DePaul University Academic Program Review

Cycle 3: Spring 2000--Spring 2001

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT -- JUNE 2001

College of Law

As a result of the third cycle of DePaul University's Academic Program Review Process (Cycle 3), the participants in the process enter into the following agreements. The participants understand that this document will be available to be made public once all the signatures are in place.

Actions agreed upon for the coming academic year

1. Curriculum
   a. Further develop the new areas of focus. In the past year, the College established four new areas of focus: intellectual property, criminal law, family law, and international law (including human rights, and trade & regulation). Faculty committees for each of the areas and for the certificate programs have been convened and are working to determine course requirements, sequencing, timing, and offerings within each specialization. Courses in these areas are already in place, and the committees will work to integrate and organize the offerings in the areas of emphasis. In the coming year, the College will seek university support for a new position to coordinate the new areas of focus; for conferences related to the new areas; and for scholarships to attract JD’s to new areas.

   b. Develop collaborative efforts with other Colleges. The College of Law is committed to collaborating with other colleges and schools within DePaul. The College of Law already approved a new program with CTI, expanded the e-commerce courses with Commerce, and has made Law courses available to Commerce students. Law will continue to pursue these and similar efforts in the coming year.

2. Faculty/Instruction
a. Hire new faculty. In the coming year, the College will seek to enhance its academic reputation by identifying, recruiting, and hiring faculty who increase the prestige of institution and who bring expertise to the new areas of curricular specialization being developed. The College will hire within existing faculty lines and will then, as needed, seek additional lines for these new faculty.

b. Increase diversity of the College’s faculty. The College considers the hiring of minority faculty to be a top priority in the coming year. Currently, only four of the fifty faculty are minorities. The College will pursue aggressive recruiting strategies to bring in minority candidates. The College will also use the visiting professorship position as a recruiting tool; next year a minority professor with a national reputation for work in Criminal Law will be visiting in the College.

c. Enrich professional activities of faculty. Next year, the College will provide opportunities for collaboration with scholars in a wide range of academic disciplines.

d. Increase support for highly productive scholars and for high quality scholarship. The College review team, the APRC team, the dean, the AVP, and the EVP all agreed that this was a complex issue, requiring the dean to balance the strategic goals of supporting quality teaching and also increasing the prestige of the College. The EVP noted that the university should provide the dean with the tools with which to increase the options available to faculty. As an example, the EVP commented that the College could consider variable teaching loads based on faculty priorities that reflect the broader mission of the college, such as reducing the four-course load for highly productive scholars, and raising it for those whose priority is teaching. The AVP noted that the college should address incentives to middle-tier scholars as well. To increase support for faculty scholars, the College dean and faculty will consider several options given the College’s multiple strategic goals and will consider implementing as many of the following as are practical:

1) implement a “6 year plan” for faculty members who produce high quality scholarship or engage in public service activities that enhance the national prestige of DePaul among academics;

2) establish differentiated tiers of endowed faculty designations;

3) enable the Dean to provide salary increases that reward outstanding contributions to scholarship and other activities that advance the reputation of the College of Law;

4) institute a rotating “scholar” designation that includes a reduced teaching load for one academic year;

5) reduce the teaching loads of highly productive scholars;
6) provide effective administrative assistance and support for faculty scholarship, teaching and administering and coordinating programs and initiatives.

e. Improve course evaluation, especially, part-time and visiting faculty. The College has been considering ways to improve the course evaluations, including the types of questions asked on the evaluation form, and the process by which the evaluations are conducted and reported. The College will more systematically examine and report on course evaluations next year.

f. Improve support for part-time and visiting faculty. The College is committed to improving the way that part-time and visiting faculty are introduced to and integrated within the College. The College has already developed a mentor system for part-time and visiting faculty and will continue to work on this issue in the coming year.

3. Students

a. Improve student quality and diversity. To increase the prestige of the College of Law and student success, the College will pursue the following strategies with regard to its students. In addition, the College will also consider these initiatives in relation to DePaul’s commitment to access as well as the institutional reality of being “enrollment driven.”

   (1) Raise academic standards for the entering class (LSAT & GPA) while ensuring that the class includes those with unique skills and diverse backgrounds.

   (2) Recruit students who will help to provide an intellectually stimulating environment that will enhance learning.

   (3) Boost student diversity.

   (4) Increase the competitiveness of Law students regarding employment opportunities, clerkships, etc.

   (5) Further enhance the College of Law’s bar passage rate.

   (6) In light of the above, the College will seek university support for student scholarships.
The EVP noted that the College is already undertaking such efforts to increase its prestige and boost student success in relation to the Intellectual Property focus. The College has attracted bright students to the program (e.g. students whose LSAT is higher than average), with scholarships and a new curricular focus, and has built an external network for student internship experiences and employment. The review team also noted that the College of Law has developed several clinics and opportunities for students to gain clinical experience while in school (such as the Technology & Intellectual Property Clinic). The EVP applauds these efforts and encourages the College of Law to continue in this direction.

b. Tracking student success. The EVP noted that it will be important to track the academic careers of these students as well as their success in employment. The AVP suggested that the College assess what students learn in the curriculum—what the College adds to their knowledge while they attend DePaul, in part to make certain that it is not simply turning out the same bright students it admits, and that it continues the university’s mission of access by enhancing the abilities and opportunities of a significant range of students. The College review team noted that while it can demonstrate what is taught in the curriculum, and can track job placement rates, bar passage rates, etc., it may be difficult to actually measure the “value added” of the College. However, the College will consider these issues as it moves forward with curricular revision, student initiatives, and tracking student success.

4. Space and Space renovation

a. The EVP acknowledges that the current space for the College of Law is inadequate. As a short-term solution, the university will add space for expansion of the College on the eleventh floor of O’Malley (renovation to be completed in September of 2001) to address the most serious space needs in the College of Law.
b. To address the long-term space needs, the College and the University are working on a plan for creating significant new space in the Lewis Center building in the next three to five years which would give the College of Law a more visible presence there.

5. Budget

The EVP is committed to move the margin of the College of Law, as reflected in the University’s annual margin study, from 35% to the 25% that is generally accepted by the American Bar Association. This will be accomplished by stabilizing enrollments and by increasing the operating and scholarship budgets of the College. In each of the past two budget cycles, the University increased the total operating and scholarship budgets by $300,000+. The EVP will recommend a third intervention for fiscal 2003, assuming no changes in the financial vitality of the University.

Issues on which there is joint commitment to continue working

1. Curriculum

   a. First year curriculum. The APRC suggested that the College of Law faculty conduct a comprehensive review of the Law School’s first year curriculum. The College review team noted that the first year curriculum was considered to be consistent with those of other Law programs and did not need immediate attention or revision. If such a revision were to be undertaken, it would require a decision/agreement of the full faculty. The team agreed that the College’s priority would be to continue to develop the second and third year curriculum—the areas of specialization, course offerings and sequences, and integration with other courses—then the first year curriculum would be considered in the context of how the curriculum integrates as a whole.

   b. Develop a plan to more fully integrate technology across the curriculum. For example, the College is considering moving toward wireless environments in the classrooms and lounge areas of the College.
c. Explore the possibility of collaborations with Music & Theatre and faculty in other units of the University. The College reported that discussions are already underway and will continue.

d. Explore the possibility of developing community based service learning (CBSL) courses in conjunction with other units of the university. The College already offers clinical opportunities for students, such as the Technology & Intellectual Property Clinic, the Community Development Clinic, the Asylum Clinic, and the Family Law program. These clinics give students the opportunity to do actual legal work with underrepresented citizens of Chicago. The College will consider how to create other service- and experientially-based learning opportunities for its students.

2. Faculty/Instruction

   a. Marketing initiatives supported by more research. For example, the College will implement a telephone follow-up survey for students accepted by DePaul who choose to go elsewhere.

   b. Develop mechanisms for using faculty to assist in recruitment.

3. Students

Graduate mentor/discussion support. The College already has resources in place to support its graduate students in the LLM and certificate programs. However, the graduate program is not growing, and so the College will need to re-evaluate its courses and program areas to identify potential areas for improvement. One idea to consider is adding a coordinator position to help bring the program together. The College is committed to looking at ways to improve, enhance, and develop these programs and may request support from the university for this purpose.

**Issues noted for further discussion**
Develop strategies to improve the Law Library. The College noted that it needs to develop a comprehensive plan with respect to the future of the Law Library. The Library Director will work with the dean and with Doris Brown to begin developing such a plan.

**University-level Issues and Commitments**

During Cycle 3, the unit program review self-studies raised several issues that have important university-wide implications. While these issues arose primarily with regard to the humanities departments of Liberal Arts & Sciences, and the Music and Theatre Schools, they also have some relevance for Law. In conversations about these major issues, the units, the deans, the Academic Program Review Committee members, and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs all have recognized the need for university-level coordination in the following areas: a) developing appropriate staffing models to support growth; b) assisting units in the transition to the PeopleSoft student administrative system and in getting the maximum benefits from it, such as identifying and counting double majors, enforcing prerequisites, and securing better information and support for student advising; c) providing research assistance to units through university-level research offices; d) improving support for advising, especially in light of PeopleSoft; e) facilitating cross-college collaboration within DePaul with respect to new programs of study.

To follow up on these common issues and determine the appropriate courses of action needed to address them at the university and unit level, the Academic Program Review Committee and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agree to do the following:

1. The Academic Program Review Committee agrees to prepare a summary report on Cycle 3 to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs which discusses these and other issues that have important connections to other university-wide initiatives. That report will be made public, along with the Memoranda of Agreement.

2. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agrees to direct the appropriate university-level offices to work with the units and their deans to determine how to effectively address these issues.

3. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs will require a progress report in June of 2002 from the appropriate university offices that will be shared with the Academic Program Review Committee.

**Acknowledgements**

The APRC thanks the College of Law review team for its continued commitment to the review of its College. During the past year and a half the College has been developing and implementing a major Strategic Plan, which in part paralleled the Academic Program Review process, while also preparing for review by the American Bar Association. We hope that together these processes have resulted in specific initiatives which will move the College forward toward its goals. The review team has continued to be cooperative throughout this long and complex process. The APRC chair and the chair of the College review team particularly thanked Russ Rogers, member of the APRC subcommittee, who has worked with the College of Law for the past two years, extending his original commitment to the APRC for precisely that purpose, and has, as always, pursued the goals of academic program review with wisdom, serious of purpose, and persistence. The EVP also thanked all those involved in APR for making this process work.
He noted that it is an important part of the university’s monitoring and maintaining academic quality. As a final note of the university’s commitment, the EVP reported that funding has been added to the College’s base budget to support the initiatives under the Strategic Plan; the initiatives resulting from Academic Program Review reflect a number of ways in which the College could use these funds.

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A hard copy of this document was signed by:

Chair of the Unit Review Committee and Department Chair

APRC Subcommittee members

Chair of APRC

Dean of the College

Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs

Executive V.P. for Academic Affairs

*The hard copy with signatures is on file in the Office of the Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs and is available upon request.