

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 23, 2020
TO: UW Board of Trustees
FROM: Dean Klint Alexander
RE: College of Law Annual Budget Submission to the Board of Trustees

The following Memorandum is hereby submitted by the UW College of Law for consideration and review by the UW Board of Trustees in preparation for the Board's May 2020 Budget Hearings.

I. Please provide a brief update on your division's accomplishments in FY 2020.

In FY 2020, the College of Law (COL) made significant progress in several areas, including general fundraising, national rankings, bar passage rate, international foreign study opportunities, cross-campus and State collaboration efforts, faculty hiring, and the expansion of experiential learning opportunities for students.

- (1) Fundraising and the Simpson Project: The private fundraising effort to support the construction of a new clinic facility addition at the College of Law - The Alan K. Simpson Center for Legal Service – continued in FY20, yielding more than \$5 million in donations, pledges, and verbal commitments to support the new Center. In addition, the College of Law pursued a state match for the Simpson building project and state funding to create an endowment to support the College's clinical and experiential learning programs during the 2020 Legislative Session. The Legislature approved \$1.25 million in state matching funds to support the creation of an endowment during the next five years.
- (2) Bar Passage Rate: In FY20, the College of Law's total bar passage rate for first-time exam takers increased on the previous year to 75% overall. The College's ultimate bar passage rate (which measures bar passage within two years of graduation) was 92%.
- (3) Enrollment: The College of Law's total number of applications (appx 400) and enrollment (225) remained steady in FY20 following a 14% increase in applications during the prior year.
- (3) Raising the National Profile of the College of Law: It has been a top priority to raise the profile of the College of Law through marketing, improved rankings, and positive exposure in major newspapers and journals. The College, once again, was recognized by several sources, including *National Jurist* and *Pre-Law Magazine*, for its strong Environmental Law and clinical and practical training programs. In addition, *AffordableLawSchools.com* ranked the UW College of law the tenth most affordable law school in the United States, which takes into account overall *U.S. News & World Report* ranking and cost of attendance.

(4) Faculty & Staff Hiring

At the Faculty level, the College of Law hired three full-time faculty members in FY20 – George Mocsary (Business law), Jerry Fowler (International Human Rights Clinic), and Dona Playton (Family & Child Advocacy Clinic). However, two long-standing professors (Steve Easton and Dee Pridgen) terminated their employment with the University in FY20.

At the staff level, the College hired a new Executive Business Manager (Laurie Kempert) and a new Faculty Assistant (Sabina McConville). The College of Law at present has filled all of its staff positions.

(5) Diversity & Inclusiveness

The College of Law implemented a minority recruitment pipeline program (the 2-2-3 Program) to funnel diverse students from community college through law school in Wyoming. The main goal of the 2+2+3 Diversity Pipeline Program is to admit diverse students who will ultimately enter and complete law school and to create a campus that will “welcome, support and graduate students of differing backgrounds, abilities and needs and from different cultures, communities and nations.” Scholarship assistance is being provided by the College of Law to facilitate recruitment to UW law school through this program.

II. Fiscal update on FY20 year to date

Due to the COVID-19 situation, the College of Law will come in under budget for FY20 as result of reduced faculty travel and the cancellation of many events hosted by the College, including the Annual Honors Banquet, the Rural Law Conference, the Spence Historic Trial, and Graduation.

III. FY21 high level internal budget adjustments and exception requests.

The College of Law has not presented any budget adjustments or exception requests at this time.

IV. Three year outlook of financial/funding issues the Administration and Board should be aware of.

During the next three years, the Administration and Board should be aware of two major issues impacting the College of Law’s success.

(1) The importance of adequate scholarship funding to recruit law students is critical to the College’s ability to remain competitive and improve its ranking in future years. We are losing law school applicants to CU-Boulder, Utah, Montana and Nebraska each year because UW cannot

offer as much in scholarship aid for recruitment as these competitor institutions. The College of Law consistently utilizes all of its available funds from Foundation accounts designated for scholarship purposes, which constitutes approximately 15 percent of its total scholarship obligations. In addition, the College of Law utilizes an additional \$1.2 million (85%) in tuition revenue for scholarship aid.

(2) The need for an adequate facility addition to house its clinics in the main building remains a critical. The specific funding request below describes the importance of this issue in more detail.

Specific division funding request to be included in the UW budget request to the Legislature for February 2021

The College of Law is in the middle of a major private fundraising effort to support the construction of a new clinic facility addition – the Alan K. Simpson Center for Legal Service - to support its clinical and experiential learning program. Currently, the College has raised over \$5 million for the Simpson Center project.

During FY20, the College requested a \$12 million state match from the Legislature, which was included in the state cap-con bill. The request received a letter of support from the Governor and was approved by the House of Representatives, but failed to gain approval in the Senate.

Having come close to obtaining Legislative approval in 2020, the College of Law respectfully requests the Board of Trustees to include in the UW budget request to the Legislature during the off-cycle February 2021 session a \$12 million state match request to support the construction of the Simpson Center expansion and renovation project at the College of Law.

The Alan K. Simpson Center for Legal Service will transform the College of Law by providing future generations of students with the clinical and experiential learning facility they deserve to have a quality legal education.

At present, law students representing indigent clients contribute approximately \$3.5 million in free legal services annually to the State of Wyoming. In 2013, the College of Law's accrediting body – the American Bar Association – noted that the current Annex facility housing the law clinics (located in the basement of the Old Farm Bureau building) is inadequate and needs to be addressed by the next scheduled ABA site visit in 2022. Moreover, the cost and inefficiency of the College of Law having to operate in two separate facilities (on and off campus) should be addressed. The proposed renovation and expansion of the main law facility would centralize the College's legal clinics and provide students, professors, and the community access to legal resources within the College's main building. This move would also bring faculty and students together and reduce the maintenance costs associated with operating two separate buildings in Laramie.

The Simpson Center also would be a defining legacy celebrating the life and career of Al Simpson. A 1958 graduate of the College of Law and a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Senate, Senator Simpson has been known as one of the most influential American leaders in recent political history.

His commitment to law and public service would inspire future generations of UW law graduates in their careers. Thus, the new Center will be appropriately named in his honor.

To date, the College of Law has raised over \$5 million in contributions, pledges and verbal commitments to support this important project. A state investment of \$12 million in matching funds is necessary to complete the project and further the long-term success of the College. Moreover, the return on investment by the State in funding this project is assured as millions of dollars of free legal services provided annually by law students to Wyoming citizens will exceed the State's allocation of resources for this project in just a few years.

The College of Law's Advisory Board, which consists of 28 distinguished members of the Wyoming legal community, are one hundred percent committed to this project, and each member has pledged his or her own resources to support the project. Other commitments, thus far, have been made by friends of the Simpson family, prominent Washington figures, and members of the Wyoming Bar.

Accordingly, the College of Law respectfully requests the Board of Trustees to include in the UW budget request to the Legislature during the February 2021 session a funding request of \$12 million in matching funds to support the Simpson Center project at the College of Law.