



THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS
CECIL C. HUMPHREYS
SCHOOL OF LAW

STRATEGIC PLAN
2015



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STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

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The mission of the **University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law** is to provide an affordable, intellectually rigorous, and practice-oriented legal education. As the sole law school in the heart of one of America's great cities, we commit ourselves to community engagement and to empowering our diverse community to pursue justice as a moral virtue and a social good.



Founded in 1962, the **Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law at the University of Memphis** is a younger law school.

Yet in just over 50 years, its alumni and faculty have made their mark in the profession and the community in Memphis, our region, our state and our nation. They have served with distinction as leaders of the bench and bar, in government, in business and in the public interest.

From its founding, Memphis Law has taken a practice-oriented approach to teaching, providing students with an outstanding program of legal education, effectively combining a thorough grounding in legal doctrine and theory with the practical skills and ethics training necessary to create highly competent, practice-ready professionals. As the University of Memphis has grown into a major research institution, so too has the ambition of Memphis Law faculty. Through their scholarship and their participation in civic, bar and governmental activities, Memphis Law professors have influenced law and public policy over a wide range of issues.

The State of Tennessee, the Memphis community, the University and the Memphis Law alumni demonstrated their confidence in the future of Memphis Law when they supported the move of the law school from the

University's main campus in East Memphis to the magnificently renovated former U.S Custom House, Court House, and Post Office overlooking the Mississippi River in downtown Memphis. The new law school campus is more than twice the size of the old campus, with over 160,000 square feet of space, and has been recognized as the best law school facility in the nation.

This strategic plan provides a blueprint to guide the School of Law through the next 5 years. Our fundamental mission has not changed since our founding, but the legal profession has undergone significant transformation, especially in recent years. These changes have created new challenges for the nation's law schools.

We will use this plan to address these challenges as we advance our mission of providing an outstanding legal education to our students and continue our development of new and innovative programs that will enable Memphis Law to stand out in the constantly-evolving legal education landscape.

STRENGTHS OF MEMPHIS LAW

As Memphis Law began the strategic planning process to address today's challenges, it did so from a position of strength, including:

- A faculty committed to providing students with the knowledge and practical skills to succeed that also seeks, through its writing and activity, to influence law, policy and legal institutions;
- A strong, vibrant and growing experiential learning program that takes advantage of the law school's downtown location to produce graduates with skills the profession demands;
- An especially close relationship with the profession, the courts, and the community that results from Memphis Law's status as the only law school in Memphis and that:
 - enables faculty and students to engage with the profession;
 - allows clinical programs to thrive; and
 - facilitates the ability of students to engage in experiential learning and connect with employers;
- A growing focus on community engagement, including strong relationships with the state and federal courts, law firms, legal service organizations, public and governmental agencies, the corporate community, and Memphis's vibrant healthcare sector;
- A tradition of success including bar passage rates that regularly exceed the state average by wide margins and exceptional employment outcomes for more than 6000 graduates practicing in 48 states; and
- A supportive alumni and community base that provides opportunities to students and resources for important programs and hiring.



THE PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic plan was developed by a strategic planning committee of the faculty and approved by the faculty on May 8, 2015, following a year-long process. The law school retained an experienced strategic planning consultant who assisted in the design of the process that first began with interviews and focus groups with faculty, staff, students and administrators. Preliminary work also included benchmarking Memphis Law against a variety of competitors and comparable schools.

The committee reviewed the information, held a series of meetings and developed a plan that leverages Memphis Law's strengths and addresses its challenges. Preliminary recommendations were presented for comment to the board of the law school's alumni chapter and to the Dean's advisory committee. Following further discussion and refinement, the plan was approved by the faculty.

As set forth in this document, the plan contains a set of overarching initiatives with a series of action items within each initiative. As appropriate, each initiative is also accompanied by benchmarks that will be used to measure progress in implementing the plan. In some cases, progress can be easily measured simply by whether the particular initiative was implemented. Others will be measured by whether progress was made toward a particular objective standard.

Some elements in the plan can be implemented by the reordering of existing priorities. In other cases, however, implementation will require additional funding and Memphis Law intends to seek funding to support those initiatives. Memphis Law is also committed to regularly reporting its progress towards achieving success.

INITIATIVE ONE:

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We will leverage our position as Memphis' law school by serving the community through innovative doctrinal programs, clinics and externships, and institutes and certificates of learning in areas related to Memphis' needs. As the only law school in our city, we have a significant advantage over law schools in other communities which may compete directly with one or two (or more) law schools in the same city. We, of course, face competition from other schools in our state and our region. But our proximity to state and federal courts, law firms, legal service organizations, public and governmental agencies, the corporate community, and Memphis's vibrant healthcare sector gives us a significant advantage in designing all-important clinics and experiential learning opportunities for our students. We must do more to exploit that advantage.

Through our Institute for Health Law and Policy, we have already begun to take advantage of our region's strength and reputation as a center for health care, including world-renowned St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, two of the state's largest healthcare systems (Methodist and Baptist), and leading medical device manufacturers (Medtronic and Wright Medical).

Our plan calls for us to identify other emerging fields where the Memphis region is strong and develop programs, including in cooperation with other schools at the University of Memphis, to enable our students to share in that growth. Our plan also calls for us to build on Memphis's long-time status as a center for civil rights activity, thought and remembrance.

ACTION AREAS

INCREASED ENGAGEMENT

We will enhance our already substantial engagement with the Memphis legal, business, governmental and non-profit communities through two key strategies:

1. Engaging them to provide externship and employment opportunities so that we are viewed as the "law school of choice" in our region.
2. Participating, though our faculty, staff and students, at even higher levels in legal, cultural, civic and business activities of the region.

COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS

We will develop and enhance our collaborative programs that serve the members of our city's various communities, such as our health law institute and clinics, and encourage

all members of our law school community to increase their involvement with the greater Memphis community. Additionally, we will build on and enhance our relationship with the University of Memphis on joint programs, joint degrees, and interdisciplinary research and scholarship.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

We will continue to make our facility a civic resource, available for use by the legal and governmental communities.

CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE

The law school will create a Civil Rights Institute that will engage students through expanded curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, provide opportunities for faculty to engage in scholarship in the field, and carry through a mission of advancing civil rights in Memphis, across the country and globally.

ADDITIONAL INSTITUTES, PROGRAMS AND COURSES

We will explore creating other institutes which exploit the unique strengths of the Memphis community. Additionally, in order to continue to serve our community, we will investigate offering a select number of graduate programs, including a Masters of Legal Studies in healthcare compliance, as well as offering courses online to non-JD audiences.

INITIATIVE TWO:

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS & CURRICULUM



In the midst of a changing legal landscape, we recognize the need to constantly find innovative ways to meet the needs of our students and the legal profession. We will review and appropriately revise our curriculum to ensure that our students have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of the today's practice. We will also provide our students with the means to better demonstrate the skills they have mastered to potential employers.

ACTION AREAS

LEGAL WRITING

A major initiative in this plan will be to transition our legal methods program from a model that uses adjunct faculty to one that uses fulltime faculty who can provide the consistency and regular on-site day-to-day contact that students need.

We must also give our students more opportunities to hone their writing skills. We will do this by expanding our writing program for second and third year students and by continuing to emphasize and support student opportunities to participate in student journals, such as the University of Memphis Law Review.

NON-TRADITIONAL COMPETENCIES

Employers and recent graduates are looking for skills not traditionally taught in law school. We will help our students develop skills that enhance their abilities to build practices and to understand business development, management and even marketing, because those skills are critical, particularly for smaller firms and rural practitioners who frequently practice in underserved communities.

CAREER PORTFOLIOS

In an especially competitive employment landscape, students must have effective means to demonstrate their professional competencies to potential employers. We will enhance our students' abilities to demonstrate the skills they have mastered through devices including law school career portfolios.

INITIATIVE THREE:

EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Memphis Law's downtown location in one of the nation's largest cities – just blocks from state and federal courts and the region's most important concentration of businesses, law firms and government offices – positions our school to be **a national leader in experiential learning.**

We will expand our experiential learning programs into fields and areas of law especially relevant to Memphis and the region. We will also continue to emphasize and extend existing classroom and co-curricular experiential learning opportunities.

ACTION AREAS

ENHANCED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

We will ensure that each student completes at least one or more experiential course(s) totaling at least six credit hours. In addition to providing substantial opportunities to students for enrollment in law clinics, externships, and simulation courses, we will guarantee that all students who wish to can enroll and receive experience in at least one clinic course or credit-bearing externship field placement.

NEW CLINICAL COURSES AND FIELD PLACEMENTS

We will expand our experiential learning curriculum into areas of student interest and community need, especially germane to the Memphis legal community.

We will explore the development of new clinical course offerings across the spectrum of practice type and area and will explore further growth of our Externship Program through new field placements, expanded student eligibility, and innovations such as distance and immersion/high-credit field placements.

SIMULATION AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS COURSES AND MOOT COURT

We will continue to expand our menu of simulation and professional skills courses and will continue to emphasize opportunities to participate and compete in our award-winning Moot Court program.



INITIATIVE FOUR:

FACULTY RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & DEVELOPMENT



The success of any program of legal education is built on the dedication of its faculty to seeing that students thrive. At Memphis Law, we have been extraordinarily fortunate to attract and retain a faculty that is especially committed to the success of our students. We are dedicated to ensuring this commitment continues.

We seek to attract and retain excellent teachers, but in today's academic environment, excellent teaching and excellent scholarship go hand-in-hand. Accordingly, our plan seeks to build a community of scholars, which will also enhance our reputation.

ACTION AREAS

STUDENT SUCCESS

All of our faculty members will focus on student success through excellent teaching and student engagement.

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

All faculty members will be expected to produce nationally recognized scholarship that seeks to influence judicial decision-making and policy and advance knowledge of law, legal institutions or legal education.

DIVERSITY

Through our hiring process, we will seek to further enhance the diversity of our faculty.

RECOGNITION

The law school will seek funding to establish additional chairs and other honorifics to recognize outstanding teaching, scholarship and service.

ENHANCED VISIBILITY

The visibility and reputation of our faculty will be enhanced by further encouraging presentations at academic conferences, participation in digital venues and extended visits by prominent scholars and by hosting academic conferences.

INITIATIVE FIVE:

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND SUCCESS

We seek to continue to attract a highly qualified and highly diverse student body and provide high quality services so students can obtain the positions of their choice. To achieve this goal, we must be financially accessible to students from Tennessee and beyond, and we must find creative ways to appeal to an even wider range of students.

To ensure accessibility, we are committed to maintaining our comparatively affordable tuition and will seek to raise additional scholarship funding. To enhance diversity, we will build on the success of our TIP (“Tennessee Institute for Pre-Law”) program by implementing new programs, including innovative recruiting and pipeline-building strategies.

We also recognize the need to work even harder for our students to enhance their position in a highly competitive job market. Accordingly, we must strengthen our Career Services Office and pursue closer connections with the Memphis and Tennessee bars and with potential employers and clients.

ACTION ITEMS

SCHOLARSHIPS AND TUITION

We are committed to maintaining our comparatively affordable tuition and will seek to raise additional scholarship funding. We are also committed to expanding our accessibility, to the benefit of Memphis and the State of Tennessee, by continuing to reduce tuition.

DIVERSITY

We will continue to implement initiatives to further enhance the diversity of our student body, including involving diverse student organizations in the recruiting process and developing programs to increase the pipeline of diverse candidates.

ENHANCED CAREER SERVICES

We will increase investment in our Career Services Office to provide students with enhanced information, counseling and training so that they can compete effectively for positions that meet their interests and qualifications.

INCUBATOR AND MENTORING

We will also strengthen our incubator program with the Memphis Bar Association, develop a mentoring program for current students, and explore the creation of a public interest law firm staffed by recent graduates.



INITIATIVE SIX:

INFRASTRUCTURE & ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES



Memphis Law will need to provide the infrastructure and administrative resources necessary to support all of the initiatives in this strategic plan. We need to ensure that we retain a highly talented, dedicated and committed staff, properly maintain our magnificent facility, improve the visibility of our plans, programs and achievements, and continue to expand our relationships with our alumni.

ACTION ITEMS

FACILITY

We will make the necessary improvements to ensure that our facility remains one of the best in the country. Additionally, we will investigate acquiring additional space and explore reconfiguring our law library to provide more space for clinics, student events, faculty offices, classrooms and potentially, student housing.

ALUMNI INVOLVEMENT

We will continue to expand connections to and relationships with our alumni, for they are our greatest resource. We will call on our alumni for financial support, but we also seek to increase alumni involvement in the activities of the law school in a variety of ways, such as mentoring students, judging moot court, teaching as adjuncts or serving as a sounding board for the Dean and faculty.

STAFF

We will continue to seek and support a diverse and highly effective staff to advance the initiatives.

FUNDRAISING

We will continue to enhance our fundraising programs in order to obtain the necessary financial support.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

We will continue to aggressively market and promote the activities at our school and the accomplishments of our students, faculty, and alumni, including website enhancements. As part of this effort, we will provide content such as classes and lectures, promotional videos, symposia, and other information on a variety of internet outlets.

MEASURING SUCCESS

INITIATIVE ONE:

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Number of externship and employment opportunities for students.
- Number of collaborative programs with University of Memphis departments and schools.
- Number of programs and events hosted at the law school by the legal and governmental communities.
- Number of Memphis-related institutes and programs.
- Establishment of Masters of Laws and Certificate programs.
- Establishment of additional institutes and programs.

INITIATIVE TWO:

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS & CURRICULUM

- Number of full-time, first-year legal writing program faculty members.
- Number of new writing-orientated courses for second and third-year law students.
- Number of new course offerings focusing on the business and operation of a law practice.
- Successful creation of career portfolios for students.
- Amount of increased integration of experiential and practice-oriented activities in traditional courses.

INITIATIVE THREE:

EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- Comparison of ABA experiential learning standards to the experiential learning requirements put in place by Memphis Law.
- Number of available spaces in clinics and externships.
- Level of expansion in experiential learning curriculum.
- Number of simulation and professional skills courses.

INITIATIVE FOUR:

FACULTY RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & DEVELOPMENT

- Number of published scholarly articles in both print and digital media.
- Number of public engagement activities by faculty members.
- Comparison of faculty diversity statistics with past law school levels as well as with peer institutions.
- Number of faculty honorifics and chairs.
- Number of media citations in academic outlets of national reputation.
- Level of funding for faculty travel.
- Number of conferences hosted and visits by scholars from other academic institutions.

INITIATIVE FIVE:

STUDENT RECRUITMENT & SUCCESS

- Level of student body diversity.
- Number of new scholarships and level of funding for existing scholarships.
- Number of students in mentoring programs.
- Level of increase in academic profile of entering classes.
- Level of employment for graduates.

INITIATIVE SIX:

INFRASTRUCTURE & ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES

- Level of investment in website and technology.
- Level of investment in print and digital marketing materials.
- Level of alumni involvement in the activities of the law school.
- Percentage of alumni participation in the annual fund.
- Level of donor support.



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