



UNIVERSITY *of*
DENVER

STURM COLLEGE OF LAW

Strategic Plan
Academic Year 15/16 - Academic Year 19/20

Final – Adopted 4/20/2015

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2009 Strategic Plan¹ for the University of Denver Sturm College of Law (“Denver Law” or “SCOL”) has served as the school’s road map through academic year 2014-15. In the highly competitive law school industry, Denver Law sought to “take our place among the very best providers of legal education.” The 2009 Plan served us well during a time of expansion, helping us to focus and set priorities. But the Plan has also served us well during a time of contraction. During implementation, Denver Law experienced a more challenging competitive environment as applications declined amidst a significant nationwide recession. The 2009 Strategic Plan guided Denver Law through the downturn in the demand for legal education and in the law-related employment market.

The 2009 Strategic Plan was grounded in two initiatives: (1) a Modern Learning Initiative and 2) a Specialization Initiative. The Modern Learning Initiative aimed to prepare students for the legal profession or their chosen career path by offering more integrated and experiential learning opportunities within a well-balanced curriculum that addresses legal analysis, legal skills, and professional identity. The Specialization Initiative demonstrated our commitment to promote and support a number of distinctive subject matter areas of strength. It aimed to promote excellent faculty scholarship; intellectual life; and engagement in local, regional, national, and international discussions about legal and social issues. The Specialization Initiative was also intended to provide rich curricular offerings that would attract students and improve our local, regional, national, and international stature.

The 2009 Plan has largely achieved its objectives and enhanced both the education provided by Denver Law and its national standing. However, because of (1) the time that has passed since that plan was developed, (2) the changes we have seen in the market for legal education and the market for legal employment, and (3) our experience in implementing the 2009 Plan, it is appropriate to revisit the 2009 Plan and make adjustments to reflect those changes.

Strategic Plan Review Process

Denver Law commenced this strategic planning review process in December 2014 with the goal of faculty approval of the plan in April 2015. It received approval from the University to undertake this process concurrent with the early phase of strategic planning underway for the University as a whole. This simultaneous approach was a testament to Denver Law’s success in implementing its prior plan, a recognition of the significant challenges and opportunities within legal education, and an endorsement of Denver Law’s leadership position on campus.

The SCOL hired two firms to aid the faculty, the Faculty Executive Committee (“FEC”), and the Dean in this process. Corona Insights, which had facilitated the 2009 strategic planning process, was retained in December 2014 to assist Denver Law in refreshing its strategic plan. For the updated plan, Corona conducted a study of the internal environment using over 150 documents provided by faculty and staff. Corona also facilitated focus group discussions and provided project leadership, strategic synthesis, and plan-writing services. Hanover Research was hired in December 2014 to produce six research studies on the external environment: a competitive

¹ Available at <http://www.law.du.edu/documents/about/SCOL-Strategic-PlanFinal.pdf>

analysis, employer survey, stakeholder survey, assessment of new opportunities for programs and revenues, an analysis of the SCOL's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (known as a "SWOT analysis"), and a study of effective strategic planning practices.

This strategic plan was informed by Hanover's research and Corona's initial assessment² as well as focus groups with alumni, university stakeholders, employers, and students, along with selected reports from the American Bar Association Task Force on the Future of Legal Education,³ the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System's Educating Tomorrow's Lawyers[®] Initiative,⁴ and the University of Denver 2014 Strategic Issues Panel's Report.⁵

During the data collection process, faculty and staff shared their aspirations for 2020 and suggested areas of distinction. Common themes emerged that informed the following conclusions and recommendations. Key themes identified in the data collection process revealed many areas of alignment around potential changes for Denver Law. In the new academic environment for law schools nationwide, Denver Law can and must do more to remain competitive, leading to the following strategic imperatives for the SCOL.

Updating Our Strategic Imperatives

Denver Law has made significant progress in addressing the strategic imperatives identified in the 2009 Strategic Plan.⁶ Denver Law will need to address the following updated strategic imperatives as it addressed those in the 2009 Plan: by being nimble and adaptable, taking bold and innovative action, and embracing new models. The updated strategic imperatives are:

1. Graduate practice-ready lawyers.
2. Continue to lead in experiential education.
3. Continue to produce high-quality, significant, and relevant scholarship.
4. Enhance student-centered guidance.
5. Expand interdisciplinary offerings.
6. Integrate inclusive excellence throughout Denver Law.
7. Create a strong and vibrant law school culture that values all members of the Denver Law community and strengthens campus and community connections.

Structure of our New Plan

The 2009 Strategic Plan was built around two Strategic Initiatives: The Modern Learning Initiative and the Specialization Initiative. Within each were "Centers of Excellence," designated as

² Raines, K. (February 2015) *Strategic Planning Assessment: Part 1 - Internal Assessment*. Sturm College of Law at the University of Denver. Denver, CO: Author.

³ Available at http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/professional_responsibility/report_and_recommendations_of_aba_task_force.authcheckdam.pdf

⁴ Available at <http://online.iaals.du.edu/category/educating-tomorrows-lawyers/>

⁵ Available at <http://www.du.edu/issues/media/documents/higheredreport.pdf>

⁶ Those imperatives included: responding to changes in the world, the legal profession, and educational theory and practice; focusing our efforts in a prioritized way; improving the law school experience for students; and enhancing a sense of identity and mission. Sturm College of Law (n.d). *The Strategic Plan: 2010-2015*. Denver, CO: Author. 2-3.

“Flagship” or “Developing” centers. The Centers of Excellence bolster both Strategic Initiatives, providing the subject-matter foundation for the Specialization Initiative, and because many of the curricular offerings adhere to the principles and expectations of the Modern Learning Initiative. As a whole, the 2009 Strategic Plan has served us well, and the Modern Learning and Specialization Initiatives will continue to form the backbone of our Strategic Plan.

We recognize, though, that the initiatives and centers are not ends in and of themselves, but means to achieving our vision. This revised Strategic Plan puts the initiatives and centers in the service of three overarching strategic goals for the next five years, each tied directly to our vision for Denver Law. One advantage of doing so is to demonstrate the degree to which the initiatives are designed to achieve our strategic goals and ultimately our vision. This approach also allows us to disaggregate the value produced by centers and focus the energy of each center where it best serves our strategic goals.⁷

⁷ We also clarify in the new Plan that Centers will not have any special claim to new or replacement faculty lines. Allocation of lines will be done according to the process in our Curriculum Committee charter.

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER STURM COLLEGE OF LAW STRATEGIC PLAN AY 15/16 - AY 19/20

OUR VALUES

We are committed to:

- Encouraging innovative and effective teaching;
- Creating, disseminating, and applying knowledge through scholarship;
- Contributing to a just society;
- Fostering inclusiveness and respect;
- Improving the legal system;
- Building and maintaining strong connections with the legal community; and
- Promoting productive involvement with the University and the broader community.

OUR VISION

Denver Law will play a leadership role in creating the future of legal education by:

- **Creating bridges to meaningful careers.** We will educate graduates who will be excellent practice-ready professionals: knowledgeable, innovative, thoughtful, practical, hard-working, ethical, and well-prepared for the practice of law;
- **Building strong connections to our community.** We will engage with our community, our alumni, and the University at all levels of our work, including teaching, scholarship, public service, and public policy; and
- **Cultivating ideas that change the world for the better.** We will create and disseminate scholarly knowledge in a variety of forms in order to solve social and legal problems and to promote justice throughout the world.

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

We will achieve our vision and increase our competitiveness through three strategic goals:

- I. **Practice-Readiness and Professional Empowerment:** Denver Law will prepare its students to be practice-ready and competitive for jobs through an innovative curriculum and student-centered support to empower them to discover and achieve their career goals;
- II. **Connecting with the Legal Community:** Denver Law will continue to connect with its local, national and international legal communities in order to provide excellent education for our students and be an indispensable part of these communities, providing pathways for students, talent for employers and clients, and knowledge to help solve the key problems of our time.
- III. **High-Impact Scholarship:** Denver Law will create and disseminate high-quality scholarship that makes significant and relevant contributions to legal and social policy debates and promotes justice.

We expect significant synergies among these three strategic goals. We also expect that accomplishing these strategic goals will further enhance the national reputation of Denver Law as we become even better known for excellent and innovative contributions to legal education and knowledge. We will accomplish these goals through a series of strategic initiatives, discussed in this Plan. These initiatives will distinguish Denver Law from its competition and drive us toward our goals.

I. PRACTICE-READINESS AND PROFESSIONAL EMPOWERMENT: We will prepare our students to be practice-ready and competitive for jobs through an innovative curriculum and student-centered support, to empower them to discover and achieve their career goals.

Denver Law will distinguish itself as a law school that prepares students for their chosen careers, ready to make an immediate positive impact on their clients and communities by the day they graduate. This is practice-readiness.

Increasingly, employers expect law schools to improve the employability of their graduates by focusing on the teaching of practical lawyering skills as well as doctrine. Graduating practice-ready is also critical for our students, ensuring that they are positioned to successfully compete for job opportunities in their chosen fields. Our commitment to practice-readiness enhances the value proposition of the legal education we offer, ensuring that the education provided by Denver Law will provide a high return on investment. It will enhance our reputation and help us attract the best students.

Students come to law school seeking meaningful careers. Whether it is serving clients, improving their communities, or changing the world, we will help our students keep sight of the broader goals that bring them to the school and guide them in fulfilling their dreams and developing their professional identities.

We must empower our students by helping them develop career paths and by giving them the tools they need to walk those paths over the course of long and rewarding careers. These abilities include: developing the requisite legal knowledge and practical lawyering skills; attaining a positive professional identity; comprehending the relationship between law and society; creating and mastering new fields of practice; integrating legal knowledge with leadership skills; and working well and inclusively with diverse clients and other professionals.

Through practice-readiness and professional empowerment, we will produce graduates who are well prepared for a professional life that may have a number of major shifts in emphasis and subject matter over the course of a career. Our students will have a foundation for success not only in traditional private law practice, but also in non-litigation and non-counseling roles, such as business and many forms of public service.

We will help our students become practice-ready and professionally empowered through the following initiatives:

A. The Modern Learning Initiative - Integrated and Experiential Education

As we stated in 2009, we believe that effective legal education and preparation for practice requires a *balanced* curriculum—one that integrates the three Carnegie apprenticeships: legal analysis, practical skills, and the development of professional identity. The SCOL has long excelled at teaching doctrine through traditional courses and teaching skills separately through dedicated courses and programs. Traditional doctrinal courses play important roles in the development of practice-ready graduates.

While these proven courses and methods remain valued, we recognize that some of the most effective learning occurs when courses combine two or more of the Carnegie apprenticeships (doctrine, skills, and professional identity), and that one of the best ways to integrate all three apprenticeships is through experiential education. Accordingly, in 2009, we committed to the Modern Learning Initiative, which was designed to augment our existing curriculum with a broad array of integrated and experiential offerings.

As part of that Initiative, we have:

- Developed a broad range of experiential offerings, including clinics, externships, simulation courses, and other project-based, hands-on courses and course components.
- Created the Experiential Advantage Curriculum™, which permits students to choose to complete a full year of experiential learning during their time at Denver Law.
- Implemented the Live Client Guarantee™, which permits every student to take a clinic or externship during his or her time at Denver Law.
- Developed Carnegie Integrated Courses, which combine all three of the Carnegie apprenticeships, and provide opportunities for both written and oral advocacy.
- Built a series of high-quality Bridge-to-Practice programs for our graduates, including our ground-breaking Legal Residency Program.

The SCOL sought to build a national reputation for the excellence of our pedagogy as part of our 2009 Strategic Plan. We created Centers of Excellence in our Clinic and Lawyering Process Programs, and we built other pedagogy-based programs that have achieved significant distinction. These include:

- Our Clinic was ranked #14 in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report* (“USN&WR”).
- Our Lawyering Process Program was ranked #7 in the nation by USN&WR.
- Our Advocacy Program was ranked #19 in the nation by USN&WR.
- Our Legal Externship Program was ranked #6 in the nation by the *National Jurist*.

Additionally, the reputational gains of these programs have brought reputational gains for our school. Denver law was ranked #10 in the nation for Practical Training by the *National Jurist*. Our Peer Assessment Rank in USN&WR, which reflects other law schools’ level of respect for our curriculum, as well as our scholarship, has risen from #72 to #53.

This new Strategic Plan restates both our commitment to these programs and to our Modern Learning Initiative. Denver Law will continue to innovate in our pedagogy. Our curriculum will

not only result in practice-ready and professionally empowered graduates, but will be noticed and emulated by other law schools across the country and noticed and respected in the practice community.

As part of this continued commitment, we will seek to expand our integrated and experiential offerings and explore new and innovative ways to incorporate practical skills and professional identity development into the curriculum. We will also explore innovative new ways to provide live-client opportunities for our students and to incorporate experiential components into more traditional courses. Such innovations could include:

- Injecting more experiential learning into the first year (while making sure not to disrupt the important core learning that occurs in traditional first year courses);
- Offering hands-on, project-based courses to provide our students with sought-after skills and abilities;
- Building upon the expertise within the MSLA program as we teach our students about law practice development and management;⁸ and
- Potentially requiring that all students have a live-client experience before they graduate.

We recognize that the third Carnegie apprenticeship, the development of professional identity, is deeply entwined in the process of selecting and preparing for a career. In this process, individuals reach an understanding of their role as lawyers, and as professionals. Our Modern Learning Initiative will provide excellent curricular opportunities for our students to develop professional identities that incorporate honesty, ethics, professionalism, and a commitment to serve. Our Career Development Initiative, discussed below, will support this process, as we help our students choose their career paths and develop their professional identities.

The Mulligan Burleson Chair of Modern Learning will continue to support this initiative by facilitating development of Carnegie Integrated Courses, hosting guest speakers, and sharing faculty experiences. Our Lawyering Process, Academic Achievement Program (“AAP”), Bar Passage Program, library, externship, advocacy skills, bar passage, and clinical faculty are valuable sources of expertise who can serve as resources to professors interested in incorporating additional skills components into doctrinal classes or collaborating on joint teaching experiments.

We do not suggest that every professor must include experiential learning or every one of the three Carnegie apprenticeships in every (or any) class he or she teaches. However, many faculty either already use or would be excited to include Modern Learning methods in their teaching. Our strategy for expansion is based on facilitating (through incentives, opportunities for self-education, etc.), coordinating, and publicizing those efforts. We recognize that some members of our faculty are innovating in the classroom today and are eager to experiment with new course formats. We endorse the “piloting” of such courses in the upcoming academic years to increase opportunities for hands-on learning.

⁸ SCOL alumni and employers have noted the importance of teaching not only legal skills, but skills that prepare our students for the practice of law – for engaging in the business of practicing law. We received that input in 2009 and again in 2015.

B. The Specialization Initiative – Certificate Programs.

In the 2009 Strategic Plan, Denver Law created a Specialization Initiative that had, among other aims, a goal of increasing employment opportunities for our students. In the 2009 Strategic Plan specialization was tied to Centers of Excellence that had additional goals, including promoting our reputation and supporting faculty scholarship. Those goals remain important and are addressed elsewhere in this plan.

Areas of subject-matter expertise that are useful to students in their job searches vary with job growth in those areas. We have learned that tying specialization exclusively to Centers of Excellence precludes us from adapting easily to such changes in the employment landscape.

For example, when we developed our 2009 Plan, we did not include a Center of Excellence for Intellectual Property (“IP”). In the interim, the City of Denver acquired a new Patent and Trademark Office, and the market for graduates with IP expertise expanded. We realized that we could offer a specialty in IP law for our students that was not tied to a Center for Excellence and adopted a valuable certificate program that allows our students to obtain subject-matter expertise in this area and to demonstrate that expertise to employers.

Adding more flexibility to the Specialization Initiative will permit us to help students become practice-ready in a way that meets the demands of a changing employment market. Our Specialization Initiative is therefore now focused on fostering practice-readiness for students and is not tied exclusively to Centers of Excellence.⁹

By offering our students clusters of courses in specialized subject-matter areas, we can provide them with deep subject-matter understanding and award them certificates that demonstrate that mastery to potential employers, reducing the need for employers to train them. We currently offer certificate programs in:

- Business and Commercial Law
- Constitutional Rights and Remedies
- Environmental and Natural Resources Law
- Intellectual Property Law
- International Law
- Workplace Law

Additionally, we offer dual degree (JD/LLM) options with three of our Masters in Law (LLM) programs which provide opportunities for even greater levels of specialization in:

- Environmental and Natural Resources Law
- International Business Transactions
- Tax Law

⁹ Of course, Centers of Excellence may offer course-clusters and certificate programs. But they need not do so. See Section III, *infra*.

Based on the feedback we have received on areas of predicted high job growth, we will consider potential course clusters and certificate programs in:

- Compliance
- Energy Law
- Family Law
- Health Care Law and/or Elder Law
- Immigration Law
- Marijuana Law and Policy

We will, of course, remain committed to also providing an excellent general legal education.

Because we seek to be flexible, adaptable, and responsive, we will revisit any course clusters or certificate programs outside the Centers of Excellence at three-year intervals. We will also encourage faculty to launch pilot projects to market-test new ideas with the goal of possibly growing those with market relevance into new course clusters and/or certificate programs.

C. The Interdisciplinary Initiative

The 2009 Plan recognized that lawyers are problem-solvers and legal education should encourage students to examine the complex contexts in which legal problems arise. The economic recession has solidified the shift to client-centered practices, whereby lawyers are expected to understand their clients' non-legal challenges. At the same time, the shape of knowledge in our society is changing, and silos between discipline-specific approaches seem to be breaking down. Thus, courses of study that incorporate information from other disciplines can be particularly effective at teaching problem-solving and helping our graduates obtain employment.

The SCOL will leverage the fact that it is part of an excellent university, with many excellent educational programs, to help provide interdisciplinary context to our law students. This can be done by empowering our students to take classes, certificates, or degrees at other units on campus that will enhance their abilities and their marketability.

The SCOL already offers four formal joint degree programs with other University units, as well as a joint certificate program in International Human Rights. And some members of the faculty have already formed effective interdisciplinary partnerships with faculty in other units within the University and with groups outside the University. We have opportunities to build on those efforts to create more robust and varied relationships with other units to enhance teaching, scholarship, and service work, for example with business, psychology, economics, sociology, or international affairs. These synergies make multidisciplinary inquiry a natural part of a balanced and comprehensive program of legal education at SCOL.

Additionally, the SCOL faculty can increase their teaching effectiveness and make our graduates better lawyers by introducing into the classroom multidisciplinary perspectives and other material designed to help students understand the complex moral, cultural, historical, and economic contexts in which legal problems arise. These courses can be particularly effective when they also incorporate experiential, problem-based elements. Many faculty already do so and can provide support to those who are interested in incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives into their

courses. (As with the Modern Learning Initiative, these forms of teaching will be encouraged and supported, but not required.)

There is also interest in interdisciplinary courses and degrees to address new market realities. For example, students seeking employment in a technology field would benefit from learning side-by-side with students majoring in business and engineering, particularly in hands-on, problem-based coursework. The same is true for students with an interest in public interest law and students studying social work, psychology, and education. When appropriate, Denver Law will lead the creation of relevant and sought-after legal education products that leverage the assets and talents of multiple DU units.

We recognize there are many impediments to overcome if SCOL faculty and staff are to create such offerings timely and cost-effectively. University leadership may need to take steps to reduce impediments to such offerings that cannot be addressed by the SCOL or other units alone. We commit to work with University leaders to address these issues.

D. The Career Development Initiative

Denver Law is student-centered. This is part of our culture. While Denver Law has a deep commitment to excellence in teaching and advising students, it can and will do more to empower graduates to select and prepare for their careers of choice.

Many law students report losing their sense of self—their personal identity—during law school. Our goal is to help students develop meaningful careers that are consistent with their personal identity, their values, and their goals. Our Modern Learning Initiative is designed to promote development of positive professional identity. Through our Career Development Initiative, we will help our students build positive curricular and career paths that are consistent with their personal values and goals. This intentional alignment of personal and professional values and goals through curricular and career planning will differentiate Denver Law from its competitor schools in a manner that is fundamental to the student experience, closely connected to our mission, and in service to the public good.

The SCOL currently provides a rich but potentially daunting array of elective courses, experiential educational options, extracurricular activities, and networking opportunities. Each student already has the theoretical ability to create a personalized legal education consistent with his or her career choices and professional identity. Mapping out the best route at the beginning of law school and then updating that trajectory as the student's interests evolve and opportunities arise may pose a practical challenge. However, we are committed to addressing that challenge.

We will empower students in navigating curricular and career choices to help them discover and achieve their career goals and develop their professional identities. We will do so through excellent, integrated, and embedded academic advising, career and financial counseling, and mentoring beginning in the 1L year.

The SCOL has excellent resources currently available to help students create and navigate their career paths, including:

- Academic Advising
- Career Advising
- Financial Counseling
- Formal Mentoring
- Informal Mentoring

The SCOL boasts one of the most inclusive and extensive Mentorship Programs in the country. Currently, the SCOL offers every 1L student the opportunity to be paired with a community mentor based on interests or other commonalities. This program significantly differentiates Denver Law from its competitor schools.

Similarly, our Career Development Office (“CDO”) has deep expertise in helping students find their career paths and pursue available jobs in the areas of their choice. The CDO has expressed a strong desire to connect with every student during the 1L year and embed career planning into the student experience from its very beginning.

Academic advising was once largely the responsibility of individual faculty members responding to requests for assistance from individual students. The Centers of Excellence and academic programs have made it easier for students interested in those subject areas to get quality academic advice from relevant faculty. They also create programming options that bring students into contact with practitioners in the community. While such faculty participation in academic advising is critical, many students do not reach out to faculty on their own, particularly at the end of their 1L year.

The Student Affairs Office has been growing its academic advising capacity and increasing its service to students since the 2009 Strategic Plan. It sees a great need for more comprehensive service.

Additionally, the Graduate Legal Studies Office provides support to non-JD students. Other forms of support for JD- and non-JD students are available at the University level. University support will be increasingly critical to career development as students pursue career aspirations that can benefit from offerings from other units.

We will explore ways to further differentiate Denver Law from its competitor schools by creating more integration and coordination among these student resources, both informally and perhaps through more structured “Inns of Court,” formal advising teams, or courses. We will explore possibilities for embedding these advising resources into students’ academic lives from the beginning of their 1L years. We will explore potential tools to help students navigate the choices available to them and to track their progress toward their goals.

II. **CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY: We will partner with our community to provide excellent education for our students, and be an indispensable part of that community, providing pathways for students, talent for employers and clients, and knowledge to help solve the key problems of our time.**

A key distinction and asset for our law school is its location in Denver. Although our network and reputation stretch far beyond Denver, our location matters.

Denver is one of the most desirable cities in the country to live and to work. This is particularly true for lawyers. The *National Jurist* ranked Denver as the 4th best city for young attorneys.

The Denver legal market is also one of the most resilient and robust markets in the country. The Mountain Region, led by Denver, was ranked as the best legal job market for entry level graduates in a study by the *National Jurist*. Our school serves as a key entry point into that market, preparing practice-ready lawyers and connecting them with the Denver legal community. In short, we produce Denver lawyers.

Our connections to the Denver community are strong.

- Denver Law is considered an integral part of the local legal community. We often hear attorneys refer to Denver Law as “their” law school even if they earned their degree elsewhere. Alumni are committed to the school’s success and seek to be resources to the school and its students.
- We are physically close to Denver’s courts and boardrooms, to government offices and agencies in the state capital, and to the regional offices of federal agencies. The participants in these enterprises welcome Denver Law students and faculty into their work, and take pride in their relationship with the law school.

Our relationship to the Denver community provides a critical advantage for the SCOL that few other schools in the country can replicate. We commit to solidify that relationship through two initiatives.

A. Partnership in Education Initiative

Our community plays an important role in helping us to prepare practice-ready and professionally empowered graduates. As mentors, our partners in the Denver legal community have helped us to create one of the most extensive Professional Mentoring Programs in the country. As externship supervisors, they have helped us to build one of the nation’s top-ranked externship programs.

As adjunct professors, community members help to provide practical, real-world insights on the law and on career development strategies. Our adjunct corps includes some of the top legal talent in our state, including many Colorado Supreme Court Justices and judges, elected and appointed officials, leaders of the bar, and some of the most experienced and respected practitioners in the region.

Our alumni and friends also help us to build bridges for our students into our community. Denver Law students can build strong networks and connections in the community while they are still in school. These relationships serve as pathways into meaningful careers, and often develop into rewarding professional and personal friendships. Our Professional Identity and Career Development Initiative, discussed above, will help our students identify and navigate these opportunities in an intelligent and effective way.

We will continue to reach out to, and partner with, our legal community to ensure our graduates are practice-ready and professionally empowered.

B. Value to the Community Initiative

We will strive to be an indispensable part of our community. The Partnership in Education Initiative should be a two-way street, valuable both to our students and our community partners. Additionally, by serving and giving back to our community, we teach and model the importance of public service in our profession. We will serve our community in a number of ways, including:

- We will continue to be a supplier of excellent legal talent for employers and clients through our practice-readiness initiatives.
- We will provide relevant and high-quality education and professional development opportunities to the members of the community. For example, we will provide CLE and other professional education programs, advanced certificate and degree options (such as LLM and Master's programs), and other forms of unbundled legal education. Additionally, we will regularly invite community members to participate in programs and events at our school.
- Our faculty will continue to participate in the intellectual and professional life of the community, and to engage with community leaders to help address important legal and policy issues. As part of our High-Impact Scholarship Initiatives, discussed below, we will create and disseminate knowledge that contributes to solutions. Our scholars will work with courts, practitioners, bar associations, and policy-makers to help solve problems and to promote justice and the rule of law. Additionally, our Centers of Excellence will work with members of their practice communities to continue to improve the law and practice in those areas, as well as the education we provide.
- Our students and faculty will continue to serve the public interest. Faculty will be encouraged to continue to perform pro bono work (in some cases, with student assistance). Our students are required to provide 50 hours of public service, building an ethic of service while helping them build practice-readiness. Our Student Law Office has provided legal services to the underserved for over 110 years. Other courses regularly provide opportunities for students to serve the local community. The opportunity to provide service in Denver's diverse community helps our students learn to put cultural competence and inclusive excellence skills into practice. In these ways and others we will take our place as part of a great private university dedicated to the public good, and continue to provide service to our community in ways that provide value and make us an indispensable part of that community.

III. HIGH-IMPACT SCHOLARSHIP: We will create and disseminate high-quality scholarship that makes significant and relevant contributions to legal and social policy debates, and promotes justice.

We are committed to scholarship as a means for improving society and social policymaking. Additionally, our 2009 Plan noted:

[I]t is important that the SCOL engage in scholarly work relevant to the issues of the day. We will fully engage our research enterprise in solving legal and social programs and promoting justice. Through our scholarship, we will continue to have a strong voice in various arenas, including legal education and public policy and with the practicing bar and community at large.

We recommit to our dedication to the scholarly enterprise and acknowledge the value of scholarly engagement and research, which is a cornerstone of any great university.

In 2009, we made a bet that we could break down the false dichotomies between teaching and scholarship and between preparing practice-ready lawyers and being a scholarly powerhouse. Our record since 2009 has proved that we can be excellent scholars and teachers dedicated to preparing our students for legal practice, and that each role reinforces the other. Our scholarly inquiries help us stay at the cutting edge of our fields and teach our students at that level. Scholarly work on teaching and learning helps us ensure that our pedagogy is state of the art and fulfills both our scholarly and teaching missions.

Maintaining our strong commitment to high-impact scholarship will enhance our reputation among our colleagues in academia, as well as our colleagues in the legal community. These reputation gains from our scholarship help us attract excellent faculty and high quality students, which in turn improves bar pass results, rankings, and job outcomes.

We will encourage our faculty to be innovative productive scholars, reward significant and relevant scholarship based on its real-world impact and quality, and continue to use specialization as a means to support our scholarly mission and reputation.

A. Productivity Initiative: Building Upon Successful Efforts to Increase Quantity and Quality of Scholarly Output

Over the past five years, Denver Law's scholarly output has nearly doubled. Our scholarship has impacted many major debates of our time. This, along with the innovative improvements in our curriculum, has elevated the school's profile and advanced its reputation as a leader in legal education.

Beginning even before the 2009 plan, the SCOL had increased the national recognition of its scholarly profile and had emerged as a nationally recognized leader in a number of fields. Our accomplishments since that time include:

- Our USN&WR peer reputation ranking, which is highly correlated with scholarly productivity, has risen from #72 to #53 since 2009.
- Our SSRN download rank improved from #66 to #38 since 2012.
- Our Roger Williams Scholarly Reputation score¹⁰ increased from 2.86 to 4.19 since 2009.

We commit to expanding the breadth of our scholarly engagement and exploring new and innovative ways to facilitate scholarship among our faculty. As part of this effort, we will continue the practices that have made our scholarship successful, particularly through mentoring and through incentive structures to support scholarship. And we will explore innovative new ways to facilitate faculty production of scholarship.

B. Impact Initiative: Producing Work that Matters

One of Denver Law’s greatest strengths is our ability to create scholarship that changes the world. We recognize there are critics of legal scholarship, who question the value of the enterprise. We commit to demonstrate the value of our scholarship, both in terms of its impact on legal and social policy, and in terms of its benefits to our students.

Our scholarship is routinely cited by other scholars, advancing important academic debates and inquiries. But we do not stop there. Our scholarship also has an impact on legal practice and on the world around us. Our faculty’s scholarship has been cited and relied upon by numerous federal and state appellate and trial courts, legislators and governors, regulators, and litigators. Our scholars regularly present their ideas in local bar publications, alumni publications, and for audiences of local practitioners. Our work is assigned in courses at law schools, graduate programs, and undergraduate programs across the country.

Moreover, our scholarship often serves as the basis for other influential writing and media, such as briefs in important cases, and articles in traditional newspapers, in general interest media outlets, in law-specific forums, and in blogs aimed at legal academics and policy-makers. Our scholars are regularly quoted in major media outlets.

We explicitly embrace many different forms of scholarship on a wide range of topics and using a wide range of methodologies. These will likely include an expansion of interdisciplinary scholarship. Denver Law is the birthplace of the Law and Society movement, and we anticipate building on that legacy of interdisciplinary inquiry, supported by our Interdisciplinary Initiative.

Scholarship has impact when it reaches a wide audience, and particularly an audience that uses it to take action on legal or social policy in the non-academic world. We will continue to increase the impact of our scholarship by seeking ever wider audiences and by building our reputation as a place where great ideas are cultivated.

While objective measures such as the “rank” of a journal that publishes an article, the number of times the article is cited, or instances in which an article is relied on in judicial opinions can be useful, they are not exhaustive metrics for impact and quality. We commit to exploring a wider

¹⁰ <http://law.rwu.edu/faculty/faculty-productivity-study>. The score is based on the number of articles published by faculty in select law reviews, divided by the number of faculty.

range of measures of scholarly impact and quality and to ensuring that our incentive structures reward our scholars based on that impact and quality.

C. **Specialization Initiative: Scholarship and Centers of Excellence**

Our Specialization Initiative provides opportunities for our students to obtain deep subject-matter knowledge in particular fields, as discussed above in connection with our goal of producing practice ready graduates. Such specialized education is supported by faculty who are expert scholars in those fields. Moreover, specialization helps support scholarly productivity and engagement through writing groups, distinguished lectures, and conferences—with students benefiting from these activities as well.

In the 2009 Plan, the Specialization Initiative was tied to Centers of Excellence, which included the goal of facilitating faculty scholarship. We adopted five subject-matter based Centers:

- Constitutional Rights and Remedies
- Corporate and Commercial Law
- Environmental and Natural Resources Law
- International Law
- Workplace Law

Among the goals of these Centers were (1) to support faculty scholarship in these areas and (2) to support programming in these areas for the academic and practice communities. These activities, in turn, serve to enhance our reputation in these areas. This strategy appears to be working. Our scholarly output has nearly doubled since 2009. We have put on excellent programming, which has attracted thousands of visitors to Denver Law. We have built influential and supportive Advisory Groups for many of our Centers. Our students have benefited from the networks created by these programs. And our programs have gained national distinction. For example, our Environmental and Natural Resources Law Program is ranked #22 in the country by USN&WR.

We will continue with our subject matter-based Centers of Excellence as a way to leverage the synergies and strengths of specialization. However, we have found that tying specialization exclusively to Centers of Excellence sometimes creates artificial divisions among centers and informal barriers to collaboration. Accordingly, we endorse scholarly efforts that promote collaboration among and beyond the Centers as well as efforts within a particular Center.¹¹

¹¹ In this plan, we re-commit to Centers of Excellence as a means to drive scholarship and reputation, as well as to support specialization opportunities for our students. However, we are also committed to ensuring that the Centers of Excellence remain vibrant, productive, and relevant. For this reason, we will continue to apply, and revise as necessary, our policies for re-evaluating our Centers at regular intervals. Additionally, following our 2009 Strategic Plan, we often thought of Centers as a primary determinant of how to allocate new or replacement faculty lines. In the current Plan, Centers will not have any special claim to new or replacement faculty lines. Allocation of lines will be done according to the process in our Curriculum Committee charter.

Ongoing Commitments

Diversity and Inclusive Excellence

Practice-readiness also depends upon our graduates' cultural competence – their ability to serve diverse clients and communities and to value a diversity of perspectives to solve legal problems and address larger social issues in society.

Denver Law's mission to train culturally competent lawyers requires that our own hallways and classrooms reflect the diversity of our society and the clients and communities our graduates will serve. Since the 2009 Plan, Denver Law has made some progress towards achieving greater diversity, embedding inclusive excellence, and producing practice-ready, culturally competent lawyers.¹²

In February 2010, shortly after the 2009 Strategic Plan was enacted, Dean Katz, with faculty input, created a new administrative position, the Associate Dean for Institutional Diversity and Inclusiveness (ADIDI). The ADIDI's charge is to 1) develop and coordinate initiatives designed to recruit diverse students, faculty, and staff; and 2) promote and maintain an inclusive law school environment.

We have developed several pipeline initiatives designed to help recruit diverse students.¹³ These include a pipeline partnership with the Denver Urban Debate League. We have also started an annual Pipeline Conference, which draws diverse students from undergraduate programs, high schools and middle schools from throughout Colorado. At these conferences, the students hear from law professors from numerous schools, as well as law admissions officials and representatives, current and former Denver Law students, and members of the local bar. Other pipeline initiatives include a "Bridge Course" taught to prelaw undergraduates at Colorado Women's College; sponsorship and organization of events featuring high profile speakers and officials to which local high school students are invited; a low-cost LSAT prep course; and a 3 + 3 program for DU undergraduates.

To improve diversity in the legal academy, we started the Emerging Legal Scholars Initiative, which provides prospective law faculty access to professional conferences and networking; the 2013 Langston Writing Workshop, promoting hiring and retention of African American law professors; and "Opening Doors to Academia," a full-day workshop for practicing attorneys interested in law teaching.

To foster inclusive excellence, we created an "Inclusive Excellence Series," presenting topics such as generational diversity and issues of implicit bias.

¹² Inclusive excellence at DU is defined as "the recognition that a community or institution's success is dependent on how well it values, engages and includes the rich diversity of students, staff, faculty, administrators, and alumni constituents. More than a short-term project or single office initiative, this comprehensive approach requires a fundamental transformation of the institution by embedding and practicing IE in every effort, aspect, and level of a college or university. The goal is to make IE a habit that is implemented and practiced consistently throughout an institution." <http://www.du.edu/cme/resources/inclusive-excellence.html>

¹³ Pipeline efforts seek to enrich educational opportunities for diverse, K-12 students in order to maximize later entry into undergraduate and graduate institutions.

In addition, in the last five years, new student organizations representing diverse communities have formed, including the Muslim Law Students Association and the Middle East and North African Law Society. Recently, Denver Law faculty created The Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place and Law, bringing together Denver Law scholars to address racial inequities in the U.S. and around the globe. In addition, a Critical Race Reading Seminar has been added to the curriculum. In the last five years, there have also been many conferences and symposia addressing a broad range of issues relevant to diversity and inclusion in society.

We understand that creating a culture of inclusion is a vitally important long-term commitment. So too is our goal to increase the diversity of Denver Law's faculty, staff, and students. Denver Law's efforts to help develop a legal profession whose diversity matches the society it serves have gained attention within the local bar and within the legal academy nationally. Much work remains to achieve these goals. We recommit ourselves to this work.

Globalization

Being practice-ready includes preparation to work in an interconnected and global society. As we heard from employers and alumni, some aspects of international law are interwoven across legal practice specialty areas. For example, students studying torts, contracts, or civil procedure need to understand not only state and federal law; they also frequently need to understand pertinent international laws and customs.

Faculty are encouraged to explore options that bring globalization issues or, where relevant, international law, into their courses and certificates, as appropriate. Many already do and can serve as a resource for other faculty interested in augmenting their courses.

Unbundled Legal Education

Fundamentally, law schools offer legal education. Traditionally, however, they have offered only one product: the Doctor of Jurisprudence ("JD"). While this degree is the best option for many people seeking legal education, increasingly, members of our local, national, and international communities are looking for other legal educational products.

Those who already have JDs often seek legal education to improve their capabilities or advance their practices, and those who earned law degrees in foreign countries often seek American legal education as an entry point into U.S. law practice. For these reasons, LLM degree offerings are proliferating across the country. Non-lawyers who do not intend to practice often seek legal education to advance their careers in business, government, and non-profits. For this reason, legal Master's degrees are starting to gain popularity.

Currently, we offer LLM degrees in Taxation, Environmental and Natural Resources Law and Policy, and International Business Transactions, and are offering a new LLM in American Legal Practice. We offer Master's degrees in Legal Administration, Environmental and Natural Resources Law and Policy, and Taxation, and now offer a new Masters of Legal Studies.

We commit to provide excellent options for non-JD students seeking legal education to advance their career goals. We will continue to improve our current LLM and Master's offerings and will consider additional degree and certificate options to meet the needs for legal education beyond the JD program.

Bar Passage

We recognize that, for our many students who seek to practice law, bar passage is an essential part of practice-readiness. Additionally, bar pass results are an important success measure for law schools and for students. To that end, our 2009 Plan incorporated and recommitted to several of our key bar pass initiatives, including:

- Reducing our class size;
- Adopting a data-driven admissions policy focused on bar passage;
- Identifying and providing effective support in law school to students whose law school performance indicates potential bar pass risk;
- Adopting a data-driven policy for maintaining good-standing in law school; and
- Enhancing our Bar Success Program for our graduates, which has proven to be extremely effective at preparing our graduates to pass the bar.

Denver Law benchmarks its bar pass results against the state average and the University of Colorado Law School. Denver Law has continued to make enormous gains in bar passage, and we continue to be committed to a curriculum and bar passage programs that will maintain or improve current bar passage rates.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

The strategic goals in this Plan are broad. To implement them, we need to develop more specific actions to achieve our strategic goals, as well as timetables and measures of success.

Accordingly, in the fall of 2015, we will appoint ad hoc committees to create implementation plans for each of these three strategic goals. Committees will include faculty and staff and will meet periodically both independently and with the other two committees. These ad hoc committees should consider the incentive structures and faculty committee structures needed to support implementation, and should also consider key performance indicators. Possibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Measures of student attraction to Denver Law
- Measures of student quality
- Measures of graduate competence/excellence/practice-readiness
- Job outcomes
- Scholarly production and impact
- Rankings

STRATEGIC PLAN ASSESSMENT

This revised Strategic Plan is ambitious and will require dedicated and persistent efforts throughout the Denver Law community, and the support of the University, to realize. As with all strategic plans, a key part of the Plan must include regular assessment of the progress made under the Plan. The Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) is currently charged with this task under its charter.