



Strategic Plan

Adopted by faculty on May 31, 2006

Strategic Plan Preamble

The University of Colorado Law School occupies a unique position among American law schools. The influence of our relatively small faculty extends well beyond its numbers. The academic qualifications of our students are among the highest of any public law school. And our setting amidst the Rockies allows the mind and spirit to soar. Our greatest strength is our ability to spark independent thinking while simultaneously fostering a sense of public mindedness and community. Our size, student-faculty ratio, and ability to recruit high-quality and increasingly diverse students are integral to preserving this strength.

Faculty and students alike choose our law school because its size and setting allow for a collaborative yet personalized approach to legal education. Our faculty is an eclectic and self-directed group of nationally recognized scholars dedicated to providing the highest quality education to students in small classroom settings and to influencing legal and public policy debates through original, path-breaking research. Our students come for the blend of intellectual, practical, and public-spirited approaches to legal education that we offer, and for the ready access to faculty that is lacking in many other top schools. Our students are equally drawn by the prospect of preparing themselves for legal careers that are not only successful, but meaningful and satisfying. Our staff is loyal, tireless, and dedicated to advancing our educational mission.

We have been further strengthened by our new Wolf Law Building. The state of the art technology and environmentally responsive facility will greatly enhance our educational and research mission. Not incidentally, our new building is also beautiful and highlights our striking geographic setting.

Despite these strengths, we have work to do. Law schools now face intense competition for students, faculty, and funds. And like most public law schools, we have seen a decrease in state support for our operations and programs. In order to advance our position, we must meet these challenges as we seek to continue to recruit world-class scholars, maintain our favorable student-faculty ratio, attract high-quality students and enhance the diversity of our student body.

This strategic plan sets forth a course that will enable us to build upon our strengths, carry out important new initiatives, and pursue financial independence.

Our Vision

A supportive and diverse community of scholars and students in a place that inspires vigorous pursuit of ideas, critical analysis, and civic engagement in order to advance the rule of law in an open, sustainable society.

Our Mission

Teaching:

We believe that legal education should employ robust theoretical inquiry, doctrinal and policy analysis, and professional skills. As part of a premier research university, we seek to integrate opportunities for interdisciplinary study. Because the law is dynamic, we must equip our students to deal with change and to exercise sound judgment and creativity in offering solutions for problems of individuals, institutions, and nations. Our faculty members are passionate about teaching and are committed to providing students with a well-rounded learning experience that prepares them to serve wisely and with professionalism. And our location provides a natural vitality that motivates students to reach for their full potential.

Scholarship:

We believe that all faculty should be committed to the broader mission of education that is accomplished through exploration, discussion, and dissemination of ideas. We seek a better understanding of existing law, to develop and test new ideas and approaches, to challenge the status quo, and to convey our research and ideas to lawyers, academics, policy makers, and the wider world. The philosophies and approaches of faculty members can and should vary widely in pursuing this mission, but all are expected to produce noteworthy work.

Public Service:

We believe that our faculty and students all have obligations to the Law School, the University, the profession, and the local and global communities for the privilege of being part of in an honored endeavor. Moreover, a commitment to service is an ingredient of a full and satisfying life. Accordingly, we will contribute our time and talents in pursuit our mission in ways that match our individual interests and abilities. As a public institution with a tradition of public service, we will strive to instill in our students an awareness of a lawyer's civic responsibilities and opportunities to serve and lead.

Strategic Initiatives

1. To **foster a vibrant and amicable intellectual climate** where diverse ideas and perspectives are generated, embraced, and tested with rigor and respect and where students, faculty, and staff mutually support one another in the pursuit of individual accomplishment and overall advancement of the Law School.
2. To **equip students** to research and analyze thoroughly law and policy, to examine the theoretical and social bases for law, to exercise sound professional skills and ethical judgment, and to use the law creatively and responsibly to achieve their clients' goals.
3. To **earn national and international recognition and esteem** of scholars, lawyers, jurists, policymakers, and citizens for the quality and accomplishments of our faculty, our students, and our graduates.
4. To **attract and retain an influential world-class faculty** whose members are mutually supportive of their varied individual endeavors.
5. To **admit an increasingly stronger and more diverse student body and to help place our recent graduates in interesting, rewarding, and satisfying positions.**
6. To **pursue financial stability** and **maintain an infrastructure** sufficient to allow our mission to succeed and our goals to be fulfilled.

1. To **foster a vibrant and amicable intellectual climate** where diverse ideas and perspectives are generated, embraced, and tested with rigor and respect and where students, faculty, and staff support one another in the pursuit of individual accomplishment and overall advancement of the Law School, we will:
 - A. Enhance the diversity of our students, faculty, and staff and ensure that our curricular content reflects that diversity to enable all of us to benefit from different experiences and perspectives
 - B. Foster an inclusive community where the input of all faculty, students, and staff is regularly sought and valued
 - C. Nurture a culture that enables great ideas to flourish, in that the faculty will:
 - i. Review and constructively critique one another's scholarship
 - ii. Provide effective mentoring and guidance, particularly to junior faculty as they teach and produce scholarship
 - iii. Encourage and support joint projects among faculty and with scholars in other disciplines
 - iv. Provide forums and encouragement to engage in intellectual inquiry with the larger community, including alums, leaders of the bar and industry, and policy makers
 - D. Create a rich program of outside visitors and guest speakers with a wide variety of intellectual interests
 - E. Maintain our historically close student-faculty interactions that enable our students to engage intellectually with our faculty and with each other by offering ample small sections, classes, and seminars
 - F. Promote a collaborative, uplifting, and mutually respectful culture and work ethic between our staff, and the faculty and administrators that they support

Benchmarks

- *Maintain a favorable student-faculty ratio, comparable to schools we have identified as our peer institutions, ("peer schools") but in any case within a range of 12:1 and 15:1, and no higher than 15:1*
- *Maintain or increase the number of small section classes for first-year students; and correspondingly manage any increase in student body such that a new small section can be added for every 25 additional first-year students*
- *Maintain or increase the number of seminars and seminar positions available to our students while maintaining a limit of 12 (15 with instructor permission) in all seminars*
- *Maintain or increase faculty satisfaction with the support, including mentoring, provided by their colleagues for their scholarly initiatives*
- *Maintain a favorable ratio of number of staff members to faculty and administrators, comparable to our peer schools*

2. To **equip students** to research and analyze thoroughly law and policy, to examine the theoretical and social bases of law, to exercise sound professional skills and judgment, and to use the law creatively and responsibly to achieve their clients' goals, we will:
 - A. Ensure that our curriculum has a rich mixture of theory, policy and doctrinal analysis and professional skills and that it includes interdisciplinary subject matter
 - B. Challenge our students to accept the responsibility and privilege that their professional training bestows upon them, to serve our society as leaders and contributors to the social fabric of their chosen communities
 - C. Encourage our students to examine and reflect on their perspectives, aspirations, and ethical norms, encouraging them to be responsible, thoughtful, and creative lawyers in whatever career path they choose
 - D. Provide excellent teaching, using both traditional and innovative methods and technologies
 - E. Continue to provide our students with a strong education in all the major disciplines of law, maintaining our excellence in fields such as business, criminal, constitutional and international law
 - F. Integrate clinical and legal writing programs into our areas of curricular strength and increase coordination and communication among clinical, legal writing and other classes
 - G. Ensure that every student seeking a clinical experience has the opportunity to enroll
 - H. Improve our legal writing program by reducing the number of students in each section to a size comparable to our peer schools, as well as by providing additional writing opportunities across the curriculum
 - I. Continue to support centers of excellence and build and maintain faculty in our current areas of strength in natural resources and environmental law, telecommunications and technology law, Indian law, and critical theory
 - J. Support the growth of programs in emerging areas of strengths, including juvenile and family law, and energy and environmental security law;
 - K. Develop the Byron R. White Center for the Study of Constitutional Law as a broad platform of scholarship and scholarly activities, to expand public knowledge, and to attract new and visiting faculty
 - L. Dedicate additional resources to our existing areas of strength, build particular strengths in new fields, and formalize our areas of strength into a "program" or "center," when justified by:
 - i. The ability of the center or program to be financially self-sustaining over the long run
 - ii. The ability of the center or program to involve several members of our faculty
 - iii. The ability to develop an LL.M. or clinical program
 - iv. Student interest
 - v. The potential involvement of other units or disciplines within the University in the work of the program or center

These same criteria will be considered as part of any decision to reduce funding for or to close a program or center.

Benchmarks

- *Increase in student satisfaction with the quality of teaching and education, as measured by surveys*
 - *Increase in employer satisfaction with graduates, as measured by surveys*
 - *Continued high bar passage*
 - *Increase in the number of available clinical opportunities*
 - *Increase in interactions between clinical, legal writing and other classes*
 - *Ensure that growth in clinical programs is consistent with areas of curricular strength*
 - *Increase in the number of public service and non-traditional career opportunities available to our students and graduates*
 - *Reduced size of legal writing sections to levels comparable to peer schools*
 - *Increase in student satisfaction with the legal writing program, as measured by surveys*
3. **To earn national and international recognition and esteem** of scholars, lawyers, jurists, policymakers, and citizens for the quality and accomplishments of our faculty, our students, and our graduates.
- A. All of our faculty members will contribute to the Law School’s scholarly mission and we will be more active in influencing public policy and academic debates.
- i. In order to advance our long history of scholarly productivity, we will reduce barriers to productivity. A program of research leaves will be available and timed to enhance scholarly productivity.
 - ii. All faculty members will be asked to contribute to the scholarly mission by publishing articles or other scholarship. Those who do not will be expected to assume increased teaching loads or service commitments.
 - iii. All faculty members will teach an equitable average course load.
 - iv. We will limit internal service obligations across the board so that the primary focus of faculty internal service activities will be related the Law School’s four standing committees, particularly appointments and faculty evaluation.
 - a. We will include a few faculty members on certain committees, such as the Academic and Student Affairs and Admissions committees, but not in administrative activities such as searches for administrative positions.
 - b. We will also simplify governance by deferring to committees or administrative leaders for decisions that need not be debated and decided by the full faculty.
- B. We will more effectively promote the scholarship and the reputation of the Law School faculty.
- i. We will facilitate opportunities for our faculty to speak at and participate in major conferences in their fields.

- a. Our conference reimbursement policy will focus on scholarly presentations and academic committee participation.
 - b. Senior faculty will mentor and assist junior faculty in becoming recognized in their fields.
 - ii. We will hold outstanding academic conferences at the Law School.
 - iii. We will encourage our faculty to visit at other schools and develop a program to encourage faculty from other schools to visit our school.
 - iv. We will utilize the expertise of the library in identifying new venues for publishing and placing our scholarship.
- C. We will develop a robust program of outreach and communications to extend the influence of our faculty's scholarship and achievements and to develop greater awareness of the activities, quality, and success of our students and graduates.
- i. This outreach will include identifying opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and engagement with other parts of the University.
 - ii. We will also seek avenues to engage and serve alumni and the larger legal, business, and public interest communities in our scholarly enterprise.
- D. We will provide adequate staff, library resources and personnel, technology, and administrative support for all of the activities described above.

Benchmarks

- *Increased number of research leaves awarded*
- *Increased number and monetary amount of supplemental faculty development awards*
- *Increased number of faculty members who present papers at law school conferences*
- *Increased number of faculty who visit at leading law schools*
- *Increase in number of faculty from leading law schools who visit our Law School*
- *Maintain annual faculty teaching load of 9-10 credit hours per year, comparable to peer schools*
- *Relative improvement in perceptions by colleagues and members of the public that our scholarship contributes to a national debate or significantly advances intellectual or practical understandings of the law. This can be measured by:*
 - *Peer reviews of scholarship, book reviews, and other forms of direct feedback from scholars or the public*
 - *Quality and quantity of placement of articles in leading law reviews and journals*
 - *Citation counts of books or article if appropriate*
- *Relative improvement in the number of casebooks, treatises, and book chapters written by our faculty and used at other schools*
- *Relative improvement in the number of university press books or similar publications authored by our faculty*
- *Recognition of our areas of particular distinction and excellence in meaningful national surveys*
- *Improvements in academic reputation as measured by meaningful surveys*

4. To **attract and retain an influential world-class faculty** whose members are mutually supportive of their varied individual endeavors, we will:
 - A. Focus our hiring on building from within by seeking entry level scholars:
 - i. Who are “crackling with ideas” and who are, or have the potential to be, cutting-edge scholars
 - ii. Who enhance our diversity, not only in terms of race, gender, and ethnicity, but also in background and experience
 - iii. Who are self-starters with an enterprising spirit that will enable them to thrive in our culture
 - B. Opportunistically recruit lateral scholars who will contribute to our community or who will enhance our faculty in areas of strength or where chairs or other honorifics may be available
 - C. Provide our faculty with salaries, benefits, library support and other resources at levels at least comparable to peer schools
 - D. Seek to expand the size and number of chairs, professorships and other honorifics available to our faculty
 - E. Obtain funding to provide research support, faculty development funds, and summer stipends at a level at least comparable to those of our peer law schools
 - F. Create and expand incentives and rewards for excellent performance
 - G. Establish compensation criteria that support the mission of the Law School
 - i. The compensation model will be designed to enable entry-level faculty members to reasonably develop their scholarship agenda through their third year of service
 - ii. Subsequent compensation increases for faculty will be based primarily on scholarly quality and productivity. Teaching excellence and extraordinary service will also be considered

Benchmarks

- *Success in hiring when competing against peer schools for candidates*
- *Success in hiring candidates who bring diversity*
- *Increases in instructional salaries for comparable positions (including clinical and legal writing positions), as compared to peer schools*
- *Success in retaining current faculty members*
- *Increase in the number of chairs and professorships obtained, with a goal of obtaining an additional eight chairs and professorships in 10 years*
- *Increase in funding for research support, faculty development funds, and summer stipends comparable to those of our peer schools*

5. **To admit an increasingly stronger and more diverse student body and to help place our recent graduates in interesting, rewarding, and satisfying positions.**
 - A. We seek to attract an increasingly stronger and more diverse student body; therefore, we will:
 - i. Develop initiatives to increase the number of applications we receive from highly qualified students
 - ii. Develop a program that will include an increase in scholarship resources to increase the percentage of high-quality, admitted students who enroll
 - iii. Increase our financial aid program to be commensurate with those of our peer schools
 - iv. Increase applications from diverse students and increase our scholarship resources to enable these students to attend our Law School
 - a. We will reach out to undergraduate institutions that can provide additional applications from diverse students
 - b. As universities in other states have done, we will pursue the possibility of treating Native Americans from tribes with ancestral lands within Colorado as Colorado residents
 - B. We will ensure that our graduates are exposed to a wide range of career opportunities and are supported in their efforts to find rewarding positions by:
 - i. Increasing the percentage of students who are employed to levels unsurpassed by peer schools
 - ii. Increasing the level of interaction between our students and members of the legal community around the State of Colorado, especially increasing our students' involvement with alumni in proximate legal communities of the metro-Denver area
 - iii. Expanding the number of employment opportunities for our students from law firms located outside the region and from government and public interest organizations
 - iv. Increasing the number of employment opportunities available to our students in public service and non-traditional legal jobs
 - v. Expanding our public interest law loan repayment assistance program (LRAP) to enable additional students to take advantage of public interest opportunities
 - vi. Fostering a culture that encourages students to take ownership of their career planning as active partners with our career development office and to become actively involved in the employment search process early in their law school careers
 - vii. Expanding the involvement of practitioners and alumni in the career planning process
 - C. We will increase the size of our student body only if we can continue to strengthen the academic qualifications of our entering students and meet our employment goals set forth above

Benchmarks

- *Maintain or increase the median LSAT and GPA for entering students*
 - *Increase in the diversity of the student body*
 - *Increase in the number of applications from highly qualified students*
 - *Increase in the capture rate of admitted students to reach peer school levels*
 - *Increase in financial aid as a percentage of tuition to reach peer school levels*
 - *Increase in placement rates equal to or exceeding peer schools*
 - *Increase in amount and number of students awarded LRAP grants*
 - *Increased student satisfaction with the career services program, as measured by surveys*
6. To **pursue financial stability** and **maintain an infrastructure** sufficient to allow our mission to succeed and our goals to be fulfilled.
- A. We will develop a comprehensive strategy to increase revenues for the Law School, which may include the following:
 - i. Tuition increases from the JD student body consistent with market forces, while remaining committed to our role as a public institution
 - ii. Increases in the number of students in the JD class, at a rate and to a level consistent with our other strategic goals, including the protection of our favorable student-faculty ratio our intimate intellectual environment, and our commitment to attract increasingly stronger and more diverse students
 - iii. Development of an international LL.M. program or graduate certificate programs relating to our areas of strength, such as natural resources and environmental law
 - iv. Increases in the number of transfer students
 - v. An aggressive capital fundraising campaign to support the initiatives in this plan, including scholarships, chairs and professorships, program support and endowment
 - vi. Increases in the annual operating support received from alumni and friends
 - B. We will continue to sustain the library's mission of supporting faculty scholarship and student needs as well as its statutory, public mission to provide access to information
 - C. We will improve the compensation, management and satisfaction of our staff members, who are a key resource supporting our ability to implement this plan fully
 - D. We will use the resources of our new building not only to enhance our teaching and scholarship, but also to further our public service mission. For example, we will use the building in a way that increases awareness and understanding of the need for environmental and energy conservation
 - E. We will maintain our information technology at levels that effectively support teaching and scholarship needs

- F. We will increase the involvement of our alumni in the life of the Law School
- i. We will increase our involvement and visibility in the Denver legal, business and civic community, and in other communities throughout the State
 - ii. We will communicate regularly with our graduates, allowing them to remain connected to one another, including them as participants in the intellectual activity of their Law School, and promoting their achievements in the legal profession
 - iii. We will reach out and provide additional support and services to our alumni
 - iv. We will encourage more alumni to visit our campus to attend events and to interact with our students
 - v. We will increase the percentage of alumni who provide financial support to the Law School

Benchmarks

- *Reduced non-library cash deficit dependence on University funds*
- *Increased revenue from tuition and other sources identified in the strategic plan*
- *Increase the endowment from \$27 million to \$50 million in 10 years*
- *Average annual increases in the alumni annual fund of 10% per year*
- *Increase in satisfaction of staff members, as measured by surveys*
- *Increased retention of staff members*
- *Reach peer school levels for percentage of alumni who contribute to the Law School and contributions per alumnus*
- *Increase in faculty and student satisfaction with the resources and services of the library and technology department as measured by surveys*
- *Increased alumni satisfaction with the services provided by the Law School, as measured by surveys*

Endnote Regarding “Peer Schools”

We have identified a cohort of institutions whose size, reputation for high-quality student body and faculty, and other measures place them among the schools that provide useful points of reference for our own performance. Throughout the strategic plan, we refer to this group of schools as our “peer schools” so that we can measure our progress in achieving the goals of our strategic plan against data from other law schools.

	US News Rank	Leiter Rank	Student-Faculty Ratio	Full-Time Students
Colorado	43	40	12.7	495
Minnesota	19	21	12.5	808
Iowa	22	19	12.2	656
Illinois	27	22	12.6	640
Washington	27	NR	10.9	561
North Carolina	27	32	16.9	715
Wisconsin	32	22	13.1	801
UC-Davis	34	32	13.5	571
Georgia	34	NR	15.3	694
Wake Forest	39	NR	10.2	468
Florida	41	47	15.4	1156
UC-Hastings	43	29	20.4	1251
Arizona	43	40	12.7	456
Denver	70	NR	14.1	814

Data from 2006 report.