Appendix A4.10

College of Law
Questions from Governor Rick Scott  
Response Document for Academic Deans

Name of College or School: College of Law

Note: The listing of questions A through Q has gaps in the lettering because they correspond to the Governor’s request, and the deans are not being asked to respond to every question. Please use the lettering as they appear below for each of your responses.

A. What studies has your university done in the last three years to ensure your graduates are meeting the needs of employers?

American Bar Association Standard 301 (a) requires the following: “A law school shall maintain an educational program that prepares its students for admission to the bar, and effective and responsible participation in the legal profession.” The College of Law submits an Annual Questionnaire to the American Bar Association. The Annual Questionnaire reports information that is relevant to how graduates meet the needs of employers, such as placement rates, type of employment, bar passage, and curricular offerings in the areas of clinics, externships, and simulation courses.

The College of Law has a Board of Visitors that serves in an advisory capacity to the administration and the faculty. Members include judges, lawyers from law firms, government, and business, community leaders, educators, and community leaders. The Board provides linkage between the College of Law and the Florida legal community and develops mechanisms for exchange of ideas between the legal profession, business, government, and education. The Board also advises the College with regard to career counseling and placement.

B. Do you have measurable goals to meet employers’ current needs? If so, please provide them. How often are these goals updated?

The goal, indeed a strict graduation requirement, is that every single student receives substantial training in the practical skills needed and demanded by employers. The training is accomplished via our nationally recognized clinical education program or through the law school’s pro bono service program. Students must complete a clinic or pro bono service as a condition of graduation. For more information regarding our clinics please go to http://www.law.famu.edu/go.cfm/do/Page.View/pid/83/t/Clinics.

The Florida A&M University College of Law received provisional accreditation from the American Bar Association in 2004 and full accreditation in 2009. Accreditation signifies that a law school complies with all aspects of the American Bar Association Standards for Approval of Law Schools (http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/standards.html).
Standard 301(a), for example, states “(a) A law school shall maintain an educational program that prepares its students for admission to the bar, and effective and responsible participation in the legal profession.” As one example, the ABA standards require and the Law School curriculum provides:

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . substantial opportunities for:

(1) live-client or other real-life practice experiences, appropriately supervised and designed to encourage reflection by students on their experiences and on the values and responsibilities of the legal profession, and the development of one’s ability to assess his or her performance and level of competence;

(2) student participation in pro bono activities; and

(3) small group work through seminars, directed research, small classes, or collaborative work.

The FAMU College of Law has been recognized in legal magazines as a leader in providing real life clinical opportunities. For the past two years, the Law School has maintained an Ad Hoc Committee on Practical Skills Training which continually seeks ways to increase and improve the opportunities for student, real life experiences in the legal profession as part of the educational process.

Legal employers also report that student must possess writing and critical analysis skills necessary to the effective practice of law. The Law School’s successful efforts in these areas are described elsewhere in this response. As with all aspects of the Law School’s educational program, the goals and accomplishments of the clinic, legal writing and other educational aspects of FAMU College of Law are critically analyzed each year by a standing committee. The Law School is currently engaged in a critical self-study in anticipation of a three year review by the American Bar Association.

C. Do you have measurable goals for each graduate in the areas of writing proficiency and critical thinking? If so, please send them to me with the goals and include the results for the last five to ten years.

All students graduating from the College of Law are required to demonstrate proficiency in writing and critical thinking. Students must successfully complete a first-year writing requirement and an upper-level writing requirement in order to graduate. No student earns his or her J.D. degree without satisfying the writing requirements. The College of Law recently has enhanced the first-year writing program to provide additional, intensive hands-on writing experience, feedback, and individualized consultation with writing faculty. In addition, the College of Law’s Academic Success and Bar Preparation (ASBP) Program augments training in
critical thinking skills and writing skills. The ASBP Program is available to assist students during law school and after graduation as well, as students prepare for the bar examination. The College of Law intends to expand the program, and is seeking the additional financial and instructional resources to do so. In doctrinal classes, successful performance on examinations and other assessments require students to be proficient in critical thinking and writing.

Currently, the Ad Hoc Committee on Bar Preparation, Legal Writing, and Academic Achievement is examining the law school’s program in areas including writing proficiency and critical thinking. The Committee will submit recommendations to the law school faculty later in the year.

ABA Standard 302 requires the College of Law to offer a curriculum that prepares students in critical thinking and writing. Standard 302 (a) mandates that law schools “require that each student receive substantial instruction in…(2) legal analysis and reasoning, legal research, problem solving, and oral communication; [and] (3) writing in a legal context, including at least one rigorous writing experience in the first year and at least one additional rigorous writing experience after the first year.”

Are professors required to integrate writing proficiency and critical thinking into all courses? If so, what oversight is provided to ensure that these skills are being taught? How are these skills integrated into course assessments?

Please refer to our response to question C, above. Every tenure track faculty member is evaluated annually by tenured faculty (i.e., peer evaluation), by the Dean of the College of Law, and by student evaluations. Student evaluations are anonymous and collected at the end of each semester; both student and peer evaluation templates include questions pertaining to the extent to which the professor, his or her course materials, and his or her teaching methods are effective in provoking the critical thinking described in response to question C. The Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development reviews all peer and student evaluations to identify issues and offer assistance to those faculty members whose reviews suggest a need for remedial assistance.

Although not “required” in the strictest sense, the College of Law generally seeks to incorporate the “Best Practices for Legal Education” (Stuckey, et. al., 2007) as a model for the best teaching pedagogical approaches. That reference strongly encourages “writing across the curriculum,” a catch-phrase used to describe any pedagogical method that incorporates several writing opportunities even in the traditional doctrinal classes in which the traditional model historically required students to write only at the end of the semester. “Writing across the curriculum” encourages writing at regular intervals
throughout the semester using the class substance as context to provide the students with an opportunity to practice their writing skills.

F. Do you have measurable goals for student success after graduation? If so, please send me the goals and the results for the last five to ten years.

The two primary measures for post-graduation success are (1) bar passage rate, and (2) career placement rate. Both data sets are reported annually to both the American Bar Association and to the U.S. News and World Report Magazine. The bar passage rate goal, as set forth by the Florida A&M University Board of Trustees is currently 80%. The Law School has an Academic Success and Bar Preparation program in place designed to achieve that goal.
Naturally, the College of Law is not satisfied with our historical outcomes. We have briefly described the efforts in place to increase bar passage rates. With respect to career placement rates, FAMU College of Law has established the following career placement goals:

GOAL: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO OUR STUDENTS.

(Career Planning and Placement has been without a formal Director. The Goals and Initiatives below have recently been established and will be evaluated in the next calendar year.)

1. Increase the number of employers participating in on-campus and off-campus interviews.
   
   **Initiatives**
   
   a. Create a formal marketing & recruiting team that would be comprised of Associate Dean, faculty members and Career Planning staff members.
   
   b. Build relationships with the local and state Bar.
   
   c. Add additional staff to assist with recruiting and counseling.
   
   d. Create more off-campus recruiting events. Instead of inviting employers to travel to Orlando to interview, take the interviews on the road. Travel to other cities. i.e. FAMU in Tampa or FAMU in Miami.
   
   e. Participating in more regional and national job fairs. This would give our students more employment opportunities in other cities such as Miami, Atlanta, Washington DC, Boston, or New York.

   **How to Assess**
   
   1. Number of on-campus employers.
   
   2. Number of off-campus employers.
   
   3. Number of job fair opportunities.

Collect statistical data on all events to determine student success.

2. Increase the number of law clerking and attorney listing posted on Symplicity (electronic job board).
   
   **Initiatives**
   
   a. Do a more strategic mailing campaign to encourage employers to list jobs with us. i.e small brochure with a rolodex card with our information.
   
   b. Have office coordinator send “annual thank you letters” to employers who have used our services.
   

   **How to Assess**
   
   1. Number of listings posted annually.
2. Pay close attention to the number of new employers posting ads and the employers who have reposted.
3. Increase the number of non-traditional opportunities.
   **Initiatives**
   a. Establish a formalized marketing plan to target corporations for quasi-legal opportunities.
   b. Bring in outside speakers to talk about “what you can do with a law degree”.
   c. Encourage non-legal employers to participate in our formal on-campus recruitment events.
   d. Add a staff member to focus on quasi-legal corporate or governmental opportunities.

**How to Assess**
1. Number of on-campus employers.
2. Number of off-campus employers.
3. Number of job fair opportunities.

Collect statistical data on all events to determine student success.

4. Continue to encourage students to look outside Florida and outside the typical law firm environment.

   **M. What programs do you have to educate students regarding job opportunities? What are your measurable goals for each program? Do you use information similar to the data available from the Florida education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) to prepare students prior to admission and prior to selection of major? Please provide me the results for the last five to ten years.**

**SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING**

The Office of Career Planning and Placement (OCPP) is a comprehensive resource center, designed to assist students and alumni in every phase of their career planning process. The OCPP serves as a professional employment and preparation resource, offering year-round service to students, alumni, and employers.

Students are not merely “placed” in jobs; the OCPP helps students develop the skills necessary to become more marketable, creating opportunities and assisting in their job search efforts. The OCPP offers a variety of services for students and alumni.

**Services for Students/Alumni**
• **Individual Counseling** – A career counselor is available by appointment to meet with students and alumni to offer suggestions on how to craft an effective resume and cover letter designed to obtain gainful employment in the legal field.

• **Programming** – The OCPP offers workshops, panels, and forums to educate students and alumni on a variety of career services related topics. Workshops cover basics such as: resume and cover letter writing, networking, job search strategies, interviewing techniques, how to dress for success, and more. Panels and forums cover more specific information through presentations by practitioners on different practice areas and topics. OCPP also offers instructional sessions for students using web based application systems like Symplicity or OSCAR. Partnering with student organizations has not only increased participation in OCPP programming events, but also aides the office in determining which career fields students are interested in.

• **On-Campus Interview (OCI) Program** –. The OCCP holds two on-campus interview sessions a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Legal employers are invited on campus to interview eligible* students for positions as law clerks, interns, summer associates, first year associates, and for full-time employment after graduation.

• **Symplicity** – Symplicity is an on-line career management system designed to facilitate the career planning process. Students are able to post resumes and cover letters, search for jobs, sign up for job fairs, OCI’s, programs and events, and much more.

• **Mock Interviews** – To best prepare students for upcoming interviews, mock interviews are conducted by the OCPP. Each 30 minute interview provides the student with the opportunity to practice, as well as to receive feedback and constructive criticism.

• **Job Postings** – The OCPP monitors several job websites and posts opportunities as they received on our career services management website, Symplicity. The OCCP also utilizes social media (Facebook), student organizations, the College of Law newsletter, and OCPP email updates to inform students and alumni about employment opportunities.

• **Reciprocity** – Most ABA-approved law schools grant reciprocity to allow students and alumni searching for employment in their area to use their resources to assist in their job search. FAMU, in turn, honors the same.

• **Publications and Books** – The College of Law Library houses a number of career services publications for public use on the 4th floor.
• **Job Fairs and Career Fairs** – The College of Law participates in a number of recruitment programs in Florida and across the country. As information on job fairs and careers are released, students and alumni are informed through Symplicity, Facebook, the College of Law Newsletter, and OCPP email updates.

• **Other Resources** – The OCPP has a computer, printer, fax machine, and copier available for students to use for job searches, resume and cover letter drafting, and other career related tasks.

• **OCPP Newsletter/Facebook** – The OCPP uses a multi-media approach to reaching students. The OCPP regularly sends out pertinent information to eligible* students and alumni about upcoming programs, job fairs, deadlines, job opportunities, workshops, and articles of interest. Facebook is also utilized as a way to quickly inform students about and provide links to community networking events, on-line seminars, job fairs, essay competitions, and more.

*Please note: The ABA requires that the first year students be prohibited from participating in career services related programs until November 1.

Q. Please provide me with any additional information you think may be helpful, including your thought process to make sure we are headed in the right direction.