

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY
Board of Trustees

**Special Committee on the College of Law
Committee Minutes
April 16, 2021**

The Special Committee on the College of Law met April 16, 2021. The following committee members were present and established a quorum: Belvin Perry, Kristin Harper, and David Lawrence. Trustees Cliatt, Reed, Dubose, McClinton and Cavazos also participated in the meeting.

Trustee Perry explained that the Special Committee on the College of Law was established because the Board of Trustees is very much interested in the success of the College of Law (COL) and its students. He then commended the graduates and faculty for the results of the latest bar exam. He then shared that the Special Committee wanted to get the faculty's perspective on relevant issues such as bar examination preparation, admission requirements and strategies to improve the status of the COL.

Trustee Perry confirmed that a consultant was hired by the COL and that the faculty would be privy to the report, once received.

Trustee Perry asked the faculty about their thoughts on the current methodologies being used to help our students prepare and successfully pass the bar exam. Faculty provided the following comments:

- They try to integrate bar preparation into the theoretical teaching provided to students;
- They integrate formative assessments periodically throughout the class and utilize some of BarBri's examination preparatory materials;
- One of the approaches that has changed over time is a more integrated approach which starts bar prep in the first year of law school and goes throughout the entire law school experience; and
- The substantive knowledge and mental ability to perform under the stress of the bar exam needs to be developed throughout law school.

Trustee Lawrence noted that the COL graduates did much better on the February examination and wanted to know what was done differently, so it can be used as a pattern forward. Dean Keller indicated that she was told that basically, the students felt more empowered and took ownership of their bar passage journey. The students were told to focus on what works for them regarding preparation and they did that. Trustee Cavazos stated that students have also performed better because this was the first cohort that had the benefit of using bar prep resources earlier in their matriculation.

Faculty noted the following regarding COL admission requirements:

- the Admissions Committee evaluated the LSAT score with the GPA of students dismissed in the first year of law school. The Committee found that the GPA was a better predictor of success, so adjustments were made.

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- The Admissions Committee also looked at students that were successful on the bar and found that the law school GPA played a much greater role than the LSAT score.
- The COL shouldn't drift from its historic mission. One of the strengths of the COL
- is that it gives opportunities to students that wouldn't otherwise have such opportunities.
- The COL summer program for admitted students was found to be extremely helpful with students getting through the first year of law school.

The following suggestions were made regarding strategies for improving the COL's status/image:

- The COL should be engaged in racial justice issues.
- It should be more engaged in the community and economically deprived areas and involved in the national debate on racial justice.
- The COL should carve out niche areas that would attract top students.
- There needs to be more faculty scholarship and more support for faculty to travel and present at conferences.
- The COL highlight its successes.
- The COL needs money to attract and retain its top students. COL is losing top students every year. Funding is a problem.
- Not all students feel they can excel at the COL, so it needs to promote a more supportive environment.

As a general comment, a faculty member suggested that students that are not interested in practicing law, should not be encouraged to take the bar. They should be encouraged to get professional certifications instead.

Trustee Perry provided a recap. His take-aways from the meeting were that the COL needs to tell its own story, raise money, and get the community support. Faculty and students are its greatest resource and can vastly impact the community. The COL needs programs such as centers of excellence. Finally, the COL needs to define what it is and what it wants to be.

There being no further business for the Committee, the meeting adjourned.