

CONSULTANT'S REPORT REGARDING VISION/MISSION STATEMENT

II. UNCLEAR AND MISDIRECTED MISSION

The College of Law's current mission statement reflects more of a vision for the law school and is too ethereal to be a true guide for law school operations, goals, and needed transformation.

From 2002 to 2010, the College of Law's mission statement read:

The mission of the College of Law is to provide a law program with high academic standards that produces excellent legal professionals who demonstrate professionalism, provide public service, enhance justice, and promote scholarship; to provide a program that offers both full-time and part-time learning opportunities to students; and, consistent with the enabling legislation, to increase the representation of minorities within the legal profession.³⁷ In the College's view, this statement "address[ed] both pedagogical and output measures of the College's effectiveness."

Nevertheless, the College and faculty adopted the current statement in **Spring 2010** incorporating social justice into the mission:

"The reestablished Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University College of Law reaffirms our historical legacy of excellence and responsibility to serve as a transformative force for the public good. Our mission is to serve as a beacon of hope and catalyst for change by providing access to excellent educational training and opportunities to generations of students seeking to serve the needs of traditionally underserved people and communities locally, nationally and internationally.

While we continue our historic mission of educating African Americans, we embrace persons of all racial, ethnic and national groups as members of the university community. We are dedicated to developing legal professionals and community leaders committed to equitable justice and the rule of law."

Conversations with several individuals at the College reveal that the mission statement is not uniformly interpreted or understood by all. Furthermore, no one who was asked could define or describe "the FAMU lawyer." Moreover, a recent study commissioned by the College which asked graduates, among other things, why they chose FAMU Law indicates the three main factors were location, low cost, and a desire to continue graduate education at FAMU. Thus, there appears to be a disconnect between how the faculty, at least, view the law school and how some prospective students view it. While a focus on social justice is admirable and understanding that it is important to instill in graduates the importance of ensuring all members of society have equal and effective access to justice, the College of Law is in the business of producing qualified, practice-ready lawyers and hereby, also increasing minority representation in the legal profession. Its mission statement should say so.

For this reason, and to the extent the social justice mission is hindering efforts to establish expertise and leadership of the College in other areas of the law, University leadership should revisit and consider restating the College's mission.