




Cleveland State University

Cleveland-Marshall College of Law

Office of the Dean

To: Dr. Rosemary Sutton
Director of Assessment

From: Linda L. Ammons 
Associate Dean

RE: College of Law-Outcomes Assessment Status-Report

Date: May 27, 2005

This memorandum is a status report on the outcomes assessment activities at the College of Law, pursuant to the April 20, 2005 memo from Provost Kuo. This report will update the report submitted to your office dated, June 1, 2004.

Introduction

Last year (as in years past) the law school used the Ohio Bar **Exam**, and the National Association of Law Placement (“NALP”) as assessment tools. For the first time, in Spring 2004, the College of Law also participated in the Law School Survey of Student Engagement. Additionally, as the law school prepares for its ABA site visit (Spring 2006), faculty are engaged in assessing every aspect of law school operation not only to determine whether ABA standards are being met but also to assure that we are effectively addressing the needs of our students.

Goals And Outcomes

1. Bar Exam

The Law School is working to be among the top law schools in the state in bar exam results by 2009. Improving our Ohio Bar Exam passage rate is a major goal. We have targeted considerable energy and resources to this initiative. The June 1, 2004 report noted that we are collecting data to track bar performance by entering class. We have also just completed the first year of implementation of the “Bar Exam Plan,” approved by law faculty, university administration and the Board of Trustees.

In January 2004, the Curriculum Committee was charged by the Dean to make recommendations to the faculty on how to revise the first year curriculum to further the

goals of the "Bar Exam Plan." The faculty adopted those changes, and the new curriculum for the first year class will be introduced in Fall, 2005.

2. NALP Statistics

The College of Law surveys its recent graduates concerning their employment status each spring. This information informs us as to their employment patterns and market trends, locally and nationally. The data identify type of employment, geographic location, size of the law firm or other legal entity, and starting salary. We are also able to assess how employers view both the College of Law and our graduates. This database provides comparative statistics, which allows us to measure our progress with that of other law schools.

3. Law School Survey of Student Engagement

In the Spring 2004 Semester, our students participated in the national Survey of Law Student Engagement, conducted by the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University and co-sponsored by the American Association of Law Schools and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Forty-two Law schools participated in this online questionnaire. More than 13,000 (out of 26,000) students responded, with a national response rate of 53%. The Cleveland-Marshall student response rate was 40.5% representing both the day and evening divisions.

The Major areas of inquiry included:

- Type of activities students take part in both inside and outside the classroom.
- Student perceptions of their law school as a supportive learning environment.
- Mental Activities (memorization, analysis, synthesizing ideas, making judgments, and applying theories) emphasized through a students coursework.
- Type of educational enriching activities (pro bono, co curricular, clinical/externship, etc.) that students take part.
- Ways students use their time (course preparation, extracurricular activities, work for pay, caring for dependents, volunteer work).
- Levels of overall student satisfaction with their law school. Plus satisfaction in areas such as library assistance, technology, financial aid, career counseling, personal counseling, legal research & writing, etc.
- The perceived quality of relationships with other students, faculty members, and administrative staff.
- Student perceptions of their educational and personal growth as a result of their law school experience.
- Student assessment of their projected debt load upon graduation.

Seventy-six percent of the Cleveland-Marshall student respondents indicated that their law school experience was either "good" or "excellent." Nationally, 82% of all students selected "good" or "excellent" for that question. There were also numerous areas where the engagement of our students exceeded the national trends. Those items included:

- Preparing two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in
- Working on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources.
- Worked with other students on project during class.
- Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments .
- Used email to communicate with a faculty member .
- Worked harder than you thought you could to meet faculty members' standards or expectations
- Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them pretty much in the same form.
- Number of Written papers between 5 and 19 pages.
- Work on a legal research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements.
- Satisfaction with financial aid advising.
- Satisfaction with library assistance.
- Working for pay in a law related job.
- Working for pay in a nonlegal job.
- Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work.
- Providing the financial counseling you need to afford your education.
- Developing legal research skills.

There were also comments that suggested shortcomings in such areas as Career Placement and the Records Office. As a result of this survey, the law school has already begun to target areas for improvement in those categories where we can strengthen the legal education experience. In addition, the College of Law continues to fine-tune the issues and methods of assessment.

cc: Steven H. Steinglass
Dean