Penn State shield logo with black text and blue shield

**Unit Strategic Plan: Dickinson Law;**

**Carlisle, PA**

2014/2015 through 2018/2019

**The Dickinson School of Law of the Pennsylvania State University**

**Carlisle Campus Strategic Plan Summary for 2014-15 through 2018-19**

# Introduction

The Dickinson School of Law of the Pennsylvania State University has moved from a unified operation of a single law school in two locations, to two, separately-accredited law schools with one in Carlisle (Dickinson Law) and one in State College (Penn State Law). This executive summary of Dickinson Law’s strategic plan sets forth the views and decisions of the Faculty of Dickinson Law as to the distinctive programming and long-term viability of a separately accredited Penn State Dickinson School of Law in Carlisle.

## A. Overview of Challenges and Opportunities

As with every law school, we face both a declining applicant pool and a contracted market for our graduates. In addition, we now, to some extent, will be competing with our former University Park partner in both admissions and placement. Finally, the number of faculty and staff members resident in Carlisle, and to a lesser degree our on-site programming, has grown smaller over the past few years as more of the unified program shifted to the University Park campus.

The size of our faculty and staff presented the opportunity to create a law school that is programmatically robust but whose budget will allow us to target an entering class of 75 JD students (supplemented by up to 10 LLM students). We believe that the attendant capacity to afford personalized attention will be attractive to a new generation of students that values and thrives on an intimate educational environment. Dickinson Law has the capacity to increase the number of appropriately-credentialed students it admits as the law school becomes more established and the market for lawyers rebounds.

We also view our geography as an asset. We enjoy close proximity to urban, suburban and rural legal communities that include national private law firms; local, state and federal government hubs; private corporations; and non-profit entities. The Dickinson Law Faculty found that within 40 miles of Carlisle, there were more than 3500 lawyers, 40 state judges, and six federal judges. Our class size, geography, and practice-ready curriculum facilitate our ability to find jobs for our graduates. The Dickinson Law Faculty is extremely proud of The Dickinson School of Law’s 180 year history, and its distinguished and loyal alumni base. We are confident that our approximately 8,000 living alums, as well as lawyers who graduated from other schools, will be valuable assets in teaching, mentoring, and hiring of our students. Dickinson Law already has received an outpouring of offers of support from judges and lawyers as we have begun to reveal our vision.

# Vision of Dickinson Law’s Future Of Excellence

The Faculty adopted the following Core Principles to govern the separately accredited Dickinson Law in Carlisle:

***A. To vest in our students the entire range of concrete lawyering skills necessary to most effectively perform as legal professionals at the local, state, national, transnational, and international levels in the 21st Century.***

***B. To engage in a constant quest for knowledge and wisdom that we can share not only with our students, but with the legal profession, scholars, policy makers, and others, consistent with Penn State’s role as a world-class research university****.*

***C. To willingly contribute our services to the university and to local, state, national, and international efforts to improve global understanding and the lives and well-being of our students and the world in which they will live.***

***D. To strive to foster a sense of community and mutual support between and among faculty, students and staff, and in our interactions outside the Law School with emphasis on increasing alumni engagement and satisfaction.***

# Curriculum And Student Engagement

The primary strategy for achieving student engagement is our revised curriculum, which a) will provide all students with education in domestic, transnational and international law practice, and b) will require all students to have practiced law in some context prior to graduation. The strategy for deploying our revised curriculum is to hire two additional full-time clinical faculty, which we have done this year, and to expand our adjunct faculty who have practical expertise in niche areas of law in markets such as Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia. The Dickinson Law Faculty adopted the following modifications to the existing curriculum designed to deliver on our promise to train profession-ready attorneys.

## A. Mandatory Coursework in the Curriculum

The existing *Legal Analysis, Research and Writing* required course has been moved from the fall semester to the 1L spring semester. The course will be replaced by a new course titled “*Problem Solving I: The Lawyer and Client.”*The course will utilize the interaction of the lawyer with his or her client, from initial interview through initiation of a lawsuit, as the vehicle by which to introduce a variety of skills, issues and doctrines that are not addressed in the other 1L courses such as interviewing, problem identification and ethical client representation. The Criminal Procedure course will become a 2L/3L elective course and will be replaced by a new required 1L course, *Practicing Law in a Global World: Contexts and Competencies I*. This course will focus on globalization and the practice of law in various legal practice settings.

During the second year of study, students will take the required ethics course and part II of the new course *Practicing Law in a Global World: Contexts and Competencies*.

Pursuant to the new experiential learning requirement, every student will be required to complete at least twelve credits of Experiential Learning, at least six of which must be earned in one of the following practice-based settings: Law School Clinic; Approved Externship Placement or Full Semester-in-Practice Program. The remaining credits will be earned in courses designated as “Practicum” that use practice-based learning as the principal method of instruction.

## B. Expansion of In-House Clinics

The Dickinson Law Faculty approved the launch of two new clinics to be added to the existing two clinics in Carlisle. These clinics will provide practice-based student learning in a Medical-Legal Partnership Clinic and a Legislative Advocacy Clinic and well help us ensure that all students who desire a clinical learning experience will have that opportunity.

## C. Upper Level Electives

The Dickinson Law upper division “Lawyer As” curriculum is broad based and includes electives organized around the substantive areas of practice. We have recruited distinguished lawyers and judges from Harrisburg, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. to teach upper level electives in specialized areas of law. Our expectation is that, on a negotiated base, the two Penn State law schools will reciprocate in offering a handful of elective courses simulcast to the sister campus using existing audiovisual technologies.

## D. Joint Degree Programs

All existing joint degree programs will be equally available to students at each of the separately accredited law schools. For some joint degrees, students at Dickinson Law will need to be made aware of the requirement that they may have to spend a semester or academic year in residence in University Park. We expect to create additional joint degree programs with the Public Health Department at Hershey Medical School.

## E. Education Abroad and Graduate Legal Education

All existing education abroad programs will be equally available to students at each of the separately accredited law schools. The Dickinson Law Faculty voted to operate a highly selective LL.M. program, limited to a small cadre of students to ensure involvement with the faculty and to add to the diversity of our community. The Dickinson Law Faculty also voted to offer additional advanced degrees in law; that proposal is currently under consideration by the Provost.

# Scholarship

The Dickinson Law Faculty is well-situated to carry out its vision for scholarly engagement. Since January 2008, the current Carlisle-based tenured faculty members have published or have forthcoming approximately 50 books, 90 book chapters and 135 articles. During this time period, 80% of the current tenured faculty members have been an author or co-author of a book; 80% have written book chapters; and 100% have written articles.

Perhaps even more important than the amount of scholarship is its impact. During the past year, there have been more than 11,000 total downloads of scholarship written by the current Carlisle tenured faculty, and 50% of the current tenured faculty members have received Fulbright grants. The 2012 Sisk study of scholarly impact found that Penn State was one of the schools that “achieve Scholarly Impact Scores well above the rankings assigned by *U.S. News*;” two of the current tenured faculty members in Carlisle have been recognized as among the ten most cited scholars at Penn State University, Dickinson School of Law. *See* Gregory Sisk et al., Scholarly Impact Ranking of Law Faculties, 2012, <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2109815>

# Admissions—Access and Affordability

The Dickinson Law faculty set a goal of seating approximately 75 students with academic credentials substantially equivalent to current student credentials. At present, we are on track to achieve this goal for the class entering Fall 2015. A robust scholarship budget from the university, together with alumni contributions, helped us expand access to a Penn State degree in law and make it affordable to many students who may have chosen to study where state subsidized law tuition is substantially less than at Dickinson Law.

# Diversity, Demographics And Global Engagement

Dickinson Law is committed to sustaining a culture of diversity that celebrates our differences and acknowledges our commonality, while helping us attain shared goals. Raising our collective cultural intelligence and leveraging our unique, individual talents and perspectives will be critical elements in attracting and retaining talented students, faculty and staff. The law school intends to continue to participate in the University-wide diversity strategic planning process through a diversity committee populated by faculty, students and staff, and the leadership of our Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Educational Equity. We have been mindful of Penn State’s Diversity Strategic Plan, “A Framework to Foster Diversity,” and we have begun the process of implementing each Challenge of the Framework.

*Challenge 1 – Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity*

As an inclusive community, we define diversity broadly to include racial and ethnic minorities, women, the differently abled, the LGBT community, veterans, first generation students, adult learners, and any others who have experienced subordination, marginalization, or isolation in academic communities because of their identity status.

*Challenge 2 – Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate*

To enhance our efforts at creating a welcoming campus climate, we have prominently displayed our commitment to diversity on our law school web site and in our marketing materials. We plan to revive several community-building events and practices that had been eliminated from the law school. Finally, we intend to conduct a student survey or student focus groups every two years to identify any issues that need to be addressed to improve the climate for all students.

*Challenge 3 – Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body*

We are committed to recruiting and retaining a diverse student body. We have deployed several new strategies that have yielded significantly increased diversity in the classes entering in 2014 and 2015. To ensure retention of this diverse class, the law school will provide individualized academic support for students with numerical predictors in the bottom 10% of the class, including new pre-matriculation support aimed at preparing these students to succeed in law school.

*Challenge 4 – Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce*

We are also committed to recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff. In 2014-15, we hired two new faculty members, both of whom are from identity groups underrepresented in the faculty ranks at Penn State. We also hired four new staff members who are racial minorities.

We plan to have our campus HR representative trained in the use of Hire Power to learn strategic hiring practices, identify the necessary competencies for a job, and keep staff hiring practices consistent and in alignment with Affirmative Action practices.

*Challenge 5 – Developing a Curriculum That Fosters U.S. and International Cultural Competencies*

Our faculty believes that experience in diverse and international environments is an indispensable aspect of quality education for today’s global society. The Dickinson Law faculty has revised the curriculum to require a course on lawyering in the global context in the first year of law school. Our curriculum includes courses that examine law from the perspective of subordinated groups, and we enrich the curricular offerings with diverse speakers who visit the law school and lecture on a range of topics. We will further foster international cultural competency of our JD students by integrating a few well-credentialed international LLM students into courses taken by JD students.

*Challenge 6 – Diversifying University Leadership and Management*

The law school management team in Carlisle presently is mostly women and includes four African American women and two members of the LGBTQ community. All three Assistant/Associate Deans are women of color or members of the LGBTQ community. Five of these individuals who contribute to the diversity of our leadership were hired under the leadership of Interim Dean Gary Gildin.

*Challenge 7 – Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals*

The law school in Carlisle hopes to achieve better coordination of diversity initiatives and better systems of accountability and collection of data related to diversity metrics. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Educational Equity has asked management staff to consistently disaggregate data across diverse demographics so as to reveal any areas of disparity that can be addressed. We also plan to foster a commitment to diversity by every employee of Penn State’s Dickinson School of Law by asking them in their annual report to the Dean to consider how they have performed the responsibilities of their job in a way that supports the challenges of the diversity framework.

# Governance

We do not anticipate any change in the faculty’s role in governance of Dickinson Law. The Dickinson Law Faculty has re-adopted existing regulations to govern a separately accredited Carlisle law school without prejudice to future revision. Dickinson Law expects that the Provost will appoint a Dean for the Carlisle campus following a national search which includes significant Dickinson Law faculty participation.

# Facilities

Dickinson Law is extremely fortunate to have a fully renovated, technologically state-of-the-art law school building, and no debt service on its physical plant and facilities. The building was designed and constructed to serve a total population of 300 students, so will provide sufficient space for the targeted total enrollment of 225 JD students and 10 LL.M. students. The state-of-the-art nature of the law school’s technology offers opportunities to bring the world to our students in Carlisle, and to bring our students to the rest of the world.

With the financial assistance of a donor and the University, the law school performed significant renovations to the clinic building on Pitt Street. That renovation has allowed our clinical programs to return to that facility and operate in a setting more professional than reconfigured houses made for residential occupation. Returning the clinics to Pitt Street has provided additional office space in the two South Street houses that immediately will be used by academic centers and student organizations. The Dickinson Law Faculty urges the University to authorize funding that will permit the University’s Office of Physical Plant to conduct an assessment of all the South Street houses, with an eye toward identifying a strategic plan for the space, whether renovation or new construction.

# Practices to Promote Integrity and Ethics

Dickinson Law’s commitment to integrity is a core community value. Students are taught the importance of ethical behavior beginning with Orientation, where students take an Oath of Professionalism. Students pledge to abide by the Honor Code during their time in attendance at Dickinson Law; the Code is enforced by the Honor Committee when there is an alleged breach of integrity by a member of our community. The Dean mandates ethics in the performance of duties by all administrative staff, and stresses that integrity should never be compromised to achieve outcomes. Faculty and staff are required to receive training on ethical management of student information, ethical research practices, ethical workplace management practices, and ethical interaction with members of the law school community and members of the public. All students must successfully complete an ethics course as a condition for earning the JD degree, and ethical practice of law is taught across the curriculum. The law school encourages the reporting of any unethical behavior through Penn State’s ethics hotline. We publish in multiple venues the mechanisms for reporting any perceived unethical behavior.

# Sustainability

A course in environmental law focuses on sustainability of natural resources. Sustainability of human resources is addressed in courses such as Constitutional Law II – focusing on Individual Rights; Elder Law – focusing on the sustainability of health and happiness for our aging population; Employment Discrimination; and International Human Rights. Dickinson Law will address sustainability in its operations by reducing energy use during times when the law school buildings are not in use. Dickinson Law will perform many of its administrative functions using technology, eliminating the use of paper in many instances. The law school will also continue providing recycling receptacles throughout the building for paper, plastic and glass. The law school will also support professional development of our Facilities Manager by sending her to University sustainability workshops that teach how to improve sustainability in operations.

# Promoting Our Health

Dickinson Law is perhaps on the cutting edge in the promotion of health and wellness of our law school community. The law school introduces students to the importance of health and wellness during Orientation by inviting Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers to give a presentation to law students on how to manage stress and other personal challenges that lawyers confront at a higher rate than the general population. The law school provides various extra-curricular activities to promote health and wellness, including intramural sports, mindfulness meditation classes and yoga classes. Dean Gildin appointed Director of Student Services, Yolanda Ingram, as our “Wellness Ambassador.” Ms. Ingram enlisted the local massage school to provide free chair massages to students and a local yoga studio to offer classes at the law school and discounted membership to students. We partner with a local mental health provider to provide several free visits for students in need of psychological counseling due to stress, depression and other mental health challenges.

# Building Our Digital Future

Dickinson Law plans to focus on this theme via a Law School Technology Committee. Our professional IT staff has recently completed a project that migrated email management to the University and contracted for a new server infrastructure with appropriate back-up and recovery function. The Law School Technology Committee will explore how we can leverage technology to implement the goals outlined in our strategic plan.

# Conclusion

Dickinson Law appreciates the opportunity to participate in this five year planning process and is grateful for the feedback we received on the initial draft of this Plan.