

Memorandum

To: David Eaton, Vice-Provost and Dean, Graduate School

CC: David Canfield-Budde

From: Kellye Y. Testy, Dean, and School of Law
Patricia C. Kuszler, Associate Dean, School of Law

Date: 9/27/2013

Re: Review of Graduate Programs, School of Law

This memorandum is in response to the final report resulting from the review of our Graduate Programs February 27-29 of this year. We are most grateful for the careful and rigorous review conducted by Professors Peter May, Resat Kesaba, Deborah Hensler and Michael Van Alstine. We are in full agreement with the recommendations and have already begun to respond to them.

With respect to first recommendation, we have already taken some steps to move toward a more streamlined governance structure and greater integration of activities among the LLM programs. This is being further facilitated by some staffing changes that are currently underway.

With respect to recruitment and marketing of our LL.M. programs, we are using our limited resources to market the programs as a package of programs rather than individual programs. For example, as the report noted, one of our strengths in marketing our Asian and Comparative Law Track is our extensive web of alumni relationships. We have integrated our recruiting for all of our programs with the Alumni Advancement efforts. For example, in late spring, representative from our Tax, Health and Intellectual Property programs participated in combined Alumni/recruiting events in Beijing and Tokyo. At these events, we marketed and recruited for all of our LL.M. tracks – not just our Asian and Comparative Law track. Similarly we have combined conference/alumni/recruiting events scheduled for Indonesia, Thailand and Japan in the coming year. We have also adopted a coordinated strategy for the LLM recruitment fairs in New York and Los Angeles. We have also moved our admission process partially into the LSAC to avail our programs of their marketing and recruitment tools.

As anticipated at the time of the Review, the Washington State Bar has recently opened the Bar Exam to international law graduates with a United States LLM.¹ The courses required to qualify for the Washington Bar require a significant number of credits of US law and we have added courses to our curriculum to provide students with the necessary courses. We are

¹ The effective date is January 1, 2014.

in the process of establishing an academic support center for LLM students seeking to take the Washington (or New York) Bar and we have also adopted a united strategy in advising students seeking to take the Washington Bar.

As the report noted, our General Track is relatively undeveloped. However, with the new access to the Washington Bar, we anticipate increased interest. We have broken out our General LL.M. track with the aim of allowing us to address the unique issues it will present in the immediate future and provided it with a dedicated director who is committed to not sacrificing quality to obtain quantity.

With respect to governance structure, we are in the process of realigning staff support along functional rather than program lines, where possible. For example, certain functions such as course scheduling, marketing and recruiting, budgeting, registration, visa verification, are common among the programs and we plan to consolidate these rather than maintain track specific staff. Other functions, such as curriculum development, student advising and placement are track specific and cannot be easily consolidated.

We have recently appointed a Director for Global Affairs who will be focused on building international partnerships beyond those we currently possess in Asia and helping our Graduate programs and Law School as a whole meet the challenges of globalization. She will be working closely with the Vice Provost for Global Affairs for the UW as a whole – another recently created position in the University.

Over the last year, we have brought the program directors together to address issues affecting all of the programs. We now conduct joint orientation sessions, joint awards/graduation celebrations and work closely on marketing/recruitment to establish and adhere to a united “brand”. We will be formalizing this more concretely in the coming academic year, setting up a monthly executive board meeting of all the program directors to review and address operational, fiscal and strategic issues faced by our programs. One of the first issues we will address in the coming year will be the fiscal platform issue highlighted in our self-study and in the Review. Our goal is for this executive board to be the cornerstone for governance of our Graduate program.

We are pleased with the ten year reauthorization for our LLM programs and would welcome any additional suggestions with respect to creating a more cohesive and functional governance structure.

With respect to the second recommendation, we fully concur with the Review Committee’s conclusion that the program be re-reviewed in five years. As noted in the report, we have substantially revised the program this past year and moreover, this revision occurs at a time when there is renewed interest in offering PhD degree by law school (e.g. Yale, University of Wisconsin).

We have recently hired Hilary Soderland, JD, PhD, as our PhD Program Director. During her career, she has had a number of post-doctoral fellowships, both in the US and in Europe. She is also active in the Law and Society Association (LSA). Since joining us in June, Hilary has met with all of our students and most of the faculty. Several of our students have submitted abstracts for an upcoming LSA meeting at her urging.

Our PhD program Director has already established herself as the go-to person for administrative issues faced by the students. She will be coordinating the committee/student interface, which is something that is desperately needed. She has also reworked some of the committees to better address the student needs and to bring in additional faculty members. Our PhD Director will be a member of the Graduate Program Executive Board.

As we have revised our PhD program, we have sought to realize curricular efficiencies and Hilary Soderland has elaborated upon this during her short time with us. She has furthered our alliance with the Law, Society and Justice Program in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Jackson School of International Studies, and the Public Affairs School. For example, we will now be doing a coordinated joint orientation session for the incoming PhD students in Law, International Studies and Public Affairs. We are also working with these colleagues to integrate the students in ways that allow for cross-fertilization in research opportunities.

As we considered applicants for our incoming class in 2014, we were particularly attentive to bringing in students with research interests that are consonant with the research interests of our faculty. In some cases, this was facilitated by the fact that several of our students are funded by our USAID and Asia Foundation Grants. All of our incoming students are fully funded. With respect to fiscal stability, we continue to work with the Office of Planning and Budget to obtain appropriate ABB revenue to fund our PhD Program operations. Preliminary numbers indicate an improved ABB return.

We are committed to providing our PhD students with a nurturing research environment. That said, much of our research environment is the product of our junior and mid-level faculty rather than our senior, more doctrinally oriented faculty members. Like many other law schools, our Law School has realized a metamorphosis over the past 10-12 years. Virtually all of the impetus for funded research rests with our junior and mid-level faculty.

We fully anticipate that our PhD program will flourish and realize all of the promise we envision. We look forward to the Graduate School Review for this program in five years.

Finally, with respect to the Certificate Program in Bioethics, Social Justice and Health, we concur in discontinuing this program. We have struggled unsuccessfully to build enrollment after the grant that originally funded it elapsed. Despite these efforts, there does not appear to be sufficient demand to maintain the Certificate Program.

In conclusion, we have carefully reviewed the Review Report and are implementing suggestions made by the Committee. We look forward to future reviews and any additional guidance the Graduate School can provide in the meantime.