

Dean's Note

Dean Daniel O. Bernstine

After my first few months as Dean of the Law School, I am happy to report that my only real surprise has been that there have been no real surprises. For any dean, particularly a new dean, that statement is remarkable in and of itself. We have just about completed our first semester of classes and, as you would suspect, students are getting busy in preparation for final examinations. We have also had the usual flurry of activities and programs which help to make the Law School such a vibrant place to study and work. There are a few items and accomplishments which are worthy of note.

On October 19-21, our Faculty Retreat was held at the Heidel House in Green Lake. During the Retreat, the faculty had the opportunity to exchange thoughts and views on a number of topics, including ways to foster an increased communal spirit in the Law School. In addition, there was a little time for us to get together socially without being concerned about the pressures of class preparations and other Law School activities. As a follow-up to the Retreat, there was a general consensus that we should take a comprehensive look at our curriculum over the next several months and a Task Force on Curriculum Reform will soon be established to examine our course offerings as well as to explore how we can better deliver an even higher quality education to our students.

On October 29th, the Law School had its annual visit by the Board of Visitors. The Board was briefed by faculty and administrators on several aspects of the Law School's operation, including admissions, clinical programs, placement, legal writing, serving students with special needs and the plans for a building addition. The Board also met with Chancellor Shalala to discuss their concerns and express their views about the Law School and its future. Overall, the visit was a success and we look forward to receiving the Board's final Report in a few months.

On the night before the Board visited the Law School, there was a reception and dinner for Board members and faculty where Professors Stuart Gullickson, Orrin Helstad and Bill Foster received the Wisconsin Law Alumni Association's Faculty Career Achievement Award. Congratulations to each of these recipients. They have had long and distinguished careers at the Law School and I wish each of them the very best in their retirement years.

Congratulations are also in order for our Moot Court teams. Champions of the Chicago Bar Association Moot Court Competition were Jeff Baxendale, Denise Steele and Eric Brandt. The regional champions of the National Moot Court Competition were Joan Brinkmann, David Hanson and Kris Thomas (Wisconsin team for the petitioner). The semifinal winners of the National Moot Court Competition were Sarah Calvin, Kelly Kinzel and



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Bryan Schneider (Wisconsin team for the respondent).

We have had a variety of speakers and conferences this semester. The Law School celebrated the 40th anniversary of the publication of J. Willard Hurst's seminal work, *The Growth of American Law*. Professor Aviam Soifer of Boston University delivered a lecture on his work. The Fourth Annual Thomas E. Fairchild lecturer was Solicitor General Kenneth W. Starr. General Starr spoke on the topic "The Court of Appeals and the Future of the Federal Judiciary." Next year's lecture will be presented by Judge Harry T. Edwards of the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. The Law School also hosted a very successful conference on critical race theory which attracted over 100 scholars from all over the country.

The major strength of our Law School has been its vitality as an academic institution and its commitment to remain in the forefront of legal education. As we move towards the 21st Century, I am optimistic about our curriculum reform efforts, our ability to produce even more moot court champions and our support of a variety of educational programs and conferences.

As this first semester comes to an end, I have completed about half of the over forty alumni events scheduled around Wisconsin and the country. It has been a pleasure seeing old friends and former students as well as meeting many of you for the first, but assuredly not the last, time. I look forward to next semester when we will resume these gatherings.

Finally, on behalf of all of us here at the Law School, I wish you the very best for the new year.