

Board of Visitors Report

Wisconsin Law Alumni Association

October 13-14, 1985

The Board of Visitors of the Wisconsin Law Alumni Association conducted its annual visit of the Law School on October 13-14, 1985. Once again, our overall impression of the Law School and its programs is highly positive. During these two days, of course, we could not expect to become expert on all the various activities within the Law School. We are satisfied, however, that the Law School is doing very well within the constraints of its budget.

Law School Finances

Sunday evening, Associate Dean Jerry Thain presented a brief talk on the financing of the Law School. His particular emphasis was on the faculty leave-balance. By far the largest expenditure for the Law School is in salaries. In order to meet its budget in this area a certain number of faculty must be on leave and off the budget each semester. For many years the average number in this category was more than 14. In recent years, however, this number has declined and now stands at approximately nine. The principal effect of this decline has been a reduction in the amount of money available to the Dean and faculty for visiting professors and lecturers. Visitors and lecturers not only add to the University of the Law School, but also enable the Law School to offer courses beyond those normally offered by the faculty. We hope that in the future the Law School will be able to solve this problem.

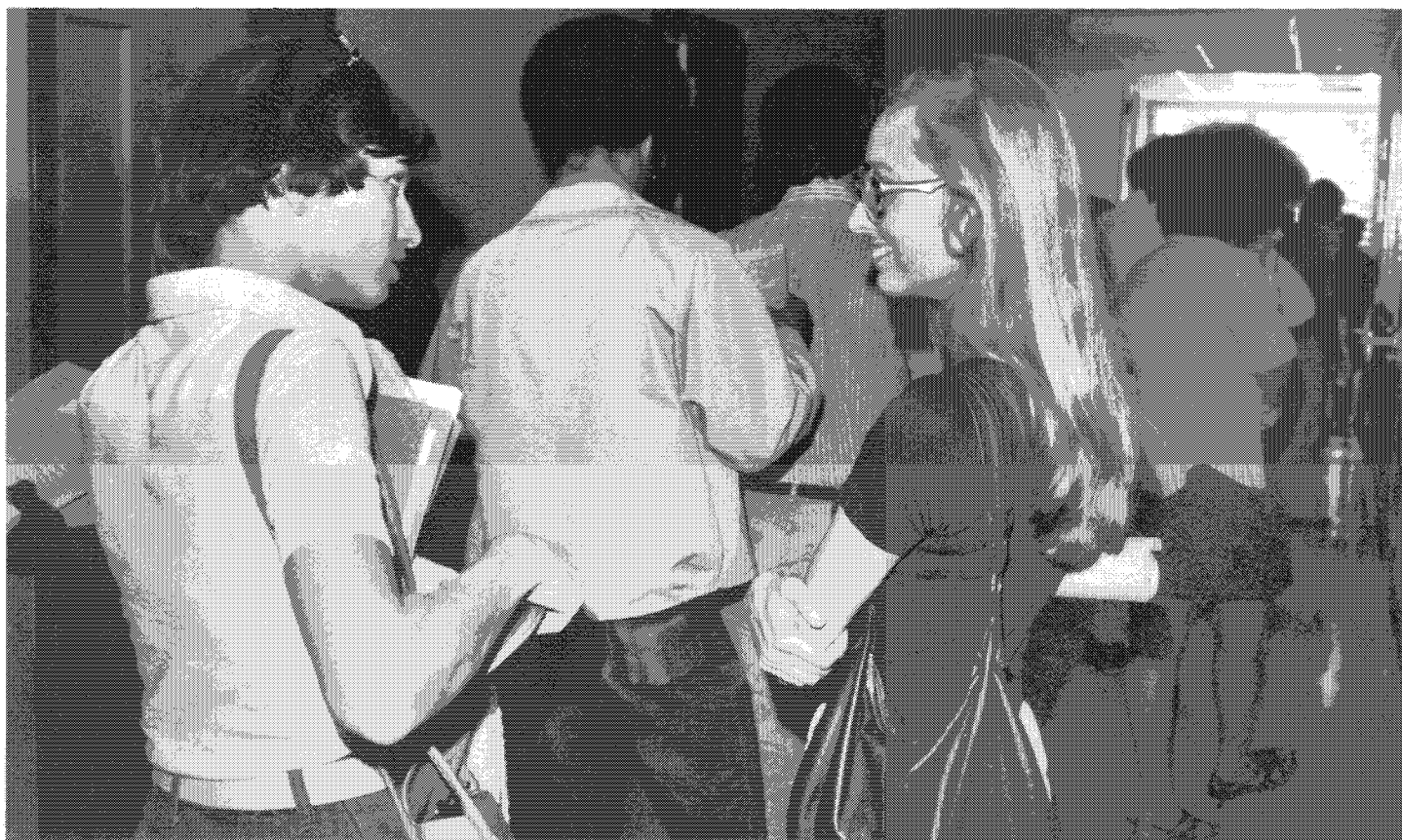
On the other hand, we are most impressed by the success of the recent Capital Campaign. With some work yet to be completed, the Campaign is already at more than twice its \$3,000,000 goal. This, combined with the recent legislative action providing for a "catch-up" salary increase for University faculty, has brought the Law School back into a more competitive position. We believe, however, that there is still room to improve faculty salaries. We have come from the

bottom of the Big 10 law school salaries to the middle. There is no reason, however, why an outstanding Law School like ours should have only average salaries. We also encourage the Wisconsin Law Alumni Association to actively continue fund raising for the benefit of the Law School. While methods may be found to permit using this money for salary supplements, there are, of course, many other worthy needs to which additional monies can be applied.

Facilities

In the area of facilities we find the Law School marginally adequate. It is our understanding that a proposed addition to the building may relieve much of the congestion which we noted. Additional library space and faculty and administrative offices appear most needed. The addition of numerous computers to the Law School has accelerated the need for additional space. We also learned that the





library is now 80% full, exceeding the guidelines for an active working library. We also learned that the scheduling of classes has become difficult due to a scarcity of medium-sized class rooms. Finally, we learned that the on-campus interviewing program is squeezed by a lack of interview rooms. We also suggest that improvements continue to be made to the clinical building (911-13 University Avenue). This facility appears to have a high degree of use and, as in any old building, a continued need for repair and improvements.

Teaching and Course Offerings

It is perhaps unfair to draw conclusive impressions about teaching and course offerings after observation of only one morning's classes. Nevertheless, we are once again impressed at the quality of instruction and the wealth of course offerings. In our observations, students were alert and interested in their courses. We also noted that there was apparently good attendance in the courses we viewed. Problems in this area relate primarily to the fact that courses tend to concentrate in certain hours of the day. This exasperates the space problem and often makes it difficult for students to take all the courses they wish.

Student Services

While there will always be need for additional funds for student financial aids, it appears that the two recent large bequests for scholarships and the establishment of the short-term loan program in the University's Office of Financial Aids have placed this program in its best position in years. We wonder if some of these funds might not be used for the purpose of attracting particular applicants to enroll at this Law School.

Despite a few complaints, we were impressed by both the quantity and quality of services offered by the placement office. On-campus interviewing this season is approximately 25% higher than last year and the office continues to report in excess of 95% placement success. We did hear comments from a number of students suggesting the placement director might have too many different jobs within the Law School. We also encourage the Law School and the placement office in particular to deal directly with unrealistically high expectations relating to Law School placement.

Both staff and students assure us that our Legal Education Opportunity program is the best in the Big 10. While we are impressed by the number of students in the program, we have some concern that the program may be too isolated from the rest of the Law School. We encourage

those who administer the LEO program to seek opportunities to involve LEO students in the normal life of the Law School.

Other concerns raised relating to student services included a plea by the *Women's Law Journal* for credit for its publication. This is, we believe, a matter for the Law School's administration. We do however encourage recognition of structured writing activities. We also had students suggest a more formal counseling service. We believe that counseling is available but on an ad-hoc basis. It may be that more publicity for services already available is the only correction needed in this area. Regarding admission, there is some concern that the current policy of admitting 80% resident applicants may need to be reassessed. This is particularly true if the recent trend towards a lower number of applicants continues. We encourage the Law School to closely monitor the credentials of applicants and not to lower Wisconsin's traditionally high standards.

Legal Writing Opportunities

Our workshop session was on legal writing opportunities within the Law School. It is clear from even this brief presentation that there are numerous and varied opportunities for students to do serious writing within the Law School. Nevertheless, since these programs tend to be

expensive, there are limits to the number of people who can be included in them. Within the restraints of the Law School's budget we encourage the continued development and expansion of these programs. We were particularly impressed by the Advanced Legal Writing course. Feedback from participants in this course has been consistently high, which may reflect the fact that, as an elective, applicants for the program already have high motivation. It appears that approximately four times as many persons apply for the course as can be accommodated. Clinical programs also appear to offer the opportunity for intensive writing experience. Here too the number of applicants exceeds the number of positions available. While the nature of the writing may be different we nevertheless see the clinical programs as a valuable component in the school's overall writing program. Professor Rob Williams explained his Trochos program. With hardware and software supplied by IBM he will soon begin offering a tutorial writing program to students on computer terminals. The computer program will analyze the writing style and content and provide instantaneous feedback for the students. In the area of moot court programs, we learned of a proposed Moot Court Board. With a budget from the Law School, the Board would be responsible for arranging for the various competitions in which our students participate. Moot Court, in addition to offering trial or appellate advocacy training, also offers advanced legal writing opportunities. It is expensive, not only in travel, copying and entry costs, but also in the sense that it requires a high level of faculty supervision. This may be an area where the Alumni Association can become more directly involved, providing not only financial support but also assisting in the coaching of participants.

Visitation and Visitors

We believe that the efforts made to improve this Visit have been successful. We urge that Visits in the future also attempt to focus narrowly and intensively on some aspect of the Law School. Some areas suggested for future consideration included the various joint degree programs available to law students, the statistical comparison of our Law School with other similar law schools, and an overview of our programs as they relate to our status as a national law school.

We are also pleased with the recent increase in the number of Visitors. The current Board, we believe, is quite representative of the legal profession, and we urge that as future vacancies are filled the question of diverse representation be given the highest consideration.

As we stated at the beginning of this report, it is risky to form an opinion about an operation as large and complicated as the Law School based upon an observation of one and one-half days in length. Nevertheless, we are encouraged to believe that real improvements have occurred in recent years. While we never doubted the competency of our law school, we are more convinced today that it is the quality national law school we always believed it was.

Submitted by:

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