



1971 Homecoming

Dear Friends of the Law School,

Despite the many changes that will come about because of the merger of the two systems of higher education in Wisconsin and despite the tightening that we feel desperately in the budget as it affects us, we are in business as usual at the Law School, except that there is lots more of it.

Although the entering class of 340 is smaller than we had anticipated (and feared), the total enrollment of the Law School is now over 900, and we are bursting at the seams. The attrition formerly experienced between the first and second years, and, to a lesser extent, between the second and third years, has been much less in 1971-72 than in other recent years. For instance, the second year class in 1970-71 was 17% smaller than the first year class which enrolled in 1969-70. This year, the second year class is only 7% smaller than the first year class last year. The third year class in 1970-71 was 15% smaller than the second year class in 1969-70. This year the third year class is only 4.7% smaller than the second year class last year.

The smaller attrition rate after the first year results from a number of factors. The very large number of applications for admission helps to insure that the students admitted are well qualified academically, and

have the capacity to succeed if they try. The lack of plentiful alternatives in employment and the uncertain future of other graduate programs prevents some students from changing their minds about being lawyers. The downturn in the economy may possibly improve motivation somewhat. The phase-out of the war and the consequent lower draft calls is returning some students to the Law School and permitting others to finish without interruption.

We continue to ponder the future—not only of this Law School, but of legal education in Wisconsin and the country. Can we continue to expand this law school without serious deterioration of the quality of our education? Is a satellite law school program providing first year courses on another campus of the newly merged university a possible solution? Should a new and completely independent law school be established? Can any of these alternatives be seriously contemplated in a tightening economy, in the light of the budget pressures that face the state?

So far, no alternative is clearly the appropriate one. No firm answers about what the future will bring are available. The Faculty tends, at this time, to feel that, to maintain quality, enrollment must be held at its present level and even, if possible, rolled back a little.

The staff is too small, the library too restricted and the building not large enough to consider any major expansion now, even if it were to be considered desirable in the long run.

Nevertheless, Faculty members report that teaching is more fun than it has been in several recent years. Students are alert and well-prepared; classes are lively and interesting. Professors are working harder than ever before, but, generally speaking, enjoying it more.

Cordially,
Spencer L. Kimball
Dean

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