

To: Christy Cole  
 From: John Paul Christoff  
 Re: Programmatic/Operational Adjustments  
 College of Law Assessment Plan  
 Date: December 6, 2007

This document is in response to the recommendation of the University Assessment Committee that each college 1) prioritize two of three items (writing abilities, speaking abilities, and solving real-world problems) and one of a list of eight others in which the college was found to be below the minimum standards of performance; and 2) develop ways in which the college will address the gaps in learning.

**I. Writing Abilities, Speaking Abilities, Solving Real-World Problems**

The University Annual Assessment Report 2006 found that the College of Law was below minimum standards of performance in these areas. The primary measure for that finding was the 2006 Law School Survey of Student Engagement taken by the graduating class of 2006. That survey showed that the level of satisfaction in the three areas above for that class was lower than those of graduating students of other law schools taking the survey:

	Writing clearly and effectively	Speaking clearly and effectively	Solving real-world problems
ONU L3s 2006	2.85	2.72	2.33
LSSSE 2006	2.94	2.76	2.46

This result appears to be anomalous. Both the LSSSE surveys immediately preceding (2005) and following (2007) indicate a level of satisfaction higher than that of comparable law schools. See below.

ONU L3s 2005	3.38	3.18	2.85
LSSSE 2005	2.96*	2.78*	2.52*
ONU L3s 2007	3.09	2.87	2.65
LSSSE 2007	2.95	2.76	2.53

\*Indicates a significant positive deviation.

It is interesting to note that the class of 2006 was the first class to complete the portfolio program which was initiated during their first year of law school as a measure of students growth in writing and legal analysis over the course of their three years in the college of law. The analysis of the data relating to that class indicates clear improvement in writing skills from year one to year three. (See Attachment IV from our Annual Assessment Report which is attached to this memo.)

Using the LSSSE survey as a measure suggests that the 2006 results were anomalous and that the College of Law satisfies standards of performance in the areas noted above. Nevertheless, the college is considering recommendations from a college curricular task force as to the following adjustments which are aimed at enhancing the performance of our students in these areas.

1. Advanced Legal Writing. The addition of an elective, upper division writing course. The course would be strongly recommended to students with a clear need to improve their legal writing skills. This would address the area of clear and effective writing.

2. Legal Reasoning. The addition of a required, two-credit course in Legal Reasoning for first year students to enhance their writing skills.

3. Legislation and Regulation. The addition of a first year course in Legislation and Regulation. This course will require them to acquire a basic understanding of the areas of legislation and regulatory agencies which are a major part of the real-world practice of law.

4. Certificate Program. The creation of opportunities to cluster courses in areas of law in which the student hopes to practice to allow the growth of expertise in real-world practice and to formally recognize that achievement.

5. Accounting for Lawyers. The creation of an elective, two-credit accounting for lawyers course to give students with little business background the skills for managing a law office in the real world.

## **II. Understanding People of Other Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds**

The University Annual Assessment Report 2006 found that the College of Law was below minimum standards of performance in this area and in a number of other areas. Similarly, the primary measure for that finding was the 2006 Law School Survey of Student Engagement taken by the graduating class of 2006. That survey showed that the level of satisfaction in this area for that class was lower than those of graduating students of other law schools taking the survey:

ONU L3s 2006	1.80
LSSSE 2006	2.08*

\*Indicates a significant negative deviation

This result again appears to be anomalous. Both the LSSSE surveys immediately preceding (2005) and following (2007) indicate a level of satisfaction higher than that of comparable law schools. See below. Although the task was to prioritize one area, which is the area noted, the same anomaly appears in the other areas not discussed.

ONU L3s 2005	2.45
LSSSE 2005	2.12*

ONU L3s 2007	2.20
LSSSE 2007	2.07

\*Indicates a significant positive deviation.

Using the LSSSE survey as a measure suggests that the 2006 results were anomalous and that the College of Law satisfies standards of performance in the area noted above. Nevertheless, the college has taken these measures to improve the understanding of people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds:

1. The law school administration, the Student Bar Association and the Black Law Student Association is in the process of gathering materials relating to racial and ethnic sensitivity for distribution to all law students.
2. These materials will be included in the orientation packets for all incoming students.
3. The SBA and BLSA will be co-sponsoring a round table discussion in the Spring semester on the subject of racial sensitivity and tolerance.
4. The SBA and BLSA will be drafting guidelines for SBA events inculcating racial and ethnic sensitivity and tolerance.

**Attachment IV**

**Portfolio Analysis—Class of 2006**

Portfolios were comprised of three papers: an office memorandum (completed at the end of first semester, first year), an appellate brief (completed at the end of second semester, first year), and a seminar paper (completed during a student's second or third year).

Each paper was evaluated in six categories.

1. Identifying issues and logical organization of those issues.
2. Stating and proving the applicable law.
3. Explanation of the cited authority and relation to the given fact pattern; Addressing counter-arguments.
4. Analogizing, distinguishing, and synthesizing the facts with the authority.
5. Grammar and citation/quotation forms.
6. Style, transitions, and formatting.

Scores of 1 (low) to 5 (high) were possible in each of the six categories, making a possible score of 6 to 30.

Results:

**Office Memorandum:** The range of scores went from 13 to 20. The average score was 16.

1. Identifying issues and logical organization of those issues. Average Score: 2.7
2. Stating and proving the applicable law. Average Score: 2.7
3. Explanation of the cited authority and relation to the given fact pattern; Addressing counter-arguments. Average Score: 2.3
4. Analogizing, distinguishing, and synthesizing the facts with the cited authority. Average Score: 2.2
5. Grammar and citation/quotation forms. Average Score: 3
6. Style, transitions, and formatting. Average Score: 3.2

Thus, at the end of their first semester most students can identify the legal issues presented to them and give the applicable law using legal citation forms and formatting rules. They need additional work on applying that law to a given fact pattern.

**Appellate Brief** Scores ranged from 12 to 24. The average was 19.

1. Identifying issues and logical organization of those issues. Average: 3.2
2. Stating and proving the applicable law. Average: 3.2
3. Explanation of the cited authority and relation to the given fact pattern; Addressing counter-arguments. Average: 2.9
4. Analogizing, distinguishing, and synthesizing the facts with the authority. Average: 2.7
5. Grammar and citation/quotation forms. Average: 3
6. Style, transitions, and formatting. Average: 3

Thus at the end of the second semester of law school, there was improvement in categories 1-4. Categories 5 and 6 remained the same.

**Seminar Papers** Scores ranged from 18 to 30. The average score was 21.

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| 1. Identifying issues and logical organization of those issues.  | Average: 3.4 |
| 2. Stating and proving the applicable law.   | Average: 3.4 |
| 3. Explanation of the cited authority and relation to the given fact pattern;<br>Addressing counter-arguments. | Average: 3.1 |
| 4. Analogizing, distinguishing, and synthesizing the facts with the authority.                                 | Average 3.4  |
| 5. Grammar and citation/quotation forms.   | Average: 4   |
| 6. Style, transitions, and formatting.   | Average: 3.7 |

**Summarization**

	<u>L-1 Fall</u>	<u>L-2 Spring</u>	<u>L-3</u>
1. Identifying issues and logical organization of those issues.	2.7	3.2	3.4
2. Stating and proving the applicable law.	2.7	3.2	3.4
3. Explanation of the cited authority and relation to the given fact pattern; Addressing counter-arguments.	2.3	2.9	3.1
4. Analogizing, distinguishing, and synthesizing the facts with the cited authority.	2.2	2.7	3.4
5. Grammar and citation/quotation forms.	3	3	4
6. Style, transitions, and formatting.	3.2	3	3.7

**Conclusion:** By the third year of law school there was clear improvement in all categories. It should be noted that by the end of their first year, law students had a good grasp on categories one and two. Categories three showed marked improvement by the end of the first year, but significant improvement by the third year. Category four showed dramatic improvement from Fall semester of the first year to the third year. Categories 5 & 6 also showed good improvement.