



Strategic Plan

Fall 2003

Approved by the Faculty 10-02-03

*One of the nation's preeminent law schools,
with a rich tradition of
studying and teaching the law in action*

GOALS

OUR MISSION:

Teaching, legal scholarship, and public service, inspired by our distinctive law-in-action approach and our commitment to justice

- Equip our students with the skills, knowledge and values essential to professional excellence and leadership
- Create a diverse, collaborative, and supportive learning community
- Attract, support, and retain a renowned faculty, whose insights and scholarship expand our knowledge of the law and how it affects society
- Embody the Wisconsin Idea by connecting our scholarship with our service to the profession, the government, and our global society

Our Strategic Priorities

- Ensure an Outstanding Student Experience
- Re-imagine the Curriculum
- Foster a Culture of Participation and Shared Enterprise
- Anticipate Emerging Areas of Law Practice and Legal Scholarship
- Embrace the Opportunities of Globalization
- Build on Our Scholarly Traditions to Create Knowledge for a Changing World
- Advance the Wisconsin Idea

Our Strategic Priorities

■ **Ensure an Outstanding Student Experience**

Our students deserve a comprehensive opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge, and awareness essential to achieve their professional and personal goals, and we will provide the student support services necessary to make that happen. We are committed to excellence in our teaching, yet we also appreciate that much of our students' preparation for their professional careers occurs outside of the classroom. We understand the importance of a diverse student body and will foster an intellectually challenging environment in which students with differing ideas, perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds learn from one another in a collegial and supportive atmosphere. To ensure an outstanding student experience, we will:

- Staff and maintain our curricular offerings to meet the future needs and current interests of our students
- Strengthen our admissions-to-placement commitment to student support services and counseling
- Continue to encourage a supportive and collegial culture
- Make the Law School a national model for the important role of diversity in legal education
- Use technology to enhance learning and to provide student support
- Provide an opportunity for every student to connect meaningfully with at least one member of the faculty for advice and support throughout the educational experience

■ **Re-imagine the Curriculum**

Legal education is a lifetime commitment, but it is the Law School and its curriculum that provide the foundation for professionalism and all future learning. Our graduates work in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world and use their legal skills in a wide variety of settings. Their employers expect them to enter the workplace not only with excellent analytical and communication skills, but also with the judgment and maturity to assume responsibility. We are committed to preparing our graduates for the practice of law and for political leadership, public service, and community participation. We will prepare our students for the legal practice of the future, while holding true to the basic values of a traditional legal education and a law-in-action focus. To achieve these goals, we will:

- Emphasize oral and written communication skills throughout the curriculum
- Integrate theoretical and practical teaching by building on our excellent clinical, skills-training, and other hands-on learning experiences
- Foster greater collaboration with adjunct faculty to enhance their teaching experiences and enrich the curriculum
- Expand experiences in which students learn from one another, work in groups, and develop cooperative skills and a teamwork approach
- Promote innovative teaching methods
- Revisit the distribution of credits and teaching load to better use our resources

- **Foster a Culture of Participation and Shared Enterprise**

The Law School is more than the sum of its individual parts. Students build career skills, faculty teach and pursue scholarship, clinics serve the community, and alumni participate and provide support – and none of this happens without the work of a talented, committed, and engaged staff. All do the work of the school, but what is most essential to a thriving law school is the interaction among the school’s different constituencies. The school’s historic contributions, from “law in action” to “law and society,” have all grown out of collective effort. We resolve to counter the inevitable pressures that lead to the separation of these functions or the isolation of individuals. Our goal is not only to ensure that the Law School is more than the sum of its parts but also to make it a place that no one wants to leave. To that end we will:

- Nurture a sense of interdependence and mutual respect among all members of the law school community
- Engage the talent and energy of our alumni and the practicing bar to further our mission
- Involve students, faculty, staff, and alumni in a shared commitment to the Law School’s future
- Build on our long-standing commitment to diversity and improve our efforts to recruit and retain faculty, staff, and students of color
- Foster faculty presence within the building to stimulate engagement with each other and with our students
- Enhance the professional development and training of staff at all levels
- Reinvigorate faculty governance and committee participation

- **Anticipate Emerging Areas of Law Practice and Legal Scholarship**

Lawyers are increasingly at the center of controversies created by the technological, political, and social transformations around us. Whether it is privacy in the workplace, Internet access in the library, or biotechnology on the farm, legal scholarship and law practice are central to developing the social framework for deciding complicated contemporary issues. Being an integral part of one of the country's great research universities for both the social and natural sciences, the Law School is perfectly situated to anticipate emerging areas of practice and scholarship that require an interdisciplinary approach. To prepare students to enter these new fields, we will:

- Build on existing faculty expertise in law and technology
- Apply our law-and-society approach to analyzing the interaction of law, the legal profession, and technology
- Develop curricular innovations that permit rapid response to emerging areas of student interest
- Promote faculty and student activities that serve the needs of the practicing bar and the local, national, and international policymakers working to understand the social transformations wrought by technological and political change

■ **Embrace the Opportunities of Globalization**

Our Law School has a long tradition of international engagement. From the law and development movement to more recent aspects of globalization, our faculty members have been active abroad. They have taught, conducted research, and worked to enhance legal education and practice on every continent. The Law School will continue to promote this engagement by building on our international resources, such as our highly successful East Asian Legal Studies Center, our opportunities for foreign lawyers at the Law School, and our exchange programs with prominent law schools in Africa, Europe and Latin America. We will explore additional opportunities for faculty and students in international programs on campus and in international institutions and programs based in the United States and abroad. To further this plan, we will:

- Make more visible our tradition of global involvement
- Encourage our colleagues to seek further opportunities to apply our expertise globally
- Advance and promote our expertise in international and comparative law
- Enhance our students' study abroad opportunities
- Increase our students' awareness of the pervasiveness of global issues in the practice of law and the place of international and comparative law as part of the core curriculum
- Strengthen the instructional opportunities we provide for foreign students at the Law School

- **Build on Our Scholarly Traditions to Create Knowledge for a Changing World**

The UW Law School has long been at the leading edge of scholarly innovation and that is where we intend to remain. When most legal scholars were confining their research to the law on the books, we were looking at the law in action. And before interdisciplinary research became fashionable, we were pioneering “law and society.” We will build on these traditional strengths in new and dynamic ways. We will continue to broaden our interdisciplinary connections, and we will commit the resources necessary to support a thriving culture of scholarship. We will cultivate theory that is grounded in experience, never forgetting both the local and the international dimensions of legal problems and the importance of scholarly analysis. To these ends, we will:

- Build on our tradition of law in action
- Maintain our leadership in law-and-society scholarship
- Invest in new approaches that emphasize the study of law in context
- Disseminate our ideas more broadly
- Continue to mentor our fellow scholars, particularly our new faculty, fellows, and students
- Ensure library and technology resources to meet our educational mission
- Continue to recruit outstanding faculty and students

- **Advance the Wisconsin Idea**

We take seriously the idea that law is a profession grounded in service to society. Our teaching aims to prepare students to serve all those who need an advocate, and our research aims to develop innovative solutions to societal problems, both at home and abroad. Our students learn through service to the community, and they do it in hospitals, low-income neighborhoods, correctional institutions, and courthouses near and far. At the Law School, the Wisconsin Idea has become the Global Idea – the idea that we serve the university, the local community, the state, the nation, and the world. To continue our commitment to advancing the Wisconsin Idea through law in action, we will:

- Promote our clinical offerings and criminal justice program as a model of the Wisconsin Idea
- Encourage faculty service to law- and policy-making bodies
- Develop opportunities for students and faculty in areas of public interest law
- Enhance service and outreach to the practicing bar
- Provide training to students and service to under-served populations through clinical programs