



WILLIAM & MARY
LAW SCHOOL

STRATEGIC PLAN | 2021-2026



A NOTE FROM THE DEAN

I came to William & Mary in 2020 with the goal of maintaining the Law School's status as one of the best law schools in the nation and leading it to new levels of excellence. This Strategic Plan will form an important foundation for that effort during the next three to five years, across all areas of the Law School.

The process of developing this plan was a collaborative one, involving input from students, faculty, administrators, staff, and alumni. I am appreciative of all those who took the time to contribute their thoughts and suggestions to this effort.

Although this plan comprises many areas of importance to the Law School, it does not address capital projects, which the Strategic Planning Committee was not charged with considering. A world-class law school must strive toward world-class facilities; those projects will be the subject of a separate planning process.

Additionally, this plan does not include items that should always be assumed to be part of our commitment to excellence. We will continue to operate in ways that are both financially sound and administratively prudent, with appropriate transparency and a dedication to the professional success of all who work at the Law School. This means, in particular, ensuring that our employees have the support and resources they need to perform at the highest levels of excellence.

The implementation of many of this plan's initiatives is already under way, with other initiatives in the pipeline. We look forward to keeping the community updated on our progress.

A. BENJAMIN SPENCER
Dean and Trustee Professor

Introduction

At the beginning of the 2020–2021 academic year, Dean Spencer established an Advisory Committee on Strategic Planning, including members from among the faculty, administration, and alumni.

The Dean’s first charge to the Committee was to develop vision, mission, and values statements for the Law School that recognized the Law School’s past success and charted a course for its continued excellence. The statements provided the framework for the Law School’s overall strategic planning effort and gave rise to five related strategic goals for the next three to five years. Based on conversations with Dean Spencer, stakeholders, and other members of the Law School community, the Committee developed initiatives to support each strategic goal. Each initiative will involve contributions from units across the Law School, which will require an integrated and coordinated approach to implementation. Units such as Accounting, Faculty and Academic Support, the Library, and Information Technology will also be key contributors to the success of many initiatives, as well as support staff such as those involved with event planning, operations, and building maintenance.

The initiatives in this plan are designed to be achievable in the next three to five years. They are aligned with the Law School’s vision, mission, and values; some will require additional resources, but all are important to moving the Law School forward. Although this plan has greatly benefited from feedback from across the Law School community, it is a given that not every initiative will be championed by every member of our community. Meaningful change does not always command unanimous support at the outset. Many initiatives will be part of an iterative process in which we will learn from initial efforts, keep what has worked well, and improve upon what hasn’t.



Finally, the strategic goals in this plan should be seen as guiding not only the initiatives described here but also other initiatives proposed in the next few years. Initiatives that do not seem to have an obvious relationship to one of the Law School's strategic goals should be pursued only after careful consideration.

Much progress has already been made to promote strategic change at the Law School over the past year, even while operating under pandemic conditions. Engagement among senior administrators has been enhanced, new financial and budgetary strategies have been implemented, and external consultants have contributed to meaningful initiatives for both Admissions and Communications. The Committee appreciates the opportunity to have participated in this strategic planning effort and looks forward to the Law School's continued growth and excellence.

Members of the Advisory Committee on Strategic Planning

ELIZABETH ANDREWS
Professor of the Practice of Law
and Director of the Virginia
Coastal Policy Center

LATOYA C. ASIA, J.D. '09
William & Mary Law School Association
Board of Directors (Fall 2020)

STEPHANIE REVER CHU, J.D. '92
William & Mary Law School Association
Board of Directors (Spring 2021)

MICHAEL J. ENDE
Associate Dean for Career Services

LAURA A. HEYMANN
Chancellor Professor of Law (chair)

VICTOR J. MILLER, J.D. '93
Marshall-Wythe School of
Law Foundation Board

NATHAN B. OMAN
Rollins Professor of Law

LAURA N. SHEPHERD
Associate Dean for Student
and Academic Services and
Chief Equity Officer

LESLIE A. STREET
Clinical Professor of Legal Research
and Director of the Wolf Law Library

SARAH R. WASSERMAN RAJEC
Professor of Law

Vision

William & Mary Law School educates lawyers, advocates, and leaders who are ready for the challenges of an ever-changing profession. Our commitment to an inclusive environment, where academic excellence is celebrated and important ideas are generated, remains constant. Together, we cultivate personal and professional lives of purpose, serving our communities and the world.

Mission

William & Mary Law School provides an exceptional education for tomorrow's lawyers. As the nation's first law school, we maintain an enduring tradition of intellectual and professional excellence. We improve legal systems here and abroad through a commitment to the classroom, influential scholarship, and service to the public. Our students become highly skilled advocates, ready to serve their clients and their communities with thoughtful engagement and unwavering integrity. We recognize the challenges of our history and our responsibility to pursue the realization of justice through the rule of law. Above all, we strive to be a diverse and close-knit community, inclusive in the broadest sense and defined by a shared commitment to the rigorous and open-minded study of the law.

Values

We embrace William & Mary's core values — belonging, curiosity, excellence, flourishing, integrity, respect, and service — as well as these additional values that make the Law School a place where all can feel a sense of pride and achievement:

Leadership. We serve our communities by leading as passionate, tireless, and ethical advocates who understand the immense responsibilities of the profession and the law's ability to affect society.

Insight. We promote intellectual and professional excellence, academic freedom, and the pursuit of ideas and understanding.

Inclusion. We strive to be an inclusive and supportive law school that welcomes and respects the diverse perspectives, experiences, and contributions of each member of our community.

Community. We create a culture that fosters lifelong connections, promotes giving back to the Law School, and inspires our graduates to make positive contributions to their communities throughout their professional lives.

Progress. We continue to be a leader in legal education by delivering a forward-thinking curriculum and producing meaningful research, constantly seeking to move beyond the status quo to improve our communities, the law, and the world.

Our Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal #1

Build, maintain, and foster a diverse, inclusive, and supportive community for all who work and learn at the Law School.

Strategic Goal #2

Develop and retain an excellent, diverse, and productive faculty who engage in relevant research and scholarship that contributes to ongoing conversations about understanding and improving the law around the world.

Strategic Goal #3

Offer a resilient and sustainable curriculum that enables students to acquire the knowledge and skills they need for a lifetime of practice.

Strategic Goal #4

Provide a high-quality legal education in new modalities and formats that expand the Law School's reach worldwide and contribute to the Law School's revenue position.

Strategic Goal #5

Establish a whole-institution approach to communications and ensure that our story is reaching intended audiences.



Strategic Goal #1

Build, maintain, and foster a diverse, inclusive, and supportive community for all who work and learn at the Law School.

- Create pathways to success for aspiring lawyers by developing additional strategies for admitting highly qualified entering classes that contribute to the diversity of the Law School community as well as initiatives to improve access to legal education more generally.
 - Establish a robust mentoring program that provides team-based support throughout each student's experience at the Law School.
 - Bolster our support and programming for first-generation and/or low-income (FGLI) students.
 - Enhance our Academic Success Program offerings so that all students have the opportunity to succeed while in law school and on the bar exam, including additional support for health and wellness.
 - Elevate the Law School's commitment to learning and growth around diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging by creating educational opportunities open to the entire community as well as additional educational experiences for students.
 - Develop an updated history of the Law School that provides a complete story of the Law School's past and the Law School's successes and challenges in providing an inclusive environment for all.
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Strategic Goal #2

Develop and retain an excellent, diverse, and productive faculty who engage in relevant research and scholarship that contributes to ongoing conversations about understanding and improving the law around the world.

- Adopt strategic improvements to our Appointments process to ensure that we are maximizing opportunities to diversify and strengthen the excellence of the faculty, with the ultimate goal of increasing the number of tenure-stream faculty to 40.
 - Create an intentional strategy around our centers and programs to broaden the reach of our research and scholarship and ensure that each center's and program's strategic plan includes ways to engage alumni, students, and scholars from across the university and beyond.
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Strategic Goal #3

Offer a resilient and sustainable curriculum that enables students to acquire the knowledge and skills they need for a lifetime of practice.

- Ensure that our course offerings are part of an integrated whole of legal education that includes new areas of substantive knowledge, greater attention to problem solving, and an increased focus on writing and research.
- Enable a more effective, consistent review of our curriculum to ensure that we are offering a forward-looking legal education that achieves our learning outcomes.
- Ensure that our students are ready for a lifetime of practice by creating a required professional development course that gives students exposure to critical skills, by introducing additional consideration of how the law affects marginalized communities to the curriculum, and by enhancing efforts around inclusive classroom teaching and learning.



Strategic Goal #4

Provide a high-quality legal education in new modalities and formats that expand the Law School's reach worldwide and contribute to the Law School's revenue position.

- Augment our current LL.M. with a new online LL.M. degree for international students that offers the high-quality legal education for which the Law School is known.
 - Expand our reach into post-graduate professional education through new certificate programs as well as other executive- and continuing-education offerings in areas such as compliance, cybersecurity, and beyond.
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Strategic Goal #5

Establish a whole-institution approach to communications and ensure that our story is reaching intended audiences.

- Emphasize a digital-first media strategy across the Law School that coordinates efforts across units.
 - Develop an enhanced strategy to connect faculty with policymakers, the media, and alumni to promote important and relevant research.
 - Implement a revised strategy for alumni communications and engagement that strengthens ties between alumni and the Law School and promotes a lifelong community of learning and belonging.
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