



ELEVATING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE:

The Future of Legal Education for the Future of Legal Practice

2015 DENVER LAW STRATEGIC PLAN



UNIVERSITY of DENVER

STURM COLLEGE OF LAW

WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



The 2015 Strategic Plan for the University of Denver Sturm College of Law is deeply rooted in our 2009 Strategic Plan, which was a great plan for our law school, playing to our strengths and to the needs of our legal community. The 2009 Plan enabled us to navigate the profound changes we have seen in legal practice and legal education, and to excel at this challenging time. We are proud to report that we accomplished virtually all of the goals set forth in that plan. For example, we moved up more than 20 spots in the *U.S. News & World Report* law school rankings, with six of our specialty programs ranked in the Top 25 nationally. And we are now ranked #10 in the nation among the Best Schools for Practical Training by the *National Jurist*.

For a list of more highlights detailing the successes of the 2009 Plan, see page 10.

Our 2015 Strategic Plan builds upon the strengths of our 2009 Plan and positions us to achieve even greater heights over the next three to five years.

As with our 2009 Plan, our 2015 Plan is built on market data and feedback from our key stakeholders: our students, those who employ our graduates, our faculty and staff, our university administrators and trustees, and our alumni and community members. The insights we received enabled us to craft a plan that matches our strengths to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. It truly is a plan by and for our community.



U.S. News & World Report, March 2015

Our new plan reflects our commitment to elevate the student experience.

At Denver Law, we are deeply committed to elevating the student experience. This “student first” approach informs everything we do, and it serves as a guiding star as we continue to integrate the critical components of a first-rate legal education: a culture of experiential learning, a strong commitment to teaching, and the internal expertise and leadership to move ambitious initiatives forward. We have the oldest and one of the most respected clinics in the nation, and one of the largest and most robust legal externship programs. And we have several of the nation’s leading scholars in experiential education, including Roberto Corrada, who was named one of the 26 best law professors in the country and serves as our chair of Modern Learning. As a result, we have emerged as national leaders in teaching law students how to apply what they learn in the classroom to real-world situations.

Our 2015 Strategic Plan is ambitious and forward-thinking—it examines higher level goals and contains a series of ambitious initiatives to achieve those goals. We are accomplishing something big with this new plan, pushing ourselves to question traditional modes of teaching and to innovate in ways that will benefit our students and help us create the next generation of truly excellent lawyers and professionals.

With careful planning and active implementation, Denver Law will secure its place as one of the most innovative law schools in the country.

Martin J. Katz
Dean and Professor of Law
University of Denver Sturm College of Law

“At the Sturm College of Law, we are firmly committed as part of our strategic plan to placing students in the role of attorney as much as possible. We feel this is the best way to ensure a readiness to practice law upon graduation. As part of that commitment, we have pioneered curricular expansion to meet this need with our Experiential Advantage Curriculum™, and have even innovated in the area of doctrinal classroom courses to make them more practical.”

— **Professor Roberto Corrada,**
*Mulligan Bursleson Chair
in Modern Learning*

PRACTICE-READINESS AND PROFESSIONAL EMPOWERMENT

Denver Law will distinguish itself as a law school that prepares students for their chosen careers, ready to make an immediate positive impact on their clients and communities by the day they graduate. This is practice-readiness.

“... Not only did Denver Law teach me what I needed to know and then some, but also, through its cornucopia of contacts in the community, afforded me key practical experiences such as moot court and trial team, an internship with a judge, appellate writing in a DA’s office, civil litigation at the Colorado Attorney General’s office, and an appearance on a case in federal court through the law school’s nationally ranked Student Law Office. These eclectic experiences prepared me well for — and I believe helped me get — my current job as a law clerk ... I get to observe some of the best and the worst lawyering in the world. It’s wild. And I love it.”

— **Aaron Neptune, JD’12,**
*law clerk to the
 Hon. Charles M. Pratt*

INITIATIVE 1:

INTEGRATED AND EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

The Modern Learning Initiative

This initiative centers on a curriculum that is steeped in experiential education and that integrates: (1) legal analysis, (2) practical skills and (3) the development of professional identity.

INITIATIVE 2:

SUBJECT-MATTER MASTERY

The Specialization Initiative (Part A) — Certificate Programs for Students

Clusters of courses in specialized, high growth subject-matter areas will provide students with deep subject-matter understanding.

Five Centers of Excellence:

- Constitutional Rights and Remedies
- Corporate and Commercial Law
- Environmental and Natural Resources Law
- International Law
- Workplace Law



INITIATIVE 3:

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROBLEM-SOLVING AND COLLABORATION

The Interdisciplinary Initiative

Responding to the need for lawyers to solve complex problems and to the changing shape of knowledge in society, this initiative leverages the fact that we are part of an excellent university, with many excellent graduate programs, to help provide interdisciplinary context to our law students.

INITIATIVE 4:

NAVIGATING CURRICULUM AND CAREER

The Career Development Initiative

This initiative empowers students as they navigate curricular and career choices, which will, in turn, help them discover and achieve their career goals and develop their professional identities.

“Choosing the University of Denver was absolutely the best decision for my legal career. The University’s faculty, classes and experiential learning programs are built to prepare you for practice in the real world. Through the externship program, I secured placements at the Colorado Supreme Court and the Colorado District Court, where I learned the value of legal analysis and writing. My legal abilities were further developed through the many skills classes offered, my position as a research assistant and my membership on the National Trial Team. I am, and forever will be, a better lawyer because of DU.”

— **Joyce Banks, JD’11,**
*associate attorney,
 Baker Botts LLP*

CONNECTING WITH THE LEGAL COMMUNITY

We are Denver's law school. The Denver legal community looks to us for talent and thought leadership, and partners with us to provide a first-rate education for our students. And we make Denver lawyers. We differentiate ourselves by providing our students with a strong pipeline into this vibrant and exciting practice community.

"When I was applying to law school, I spoke with local attorneys about their opinions on the law schools in the region and whether they had a hiring preference for graduates of any school. Every attorney I spoke with reinforced the positive reputation of Denver Law grads. This reputation stems from Denver Law's commitment to ensuring that all students have opportunities to get practical education and making students as practice-ready as possible."

– **Elizabeth Phillips, JD'13**,
 associate attorney,
 Polsinelli PC

INITIATIVE 5:

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY IN
 EDUCATING OUR STUDENTS

The Partnership in Education Initiative

Our community partners are essential to our ability to create practice-ready graduates. These partners serve our students as mentors, externship supervisors and adjunct professors. They help our students build bridges into the community.

We will continue to reach out to, and partner with, our legal community to ensure our graduates are practice-ready and professionally empowered.

INITIATIVE 6:

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

The Value to Community Initiative

We will strive to be an indispensable part of our community. The Partnership in Education Initiative should be a two-way street, valuable both to our students and our community partners. Additionally, by serving and giving back to our community, we teach and model the importance of public service in our profession. We will serve our community in a number of ways, including supplying excellent legal talent for employers and clients through our practice-readiness initiatives and providing relevant and high-quality education and professional development opportunities to members of the community.



U.S. News & World Report, March 2015



"One of the greatest aspects of the DU Law experience is the numerous opportunities it provides for students to integrate with the Denver legal community before graduating law school. The active participation by alumni and friends in the Alumni Career Network (ACN) is an easy way for law students to start forming professional relationships with practicing attorneys in the area. The ACN has helped me 'bridge the gap' between law school and legal practice by providing mentorship and building relationships that will last my entire legal career."

– **Jason Crow, JD'09**,
 associate attorney,
 Holland & Hart LLP

HIGH-IMPACT SCHOLARSHIP

Denver Law will create and disseminate high-quality scholarship that makes significant and relevant contributions to legal and social policy debates and promotes justice.

“Denver Law has a truly impressive group of faculty, all of whom are effective instructors, dedicated mentors and more than willing to assist students outside of the classroom. I could not be more satisfied with my decision to attend Denver Law as it was instrumental in preparing me for a successful and rewarding career and to adapt in a rapidly changing legal market.”

– **Justin L. Cohen, JD’12**,
associate attorney, *Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP*



U.S. News & World Report, March 2015

INITIATIVE 7:

EXPANDING SCHOLARLY
PRODUCTION & ENGAGEMENT

The Productivity Initiative

Over the past five years, Denver Law’s scholarly output has nearly doubled, with much of this scholarship impacting the great debates of our time. This, along with the innovative improvements in our curriculum, has elevated the school’s profile and advanced its reputation as a leader in legal education. Key components of this initiative include mentoring and thoughtful incentive structures.



INITIATIVE 8:

PRODUCING WORK THAT MATTERS

The Impact Initiative

We will continue to demonstrate the value of our scholarship, both in terms of its impact on legal and social policy, and in terms of its benefits to our students. We will increase the impact of our scholarship by seeking ever wider audiences and by building our reputation as a place where great ideas are cultivated.

SUPPORTING SCHOLARLY IMPACT

The Specialization Initiative (Part B)

Our five Centers of Excellence allow for clusters of faculty members involved in specific subject matter areas to (1) support faculty scholarship, (2) support programing for the academic and practice communities and (3) enhance our reputation in these areas. We will also provide opportunities for our students to specialize within these centers as well as opportunities for specialization that are independent from these centers of excellence (see Initiative 2).



U.S. News & World Report, March 2015

“The faculty members at DU Law have been invaluable resources—while the professors are interested and immersed in their scholarship, they also truly enjoy teaching and are wonderful mentors to their students.”

– **Kira Suyeishi, JD’13**,
associate attorney, *Ireland Stapleton Pryor & Pascoe PC*


“Denver Law is home to some of the most highly regarded academics in the country. What I appreciate the most is this: not only do the professors contribute regularly to scholarly debate, but they are also active and effective advocates in the Colorado legal community.”

– **Julian R. Ellis, Jr., JD’14**,
associate attorney,
Lewis Roca Rothgerber LLP
Judicial Clerk for 2015-2016
term, *U.S. Court of Appeals*
for the 10th Circuit

SUCCESSSES

2009 STRATEGIC PLAN SUCCESSES

Since we adopted our 2009 Strategic Plan, we have achieved tremendous success, both internally in terms of the initiatives and innovations we have successfully implemented, and externally, in terms of the recognition we have received. Our 2009 Plan also helped us to achieve success in other core areas, including fundraising, diversity and inclusive excellence, graduate employment and bar passage.

BAR PASSAGE RATE
 **18%**
 from 10% below state average in 2005 to 8% above state average in 2014-2015.

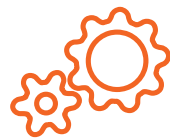
Denver Law was recognized as one of the **MOST-IMPROVED LAW SCHOOLS IN BAR PASSAGE** by *The National Law Journal*.

The **ANNUAL PASS RATE** for DU graduates was 67% in 2005; it is now regularly between

85% & 90%.



BAR PASSAGE



INNOVATIONS

MODERN LEARNING INITIATIVE

- Developed the **Experiential Advantage Curriculum™**
Any student may choose to take 30 credits of experiential learning courses.
- Created the **Live Client Guarantee™**
Any student may take either an in-house clinic or externship.
- Developed the concept of **Carnegie Integrated Courses**
These simulation courses combine all of the apprenticeships recommended by the Carnegie Report *Educating Lawyers* of 2007. Denver Law now has more than 25 Carnegie Integrated Courses.
- Inaugurated the nation's first endowed chair in experiential learning, the **Mulligan Burselson Chair in Modern Learning**.



FUNDRAISING

\$45.5M

Raised for Denver Law in the ASCEND Campaign

ASCEND CAMPAIGN GIFTS FUNDED

- Over **70 NEW ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS**
- A **NEW LL.M. PROGRAM** in International Business Transactions (\$3 million)
- A **NEW ENDOWED MULLIGAN BURLESON CHAIR IN MODERN LEARNING** (\$2 million)
- **NEW ENDOWED CHAIRS** in International Law and Clinical Education
- **TERM PROFESSORSHIPS** in Animal Defense, Marijuana Law & Policy, and Online Learning

SET ANNUAL FUNDRAISING RECORD for Denver Law with over

\$10M



RECOGNITION FOR OUR MODERN LEARNING INITIATIVE

2015-2016 NATIONAL RANKINGS

#10 BEST SCHOOLS FOR PRACTICAL TRAINING
(National Jurist)

#6 LEGAL EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM
(National Jurist)

#14 CLINICAL TRAINING
(U.S. News)

#7 LEGAL WRITING
(U.S. News)

#19 TRIAL ADVOCACY
(U.S. News)

RECOGNITION FOR OUR SPECIALIZATION INITIATIVE



CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Six certificate programs for students, allowing them to demonstrate expertise in corporate and commercial law, constitutional rights and remedies, environmental and natural resources law, international law, workplace law and intellectual property law.

ROGER WILLIAMS SCHOLARLY REPUTATION SCORE

2.86 2009  **4.19** 2015
INCREASED

U.S. NEWS PEER ASSESSMENT

#72 2009  **#53** 2015
RANK UP



GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

91.7% of our JD Class of 2014 who sought employment held professional positions as of March 15, 2015 (the reporting date).



85.6% of our JD Class of 2014 obtained **Bar Required** or **JD Advantage** positions in which bar admission is not required but a JD is helpful (outperforming the national rate of 78.6%).

We have seen steady improvement in the percentage of our graduates obtaining Bar Required and JD Advantage jobs:

Denver Law JD Employment Outcomes^[1]

	2010 ^[2]	2011	2012	2013	2014
% of all Denver Law grads in Bar Required and JD Advantage jobs	69.3%	79.8%	77.9%	84.3%	85.6%
Nationwide % of all law grads in Bar Required and JD Advantage jobs	—	74.8%	75.2%	75.8%	78.6%

^[1] For the Classes of 2010 through 2013, these figures reflect our graduates' employment status as of February 15 of the year following graduation. Beginning with the Class of 2014, the ABA changed the reporting date to March 15 of the year following graduation.

^[2] Due to different reporting standards when we reported on the Class of 2010, these figures are estimates based on available data from that class. For this reason, we do not have a national comparison for 2010.

IMPLEMENTATION AND CONCLUSION

We will develop an implementation plan to ensure that our 2015 Strategic Plan becomes a reality. The implementation plan will include specific goals and timetables, and specific allocations of responsibility for accomplishing those goals. It will also include measures for determining progress toward those goals and for success.

Our alumni and friends in the legal community have committed to supporting our plan, both financially and with their valuable time (for example, serving as adjunct professors and mentors to our students). They also have committed to supporting our students and graduates, who will benefit from a dedicated and expanding University of Denver Sturm College of Law network.

We have created a strategic plan that capitalizes on our strengths and builds on the valuable synergies that exist between Denver Law, the University and the greater legal community. The faculty and administration are committed to implementing this plan and to its success.

As dramatic shifts in legal education continue, we're proud to say that Denver Law is on the cutting edge of that shift and is graduating men and women ready to engage in this complex and dynamic field. We look forward to working with you to make this plan a reality as we continue to position Denver Law at the forefront of modern legal education.

*Visit us online to read Denver Law's entire 2015 Strategic Plan at
www.law.du.edu/2015-strategic-plan-full.*



UNIVERSITY *of*
DENVER

STURM COLLEGE OF LAW