

COMMITTEE TO ADVISE ON THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE LAW SCHOOL

April 1, 2019

USM Campus, Abromson, Wishcamper 102

Minutes

Members Present: Kurt Adams, Martha Casey (by phone), Ben Devine, Grog Johnson (by phone), Peter Mills, Heather Sanborn, Leigh Saufley, Deirdre Smith, Terry Sutton, Ben Gideon, Vendean Vafiades (by phone), Adam Tuchinsky

Staff Present: Jim Thelen, Joan Cohen, Kim Jenkins

Co-Chair Smith opened the meeting at 1:15 p.m and welcomed the Committee. USM President Glenn Cummings expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Committee and the co-chairs for their time and hard work on this important effort to identify the best future direction for the law school. President Cummings was invited to return later to discuss governance. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the minutes from the March 25, 2019 meeting.

The Committee discussed scheduling and agreed to replace the May 2 meeting with a meeting on Saturday, April 27 from 2-6 pm location TBD.

The Committee then heard from a panel on the topic of Maine's legal needs and opportunities for Maine Law's curriculum, clinics and culture to align with those needs. Co-chair Smith introduced the topic and panelists. She noted that the team Google Drive includes the presenters' biographies, power points, and an array of reports, articles, and other relevant information.

The panel included:

1. *Hon. Andrew Mead, Associate Justice, Maine Supreme Judicial Court*
2. *Benjamin Jenkins, Litigation Director, Maine Legal Services for the Elderly*
3. *Sandra Livingston, AVP & Senior Counsel, UNUM, and Maine Volunteer Lawyers Project, Board Member*
4. *Chet Randall, Deputy Director, Pine Tree Legal Assistance*
5. *Susan Roche, Executive Director, Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project*
6. *Elizabeth Stout, Executive Director, Maine Community Law Center*
7. *Teresa Sutton, CEO, Maine Center*

The first 6 presenters stressed that there is a tremendous need for meaningful access to legal services for pro bono and low bono Mainers, especially in areas outside of greater Portland. The demand for legal services is far greater than the resources to

meet that demand. They noted that Maine has a close and generous bar and most of the pro bono/low bono work couldn't happen without the support of volunteers, volunteer mentors and generous donors, many of whom are Maine Law grads. Law schools around the country are playing a critical role in the access to justice conversations and solutions. Maine Law's clinics, internships and externships play an important role in access to legal services but there are opportunities for expansion. Suggestions included: requiring participation in clinics as part of the curriculum; developing admissions criteria that attracts students interested in practicing in rural communities; and looking for opportunities to reduce student debt for students so that new lawyers can afford to practice in underserved communities. The Law School could promote public interest or public service as one of its core missions in an effort to create an environment that encourages public interest work. The panelists noted that it would be helpful for the Law School to support and encourage students to consider solo or small firm practice by including business courses such as business planning, accounting, and networking. They also recommended that the Law School offer or encourage students to take courses in psychology-related topics.

Committee member Terry Sutton, CEO of Maine Center Ventures, shared information about the Maine Center for Professional and Graduate Studies and its role in bringing together the Law School, Muskie School and the Business School as a consortium. Their focus is encouraging interdisciplinary efforts including interdisciplinary curriculum development. The shared drive has more information about the Maine Center.

In response to Committee interest, Co-Chair Adams invited Glenn Cummings and Jim Thelen to talk about governance. They spoke about the reporting structure and the appropriations process.

The Committee adjourned at 5:00 pm.