



# Cleveland State University

Cleveland-Marshall College of Law

Annual Assessment Report by the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law  
for the 2006-2007 Academic Year

June 6, 2007

## I. Introduction

The Cleveland-Marshall College of Law at Cleveland State University is accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools. During the 2006-2007 academic year, the College of Law engaged in an extensive internal strategic planning process. As a result of that process, we wrote the following mission and vision statements, which provide useful context for understanding the following assessment report.

**Mission:** The mission of the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law is to foster a more just society through legal education, service, and scholarship. The Law School provides the opportunity for a rigorous legal education, enabling a diverse population of students to become accomplished, ethical citizen-lawyers who will make significant contributions to the region, the nation, and the world.

**Vision:** The Cleveland-Marshall College of Law will continue to be a major foundation of the legal community in the region, having educated outstanding lawyers, judges, public servants, and business people. For more than a century, the Law School has provided an opportunity to qualified students to improve their own lives by serving others. Towards that end, the Law School will enhance its tradition as an institution committed to excellence in teaching, service, and scholarship and other intellectual inquiry. The Law School will be recognized for the capacity of its graduates to counsel and represent their clients effectively, and for the ability of its students, graduates, and faculty to think critically about our society's strengths and weaknesses and to have the theoretical, doctrinal, and practical legal expertise to promote social justice, individual freedom, and economic growth. The Law School will be distinguished as an accomplished and highly regarded public law school, renowned for being creative, accessible, and compassionate.

## II. [Strategic] Goals

During the College of Law's extensive strategic planning process this academic year, we developed the following six strategic goals for the next five years. Three of

these goals relate directly to students (highlighted below); the remaining three goals serve other, broad institutional interests.

- “Goal #1: Substantially improve our graduates’ first-time bar passage rate on the Ohio State Bar Exam.**
- Goal #2: Enhance the quality and diversity of the student body, and expand the professional opportunities available to them.**
- Goal #3: Improve the scholarly reputation and productivity of our faculty.
- Goal #4: Develop signature programs or centers of excellence at the law school.
- Goal #5: Strengthen our curriculum and expand our teaching strategies to maximize the educational experience for our students in order to prepare them to practice law in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**
- Goal #6: Expand our long-standing commitment to public service.”

The following analysis of our assessment practices is keyed to the three highlighted strategic goals relating to students.

### **III. Outcomes**

#### **A. Improve Bar Passage Rates**

The College of Law’s first intended outcome is to improve the first-time bar passage rate for its graduates on the Ohio State Bar Examination in accordance with the Cleveland State University Board of Trustees’ resolution. At its June 25, 2003 meeting, the CSU Board of Trustees passed the following resolution:

**“RESOLUTION 2003-36  
STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION TO THE COLLEGE OF LAW  
AND CURRICULUM REVIEW**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Provost and the President, with all reasonable speed, be directed to work with the faculty to establish admissions standards for the College of Law to include undergraduate academic performance, LSAT scores, and other appropriate criteria designed to achieve a passage rate of the Ohio State Bar Examination, which would place the College of Law in the top one-third of such colleges with regard to the bar passage rate annually; and that they inform the Board of Trustees of said standards, and that the Provost and/or the President report to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis the results of said standards with the goal of achieving the top one-third standard within five years.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Provost and the President are instructed to meet with the Dean of the College of Law and appropriate members of the law faculty to review curriculum and other support mechanisms for achieving the goal of reaching the top one-third standards.”

## **B. Enhance Student Body and Expand Professional Opportunities**

The College of Law's intended outcome on this strategic goal is actually threefold. First, we seek to increase the quality of each successive entering class. Second, we hope to achieve this goal without sacrificing our law school's commitment to diversity and opportunity. Third, we seek to provide our graduates with a broad spectrum of professional opportunities upon their graduation from Cleveland-Marshall.

## **C. Maximize Educational Experience**

The College of Law's intended outcome is to maximize the educational experience of our students so that they will be prepared to practice law in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We believe that this goal will be satisfied with the use of better teaching and testing methodologies and the provision of a for-credit, ABA-approved bar preparation course.

## **IV. Methods**

### **A. Improve Bar Passage Rates**

To assess our efforts to improve graduates' first time bar passage performance on the Ohio State Bar Examination we are using the official results of the Bar Examination as reported by the Ohio Supreme Court. To achieve the Cleveland State University Board of Trustees' goal that we be in the top one-third of Ohio law schools, we are monitoring and comparing our bar passage rate with the rates of the other eight law schools in the state.

### **B. Enhance Student Body and Expand Professional Opportunities**

#### **1. Admissions Statistics**

To assess our goal of improving the quality of the law school's entering classes, we are using the Admissions Office's records of all students admitted to study at the College of Law and their entering credentials, including both their LSAT (Law School Admissions Test) score and their undergraduate GPA (grade point average). We are also collecting and analyzing the admissions statistics of the other eight Ohio law schools.

#### **2. The National Association of Law Placement ("NALP") Statistics**

To assess our goal of improving the professional opportunities of our graduates, we are using the College of Law's annual survey of its recent graduates concerning their employment status. This information tells us about employment patterns and market trends, locally and nationally. The data identify type of employment, geographic location, size of the law firm or other legal entity, and starting salary. We are also able to assess how prospective employers view both the College of Law and our graduates. This database also provides comparative statistics, which allows us to measure our progress with that of the other law schools.

## **C. Maximize Educational Experience**

To assess our goal of maximizing the educational experience of our students, one method we are using is self-report measures among full-time law faculty members to determine whether they had changed their teaching and testing strategies over the last several years. In addition, we are analyzing the efficacy of a new, ABA-approved bar preparation course called Ohio Bar Exam Strategies and Tactics, on our graduates' performance on the Ohio State Bar Examination.

## **V. Findings**

### **A. Improve Bar Passage Rates**

On the Ohio State Bar Examination administered in February 2007, Cleveland-Marshall's first-time takers passed at a rate of 78% and ranked fifth out of the nine Ohio law schools for first-time takers, surpassing Capital, Case Western, Cincinnati, and Dayton. On the July 2006 bar exam, Cleveland-Marshall's first-time takers passed at a rate of 84% and tied for fifth with Ohio State University in bar passage rate for first-time takers. These results represent a marked improvement in both bar passage percentages and relative rankings among the nine Ohio law schools. Cleveland-Marshall's 78% and 84% passing rates are the highest we have achieved since the Ohio Supreme Court raised the passing score to 405 points in 1997. In addition, the two fifth-place rankings are equal to the best rankings we have had since 1997 and well above some of our more recent rankings. The attached Chart I summarizes the performance of the nine Ohio law schools on the Ohio State Bar Examination for the last ten years.

### **B. Enhance Student Body and Expand Professional Opportunities**

#### **1. Enhance the Quality of the Entering Class**

In the fall of 2006, the College of Law enrolled a class of 227 students. Aided by the reduction in size, the law school was able to enroll the best class in more than a decade. The credentials of the 2006 entering class were quite strong in terms of LSAT scores. For full-time students, the 25<sup>th</sup>/75<sup>th</sup> quartiles were 152-158; for part-time students, the quartiles were 151-156. In the fall of 2005, the College of Law enrolled a class of 236 students. The credentials of the 2005 entering class were also quite strong in terms of LSAT scores. For full-time students, the 25<sup>th</sup>/75<sup>th</sup> LSAT quartiles were 151-157 and for part-time students, the quartiles were 151-156 as contrasted to 152-156 (FT) and 149-155 (PT) in 2004 and 150-154 (FT) and 147-156 (PT) in 2003. The attached Chart II provides the entering student credentials of the nine Ohio law schools for the past eleven years.

## **2. Commitment to Diversity and Opportunity**

We conducted an analysis of the impact of the Bar Plan on diversity and the Legal Career Opportunities Program (LCOP), through which the College of Law admits students who do not meet the traditional admissions criteria. In the fall 2006 entering class, minority representation declined slightly to 33 (15%) students. The 2005 entering class reflected substantial diversity: 17.37% (i.e., 41 of 236) of the class indicated minority ethnicity. This figure is a slight reduction from the 21% who indicated such ethnicity in the 2004 entering class, but an increase over 11.51% for the 2003 entering class—the year prior to this implementation of the Bar Plan. In terms of African-American enrollment, 7.4% of the 2006 class was African-American compared to 6.35% in 2005, 7.66% in 2004, and 5.75% in 2003.

The reduction in the College of Law's entering class size has had no significant impact on the size of the law school's Legal Careers Opportunity Program (LCOP). Enrollment in the LCOP program has remained relatively stable over the last decade: 27 students in 1997, 34 in 1998, 29 in 1999, 24 in 2000, 24 in 2001, 18 in 2002, 26 in 2003, 23 in 2004, 21 in 2005, 19 in 2006, and 23 in 2007. If the size of LCOP remains stable at the same time that the overall size of the entering class diminishes, then LCOP enrollment will be proportionally larger than in the past.

## **3. Professional Opportunities**

In terms of expanding the professional opportunities of our graduates, the Law College's Office of Career Planning reported the following information compared to the previous year: (1) the total percentage of students employed increased (i.e., 93% compared to 91.1%), (2) the average salary decreased (i.e., \$63,518 compared to \$67,584), (3) the number of students obtaining a prestigious judicial clerkship increased (i.e., 4% compared to 1.7%), (4) the number of students taking public interest jobs increased (i.e., 5.5% compared to 4%), and (5) the number of students who took jobs outside the northeast Ohio region slightly decreased (i.e., 24 compared to 26).

### **C. Maximize Educational Experience**

#### **1. Changing Instructional and Testing Methodologies**

In the late spring of 2006, the Bar Exam Committee and the Teaching Committee conducted a joint survey of full-time faculty members to determine whether they had changed their teaching methodologies, especially vis-à-vis the bar examination. We compared these data with information gathered in the last comprehensive survey of teaching in the fall of 2003, which provided useful data from a time prior to the implementation of the Bar Plan.

A comparison of the 2003 and 2006 data indicate professors have changed their teaching in several ways in light of the Bar Plan. First, a greater number of faculty are moving away from the traditional model of one final examination at the end of the semester

by incorporating quizzes, midterm exams, research and writing assignments, problem sets, and other feedback mechanisms in their courses. Second, a greater number of faculty are incorporating short-answer and multiple-choice questions into their exams, testing modalities similar to those on the Ohio State Bar Examination. Third, the data indicate more faculty members are using closed-book exams, rather than open-book exams, again simulating the conditions of the bar exam. Finally, the comparative data suggest that professors are providing additional feedback on exams, including more written comments, individual conferences, and in-class reviews of exams.

## **2. Offering a For-Credit Bar Preparation Course**

In the 2005-2006 academic year, Cleveland-Marshall launched an ABA-approved, for-credit bar preparation course; in the previous academic year, the course was offered on a non-credit basis. Assistant Dean and Bar Coordinator Gary Williams taught four sections of Ohio Bar Exam Strategies and Tactics. Course enrollment was quite good—24 students in the two fall sections and 91 in the two spring sections. In 2006-2007, the enrollment was approximately the same—22 students in the fall and 88 students in the spring.

The empirical data suggest that the Bar Strategies course was particularly effective with students who had a law school GPA below 3.0. Of first-time takers who took either the Fall 2005 or the Spring 2006 Bar Strategies Class (some students from the Fall class waited until July 2006 to take the Bar), 29 of the 39 (**74.4%**) students with graduating GPA of under 3.0 passed the July 2006 Ohio Bar Exam. Only 13 of the 24 (**54.2%**) students who graduated with a GPA under 3.0 and did not take the Bar Strategies Class passed the July 2006 Ohio Bar Exam. Thus, students taking the course passed at a 20% higher rate than those who did not. No real difference occurred among students with a law school GPA above 3.0.

In addition to these empirical data, student evaluations indicated that the course was very beneficial. The following are representative examples of students' comments:

“This course is an excellent way to prepare for studying for the bar. I recommend it to everyone! It showed me what areas I was strong in and weak in and helped me understand how to make the necessary improvements. It also helped reduce my overall anxiety about taking the bar.”

“I feel more confident about taking the Bar since I now have a good set of tools to use during bar preparation. I also feel the Barbri course will be more beneficial since I know what to expect.”

## **V. Review**

The faculty is made aware of assessment issues during faculty meetings held each month. Changes in the curriculum were instituted by the Curriculum Committee and approved by the faculty. Changes in admissions standards have been approved by the faculty and implemented by the admissions staff with oversight by the Admissions

Committee. Employment data is collected by the Office of Career Planning and reported to the faculty yearly. In addition, staff members are made aware of these issues at monthly meetings of senior staff. The Dean, Associate Deans, and Director of Budget and Administration also meet monthly in part to review these matters. The Bar Pass Committee continues to monitor all aspects of the Bar Pass Plan and to report yearly to the faculty and staff as well as the President, Provost, and CSU Board of Trustees.

## **VI. Actions**

In light of our assessment findings, the College of Law engaged in the following activities. Beginning in the Fall of 2006, six members of the law school (i.e., Dean Geoffery S. Mearns, Associate Dean Phyllis L. Crocker, Associate Dean Patricia J. Falk, Assistant Dean Gary R. Williams, Academic Excellence Program Manager Daniel Dropko, and Professor Pam Daiker-Middaugh) held individualized counseling sessions with each second-year student regarding the bar, to provide useful information and guidance to students so they can manage the bar preparation process to maximize their success, and to gather data from them regarding risk factors. We plan to repeat these counseling sessions in the coming academic year.

In the spring of 2007, we expanded our advising activities to the first-year students. In four large-group counseling sessions, we informed students of the overall format of the Ohio State Bar Examination, the deadline for applying to take the exam, and the subjects tested on the exam. These counseling sessions occurred immediately prior to students registering for their second-year courses.

Following our analysis of the efficacy of the Ohio Bar Exam Strategies and Tactics course for graduates taking the July 2006 bar exam, Dean Mearns wrote a letter to each student who had a law school GPA below 3.0 and who was expected to graduate in 2007 urging that student to enroll in the law schools' bar preparation course.



Appendix- OH LS Entering Stats

School	Year	Class Size	FT UGPA	FT LSAT	PT UGPA	PT LSAT
<b>C-M/CSU</b>	<b>2006</b>	227	3.00-3.63	152-158	2.92-3.57	151-156
	2005	236	3.14-3.59	151-157	2.87-3.59	151-156
	2004	247	3.13-3.61	152-156	2.88-3.54	149-155
	2003	278	3.05-3.51	150-154	2.94-3.37	147-156
	2002	264	2.62-3.46	149-154	2.83-3.57	150-156
	2001	292	2.98-3.49	148-153	2.86-3.49	145-154
	2000	278	2.90-3.43	147-152	2.78-3.34	147-155
	1999	254	2.87-3.53	147-154	2.76-3.37	147-155
	1998	276	2.83-3.44	145-153	2.74-3.32	146-154
	1997	288	2.88-3.41	145-153	2.63-3.33	147-155
	1996	260	2.93-3.43	145-153	2.81-3.39	147-154
<b>Univ. of Akron</b>	<b>2006</b>	186	3.07-3.63	154-159	3.12-3.58	151-156
	2005	183	3.13-3.67	156-160	3.00-3.57	150-155
	2004	174	2.82-3.67	156-161	2.89-3.62	152-157
	2003	183	2.80-3.56	155-159	2.87-3.58	152-157
	2002	219	2.84-3.6	153-157	2.82-3.54	149-155
	2001	228	2.95-3.49	150-155	2.88-3.45	148-154
	2000	173	2.96-3.64	151-155	2.75-3.50	150-157
	1999	202	2.91-3.49	149-154	2.58-3.51	148-154
	1998	199	3.00-3.59	148-154	2.83-3.45	150-157
	1997	201	2.78-3.48	148-155	2.76-3.41	150-156
	1996	219	2.78-3.37	150-156	2.71-3.57	150-156
<b>Univ. of Toledo</b>	<b>2006</b>	190	3.02-3.82	155-160	2.94-3.71	153-158
	2005	174	2.98-3.76	155-162	3.00-3.42	152-156
	2004	190	3.07-3.76	153-159	2.86-3.37	151-155
	2003	173	2.98-3.67	153-159	2.66-3.33	151-154
	2002	205	2.84-3.53	153-158	2.64-3.42	149-153
	2001	167	2.94-3.53	150-156	2.60-3.40	148-152
	2000	140	2.93-3.55	149-156	2.68-3.43	148-154
	1999	190	2.80-3.47	146-157	2.67-3.34	146-154
	1998	166	2.69-3.34	146-156	2.81-3.36	146-154
	1997	192	2.86-3.44	148-155	2.59-3.23	147-152
	1996	200	2.67-3.37	150-157	2.69-3.57	148-153

School	Year	Class Size	FT UGPA	FT LSAT	PT UGPA	PT LSAT
Ohio State Univ.	2006	232	3.36-3.79	158-163		
	2005	217	3.32-3.72	158-164		
	2004	237	3.32-3.77	156-162	N/A	N/A
	2003	269	3.36-3.79	155-162	N/A	N/A
	2002	246	3.36-3.78	156-163		
	2001	225	3.38-3.77	155-161		
	2000	219	3.32-3.75	154-160		
	1999	215	3.27-3.75	153-160		
	1998	214	3.29-3.75	152-160		
	1997	213	3.23-3.69	153-161		
	1996	244	3.16-3.67	155-162		
Univ. of Cincinnati	2006	113	3.31-3.80	157-161		
	2005	133	3.29-3.83	156-162		
	2004	129	3.24-3.80	157-162	N/A	N/A
	2003	135	3.19-3.75	157-162	N/A	N/A
	2002	126	3.20-3.72	156-162		
	2001	97	3.20-3.70	157-162		
	2000	140	3.20-3.72	153-160		
	1999	128	3.09-3.67	155-161		
	1998	121	3.01-3.66	154-162		
	1997	123	3.04-3.66	155-163		
	1996	124	3.24-3.74	154-162		
Case Western	2006	228	3.07-3.61	157-161		
	2005	225	3.11-3.59	157-161		
	2004	228	3.04-3.53	157-161	2.96-3.50	156-157
	2003	262	2.98-3.48	156-159	N/A	N/A
	2002	244	3.01-3.49	155-160	N/A	N/A
	2001	221	2.97-3.52	154-160	N/A	N/A
	2000	219	3.00-3.49	152-159	3.61-3.82	148-156
	1999	213	2.93-3.47	153-160	N/A	N/A
	1998	201	2.99-3.50	153-161	N/A	N/A
	1997	242	3.02-3.53	152-159	3.02-3.66	151-161
	1996	226	3.02-3.57	154-161	N/A	N/A

School	Year	Class Size	FT UGPA	FT LSAT	PT UGPA	PT LSAT
Capital Univ.	2006	248	2.99-3.54	151-155	2.82-3.38	151-156
	2005	255	2.96-3.50	151-156	2.90-3.47	150-157
	2004	280	3.02-3.61	150-156	2.93-3.51	150-156
	2003	258	3.05-3.50	149-155	2.80-3.47	149-155
	2002	269	2.96-3.44	148-154	2.84-3.55	148-156
	2001	276	2.90-3.41	147-154	2.81-3.45	148-154
	2000	250	2.81-3.43	146-152	2.81-3.28	147-154
	1999	259	2.85-3.30	145-152	2.68-3.45	146-154
	1998	253	2.80-3.33	146-152	2.82-3.33	145-154
	1997	282	2.66-3.29	144-151	2.74-3.35	147-157
	1996	275	2.76-3.29	146-153	2.70-3.34	147-154
Univ. of Dayton	2006	182	2.88-3.47	150-155	3.06-3.54	151-155
	2005	119	2.87-3.45	152-156		
	2004	219	2.89-3.45	150-154	N/A	N/A
	2003	183	2.71-3.34	150-154	N/A	N/A
	2002	204	2.84-3.43	147-154		
	2001	172	2.68-3.36	147-154		
	2000	167	2.8-3.37	148-154		
	1999	167	2.8-3.38	147-154		
	1998	187	2.98-3.47	146-153		
	1997	178	2.79-3.41	146-154		
	1996	191	2.95-3.51	149-156		
Ohio Northern Univ.	2006	120	3.09-3.65	150-155		
	2005	119	3.09-3.69	150-155		
	2004	120	3.02-3.62	149-156	N/A	N/A
	2003	130	3.00-3.59	147-154	N/A	N/A
	2002	119	2.76-3.45	145-153		
	2001	120	2.70-3.40	145-150		
	2000	111	2.61-3.41	144-152		
	1999	108	2.60-3.32	145-154		
	1998	131	2.59-3.12	143-150		
	1997	131	2.47-3.19	143-152		
	1996	125	2.64-3.29	144-152		