



Annual Departmental Assessment Report

Adell Amos
Associate Dean for
Academic Affairs
aamos@uoregon.edu

Department or Program: School of Law

Academic Year of Report: August 2017-May 2018

Department Contact Person for Assessment: Adell Amos, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Section 1: Learning Objectives Assessed for this Report

For each major in the department, list the learning objectives that were assessed during this period.

In AY 2016-17, the School of Law reported on our activities on bar passage, learning outcomes, and academic success. For AY 2017-2018, we continued to assess these three learning objectives.

1. Bar Passage
2. Learning Outcomes
3. Academic Success

Section 2: Assessment Activities

For each learning outcome, describe what information was collected, how it was analyzed and discussed, and the conclusions that were drawn from the analysis. In the narrative, reference all relevant means of collecting information about learning goals, including direct measures (e.g. assessment of student assignments), indirect measures (e.g. overall grade patterns in a particular course, student reflections on learning, SERU data), and qualitative information (e.g. faculty observations, student input). While the choice of which assessments are most meaningful is up to the department, a mix of direct and indirect measures is requested.

Bar Passage

In AY 16-17, through the work of the Academic Success Committee, we learned that the strongest indicators of bar passage success or failure were being in the bottom quartile and the percentage of work a student completed of bar prep and simulated MBEs. The Academic Success Committee made four recommendations to the faculty:

- Remove students' option to turn off their rank on their unofficial online transcript, and, if a student turns it off, it is automatically turned on the next time the student accesses the system.
- Continue to update the database and analyze the data.
- Develop a program of academic support and target those at greatest risk.
- Develop a strategy to distribute to the students the data in a way that would be most salient for them.

The Law Registrar completed the first recommendation in March 2017.

In July 2017, UO overall bar passage rate was 86.96% (84.8% for first-time takers).

Office of Academic Affairs

1515 Agate Hall

1221 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1221

541-346-3826 | FAX 541-346-1564 law.uoregon.edu





In October 2017, Dean of Students Espinola engaged with the Academic Success Committee to review the data from BarBri and Kaplan against the performance of the summer 2017 bar takers. The plans to continue bar data tracking and qualitative assessment to evaluate our bar prep efforts were put on hold until a Director of Academic Success was appointed.

We worked on the remaining recommendations by revamping the Bar Boot Camp curriculum and conducting student outreach. Students on track in the BarBri program were outreached once, but students who were falling behind had additional correspondence to offer support and assistance with navigating the program. Through Summer 2018, we collected weekly data on student progress in their bar preparation program – this information is one of the resources gained in contracting with a single provider in AY 16-17.

Learning Outcomes

In AY 16-17, the next steps for learning outcomes were to engage faculty in conversation on course planning, learning outcomes, TEP resources and engagement, and curricular mapping of threshold concepts. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and faculty members engaged with TEP on individual issues. We decided to delay curriculum mapping until AY 18-19. By completing efforts to develop and vet performance indicators for our institutional learning outcomes, we hope to make the mapping exercise more robust.

At the annual faculty offsite in August, the law faculty discussed, brainstormed, and voted on our institutional learning outcomes. In fall, Associate Dean Amos hosted a meeting for faculty and pro tem instructors to discuss rigor in teaching and learning. Associate Dean Amos presented on, facilitated discussion around, and vetted the institutional learning outcomes with the Dean's Student Advisory Council (DSAC) and Dean's Advisory Council (DAC). In May, the faculty formally adopt our eight institutional learning outcomes.

The University of Oregon School of Law expects that our graduates should be able to:

- (1) demonstrate the knowledge and ability necessary to practice substantive and procedural law and to understand the dynamic processes through which law is created, developed, and changed.
- (2) employ sound and articulate legal reasoning to identify, research, and analyze legal problems.
- (3) engage in and appreciate the importance of their professional and ethical responsibilities towards clients, the local community, our nation, and the world.
- (4) communicate effectively with clients, decision makers, and other relevant stakeholders.
- (5) recognize the responsibility of lawyers to serve as informed and professional leaders.
- (6) understand and appreciate diversity, equity, and inclusion as components of their personal and professional success.
- (7) appreciate the critical role that lawyers play in ensuring meaningful access to the legal system, promoting the just application of its laws, and serving their clients and the community.
- (8) understand the interrelationship between the creation, development, reform, and practice of law, the natural and social sciences, the humanities, and the arts.



Academic Success

For academic success, the next steps were to design and implement a data tracking tool to look at the effectiveness of the interventions we have adopted with regard to academic success. As with bar data analysis, this was also put on hold until a Director was appointed. Instead, the Academic Success Committee focused on researching the academic success initiatives at other law schools in order to lay the foundation for the new Academic Excellence Program.

In Fall 2016, Dean of Students Espinola hosted a brainstorming session with administrators and staff around “Best Practices for Student Success.” Students take a Professional Commitments Oath as part of Convocation.

In May 2018, the faculty adopted the diversity course and professional planning program degree requirements. The diversity course degree requirement was adopted in response to Oregon Law’s Diversity Action Plan which calls for a “new graduation requirement whereby students must take at least one elective that includes content relating to legal history, structural inequality, discrimination, cultural context, or cultural competency.”¹ The professional planning degree requirement is a non-credit bearing mandatory first year program with the goal of preparing J.D. students for successful competition in the job market at the beginning stages of their careers.

Section 3: Actions Taken Based on Assessment Analysis

For each learning goal assessed for each major, describe any actions taken as a result of assessment information, or plans to take action during the next academic year. Describe how the actions or action plans are meant to address the issues arrived at through the assessment activities in Section 2.

Bar Passage

Based on the research and recommendations of the Academic Success Committee in AY 17-18, the Dean appointed Professor Megan McAlpin to serve as the Director of the Academic Excellence Program in AY 18-19.

In April 2018, Professor McAlpin led a mandatory bar boot camp relaying to students that completing the bar prep course is the strongest known predictor of bar passage success. This message was an initial attempt to relay the salient data to students. Professor McAlpin also prepared Lawyering Skills and Bar Success for approval as a new experimental course. This course was developed from curriculum provided by Barbri, another benefit of the decision to contract with a sole provider.

Learning Outcomes

¹ University of Oregon School of Law, 2017-2018 Diversity Action Plan, on file with author.



With respect to course level learning outcomes, fifteen courses were reviewed and approved for permanent approval by the law school's curriculum committee, law faculty, and the UOCC.

In AY 17-18, the Assessments and Outcomes Committee worked to articulate performance indicators for our interdisciplinary learning outcome (#8). They then collected data on these performance indicators and presented on learning outcome #8 at the February faculty meeting. The memo on learning outcome #8 concludes, "Broadly, it would seem that a substantial portion of students in the building have some sort of at least minimal exposure to interdisciplinary ideas and concepts – through events organized across campus, and because a critical mass of instructors cover some number of interdisciplinary concepts and content in their courses."²

Academic Success

In anticipation of having a Director of Academic Excellence, the faculty voted to change our academic standards so that probationers are now required to meet with the Director, not with the Academic Standing Committee. This provides for consistent academic counseling for students and charges the Director with follow up on all of our most at-risk students.³

Section 4: Other Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience

Briefly describe other continuous improvement efforts that are not directly related to the learning goals above. In other words, what activity has the department engaged in to improve the student educational experience? This might include changes such as curriculum revisions, new advising approaches, revised or new co-curricular activities, etc. Describe the rationale for the change(s) and any outcomes resulting from the change(s).

Co-Curricular Credit Bearing Activities

In AY 2017-2018, Joan Rocklin was designated as the instructor of record for all three journals. This is a slight change from the previous academic year in which Associate Dean Amos had designated one faculty member as the lead instructor for each journal. Having one instructor of record has continued to provide increased accountability and faculty engagement. Similarly, we continued to offer Oral Argument and Appellate Briefs. These course offerings have enhanced appellate advocacy skills for students and provided structured support for students engaged in Moot Court competitions.

JD Writing Requirement

The Law Registrar implemented a new system to check in with students and faculty supervisors and track progress on the writing requirement over the last semester in law school.

² Tippet, L., "Measurement regarding Interdisciplinary Learning Outcome AY 17-18," (October 17, 2018) memo on file with author.

³ See "Proposed Changes to Academic Standards," (March 22, 2018) memo on file with author.



In addition, Professor Liz Frost hosted a series of “Just Write” and “Throwback Thursday” sessions. Just Write sessions are three-hour, distraction-free blocks for focused writing time. Throwback Thursdays are quick, 20-minute sessions on writing basics.

Section 5: Plans for Next Year

Briefly describe tentative assessment plans for the next academic year. Which goals will be assessed and how? What actions will be taken as a result of this year’s analysis of assessment information? What other plans does the department have to improve the student educational experience? What are the budgetary implications of any proposed actions? How will those be addressed?

Bar Passage

With the exclusive contract with Barbri for bar preparation, Oregon Law gained access to curriculum that can be used for an academic support workshop series, supplemental materials for faculty to incorporate into their course offerings, and diagnostic tools for assessing students during each year of law school. The newly appointed Director of Academic Excellence will review those materials and create an implementation plan for their use.

Learning Outcomes

In AY 18-19, the Assessments and Outcomes Committee will work to draft performance indicators and measures for the remaining learning outcomes. We will also begin to develop program level learning outcomes for the LL.M. and CRES Masters programs.

Academic Success

Professor McAlpin plans to offer five Academic Excellence Program interventions in AY 18-19 – a series of 1L workshops, small skill building groups, Legal Writing for the Bar, Lawyering Skills and Bar Success, and a supplemental bar prep course for 3Ls. She is working to put sufficient structure and an effective data tracking system in place so that measuring the impact of these interventions is possible.