



ALBANY LAW SCHOOL

ALBANY LAW SCHOOL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

2022

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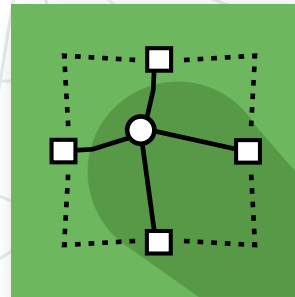
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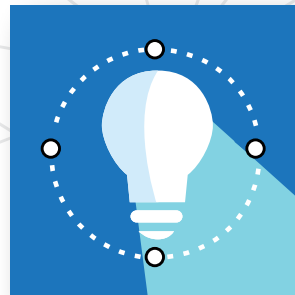
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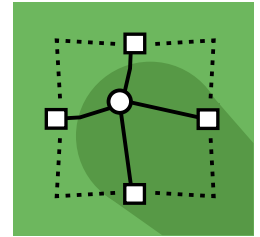


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OUR COMMITMENT TO THE
SUCCESS OF THIS STRATEGIC
PLAN

OUR MISSION

Albany Law School educates and empowers lawyers and leaders through a rigorous and innovative program of study providing students with the knowledge, values, critical thinking skills, and transformational competencies necessary to become ethical and effective professionals in a rapidly changing world. Our students will promote the rule of law, equity, and access to justice in their professional pursuits and advance their careers using a sophisticated understanding of the law to improve society.



TRANSFORMATION

OUR VISION

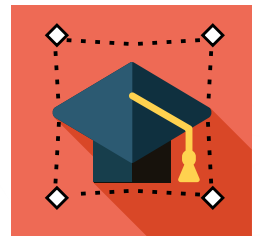
Through an enduring and unwavering commitment to and focus on the success of our students in achieving their personal and professional goals, and to excellence in all we do, we will provide an engaging and flexible curriculum and enriching and immersive educational experiences that prepare graduates not only to be successful in their legal and professional careers, but also as individuals who will, with the highest degree of professionalism, fundamentally transform the practice of law and related professions to help create a more just, fair and equitable world.



INNOVATION

OUR CORE STRATEGIC GOALS

THE PILLARS OF THIS NEW STRATEGIC PLAN THAT WILL GUIDE THIS TRANSFORMATION—IMPACT, INNOVATION, AND INCLUSION—ARE BOTH A TESTAMENT TO OUR HISTORY AND A GATEWAY TO OUR FUTURE.



STUDENT-CENTERED

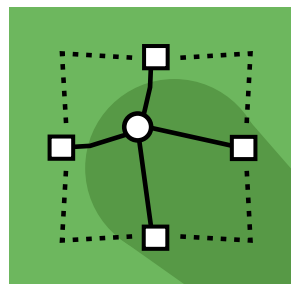
WE WILL INSTILL in our students *Transformational Competencies* that prepare them to excel and lead in the 21st century and will enable them to build impactful, meaningful, and rewarding careers in a rapidly changing world.

WE WILL ADOPT an *Innovation-Across-the-Curriculum* approach that will ensure that we, through continuous self-assessment, continue to innovate in the classroom and in the courses of study and degrees that we offer as we further refine what it means to be a graduate school for the study of law, provide more flexible and engaging programming, and prepare our students for the ways in which the study and the practice of law and related professions will change in the coming decades.

WE WILL CONTINUE our *Student-Centered Focus* in everything we do, which includes holistically supporting the well-being and personal and professional development of our students and deepening our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout our entire community.

1. TRANSFORMATIONAL COMPETENCIES FOR A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

The oldest independent law school in the country, Albany Law School has an established legacy of excellence in service and innovation dating back to 1851. As we embark upon a new chapter in the school's illustrious history, this Strategic Plan bears the hallmarks of this legacy, but also embraces new challenges and continues the development of our evolution into a graduate school for the study of law.



TRANSFORMATION

Our most recent strategic plan focused on preparing our graduates to achieve their personal and professional goals through preparation for the career opportunities that were emerging at the time that plan was adopted. This Plan is animated by a desire to prepare our graduates not only for the opportunities of today but also those that will arise throughout their careers. This Plan will provide our graduates with the capacity to be lifelong learners, prepared through their mastery of transformational competencies identified here to adapt to and drive change.

Our curriculum will prepare students for meaningful and impactful careers that help them meet their personal and professional goals by teaching them to develop and hone the critical competencies necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world, including the following:

- A commitment to the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and professionalism;
- critical thinking and analysis;
- effective oral and written communication and advocacy skills;
- self-reflection and assessment;
- complex problem-solving capacities;
- an appreciation for interdisciplinary perspectives;
- collaboration and teamwork;
- cross-cultural understanding;
- a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- the capacity for consensus building;
- leadership;
- project management;
- self-directedness;
- resilience and flexibility, and
- the development of a mindset based on active learning that fosters the capacity for lifelong learning and sustained career excellence.

STRATEGIES AND KEY TACTICS

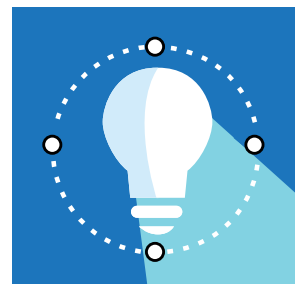
1.1: TO MEET THE GOAL OF ENSURING OUR STUDENTS DEVELOP AND DEMONSTRATE THESE TRANSFORMATIONAL COMPETENCIES, WE WILL:

- Infuse the curriculum with opportunities for students to develop transformational competencies essential to succeeding in dynamic environments and a rapidly changing world;
- Develop new opportunities specifically focused on strengthening our students' research and oral and written communication and advocacy skills;
- Adopt learning technologies that will prepare students for developing these competencies effectively and expose them to the practice technologies essential to their future success;
- Support our students to develop the skills, habits, competencies, and approaches necessary to develop their professional identities and become self-directed lifelong learners, ready to respond to and drive technological and societal change with equanimity, ingenuity, and resilience;
- Deepen, enrich, and broaden the range of experiential learning opportunities, in The Justice Center, our Field Placement Program, and other centers and initiatives created to ensure students develop and demonstrate the transformational competencies and prepare them for their chosen career paths and professional success;
- Offer focused learning opportunities to our students within their chosen area of study as well as have an array of rich, interdisciplinary learning settings at their disposal so that they will gain both deep knowledge and excellence in their field while also developing the ability to understand disciplines and professional domains other than law and prepare them for a future of collaborative work;
- Use of our holistic, forward-thinking approach based on the transformational competencies will not just prepare our students to satisfy their professional licensing requirements, like bar passage and other credentials, it will also develop within them the wisdom, practical judgment, and confidence to thrive in their personal and professional pursuits throughout the arc of their career, and help them gain not just knowledge of the law—its content, purpose, history, and importance in society—but also an appreciation for its evolving and growing status in major areas of American life;
- Ensure our students exhibit not just proficiency in the law, but also can engage in conceptual, strategic, and other complex thinking necessary for professional success;
- Develop and use capstone experiences to assess whether students are able to demonstrate these competencies before earning their degree.

1.2: TO FOSTER OUR STUDENTS' FORMATION OF A PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND ASSIST IN THE PURSUIT OF THEIR CAREER GOALS, WE WILL:

- Ensure students take full advantage of our Career Opportunity Pathways so that they can develop deep knowledge and excellence in their chosen field; provide up-to-date resources around the Pathways so students can take full advantage of them as a means to professional development; and examine whether additional pathways are desirable, including: e.g., exploring the potential creation of a Career Opportunity Pathway focused on Criminal Justice;
- Further enhance our career counseling services by educating our students on career possibilities from the very beginning of their engagement with the school;
- Leverage our extensive alumni base and our current centers and affiliations to build a stronger and more diverse network of professional connections for our students and ensure our students know how to benefit from this network;
- Reinforce student self-assessment and self-directed learning in the course of professional identity formation through a range of intentional techniques that we will incorporate throughout our academic and career-planning programming, including formative assessment and meaningful self-reflection;
- Recruit non-traditional employers outside of legal practice to provide our students to fill internship positions and post-graduate employment opportunities;
- Ensure all of our students are provided with support and ample opportunities to explore their desired career path, including those who might wish to consider non-traditional or geographically diverse career opportunities or those in public service;
- Build on, strengthen, and expand the Government Law Center's relationships with governments at all levels to increase opportunities for public service;
- Strengthen Albany Law School's historic connections to government and government-related law practice, including curricular offerings and other programs that prepare students to be policymakers and leaders serving the public interest.

2. AN INNOVATION-ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM APPROACH



INNOVATION

Established to serve the legal profession of the 19th century in novel and creative ways, Albany Law School innovated and adapted to the changes in the nation and the world of the 20th century, and now stands poised to meet the challenges of the 21st. This legacy of innovation provides a firm foundation for this Strategic Plan through which we will adopt an approach that we call “Innovation Across the Curriculum” that will ensure we continue to innovate in the classroom and in the courses of study we offer, but also in the competencies we instill in our students, ones that will serve them well and prepare them to excel throughout their careers.

It is because of this tradition of innovation, this legacy of excellence, and our powerful mission to provide our graduates with opportunities that have impact on their lives and the communities where they will live and work that we have begun the transformation of the school from one that serves to educate future lawyers alone, to one dedicated to providing a rigorous education that can help launch rewarding careers for individuals who seek a legal education in some form to improve their lives, develop professional expertise, and bring legal skills to bear in a range of fields and professions. This new vision for the study of law, one that builds on our

legacy and points toward a future of innovation, inclusion, and impact, will prepare students of the 21st century for the challenges that lie ahead while adapting the law school as an institution to engage with the broader world in new, creative, inspired, and inspiring ways. While innovation has always been a hallmark of everything we do, it will now serve as one of the cornerstones of this Strategic Plan.

In pursuit of this goal, we will focus on three areas: further strengthening and expanding our flexible programming geared towards the legal professions broadly defined, including expanding and further refining the creation of a graduate school for the study of law; preparing our students for changes to the law and the practice of law; and strengthening the ability of our faculty and staff to innovate in the classroom, in our programming, in the production of engaged and creative scholarship, and in the provision of effective and impactful service to the school and the wider community.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

2.1: TO FURTHER ENHANCE AND BROADEN OUR CURRICULAR OFFERINGS AND ADVANCE OUR GOAL OF BUILDING A GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR THE STUDY OF LAW, WE WILL:

- Expand access to all of our programs by continuing to provide more flexible options and avenues for students to pursue a range of degrees with us, including the strategic expansion of our use of online courses and programs;
- Explore additional flexible programming, including examining the development of opportunities for students to obtain a JD degree through evening, weekend, fully online, or hybrid (mixed in-person and online) options;
- Offer short-term, modular, and flexible programming to engage with important, cutting-edge topics as they arise.

(Goal 2 continued)

2.2: TO PREPARE OUR STUDENTS FOR THE EVOLUTION OF LAW AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE, WE WILL:

- Develop programming that prepares our graduates for the many ways that technological, social, political, and environmental change will impact the law and professional practice;
- Teach students how technology and innovation are affecting their chosen fields of study and to appreciate the value of interdisciplinary analysis of complex problems;
- Strengthen and expand our strategic partnerships, including our affiliation with the University at Albany, to create more avenues through which we can draw prospective students from different disciplines, increase the potential for interdisciplinary collaboration, and develop new career opportunities for our graduates;
- Use The Justice Center as a laboratory at the law school where students can be exposed to and learn how to work with emerging technologies that will affect law practice.

2.3: TO ENSURE OUR FACULTY AND STAFF CAN CONTINUE TO INNOVATE IN THEIR TEACHING, SCHOLARSHIP AND SERVICE, WE WILL:

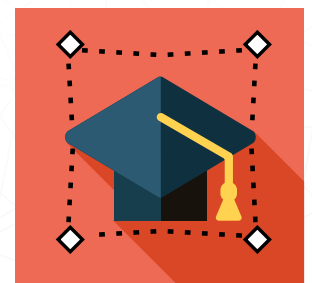
- Provide all faculty and staff—those who are already part of the community and those who will join us in the future—with the support necessary to incorporate innovative methodologies and cutting-edge teaching technology in our programming as appropriate;
- Ensure innovative, engaged, and responsive teaching, scholarship, and service that strengthens the entire community are all cultivated, prioritized, incentivized, and recognized;
- Support our faculty and staff so that they can remain agile to respond to the emerging needs of our students, the profession, the law, the legal system, and society in light of technological and social changes;
- Provide meaningful opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to develop impactful scholarship and promote it through various media and a range of platforms and outlets;
- Create meaningful opportunities for faculty and staff to collaborate and build communities among their subject-matter peers both internally and externally.

3. A STUDENT-CENTERED FOCUS ON INDIVIDUALIZED ATTENTION AND INCLUSIVENESS

Our continuing transformation into a graduate school for the study of law, with flexible programming and degree offerings, will open the door to students with different life experiences, interests, and career goals and ensure we attract students from diverse backgrounds who will excel in their chosen professional paths and benefit from an Albany Law education. In addition, our student-centered focus that strives to promote not just professional development but also personal well-being will help students pursue meaningful and rewarding careers. A more open and accessible campus culture will help to diversify the practice of law and make the study of law itself more enriching. With an unwavering commitment to our students and their professional success, we will maintain our student-centered focus in all that we do and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout our community.

Our student-centered focus engages our students as active participants in their education,

development, and well-being and we strive to facilitate our students' fulfillment of their potentials as lawyers and other professionals for whom law is crucial. Our educators not only guide our students in the study of law they also foster that education in an environment that encourages students to take ownership over their own learning and in developing transformational competencies and skills such as analysis, critical thinking, problem-solving, independent thinking, and professional behavior within and related to the field of law.



STUDENT-CENTERED

(Goal 3 continued)

This dual commitment to individualized attention and inclusiveness has been a hallmark of our community for nearly two centuries. Since its founding, Albany Law School has fostered intellectual development and prepared lawyers from diverse backgrounds to excel in the practice of law and serve as pathbreaking role models for the generations of students who have realized their personal and professional goals by obtaining an Albany Law education. James Campbell Matthews, Albany Law School Class of 1870, was the first African-American law

student admitted to a law school in New York State, the first to graduate from such a law school, and one of the nation's first African-American judges. Kate Stoneman, Albany Law School class of 1898, was the first woman admitted to the bar in New York State after a long and protracted battle. Albany Law School is committed to building on this history by continuing to focus on the success and well-being of our students and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion as we embark upon the implementation of this new and ambitious Strategic Plan.

OUR CORE VALUES AS AN INSTITUTION CONTINUE TO INCLUDE, AND WHICH WE REAFFIRM IN THIS STRATEGIC PLAN, ASPIRING TO ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING IDEALS:

- Offering students a rich learning environment and a rigorous and innovative academic program;
- Providing an educational setting that advances liberty, justice, ethics, integrity, critical thinking and the search for truth;
- Advancing equality of opportunity and opposing discrimination and bigotry;
- Promoting inclusion on campus and in the profession;
- Supporting academic freedom, free expression and a robust, open, respectful exchange of diverse ideas; and
- Fostering an inclusive, respectful, and compassionate campus culture.

We also re-affirm our commitment to academic freedom and our appreciation for the importance of diversity of thought, experiences, and background. Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion means that our community does not discriminate on the basis of gender, gender identity or expression, race, creed, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, domestic violence victim status, military or veteran status, genetic predisposition status, criminal conviction or age in its programs and activities and will address discriminatory conduct should it arise in our community. In addition, we will set a deliberate goal of building and sustaining a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community to address specific forms of discrimination that have historically affected the legal profession in particular. To that end, we will take active steps to support this goal, including

but not limited to, promoting *Anti-Racism*, the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life where necessary to overcome racial inequality; *Gender Justice*, the work of advocating changes necessary to ensure that everyone is treated equally and with respect and enjoys full rights and equal dignity regardless of their gender, transgender or nonbinary identity or expression, or lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer existence; and *Disability Equity*, a commitment to ensuring the profession values access, self-determination, and an expectation and valuing of difference in terms of disability, identity, and culture.

STRATEGIES AND KEY TACTICS

3.1: TO REALIZE OUR COMMITMENT TO MAINTAINING OUR FOCUS ON STUDENT SUCCESS, WE WILL:

- Continue to provide exemplary individualized academic and career advisement and support to our students as they pursue their educational goals, develop their professional identity, and launch their careers;
- Build on our demonstrated track record of success in providing individualized mentoring and guidance by continuing to provide our students with the essential support they need to achieve their personal and professional goals and encouraging them to embrace an intentional and self-directed approach to course and skill-acquisition sequencing that will enable them to succeed in their chosen career;
- Maintain our role as leaders in wellness programming and support so that our students will learn to thrive in the face of the adversity and challenges they will confront throughout their careers;
- Promote a culture of respect that values and promotes professionalism, civility, and kindness, and encourages the adoption of a growth mindset focused on personal and professional development and mutual support.

3.2: TO REALIZE OUR COMMITMENTS TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION WE WILL:

- Ensure that the community prioritizes and realizes diversity, equity, and inclusion in developing its programs, policies, practices, and initiatives and adopts effective, creative, and engaging recruitment efforts to attract and retain diverse faculty, staff, and students;
- Strengthen the many contributions of our faculty and staff to enriching our community and ensure that the burdens of sustaining a diverse and inclusive community are equally shared;
- Create a pipeline program through which we can recruit and develop new teachers and scholars from diverse backgrounds who will ultimately join and enrich our faculty;
- Support faculty and staff in ways that ensure we can offer meaningful opportunities for professional development and growth so that a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community can flourish at the law school;
- Provide opportunities for our students and all members of the faculty, staff, and administration to develop the capacity for self-reflection and self-critique; the ability to examine their own beliefs and cultural identities; and an appreciation for the beliefs and cultural identities of others;
- Provide exemplars of diverse, ethical, and resilient leadership through campus speakers and invited guests;
- Provide dedicated career programming specifically for students who are members of historically underrepresented communities, including first-generation, BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ students; partner with student affinity groups to provide tailored career programming specifically for students from historically underrepresented communities; and offer opportunities for leadership development through the Women's Leadership Initiative;
- Promote and provide support for culturally inclusive teaching practices that consider students' backgrounds, experiences, and cultural and linguistic frames of reference; develop sustained faculty training on the impact of unconscious bias on instruction and the classroom experience; and add training on expectations for community members to orientation for new faculty, students, and staff;
- Develop further clinical, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs that focus on equity and access to justice and create opportunities to consider issues from multiple perspectives;
- Train and equip our leaders, faculty, staff, and students to facilitate difficult conversations that foster inclusion and equity and recognize the importance of diversity of thought and position;
- Continue to diversify our Board to reflect the growing diversity of our students and alumni;
- Adopt guiding principles for all forms of communication, including online communication, among community members;
- Commit to adopting policies that are consistent, equitable, inclusive and transparent;
- Cultivate the activities and ongoing engagement of our innovative Faculty-Trustee Communication Council, Student Bar Association, student groups, Centers, and Institutes to ensure alignment with and activities in furtherance of this Plan;
- Ensure all students can develop the transformational competency of practicing and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

In order to achieve all of the goals, aspirations, and elements of the Strategic Plan, we will embrace a range of commitments and tactics to realize it. Our last strategic plan resulted in a capital campaign that not only met, but exceeded, our goals for it. To realize the goals of this new Strategic Plan, we will build on this recent success in varied ways by investing in the current Plan in real, effective, and meaningful ways.

TO ACHIEVE THESE ENDS, WE WILL:

- Effectively steward our financial and other resources to support the goals of this plan, including prioritizing accessibility and affordability of an Albany Law education, making appropriate investments in our Institutional Advancement resources and talent, and strengthening our efforts in alumni engagement and contributions of talent and financial support;
- Maintain and adapt our physical campus and technology to optimize our learning environment, support innovations in our curriculum and pedagogy; foster interdisciplinary, collaborative and experiential learning; and to support the academic life and well-being of our students;
- Develop admissions and enrollment strategies that strengthen and grow the applicant pool for all of our academic programs;
- Grow our online masters and LLM programs in keeping with our commitment to building and maintaining a graduate school for the study of law, including creating new degree offerings in emerging areas of interest and opportunity and building new programming connected to certification requirements in specific industries following data-based assessment of market opportunities;
- Provide opportunities for those seeking professional credentials related to compliance in a range of professional settings to pursue and obtain the qualifications necessary to excel in their chosen field;
- Develop the administrative infrastructure, human capital, and professional expertise necessary to strengthen expanded programming in the online graduate programs while maintaining current practices and policies with respect to all of our programming that ensure its continued excellence and rigor; one aspect of this expansion will include the creation of a new position of Associate Dean for the Graduate Program who will also be a member of the faculty;
- Provide adequate staffing to oversee the effectiveness and operation of the school's technological infrastructure; assist the faculty in deploying cutting-edge and effective methodologies for developing creative, impactful programming that will prepare students for their professional future, including orienting students to the ways in which technology will impact the practice of law; and strengthen our strategic partnerships with institutions both inside and outside of the discipline of the law;
- Prioritize developing resources to realize our commitment to making an Albany Law School education accessible for a diverse body of students, which will include growing donor supported student scholarships;
- Adopt and implement an Institutional Diversity Strategic Plan for attaining inclusivity and conduct periodic evaluations of progress in areas where diversity, equity, and inclusion are institutional concerns, and modify our planning and programming as needed in light of those evaluations;
- Expand and build our partnerships with corporations, law firms, foundations, and other potential stakeholder supporters with an eye towards strengthening programs across the law school including in academics, admissions, career planning and placement, and institutional advancement;
- Develop and implement a robust, effective, and comprehensive social media and communications plan that engages faculty and students, complements and enhances our recruitment strategies, and raises the profile and enhances the reputation of the school;
- Continue to invest in next-generation classroom features and practice-ready training technologies to prepare our students for the careers of the future;
- Develop a plan for facility renewal and revitalization where necessary to enhance the student experience at Albany Law School, including initiating a campus plan focused on enhancements to individual student study spaces, collaborative work areas, makerspace rooms, and the establishment of a student center in the core of the 1928 building to serve this purpose.

