

# CONCEPTUALIZING A LAW SCHOOL AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

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I came to the deanship of my law school in 1998 from its faculty—twenty-one years on the faculty, to be precise. One of the themes of my installation address was that I wanted my law school to be viewed, and to view itself, as an integral part of the legal profession. The concept resonated. It felt good to say it. Those who heard it (including our faculty!) found it refreshing. It conveyed a sense of energy and engagement about the institution. Every time I repeated the phrase—“integral part of the legal profession”—in subsequent formal and informal presentations, it seemed to evoke a favorable response. In this essay, I reflect on: (1) what led me to articulate the idea that a law school should conceptualize itself as an integral part of the legal profession; (2) how our law school has implemented this concept without compromising the values of academic independence and intellectual rigor that animate legal education; (3) how this orientation has benefited my law school; and, (4) whether this conceptualization should be recommended to other deans.

## I. ORIGINS OF THE “INTEGRAL RELATIONSHIP” CONCEPT

My principal field of academic inquiry as a professor has been the legal profession. As a brand new law professor in 1974, I was thrust into the then newly required course on professional responsibility. I was an unlikely choice for this assignment because I came to academia from a stint in the Justice Department during the Nixon administration. I had been a very low-level attorney in the Antitrust Division, but because Watergate and other scandals had transpired during my time there, some might have doubted the suitability of assigning a former DOJ attorney from that era to instruct future lawyers on the finer points of legal ethics. Perhaps it was the fact that I had survived the “Saturday Night Massacre” that gave my dean the confidence to make this assignment. (Of course, the heroes of Watergate were those who *did not* survive the “Saturday Night Massacre.”) Despite a rocky beginning in the course, I stayed with it, and most of my scholarship has been focused on the legal profession and legal ethics.

As I developed as an academic in the field of legal ethics, I spent a lot of time considering the relationship between legal education and the behavior of lawyers. I resisted the notion, advanced by some practitioners and commentators, that it must be inadequacies in legal education that were to blame for the shortcomings of the legal profession. Similarly, I was skeptical of the claim that law schools held the primary responsibility for reforming the profession. When the *MacCrate Report*

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was published in 1992,<sup>1</sup> I embraced its premise that law schools and the profession *both* play roles in an “educational continuum” that shapes the attitudes, values, and work habits of lawyers. This insight made perfect sense to me. It corroborated what I had recently concluded in the most ambitious scholarship I had produced, an empirical study that probed the relationship between what students learn about legal ethics in the classroom and what they learn in practice settings outside the law schools.<sup>2</sup> By that time, after a number of years of teaching professional responsibility, I had the distinct sense that I was relatively powerless to influence law students to behave in ways that were not embraced by the professional culture in which they would work. The results of my empirical study, based on data gathered over several years from law students who were working in law offices while attending law school, were consistent with this view.

My work as a professor of professional responsibility had produced many opportunities to interact with lawyers in the city and state where my law school is located. Speaking opportunities abounded as mandatory continuing legal education took hold, with its separate ethics requirement. In 1986, I was invited to write a monthly column on legal ethics for the local county bar newspaper, with a readership of 2,000, which continues to this day. This led to more speaking invitations and then to appointments to various state and county bar association committees dealing with such subjects as the Rules of Professional Conduct, legal ethics, the disciplinary process, professionalism, and the state’s student practice program. Thus, I was playing an active role in the organized bar at the time of my appointment as dean.

In my interactions with bar leaders and rank-and-file lawyers, I had found a level of interest and deference that, frankly, was unexpected. It had become clear to me that there was a thirst within the profession to be engaged with legal scholars. I encountered no disdain for the “ivory tower professor” because, as a professor, I had not been cloistered in an ivory tower exhibiting disdain for the profession. This is not to say that my scholarship was uncritical of the profession. However, I wrote and spoke from a point of view that assumed that most lawyers, and the profession as a whole, had laudable aspirations and would respond constructively to meritorious criticism.

My research and scholarship addressed matters that were relevant to the bar, and many lawyers seemed to relish the opportunity to engage a professor in conversation about my subject area. The practitioners did not view me as irrelevant to their professional work; on the contrary, they viewed me as a valuable resource. As an academic, I was treated with a level of respect and a degree of credibility that made my encounters with practitioners satisfying and enjoyable.

The lawyers with whom I came into contact were interested in more than legal ethics and professional responsibility; they were interested in legal education as well. They wanted to talk about admissions trends, curricular and pedagogical matters, and the placement situation. There was a real desire to be informed about

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1. AMERICAN BAR ASS’N, AN EDUCATIONAL CONTINUUM, REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON LAW SCHOOLS AND THE PROFESSION: NARROWING THE GAP (1992) [hereinafter MACCRATE REPORT].

2. Lawrence K. Hellman, *The Effects of Law Office Work on the Formation of Law Students’ Professional Values: Observation, Explanation, Optimization*, 4 GEO. J. LEGAL ETHICS 537 (1991).

what was going on in the law school world. And there was real value to me as a teacher and scholar to learn about practitioners' experiences and views. These interactions with the profession informed my work as an academic while giving me an opportunity to influence legal practice, professional behavior, and the development of law and public policy through private conversations and bar committee work as well as through academic scholarship.

Of course, as an academic, I was aware of the tension between legal academia and the profession, sometimes reflected in disdainful attitudes and remarks running in both directions.<sup>3</sup> However, I had come to the view that the claim that there is a disconnect between the law schools and the profession was off the mark. What had happened was that legal academics and members of the bench and bar had lost sight of how their work is interrelated.

As I contemplated the task of serving as dean, I knew that the bar and the judiciary were important constituencies—not for me, but for the school. Part of my job would be to articulate the vision, mission, and programs of our school to these constituencies to gain their confidence and support for the school's institutional aspirations while, at the same time, communicating to our faculty the interests and concerns of the bar with respect to legal education. It seemed advantageous to reach out to the profession, to indicate openness to external assessment and a willingness to seek to further the higher goals and aspirations of the bar. By conveying to the bar and its leadership that the law school was sincerely interested in a relationship of equality and mutual respect, I hoped to tap the inherent desire of lawyers to be involved with legal education and to create an opportunity for the law school and its faculty to be taken seriously by the bar. I wanted the law school to be, and to be perceived as, immediately relevant to the profession.

Thus, it seemed entirely natural for me to seek to communicate a willingness to engage the bar and its leaders, to depict the relationship between our school and the bar as a reciprocal one. The concept was of a relationship in which neither party would be viewed as dominant, where each could provide value to the other, and where each would accept rather than disapprove of the perspective of the other.

In sum, based on my own experience as an academic, I had come to the view that a law school can be an integral part of the legal profession. I thought there would be value in encouraging both my faculty and the practicing bar to share this perspective. And so, I articulated the "integral relationship" concept and looked for ways to put it into practice.

## II. PUTTING THE "INTEGRAL RELATIONSHIP" CONCEPT INTO PRACTICE

What does it mean for a law school to conduct itself as an institution that is an integral part of the legal profession? The short answer is that such a law school will act like a normal law school. Conceptualizing a law school as an integral part of the

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3. See, e.g., Harry T. Edwards, *The Growing Disjunction Between Legal Education and the Legal Profession*, 91 MICH. L. REV. 34 (1992); Harry T. Edwards, *The Growing Disjunction Between Legal Education and the Legal Profession: A Postscript*, 91 MICH. L. REV. 2191 (1993); Harry T. Edwards, *Another "Postscript" to "The Growing Disjunction Between Legal Education and the Legal Profession,"* 69 WASH. L. REV. 561 (1994).

legal profession does not require doing things that law schools have not traditionally done and would not want to do in the ordinary course of events. It does not require the school to alter its curriculum or to otherwise patronize the bar. The school's governance remains with the faculty and dean. The "integral relationship" concept simply requires a mindset that creates an *awareness*—on the part of legal educators and practitioners alike—that there is an important connection between the goals, purposes, and aspirations of the law school and the goals, purposes, and aspirations of the bar. It puts the *MacCrate Report's* "continuum" into practice.<sup>4</sup>

### *Just Say It*

The first step in bringing the concept to life was to articulate it. It was valuable for alumni, bar leaders, and members of the judiciary to hear it because declaring this orientation attracted their attention and encouraged them to take notice of the school's activities. It was important for the faculty, administration, and staff of the law school to hear it because it helped to shape their view of the institution's mission. For internal and external constituents alike, the concept evoked an elevated sense of relevance for everything that the law school was doing.

### *Be Inclusive*

One of the first things we did was to become more aggressive in inviting members of the profession, including its leaders, to law school events. This began with my installation ceremony. This event was planned, not as a celebration of me, but as a reawakening of interest in the law school. As it happened, our school is located in the home city of that year's president-elect of the American Bar Association. He came. The incumbent president of the state bar, many members of the state bar's board of governors, and its executive director attended. Jurists from state and federal courts in our state were present. Leading members of the bar who are not alumni of our law school accepted invitations to attend.

Those who were invited to speak at the installation illustrated, through their careers (which were reviewed as they were introduced) as well as their words, how legal academics contribute not only to the training of future lawyers, but also to the well being of the legal profession and improvement of law and legal institutions. One was James P. White, then the ABA's consultant on legal education. Another was David Ruder, whose 40-plus-year academic career, including a period as dean of the law school I had attended, was interrupted by a term as Chairman of the SEC. There was also Victor Rosenblum, a past president of the AALS, who had a long record of influential service on the Administrative Conference of the United States and whose book, *The Making of a Public Profession* (with Frances Zemans), presaged the *MacCrate Report's* articulation of the law school/legal profession "continuum."<sup>5</sup> The immediate past president of the state bar (who had appointed me, when I was a professor, to some important committees) also spoke. Each

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4. MACCRATE REPORT, *supra* note 1.

5. FRANCES K. ZEMANS & VICTOR G. ROSENBLUM, *THE MAKING OF A PUBLIC PROFESSION* (1981).

speaker touched on the importance of fostering a close and mutually respectful relationship between the law schools and the profession.

By design, the installation ceremony was preceded by one of my school's annual endowed lectures, which was delivered by a nationally prominent scholar, Erwin Chemerinsky. Many of those who attended the installation ceremony and elegant reception and buffet following it took in the lecture, which allowed us to showcase legal education's academic pursuits in a way that demonstrated how these were relevant to the work of lawyers and jurists. Members of the profession who may not have paid much recent attention to discourse occurring in legal scholarship found reason to reconsider the value of law schools' academic contributions. Several thoughtful members of the bar privately told me how the installation events had energized them intellectually and made them more respectful of the legal education enterprise.

A tone had been set. It was easy to reinforce it by finding frequent opportunities to engage the bar in the law school's normal activities. We invited bar leaders and jurists to our annual orientation for new students. They found it refreshing to see the maturity and eagerness of those who were striving to gain entry into the legal profession. We began a tradition of inviting the president-elect of the state bar to be the featured speaker at our December graduation ceremony, giving that person an opportunity to address his or her agenda for the presidential year that was about to begin.

### *Be Hospitable*

The school opened its doors to meetings of the state bar's board of governors, the city's association of black lawyers, the regional Hispanic lawyers' association, and committees of the local and state bars (on several of which members of our faculty sit). We hosted the national Native American Law Student Association's moot court competition and the National Women Law Students' Association's annual meeting, which included the Sojourner Truth moot court competition. The moot court competitions brought many judges and practitioners to campus to serve as judges. Three different chapters of the American Inns of Court are affiliated with our law school, and each inn holds at least one meeting each year here. We have encouraged students and professors to take part in our city's robust inns. As dean, I have been appointed as an "honorary master" of two inns, which gives me an opportunity to interact regularly with thoughtful lawyers and judges in settings that allow me to gain a deeper appreciation for the quality of the bar.

Another facet of the school's engagement with the profession has been to invite state and federal courts to sit in our moot courtroom to hold trials and appellate arguments in cases that are readily accessible to our students. Participating courts have included the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, our state's highest appellate court for criminal cases (reviewing capital convictions), our state's intermediate civil appellate court, and state trial courts. The state's supreme court has come to our campus to preside over the final round of our first-year moot court competition. A by-product of bringing these proceedings to campus is the opportunity they create for students to interact with the participating lawyers and judges after the hearings.

### *Leverage Your Adjuncts*

We sought to elevate our adjunct faculty by recruiting well-known members of the legal community, who brought with them not only their expertise, but also their reputations and their outreach. These adjuncts were given more opportunities to interact with our students, faculty, and bar leaders when we began inviting adjunct professors and bar leaders to more law school events, such as first-year orientations, annual holiday receptions, dinners for visiting speakers, law review banquets, and graduation celebrations. The adjunct professors found our school's events valuable to them because these events gave them opportunities to discuss timely topics with faculty and bar leaders. Their presence as well as their words reinforced the sense of relevancy and engagement we were seeking to project, and they began to speak of this engagement in conversations with their colleagues in practice.

Reaching out to the profession was neither intended nor perceived as a gesture of deference or subservience to practitioners. The message was simply that law professors and legal practitioners had much to learn from each other, and we viewed it as a core responsibility of our law school to be the facilitator of a productive dialogue cutting across substantive areas and including issues relating to the governance and performance of the profession.

### *Assert Leadership*

We signaled a willingness to take a leadership role in setting the agenda for the dialogue as we created programs that explored issues that were timely for the bar to consider. This allowed us to demonstrate how academic inquiry could contribute constructively to the day-to-day work of the bar as well as the institutional responsibility of the profession. For example, our school took the initiative to plan and host the first conferences in our state focusing on fostering greater diversity in the legal profession. When it was alleged that inappropriate use of forensic evidence in our state's criminal justice system may have led to a series of wrongful convictions, we presented a conference to consider the "use and abuse of forensic evidence." In a state with above average incarceration and execution rates, particularly for women (in both cases), we organized conferences addressing sentencing in general and the administration of the death penalty in particular.

Our programming was not limited to issues that were exclusively of local and regional interest. We looked for topics that had a local point of departure, but which were on the national agenda as well, and thus attracted nationally prominent scholars. This was true of the conferences on the death penalty, sentencing, and forensic evidence in criminal trials. Another example of the local/national intersection was a conference considering the evolution of banking regulation held on the twentieth anniversary of the failure of Penn Square Bank, a local institution whose demise affected the national banking system.

Other academic conferences have focused on more general legal issues such as federalism, the uniform state laws process, and the revision of the UCC. For each of these conferences, our local bar had access to panels that included national academic authorities as well as important practitioners who are playing leading

roles in the fields of law addressed by the conferences. These programs brought faculty, practitioners, and students together. Attendance was not always high, but the caliber of the presentations has been first rate, and the fact that we were presenting these programs was communicated broadly through state and local bar publications. Our school became perceived of as a place where important issues were being explored in meaningful and accessible ways.

### *Show Off*

With little effort and expense, we advertise this wide array of events and speakers in state and county bar publications. The frequency of events, including those that occur regularly, keeps the school's name before the bar and judiciary in a way that conveys energy, liveliness, and relevance. Knowledge of our activities thus reaches the entire bar, not just those who are able to attend the programs.

Besides advertising each event as it occurs, we publish an "annual report" in the state bar journal reviewing the major events and speaking appearances of the preceding academic year. The report is presented with a brief introductory note from the dean reminding lawyers and judges of our school's commitment to the "integral relationship" concept and inviting continued interest and input from members of the profession.

### *Seek Partnerships*

Another aspect of implementing the "integral relationship" concept has been to seek partnerships with bar entities to produce events that serve the law school's academic mission and our partners' goals as well. At our suggestion, our metropolitan bar association joined us for an annual Law Day luncheon. Previously, the law school and the county bar held separate events on different dates. The school's events were well attended and allowed us to present speakers who spoke on topics of interest to the local and state bars. However, by initiating a partnership with the county bar, our Law Day speakers have reached an even larger audience.

The selection of the Law Day speaker provides another opportunity for us to reinforce the image of relevance that the "integral relationship" concept is intended to foster. It also allows the school to play a meaningful role in influencing discourse within the legal profession in our community. For example, in the year when the number one priority of the ABA, under the leadership of a president from our state, was enhancing diversity within the legal profession, we invited Robert Benham, the first African-American Chief Justice of Georgia. In the year following the impeachment trial of President Clinton, our speaker was Judge Susan Weber Wright, who presided over Paula Jones' private suit against Mr. Clinton. In the year following 9/11, and before the invasion of Iraq, our legal community was treated to a presentation by Columbia Law School professor Lou Henkin, who was present at the founding of the United Nations. Henkin spoke on the importance of the rule of law in international relations. More recently, we secured an appearance by Robert Grey, Jr., president-elect of the ABA (and a former student of mine at the beginning

of my teaching career). Grey helped us present a program commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Law Day is an important event in the life of the bar, and, by reaching out to join the bar in the observance, our school manifests the sense of “shared enterprise” that is at the heart of the “integral relationship” concept. Our school’s sense of engagement with the legal profession is symbolized by the honored guests that are assembled at the head table for our legal community’s most widely attended Law Day function. Typically included are the presidents of both the county and state bar associations, the chief judges of the highest appellate courts in the state, the chief judge of the local federal district court, a judicial representative from the federal circuit court encompassing our state, and sometimes the governor and attorney general of our state. Seated with them are representatives of the school, including the president of our university, the president of our student body, and me.

A particularly successful partnership was formed when the ABA’s Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (CEELI) accepted our invitation to host a training program organized under its auspices. For two weeks one summer, a dozen Armenian criminal defense lawyers were introduced to the American criminal justice system through a program organized by a member of our faculty. The program gave us an opportunity to include many of the key players in the legal system, including district attorneys, public defenders, jurists, state bar officials, and private practitioners. These non-academics gave presentations alongside members of our faculty. The lawyers and jurists who participated were flattered to be invited to “represent” our legal system to the earnest and appreciative guests, and they were left with the impression that our school was doing something that was highly worthwhile and meaningful.

Our school made a special effort to partner with another ABA program when we nominated a worthy student as a candidate for a diversity initiative sponsored by the ABA’s antitrust section. This program makes a limited number of summer federal judicial clerkships available in the Northern District of Illinois. Our candidate was selected for one of these coveted opportunities, bringing pride to all of us associated with the law school. When the ABA president hosted a reception in Chicago for all of the judges, the student-clerks and their deans, as well as the ABA’s Board of Governors, I was the only dean who attended. This level of support was certainly appreciated by our student, but it was also noted by the ABA leadership.

Partnerships have been forged with specialty groups within the bar. We have co-sponsored CLE programs with the state’s criminal defense lawyers’ association and the litigation sections of both the ABA and our state bar association. Our contribution to the programs has been to provide the space for the event. Our students are allowed to attend any part of the programs at no charge.

An especially rewarding partnership has been established with an admirable local network of pro bono attorneys who address the legal needs of neglected and deprived children. The network recruits and trains students who volunteer to support these lawyers’ good efforts. Similarly, we organized and hosted a roundtable of public interest groups and legal services providers to brainstorm about how the profession, with the involvement of the law schools, could better address the enormous unmet need for legal services. We also helped launch a “volunteer



legal center” that linked students and practitioners in providing a free clinic for lower income persons seeking debt counseling.

### *Show Up*

Another key ingredient for implementing the “integral relationship” concept is simply “showing up.” From the earliest days of my deanship, I made it a point to attend all sorts of events involving local, state, and national bar organizations. Some of the events involve official functions, such as retirement ceremonies for high level state and federal judges or the swearing-in of a new president of the state bar, a new appellate judge, initiates to the state bar, or even new members of the U.S. Supreme Court Bar. Other events fall in the category of professional meetings or major CLE programs, such as our state bar’s annual Women in Law Conference, the annual meeting of the state bar, and the county bar’s annual Bench and Bar Conference. And there are also social events, such as the annual holiday party, awards luncheon, and dinner-dance of the county bar association. Simply being present at this range of events conveys a message that our school views these functions as important and that we want to have an active partnership with the bar.

It is not just the dean whose activities convey this message. Several members of our faculty take an active part in the work of bar committees and task forces. Faculty members have also served as reporters for drafting projects under the auspices of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws and the ABA. Faculty have been good sports by accepting speaking invitations for CLE programs and meetings of specialized bar groups.

Our school “shows up” institutionally as well. The state’s bar officials and delegates to the ABA House of Delegates are invited to our alumni receptions, which are held in conjunction with the ABA annual meetings. We purchase a table at important luncheons and dinners of the county and state bar associations. The tables are filled variously with faculty, administrators, and alumni of the law school.

### *Have a Party*

One of our bolder initiatives was to commence an annual law school gala and awards banquet, where we could invite the legal community to celebrate the achievements of members of the bar and our law school. Presenting the awards gives us an opportunity to showcase lawyers whose careers were nurtured at our law school. In addition, an annual “Mark of Distinction” award is presented to a law firm, allowing our school to make a statement about the kinds of performance that are worthy of professional admiration. We have been told that our gala has become the leading social event for the legal profession in our community. Of course, it engages alumni, but it also attracts many graduates of other law schools.

### *Stay True to Your Mission*

The reader will note that none of the steps mentioned in this section relate to curricular changes. This is because curricular change is not necessary to implement the “integral relationship” concept. Rather, the concept enables us to better convey

the sense that a school's existing curriculum is *already* closely connected with what lawyers do and the issues on which they could profitably be focusing. The more the bar knows about law school curricula, the more confidence lawyers gain in the law school, as myths about irrelevance are dispelled.

One aspect of my school's curriculum that furthers the implementation of the "integral relationship" concept is our carefully designed externship program. This program was *not* created to implement this concept but, rather, to implement our faculty's determination that a well-monitored externship program is an excellent way to offer skills instruction. With a full-time, tenure-track professor serving as director of externship programs, we have a system in place that puts students and a member of our faculty in regular contact with lawyers and judges throughout the legal community who are delighted to be partners with us in fulfilling our school's teaching mission. These lawyers and judges are made to feel connected with the law school by, for example, being welcomed to law school functions. Their participation in our program enables them to become well informed about the school and the talents and aspirations of our students. Thus, our externship program helps us educate the bar about legal education. Conversely, the feedback our externship director receives from the field supervisors informs us about views from the profession regarding the adequacy of the preparation we are providing to our students. To date, this feedback has been very positive.

Just as the "integral relationship" concept does not require curricular adjustments, neither does it distort the scholarly agenda of the faculty. Many schools already have some scholars whose work focuses directly on organizational, institutional, and substantive issues regarding the legal profession. But theoretical, empirical, and doctrinal work in other fields is equally valuable to the profession. The "integral relationship" concept provides an effective platform for demonstrating that value to external constituencies.

### III. BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING THE "INTEGRAL RELATIONSHIP" CONCEPT

The previous section touched on some of the benefits to the school from the implementation of the "integral relationship" concept. The benefits fall into two categories. First, from the external perspective, the school has gained visibility, respect, confidence, and support. It is viewed with a greater sense of relevance by lawyers and judges whose opinions matter. Second, from the internal perspective, it has gained a greater sense of purpose, energy, insight, and influence. Faculty and senior administrators have a greater sense as to how their work can and does influence the work of lawyers and judges.

While we have made no attempt to measure the changing perceptions held by external constituents about our institution, there is little doubt that there is greater awareness of, interest in, and appreciation for our law school's academic programs and intellectual vitality. While these effects have been most apparent at the local and state level, the impact has been felt at the national level as well.

Attendance at law school events has increased. Consulting and advisory opportunities for faculty have expanded, as have opportunities for students to interact with the profession. Our students' assimilation into the legal profession has been furthered. The breadth and strength of our faculty are much more widely

acknowledged than before. Annual giving to the law school— from both alumni and those who are not alumni—has increased.

Successive state and county bar presidents have turned to our law school with increasing frequency for appointments to important committees and task forces. As chief spokesperson for the law school, a good share of these appointments have come my way, but faculty members and senior administrators have also been tapped more often for assignments on the local and state levels. Opportunities for service at the national level of professional organizations, such as the ABA and NCCUSL, have also expanded. These assignments enrich our faculty's scholarship and teaching. I hasten to add that the involvement of our faculty in bar projects and committees has not diverted them from their scholarly and teaching missions. Actually, their scholarship and classroom engagement have benefited from their service to the bar.

In sum, my law school is taken more seriously by members of the legal profession. It is viewed with greater respect. It is looked to for leadership. These perceptions on the part of the profession at large pay dividends in terms of student recruitment, retention, and placement. They create a more favorable climate for fundraising. Finally, they have brought enhanced pride to our alumni, who now have an additional reason, beyond loyalty, to support the school that nurtured their careers.

#### IV. IS THE "INTEGRAL RELATIONSHIP" CONCEPT TRANSFERABLE TO OTHER LAW SCHOOLS?

Any law school can adopt the "integral relationship" concept. This concept should be only one aspect of a law school's identity. Putting the concept into effect does not require a law school to depart from its own unique mission. Its curriculum, its teaching objectives, and the scholarly agenda of its faculty need not change. All that is required is for a law school to conduct its affairs with a heightened awareness that its mission is indeed related to the needs, goals, and aspirations of the legal profession—and to communicate that awareness to external constituencies. Any law school can do this, and any law school can gain greater visibility, respect, and confidence from the bench and bar by doing so. One would think that any law school that seeks to acquire or retain approval from the American Bar Association's Section on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar would benefit from adopting the "integral relationship" orientation to its operations.

The law school that I serve as dean is a very traditional institution. We are not doing anything that is fundamentally different from what all law schools do. Our faculty and administrators are simply improving our understanding of how what we do affects the legal profession. In doing so, we are improving the understanding of the bench and bar regarding the relevance of our operations to their professional lives. We are creating a sense of connection that is mutually beneficial for educators and practitioners. We are elevating the understanding of lawyers and judges about legal education today, helping them to see that, even if they are not our alumni, they are stakeholders in our school—indeed, that they have a stake in our success in fulfilling our mission.

A law school's history and place may affect the ease with which the "integral relationship" concept can be implemented. My law school is located in a moderate-size state (about 3.5 million citizens; about 15,000 practicing lawyers). We have a unified bar. Our school is located in a state capital city, just about a mile from the state capitol complex and the state bar headquarters. There is a very strong, well organized, active local bar association in our community. There are only three law schools in our state competing for the attention of the bar. Each of these factors makes it relatively easy to garner attention from bar leaders and the legal profession as a whole. Many schools find themselves in a similar environment and would, thus, find it easy to put the concept into practice. Other schools might find it more difficult to forge the connections that have worked so well for us. Still, the differences would be only a matter of degree.

Therefore, I encourage other deans to consider conceptualizing their law schools as integrally related to the legal profession. Adopting this point of view can energize the academic enterprise without altering it. And your school can be rewarded with a heightened degree of visibility, respect, and confidence from an important external constituency.