

JUN. 5. 2008 4:34PM

NO. 2923 P. 2



Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

COLLEGE OF LAW

Excellence With Courage

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January 9, 2007

RECEIVED
MAY 27 2008
to Dean Fennell
from AD Witherspoon

Hulett H. Askew
Consultant on Legal Education
American Bar Association
321 N. Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60610

Dear Mr. Askew:

This is to acknowledge receipt of the October 8-10, 2006 Limited Site Visit Report on the Florida A&M University College of Law and to respond with clarifications and corrections to that report. We appreciate the time that the team took to evaluate our program and to observe our progress.

If you have any questions about this response, please contact me at (407) 254-3200.

Sincerely,

Ruth A. Witherspoon
Ruth A. Witherspoon
Interim Dean

CORRECTIONS / RESPONSE TO THE 2006 LIMITED SITE VISIT REPORT

PAGE 2 **“After the tour, the Site Team had dinner at a local restaurant with Deans Douglas and Motley and was joined by several others from the administration and faculty including Associate Dean Nathaniel Friends, Professors Lundy Langston and Barbara Bernier.”**

The professors who attended the dinner were Lundy Langston and Joan Bullock.

PAGE 2 **“Neither the Interim President of Florida A&M University, Castell Bryant, nor the Provost, Debra Austin, was available to meet with the Site Team in person, but Provost Austin did meet with the site Team via teleconference on Tuesday morning prior to our departure and had a follow up conference with the Chair approximately two weeks after the Site Visit.”**

The President and the Provost would have made themselves available but for the fact that the Chair indicated it was unnecessary for them to come to Orlando because this was a limited site visit.

PAGE 3 **“Dean Douglas appointed a new Self-Study Committee about two weeks before the Site Visit.”**

All 2006-2007 committee assignments, including those for the Self-Study Committee, were made at the very beginning of the fall semester and published to the faculty on August 29, 2006.

PAGE 3 **“...Professor Lundy...”**

Professor (Lundy) Langston

PAGE 3 **“At the request of Professor Langston, Associate Dean Ruth Witherspoon has been made an ex officio member of the committee.”**

Ruth Witherspoon also served on the previous 2005 Self-Study Committee.

PAGE 3 **“The Committee that prepared the Self-Study in 2005 was made up primarily of chairs (who also are tenured or tenure track faculty members) of the standing committees of the faculty.”**

While the chairs of the standing committees were not formally named to the 2006-2007 Self-Study Committee, they are full participants in the process. The Self-Study Committee meets regularly with the standing committee chairs and they are fully engaged in the work of the Self-Study Committee.

PAGE 3 **“Currently there are no students, no alumni and no members of the local legal community on the Self-Study Committee and there were none involved in development of the previous document.”**

The membership of the 2005-2006 Self-Study Committee did include a student (Marjorie Thomas), an alumnus (Carlos Woody) and a member of the local legal community (Douglas Kelley). Also, since the Site Team’s visit, both a student (Eurilynne Williams) and an alumnus (Carlos Woody) have been added to the 2006-2007 Self-Study Committee.

PAGE 4 **“(Several also teach, on a voluntary basis, in the L.E.A.P. program...”**

The Legal Methods faculty who taught in the LEAP Program were compensated as were the doctrinal faculty.

PAGE 6 **“All others [clinics] were suspended for lack of faculty.”**

There was no clinic suspended for lack of faculty. Three clinics were not offered because of the lack of student demand.

PAGE 8 **“Having just recently been dramatically restructured, and still suffering from a shortage of faculty”**

There is no shortage of clinical faculty. Three clinical faculty did not teach a clinic this year because of low student demand: Professors Hastings Jones, Jennifer Smith, and Phyllis Smith. As a result, these professors were used to meet other curricular needs.

PAGE 9 **“Despite agreement that hiring experienced faculty is crucial, efforts in this area were unsuccessful in 2005-2006.”**

The primary reason people were not hired in 2005-2006 was because the faculty voted “no” on most of the candidates who were brought to campus.

Of the two candidates who did receive a favorable vote from the faculty, one was only in her first-second year of teaching. The Dean did not extend an offer to her because she did not fit the need for “seasoned, experienced faculty.” The Dean did extend an offer to the other candidate who received a favorable vote. The candidate accepted the offer, but later decided not to come.

The faculty voted favorably to extend tenure-track offers to seven internal candidates who were previously non-tenure track members of the faculty.

PAGE 9 **“and some suggested that delays by the Dean in extending offers also may have contributed to less than favorable results.”**

The Dean did not delay extending offers.

PAGE 11 **“Total enrollment at the Law School for Fall 2006 is 603”**

As noted in the 2006 ABA Annual Questionnaire, total enrollment at the Law School for Fall 2006 is 537.

PAGE 14 **“The fall 2006 entering class included six students who had previously been dismissed.”**

The fall 2006 entering class included only one student who had previously been dismissed.

PAGE 14 **“Eight students from the fall 2005 entering class were dismissed. Five of these students applied for readmission and three were readmitted.”**

Seven students from the fall 2005 class were dismissed.

Four of these students applied for readmission and three were readmitted.

PAGE 14 **“Attrition in the fall 2004 entering class for academic performance was three, and two from the fall 2003 entering class.”**

Attrition in the fall 2004 entering class for academic performance was eleven, and ten from the fall 2003 entering class.

PAGE 14 **“Currently, students who participated in the summer 2006 LEAP program continue to receive direction from a faculty member who taught in the program. The rationale for this practice is that there is a concern that these students might not receive the attention that they need under the direction of the Academic Support Program.”**

The mission of LEAP is to maximize the academic potential of low-quantitative predicting students. Faculty at the College of Law recognize that if the LEAP students are to achieve the goals set for them, they would continue to need additional academic support beyond the six-week summer program. Thus, in addition to the assistance provided to all students through the Academic Support Program, classes are conducted for LEAP students on a biweekly basis by the tenured professor who developed and oversaw the summer program.

PAGE 16 **“The Coordinator for Admissions who normally assists with financial aid matters resigned from her position this past summer and the position remained open at the time of the site visit.”**

The Coordinator for Financial Aid position at the College of Law has been filled.

PAGE 17 **“In 2005, the law school graduated 55 students and in 2006, there were 65 graduates.**

In 2005, the law school graduated 55 students and in 2006, there were 88 graduates.

PAGE 19 **“For example, among the things that need to be finished are little things like clocks in each classroom and screens for audio visual equipment.”**

Since the Site Team’s visit, clocks have been placed in each classroom, and the drop-down screens have been installed.

PAGE 20 **“Also, there is no space large enough to accommodate all of the faculty for a meal function.”**

Room 263 is large enough to accommodate all of the faculty for meal functions and has been used for numerous functions during the past year. For example, the room has been used for the Board of Trustees' luncheon, luncheons with prospective faculty and dean candidates, a faculty retreat; farewell receptions for departing employees, and most recently for the faculty and staff holiday luncheon.

PAGE 20 **“The State of Florida provided approximately \$15 million to build the Law School but that was not sufficient to complete the project in its entirety.”**

The State of Florida appropriated \$27.8 million dollars in capitol improvement funds to pay for the construction of the permanent facilities.