

Over the next 10 years, Emory Law School will build upon its solid foundations to emerge as one of the most dynamic, enthusiastic and creative law schools in the country. For the past decade, the Law School focused on building a distinguished faculty with national and international reputations in teaching and in scholarship. The next stage for the Law School is to leverage this strength in shaping a distinct character and leadership role in legal education.

In ways that mirror strengths of other premier law schools yet are modeled around a unique combination of commitments, Emory Law School will claim and proclaim a vision of legal education and the legal profession that becomes the standard for others. The three key commitments are: first, to the essential character of the legal profession as a service profession; second, to training in the practice of law as well as the study of law; and, third, to focused centers of excellence that are interdisciplinary, integrative, and international in nature.

In the face of skepticism, if not cynicism, about the role of law and the rule of law in society today, there is no more important task for legal education than to understand and to communicate that law makes life together possible and justice more than an abstract dream. The Law School will emphasize in all its manifold roles that the core of the legal profession is a service profession. It will do this by offering to every student the possibility of a subsidized summer internship in a public sector or private not-for-profit placement across the world. It will also strengthen the possibility of service-oriented vocational choices through the expansion of the existing Loan Repayment Assistance Program and with significant increases in student financial assistance.

Legal education in coming years must do a far better job of preparing students for the actual practice of law and not just the study of law. Emory Law School is already the nationally acclaimed leader with its Trial Techniques Program, and in the past few years has developed one of the leading initiatives in intellectual property law through its three semester TI:GER Program (Technological Innovations: Generating Economic Results). We will continue to support and expand programs that enable students to experience the practice of law. We will add a targeted program on transactional skills. New “live client” clinical programs in criminal defense and juvenile justice will supplement the celebrated Barton Child Advocacy Program and the Turner Environmental Clinic. We also will offer partially subsidized summer internships for students working with law firms of less than ten attorneys. This private practice experiences will build new bridges to the practicing bar, reshape expectations of vocational options, and provide invaluable experience in the practice of law.

The third commitment that will define Emory Law School in coming years is its emphasis on pivotal centers of excellence that are known for substantive depth and interdisciplinary breadth. The Center for the Study of Law and Religion has become the premier program in the world in its teaching, its scholarship and its outreach. Our faculty members in international and comparative law are poised to develop parallel initiatives. Our new Project in Feminist Jurisprudence and Legal Theory probes the depth of domestic laws with the binoculars of international and cross-cultural vision. A fourth center of excellence concentrating on health law and policy will draw upon the powerful resources of the Schools of Medicine and Public Health at Emory, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As Emory Law School matures into this leadership role in legal education and in the legal profession over the next decade, we must pay attention to the infrastructure necessary to support and implement these commitments. In just the past two years, we have filled key senior staff positions and reorganized administrative duties that allow us now to move forward in a strong and steady manner. We must make additional investments to maintain and upgrade our physical facilities, and to broaden the availability of advanced technology in each of our classrooms. To support our students in their own service and learning, we will need to increase the number of small classrooms and conference rooms and redesign new community spaces.

In just one generation Emory Law School has emerged from being a solid regional school to a top national law school. Within the next generation it will become one of the premier institutions in the country, recognized across the world, for its commitments and its excellence.