



“The question is not only, what will it take to maintain our success, but what does the school need to do to get even better over the next five, 10 and 15 years?”

Dean's Column

BY DANIEL W. HAMILTON, DEAN, UNLV WILLIAM S. BOYD SCHOOL OF LAW

OFF AND RUNNING

These are exciting and challenging times for legal education and for the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law. The challenges are real and are, by now, familiar to us all. Applications to law schools, nationwide and in our region, are declining. Legal jobs are scarce. Increasing levels of debt are a burden to our current students and a concern to those considering applying.

We at Boyd are not immune to these challenges. The question is, how do we respond? How can we make sure the school builds on the success of my predecessors Dick Morgan, John White and Nancy Rapoport who, together with an extraordinary group of faculty, students, alumni and community partners, have made Boyd a nationally recognized law school in 15 short years?

This is the exciting part. The vision that created Boyd 15 years ago came out of the recognition that a growing and dynamic state like ours needed a top law school. Boyd strives to fill that role by succeeding on several levels at once. First, we have an outstanding faculty, the members of which are at the top of their fields. We produce scholarship that spurs innovation and discussion and helps shape the legal system in this state and others. Our legal writing program is among the very best in the country. Our clinics are, similarly, a national model for combining research and service to the city, state and region. Our Saltman Center has taken on a leadership role in the growing and vital field of mediation and dispute resolution.

Similarly, our students and alumni are making their marks in ways that clearly illustrate just how much value the law school adds to the legal work of Las Vegas, Nevada and beyond. Our students are engaged members of the profession from their first day of law school, leading the Nevada Law Journal and the UNLV Gaming Law Journal, representing clients in our clinics

and learning from our distinguished faculty how to read cases, write briefs and represent the best ideals of our profession. Our graduates are members of the legislature, judges, partners and associates in firms both large and small, bar members, public defenders, prosecutors, public interest lawyers, judicial clerks and law professors. There is no aspect of the legal profession in Nevada that has not been improved by the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law.

The question is not only, what will it take to maintain our success, but what does the school need to do to get even better over the next five, 10 and 15 years? First, we need to build on our strengths. We have a record of making great faculty hires and we need to make more. We recruit great students and we need to recruit more – from Las Vegas, Reno, all over the state and from outside the state, in an increasingly competitive environment. Our students work with our professional staff and faculty and alumni to find jobs, and we need to make sure Boyd graduates keep getting what they come to law school for: good jobs and a satisfying legal careers. Despite the challenges we – and nearly all other law schools – are facing, these vital tasks are at the heart of our mission and are part of our responsibility as Nevada's law school.

Just as we need to focus on our traditional strengths, we need to find ways to innovate, to create new ways of distinguishing and promoting our law school. Toward this end, we are pursuing several initiatives to build out our gaming law programs at Boyd. This is a natural for the law school and is underway at UNLV more broadly. Gaming is of course booming nationwide and worldwide, and the legal issues surrounding gaming, from intellectual property and regulation, to labor law and international law, are sophisticated and growing ever more complicated. Here is a place where Boyd can draw on the expertise of a city and state that remains at the center of the gaming industry. We



can meet the demand for training and education in gaming law, through degree programs, executive training programs and graduate programs. This demand is local, national and international and Boyd can become the national leader on the legal issues presented by a growing part of the world economy.

As a public law school, we need always to be thinking about how we can best serve our community, our state and the legal profession. Boyd needs to remain a place where people from different backgrounds can come together in a common pursuit: to become excellent lawyers. We need to remain accessible and within reach, to provide the opportunity to all to serve in a time-honored profession. In a time when resources are tight, this kind of aspiration will require the engagement of all those who share this commitment.

We are fortunate to have found so many committed to UNLV and to our law school. Boyd's record of success would have been impossible without support from community leaders, and they have embraced and supported Boyd from day one. Simply put, Boyd is one of

the great success stories in American legal education in the last 20 years. My goal as dean is not only to help keep that momentum going, but to take the next step, to take a great thing we have accomplished and, together with the rest of the community, make our law school even better. I encourage you to be in touch and I look forward to hearing from you. ■

DEAN DANIEL W. HAMILTON became the third dean of the William S. Boyd School of Law in July 2013. He joined the law school faculty as the Richard J. Morgan Professor of Law. Hamilton received his Ph.D. in American legal history from Harvard University, his J.D. from George Washington University, and his B.A. from Oberlin College. Hamilton comes to UNLV from the University of Illinois College of Law where he served as Associate Dean for Faculty Development and professor of Law and History. He is the recipient of multiple teaching awards, including Professor of the Year at both University of Illinois College of Law and the Chicago-Kent College of Law.