

**Annual Academic Assessment Report
Juris Doctorate Program
University of Arkansas School of Law
June 2025**

Report annually to the Provost & Dean of the School of Law about the following:

- **Updates from this academic year**

The Law School celebrated its centennial year culminating in the Gala event held on April 26, 2025. It was a momentous occasion that raised funds for the Centennial Scholarship Fund. The sold-out event brought together attendees spanning generations—from golden alumni to current students. Additional centennial celebrations were held in Washington, D.C., Texas, Oklahoma, and across Arkansas.

In addition to creating the centennial scholarship, the administration of financial aid was restructured this year to address budget constraints while continuing to seek to attract highly qualified students. This new approach helped support students' academic success. No students from last year's incoming class were dismissed after the first semester. Recruitment for the upcoming class is ongoing and appears to be progressing well, with strong academic indicators. This was the first year we've had an imbedded financial aid counselor which enabled us to quickly address student concerns.

Similarly, the endowed faculty position appointment and renewal letters have been revamped, consistent with the templates from the provost's offices, as has the appointment process itself.

Several distinguished public officials visited the law school this academic year, including members of the Arkansas Supreme Court, the Arkansas Attorney General, and former Governor Asa Hutchinson. Governor Hutchinson delivered remarks at orientation and taught a seminar course during the Spring 2025 semester.

Several key staff positions were filled over the past year, including Tammy Tucker as Director of Communication and Marketing; Susie Nicholson as Assistant Director of Development; Tracy Deffebaugh as Assistant Dean of Admissions; and Rachel Whitman as Assistant Dean of Administration. In addition, Professor of Law Sarah Cravens joined the faculty in January 2025 to serve as Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development.

- **Bar Passage**

Consistent with the school's program goals and learning outcomes, we continue to monitor bar exam performance, and to report our graduates' bar passage rates as required by the ABA. The ABA monitors the success of our graduates on a calendar year basis over a two-year cycle (four opportunities to sit for the bar). For our 2024 graduating class of 124 graduated with 120 took the bar for the first time and 96 passed (80%). The Law

School's bar passage rate for all of 2024 was 72% for all bar examination takers. Relatedly, we were able to hire Directors of both Academic and Bar Success both of whom have greatly contributed to these positive outcomes.

- **Employment Outcomes**

In alignment with our program goals and learning outcomes, we continue to track and report graduate employment outcomes using our accreditor's "snapshot" methodology, which captures placement data ten months after graduation. For the Class of 2024, 108 of 124 graduates (87%) were employed or enrolled in full-time graduate programs within that timeframe. Reported placements fall into the following categories: Bar Passage Required, J.D. Advantage, Professional Positions, or Full-Time Graduate Study.

- **Any changes to the degree/certificate planned or made on the basis of the assessment and analysis.**

N/A

- **Any changes to the assessment process made or planned.**

A change to the ABA Accreditation Standards took effect this academic year with the implementation of Standard 314, which requires law schools to "utilize both formative and summative assessment methods in [the] curriculum to measure and improve learning and provide meaningful feedback to students." In response, the Dean charged a faculty committee with developing specific curricular recommendations to support compliance with this standard.

One proposal calls for all first-year faculty to administer a midterm examination—preferably graded—in each course. Additionally, faculty members who teach different sections of the same course (e.g., Criminal Law, Torts, Civil Procedure, Constitutional Law, Property, and Contracts) are encouraged to implement comparable assessments. This approach aims to ensure that all 1L students have a consistent and equitable academic experience, regardless of their section.

- **Plans for 2025-2026 Academic Year**

Next year, the Law School will undertake a significant hiring process as several senior faculty members plan to retire. This includes the work of a decanal search committee charged with recommending a new Dean to begin service on July 1, 2026.