

**Society Needs Lawyers Equipped for Ethical Leadership and Service:  
The Role of Law Schools in Character Development**

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*Are law schools doing enough to prepare students for the increasingly complex and continually changing world they will serve?*

Institutions of higher education in the 21st century hold one of the most important roles in shaping the future of societies. Research indicates that a strong system of higher education is a significant contributor to the country's ability to compete in the global marketplace.<sup>1</sup> The nation looks to its colleges and universities to provide an educated citizenry for our future. This is particularly so for law schools given the importance of the role lawyers play in our communities. While lawyers comprise less than one-half of one percent of the population, their influence is significant and their impact on everyday decisions is important. Today's lawyers not only represent and counsel individual clients, they advocate for causes, counsel businesses, serve nonprofits, and lead in organizations throughout our communities.

Historically law schools have focused their efforts almost exclusively on teaching students how to "think like lawyers." As described by William Sullivan in a report on legal education, law schools traditionally focused on exposing students to "intellectual training to learn the academic knowledge base and the capacity to think in ways that are important to the profession."<sup>2</sup> A series of reports spanning the last twenty-plus years encourages law schools to expand their educational programming beyond a traditional primary focus on intellectual training.<sup>3</sup> Uniformly, the studies recommend the inclusion of skills-based experiences to teach novices the skills and give them the know-how that marks expert practitioners of the domain – in other words, use clinical or simulation learning techniques to help students learn to "act like a lawyer." While law schools now must mandate such experiential opportunities for students, the integration of learning to think like a lawyer with learning to act like a lawyer is not always effective. More recently, law schools are turning their attention to providing "entrants to the field with effective ways to engage and make their own the ethical standards, social roles and responsibilities of the profession, grounded in the profession's fundamental purposes."<sup>4</sup> Put another way, students headed into practice need to learn to "BE a lawyer," with all that

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<sup>1</sup> David Skaggs, *Higher education as a matter of national security: can a democracy plan ahead?* 100 *Liberal Education*, 1. (2014); Leah Teague, *Higher Education Plays Critical Role in Society: More Women Leaders Can Make a Difference*, (2015) available at <http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/journals-2/online-journals/vol-2015-no-2/>.

<sup>2</sup> WILLIAM M. SULLIVAN ET AL., *EDUCATING LAWYERS: PREPARATION FOR THE PROFESSION OF LAW* (2007) (Hereinafter referred to as "The Carnegie Report");

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*; TASK FORCE ON LAW SCH. & LEGAL PROFESSION: *NARROWING THE GAP, A.B.A., LEGAL EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT –AN EDUCATIONAL CONTINUUM, A.B.A. SEC. LEGA. EDUC. & ADMISSION TO THE BAR* 138–41 (1992) (Hereinafter referred to as "The MacCrate Report"); STUCKEY ET AL., *BEST PRACTICES FOR LEGAL EDUCATION* (2006). See also, Leary Davis, *Other, Competence as Situationally Appropriate Conduct: An Overarching Concept for Lawyering, Leadership, and Professionalism*, 52 *Santa Clara L. Rev.* 725 (2012); Stuckey Et Al., *Best Practices for Legal Education* (2006).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

entails.<sup>5</sup> Recent amendments to the ABA accreditation standards include a mandate requiring students' competency in "... (c) exercise of proper professional and ethical responsibility to clients and the legal system; and (d) other professional skills needed for competent and ethical participation as a member of the legal profession."<sup>6</sup> The steady stream of reports on the deficiencies in legal education, reinforced by the recent amendments to the accreditation standards, serve as a catalyst for the creation of professional development and leadership development programming (which should and often does include attention to the character formation) of the nation's future lawyers.

Creating law school programming that includes character formation is essential because of two important roles lawyers play in society. First, lawyers serve as advisors to their clients, helping them through some of their best and worst of times. Clients depend on their attorneys to provide prudent and effective counsel that often occurs in the midst of ambiguity, conflict and even chaos. Lawyers have an obligation to zealously represent their clients, but as officers of the court and protectors of the rule of law, we have a higher duty to our system of justice and to our representative form of government with its system of checks and balances. Second, lawyers serve in leadership roles within our communities and have opportunities to be influencers and advocates for advancement.

Legal education and the legal profession face significant disruptive challenges that cause us to consider our future. At the same time, the need for legal advice, thoughtful counsel and courageous, moral leadership has never been more important. This places the legal profession at a critical juncture. We are met with questions of definition, distinction and purpose. This paper discusses the need for character formation and leadership development efforts in law schools in order to insure our students are prepared for their obligations and equipped to meet the challenges they will encounter in our ever-increasingly complex world. The author then discusses national movements underway in legal education to incorporate such programming in law schools. Finally, innovative programs at Baylor Law will be highlighted as well as Baylor Law's involvement in the creation and development of these efforts across the nation.

### **How Do We Distinguish Ethics, Professionalism and Leadership?**

For those of us involved in a movement in legal education to incorporate more character formation and leadership development in law schools, an often-asked question, even among us who are pursuing the study of leadership in the context of the legal profession, is: "What is the difference between professional responsibility, professionalism (also referred to as professional identity, formation or development) and leadership?" The following provides a starting point for consideration. I have no doubt my thoughts will continue to take shape as we in legal education continue our conversations and work.

#### *Ethics/Professional Responsibility*

As lawyers we must abide by a code of professional responsibility. The outer boundaries of unactionable conduct is set by principles established in the code. Law students learn these rules as minimums – that which they MUST do or not do to avoid scrutiny for a violation and to avoid an appearance of impropriety. Students are tested on these rules. Law firms have committees that consider ethical issues and make decisions for their lawyers. Bar associations have committees for reviewing rules, advising lawyers and taking action when lawyers step outside the boundaries. Self-regulation of lawyers' conduct is essential to maintaining our independence and our privileged status with powers and opportunities. However, as we often discuss in law

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<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Fraley, Leah Witcher Jackson Teague, *Where the Rubber meets the Road: How do Law Schools Demonstrate a Commitment to Training Leaders?*, publication pending, U. Tennessee L. R.

<sup>6</sup> American Bar Association, *Standards for 2017-2018 Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools* (2017). Available at [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal\\_education/resources/standards.html](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/standards.html)

school, or at least we should, the code of professional responsibility will not determine who you are as a lawyer, what type of cases or clients you will represent, how you will practice law, or how you will be remembered.

### *Professional Development/Professionalism/ Formation/ Identity*

What does it mean to be a member of a profession that has a rich history of status and privilege earned by rigorous intellectual pursuit and legal training? Here are some of the questions raised as we try to define our professional identity and to better prepare our students to enter the profession that has long been considered a noble pursuit, but also a profession that is perhaps less favored and respected in recent decades:

- Who are we as lawyers?
- What is our role in society?
- What does the public expect of us?

And on an individual basis, we ask our students to consider what kind of lawyer they desire to be.

With our legal training & law degree we have an obligation to serve our clients and society. From the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct, Preamble: A Lawyer's Responsibilities, "[a] lawyer is a representative of clients, an officer of the legal system and a public citizen having special responsibility for the quality of justice."

As Alexis de Tocqueville recognized in the 1830s, the role of lawyers as keepers of the rule of law, along with the special training of lawyers as problem solvers and advocates, ensured for us "a separate station in society." When he labeled lawyers as the "American Aristocracy," he used that title in the European tradition from which he came – where lords were responsible for their charges. The privilege of wealth and power carried with it a privileged duty to protect. For American lawyers, our charge is our system of government, our democracy. Our special status arose because lawyers were viewed as more than mere providers of legal services. We have an obligation to serve not only our clients but also society.

As lawyers, more is expected of us by the public. And by that I mean, with the acquisition of our privilege – law degree and legal training – the public has an expectation of us that obligates us to live up to a higher set of principles and standards than a citizen who is not a member of our profession.

As I tell our students during orientation, the Latin root of profession is *professio* – to make a public declaration or to take an oath. When I ask them to name the three vocations considered to be the original "professions," it does not take them long to name "doctors, lawyers and clergy." We then discuss what common attributes are shared by these three professions. Answers include "education and training;" "expectation to live an exemplary life" or at least "higher expectations;" "less forgiveness for human error;" and this is one of my favorites, "doctors take care of the body, clergy minister to the soul, and lawyers take care of life in a community - rights, liberties and property interests." What becomes clear to them through the discussion is that our privilege comes with expectations and obligations to conduct ourselves in a manner befitting of our noble profession, which includes service.

In some ways, attorneys are like our colleagues in the medical and ministry fields in the sense that all three professions carry the burdens of other people on our shoulders. Like physicians, ministers, and other healers, lawyers are individuals to whom people open up their innermost secrets when they have suffered or are threatened with serious injury. People go to them to be healed, to be made whole, and to be protected from harm. These large and important tasks require all that lawyers have to offer. They require both good minds and good hearts—not only mental acuity and professional skill, but also compassion, righteousness, mercy,

and strength to suffer and carry pain. That is what it takes to be a truly good lawyer. And the world desperately needs truly good lawyers.

### *Leadership*

Leadership development should go beyond a focus on defining lawyers' behavior and actions in terms of expectation and obligation to serve clients and communities. Lawyers have the opportunity to guide and influence clients and to serve and impact in their communities. Lawyers are leaders and as such that is part of our professional identity. Yet leadership development requires a different type of attention and training than professional development. Leadership development should start with professional development, i.e. self-awareness and self-assessment – the “who am I as a lawyer?” But then we must move to looking at the opportunities we have as lawyers to have a positive influence and impact on society. Effective leadership, through lawyers' many roles and responsibilities, advances important causes and enhances enterprises.

Leadership seeks to develop lawyers who not only have mastery of self but also are inspired to make a difference. Our legal training, our law license and professional status afford us daily opportunities to influence individuals, behaviors, transactions, organizations, communities and society. Now more than ever, we need lawyers to recognize not only our obligation to serve society, but also opportunities afforded to us because of our professional status and education and then to use our position and training to make a positive difference in the lives of their clients and communities. We in legal education, as the teachers, coaches and mentors to the next generations of lawyers, need to do a better job of equipping them and inspiring them to rise up and seek those opportunities to positively impact society.

### **What More Can or Should Law Schools Do to Educate and Train Our Students?**

Having laid the foundation for the need to attend to law students' character formation and leadership development, the rest of the paper will explore aspects of professional development and leadership development efforts in legal education with the hope that it will serve as a call to other law schools to join the growing movement of law schools committed to incorporating professional formation and leadership development programming into all aspects of their legal education and training.

We must begin with the recognition that the obligation of lawyers to serve their clients and society is actually written into our code of conduct. From the Preamble to the American Bar Association (ABA) Model Rules of Professional Conduct, A Lawyer's Responsibilities: “[a] lawyer is a representative of clients, an officer of the legal system and a public citizen having special responsibility for the quality of justice.” As lawyers, more is expected of us by the public. We also know that society needs us to honor our obligations and to serve in honorable ways. Law schools need to insure students understand the critical role of lawyers in society and then to better prepare them for such roles.

### *Professional Development Programming*

Law schools throughout the country are creating and implementing professional development programs. Some of these new programs focus upon the formation of students' professional identity (sometimes shortened to “professional formation”).<sup>7</sup> Neil W. Hamilton, Holloran Professor of Law and Founding Director of the Holloran Center for Ethical Leadership in the Professions at the University of St. Thomas School of Law, along with his colleague, Professor Jerry Organ, are leading the effort to document, promote, and study the

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<sup>7</sup> See Louis D. Bilionis, *Professional Formation and the Political Economy of the American Law School*, 83 TENN. L. REV. (2016), [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2783790](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2783790).

efforts of law schools in helping law students to recognize, understand, and develop their professional identities as lawyers and always “with a moral core of responsibility . . . and service to others.”<sup>8</sup> “The Holloran Center's mission is to provide innovative interdisciplinary research, curriculum development and programs focusing holistically on the formation of both students and practicing professionals into ethical leaders in their communities.”<sup>9</sup>

Many law schools now offer introductory-level professional development programming for first-year students or offer voluntary training for interested students. As noted, professional development programs are gaining attention and becoming a focal point in the education and training of law students.<sup>10</sup> Leadership development topics are commonly presented as part of the professional development training. The attention to the professional identity of lawyers occurring in law schools across the nation is helping to acquaint modern law students with the historic role of lawyers as professionals in a service-oriented profession and as leaders of our nation. Programs are designed to guide students’ understanding of, and reflection upon, both ethical and personal considerations in law and leadership.

Emphasis on character development and professional identity is not only important to ensure that lawyers are fully prepared to accept their obligation to serve society but also assists with their professional success and personal satisfaction – yet another reason to engage in these experiences. Legal employers want law school graduates who are better equipped to enter the profession immediately upon graduation and who need less on-the-job training and mentoring. Law firms are demanding that new lawyers have not only intelligence and legal skills but also key characteristics and professional competencies to use those skills in practice.<sup>11</sup> According to a recent survey of American lawyers, the following professional competencies and characteristics are necessary directly out of law school: integrity, work ethic, common sense, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, emotional intelligence, listening attentively and respectfully, tact and diplomacy, working well with a team, empathy, self-control, self-awareness, being a self-starter, courtesy and respect for others, adaptability, resilience, and possessing a strong moral compass.<sup>12</sup> These are all competencies and characteristics that professional development and leadership development programs are designed to help law students build and enhance. Unfortunately, most law schools traditionally have not intentionally focused on developing the character or skill of their students beyond “thinking like lawyers.”

### *Leadership Development Programming*

As lawyers, as professionals, we are already leaders in society. As noted above, attorneys have an obligation to serve our clients and society, but we also have abundant opportunities to influence and impact those around us, i.e. to lead.

The special status in society entrusted to American lawyers, described by Alexis de Tocqueville in the 1830s, arose because lawyers were viewed as more than mere providers of legal services. As described by Harvard Professors Heineman, Lee and Wilkins, the role of lawyers has traditionally been three-fold—that of technical

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<sup>8</sup> Neil W. Hamilton, Holloran Center Director and Professor of Law, University of St. Thomas School of Law, <http://www.thelegalprofession.org/neil-w-hamilton/>.

<sup>9</sup> *Holloran Center Mission*, U. OF ST. THOMAS, <https://www.stthomas.edu/hollorancenter/about/mission/>.

<sup>10</sup> At the annual meetings of the National Association of Law Placement (NALP) sessions on professional development programs for law schools have experienced a significant increase in attendance since 2014. Email from Jay Richards, Senior Director of Operations and Member Services, NALP to Angela Cruseturner, Assistant Dean, Assistant Dean of Career Development, Baylor Law (May 9, 2018). Also, a Professional Development Consortium (PDC) has been established as an association of individuals working at law firms, law schools, government agencies and corporations who are responsible for developing and administering training and continuing professional development for lawyers. Email from Angela Cruseturner, Assistant Dean, Assistant Dean of Career Development, Baylor Law to author (May 9, 2018) (on file with author).

<sup>11</sup> Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, *Foundations for Practice: The Whole Lawyer and the Character Quotient*, *supra* note 47 at 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.* at 1–5.

expert, wise counsellor and effective leader. However, with the modern bottom-line orientation and business focus of law firms, the technological disruptions to the legal profession, and the growing distrust of (and lack of respect for) lawyers, that special status of lawyers is endangered. The disappearance of lawyers as leaders and protectors of citizen's individual rights, liberties and property interests could threaten our democracy.

While lawyers still serve as heads of government, business, and nonprofit organizations, the legal profession's influence appears to be declining. For example, the percentage of the members of Congress who are lawyers has gone from nearly 80% in the late-19th century to less than 60 percent in the 1960s. Today that number is approximately 40 percent – less than half of what it was a century earlier. In state legislative bodies, only seven states have more than 25% of their legislators with law degrees. Does having fewer leaders trained and experienced in critical thinking, strategic planning, advocacy, civil discourse, negotiation and problem solving make a difference?

This decline in congressional leadership positions may simply be emblematic of the disappearing role of lawyers in serving and advocating for ordinary citizens. Other factors may well be contributing to the decline – factors such as toxic legislative environments and vicious campaign races. It also reflects, however, the need for law schools to place a premium on the intentional training and development of leadership skills. Deborah Rhode noted in her book "Lawyers as Leaders" that "the legal profession attracts a large number of individuals with the ambition and analytic capabilities to be leaders but frequently fail to develop other qualities that are essential to effectiveness."<sup>13</sup>

Attorneys are not given sufficient leadership training, either while in law school or after leaving. We know that young lawyers are not mentored as in the past. We know the pressure to bill their time makes it difficult for them to understand or acknowledge the longer-term benefits of serving. How, then, will lawyers learn to be leaders if the skills needed for effective leadership are not part of the law school curriculum?

During a recent Stanford Leadership Symposium, Harvard Professors Scott Westfahl and David Wilkins advocated for law schools to "explicitly elevate and acknowledge lawyer development as one of the few existential purposes of a law school."<sup>14</sup> They continued:

The most critical component of the new model of lawyer development is the building of leadership and other important professional skills that can be applied in any professional, public sector, or even academic career setting. While the traditional law school environment currently provides opportunities to build such skills, it does so much more by chance than by design and without the consistency of instructional quality that law schools demand for the teaching of legal doctrine.<sup>15</sup>

Ben Heineman wrote about the low priority and presence that leadership training has in legal education:

The profession and the law schools should more candidly recognize the importance of leadership and should more directly prepare and inspire young lawyers to seek roles of ultimate responsibility and accountability than they do today. Why do I advance this thesis? First, our society is suffering from a leadership deficit in public, private, and non-profit spheres. The core competencies of law are as good a foundation for broad leadership as other training. Second, the legal profession, by many accounts, is suffering from a crisis of morale, from a disconnect between personal values and professional life. Providing leadership can affirm—

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<sup>13</sup> DEBORAH L. RHODE, *LAWYERS AS LEADERS 1* (2013).

<sup>14</sup> Scott A. Westfahl & David B. Wilkins, *The Leadership Imperative: A Collaborative Approach to Professional Development in the Global Age of More for Less*, 69 *STANFORD L. REV.* 1667, 1705 (2017).

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at 1706.

and test—our vision and core values. Third, other professional schools—business and public policy—have as their explicit mission the training of leaders for the public, private, and non-profit sectors. The graduates of our law schools are at least as talented as those who enter other professional and graduate schools. And law schools should have a similar vision to enhance the careers of their outstanding students, thus serving society and addressing the values crisis that affects portions of the profession.<sup>16</sup>

Other influential jurists and lawyers periodically call upon lawyers to rise up and reclaim allegiance to the traditional role of lawyers as advocates, counsellors and community leaders.<sup>17</sup> A call to leadership is a common theme of law school commencement addresses and speeches and remarks delivered in innumerable settings within the profession.<sup>18</sup> In fact, leadership is mentioned in the mission statements of many law schools.<sup>19</sup> Law schools expect that their students will actively and civically engage in their communities in a variety of leadership capacities. Santa Clara Dean Emeritus Don Polden noted that leadership is “an essential or core component for ethical engagement and success in the work of lawyers.”<sup>20</sup> Jim Rasband, former dean of J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University, was fond of saying, “law is a leadership degree.”<sup>21</sup>

In many ways specific aspects of legal training has always helped lawyers succeed as influencers and leaders. While law schools have not historically sought to answer the question of what makes lawyers good leaders, law students nevertheless graduate with skills that are crucial in gaining and succeeding in leadership roles. Lawyers by training put themselves in a position to lead by strategizing, persuading, and ultimately commanding the room, whether boardroom, courtroom, or arena of public opinion. These are foundational leadership skills developed in law schools. Being more intentional in our programming and training will insure our students are better equipped for success when those opportunities are presented.

Preparing law students for their professional obligations and inspiring them to purpose leadership opportunities is also important for our profession. As fewer lawyers volunteer in the community and serve in leadership roles, the public has less opportunity to observe the special skills of lawyers that makes them so valuable in the community. How ironic that what gave lawyers special status in the community – their skill set as leaders – has been utilized less and less by lawyers in recent decades. We must help our students understand that their professional obligation is to serve their clients and their communities. If we see ourselves as problem solvers and trusted advisors (instead of deal killers and hired guns), maybe the public will see us in that light as well.

We can start by reframing the way we think about leadership development training. A simple internet search will generate a wide variety of definitions and examples of what is “leadership.” A favorite quote comes from John C. Maxwell who said, “Leadership is not about titles, positions or flowcharts. It is about one life

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<sup>16</sup> Ben W. Heineman, Jr., *Lawyers as Leaders*, 116 YALE L.J. Pocket Part 266 (2007), <http://yalelawjournal.org/forum/lawyers-as-leaders>.

<sup>17</sup> Louis D. Brandeis, *The Opportunity in the Law*, Address Before the Harvard Ethical Society (May 4, 1905) in BUSINESS—A PROFESSION 313, 321 (1914); *The Texas Lawyer’s Creed—A Mandate for Professionalism* (adopted by the Supreme Court of Texas and the Court of Criminal Appeals Nov. 7, 1989), reprinted in *Texas Rules of Court: Volume I—State 723* (ThomsonReuters 2017); ANTHONY T. KRONMAN, *THE LOST LAWYER: FAILING IDEALS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION* (1993); Ben W. Heineman, Jr., *Law and Leadership*, Lecture as part of The Robert H. Prieskel and Leon Silverman Program on the Practicing Lawyer and the Public Interest (Nov. 27, 2006) [hereinafter “Heineman, *Law and Leadership*”].

<sup>18</sup> Neil W. Hamilton, *Ethical Leadership in Professional Life*, 6 U. ST. THOMAS L.J. 358, 359–60 (2009); “Roscoe Pound and Chief Justice Burger understood that the best way for the profession to continue to resolve society’s conflicts is to lead.” (see Roscoe Pound, *Speech at the Annual Meeting of the American Bar Association* (1906) and Chief Justice Warren Burger, *Speech at the Pound Conference* (1976) in *Report on the Future of Legal Services in the United States*, AM. BAR ASS’N 8 (2016), [http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/images/abanews/2016FLSReport\\_FNL\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/images/abanews/2016FLSReport_FNL_WEB.pdf) (hereinafter *ABA Report*).

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Fraley, Leah Witcher Jackson Teague, *Where the Rubber its the Road: How do Law Schools Demonstrate a Commitment to Training Leaders?*, publication pending, U. TENNESSEE L. R.

<sup>20</sup> Donald J. Polden, *Symposium on Leadership Education for Lawyers and Law Students*, 52 SANTA CLARA L. REV. 685 (2012).

<sup>21</sup> Email from Gordon Smith, Dean, J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University, to author (May 8, 2018) (on file with author).

influencing another.” Our legal training, our law license and professional status afford us daily opportunities to influence those around us. Now more than ever, we need lawyers to recognize our obligation to society, to be better equipped to rise up and take advantage of the opportunities to use position and training to make a positive difference in the lives of clients and communities.

Law faculties are equipped to participate. Often faculty are teaching and modeling leadership, just not doing it intentionally. Because they are lawyers, they have served in a variety of leadership roles, including as professors in the classroom. Leadership goes on every day, in every classroom. Faculty can be more intentional in helping students see themselves as leaders. Faculty can encourage one of the most fundamental aspects of leadership – intellectual curiosity – as a way of life. Law professors can equip students with knowledge, skills and strategies that will help them be successful in dealing with and leading people and organizations.

### **Baylor Law’s Response to the Need for More Training**

At Baylor Law, we take professionalism and our obligations very seriously. We are always seeking to push our students to make them the best lawyers that they can be. Baylor Law is often referred to as the “boot camp” of law schools, and we take that as a compliment. We know that our graduates will hold their clients’ livelihoods, futures, and maybe even their very lives in their hands. We want all Baylor Lawyers to be prepared for that future and we begin the very first day in law school orientation with two themes – professionalism and service. We teach them the importance of what it means to be a lawyer – a trusted advisor and zealous advocate for their clients and their communities, while exemplifying the character of a respected professional and treating others fairly and with dignity. We model for them what it means to be a servant leader. Character is important and we expect their best efforts.

Baylor Law is leading the way in legal education to prepare lawyers who are competent and ethical lawyers with an understanding of their obligation to serve and their opportunity to make a difference. Our goal is to produce successful, moral and fulfilled lawyers who not only embrace their professional obligations, but also seek opportunities to positively influence and impact clients and communities. Baylor Law’s nationally-recognized and award-winning Professional Development Program, as well as our one-of-a kind Leadership Development Program, were created to attend to the development of the whole persona of our students – technical experts, wise counsellors and effective leaders.

#### *Baylor Law’s Professional Development Program*

Baylor Law has a long tradition of producing “practice ready” lawyers. We have offered professional development programming for many years. Because we continually look for ways to improve and to better prepare our students, we responded to reports such as those mentioned above and feedback from legal employers and Baylor Law alumni by creating our mandatory Professional Development Program with the following objectives:

1. Educate all Baylor Law students in the professional standards of behavior required for the practice of law;
2. Equip students with the requisite professional skills to assume their responsibilities to clients and to provide immediate value to clients;
3. Expose students to business development training to prepare students to succeed in a challenging legal market; and
4. Prepare students for professional leadership.

Baylor Law was one of the first law schools in the country to develop a formal professional development program. Many schools followed suit, but most were small in scale, offering introductory-level programming for first-year students or voluntary training for some. At Baylor Law, we insure our students receive regular professional development training throughout their law school experience, but not in a way that undercuts our commitment to our existing course offerings. We added educational opportunities outside of—and as a supplement to—our traditional structure. The program requires students attend programming over their three academic years.<sup>22</sup> Students have flexibility so they can tailor the programming to their own needs and to the kind of legal practice they seek to pursue.

While the majority of law schools now have some type of formal professional development programming, few other schools have committed to providing the same level of professional development training as Baylor Law School. As law schools evaluate the effectiveness of their programs, we see more and more schools adopting mandatory programs and moving beyond programming limited to first-year students. Baylor's program has served as a model to other law schools, and through ongoing conversations with employers and recent graduates, we find that our program is meeting the needs of recent graduates and employers.

### *Baylor Law's Leadership Development Program*

Consistent with our mission, at Baylor Law we pride ourselves on producing "Baylor Lawyers" who will be actively and civically engaged in their communities.<sup>23</sup> Baylor Lawyers have a proud history of serving in all manner of leadership roles in communities near and far. Leadership development has always been a core component of the education and training of every Baylor Law student. From day one of orientation through graduation, we are developing individuals who will be prepared to seek and assume leadership roles across a wide spectrum of organizations within their communities and within the legal profession. While leadership training is part of the fabric of Baylor Law School, specific emphasis and training is important and helpful to adequately equip our graduates with the leadership skills they will need in an increasingly-complex and ever-changing environment.

Baylor Law was among the first of a growing number of law schools to offer a course focused on the role of lawyers as leaders. Our Leadership Engagement and Development (LEAD) course is part of Baylor's innovative Leadership Development Program created to better prepare students to make a meaningful difference in the lives of their clients, the legal profession and their communities.

Our leadership program provides education, training and programming throughout the three years of law school and includes an elective course, an annual student-run conference and the opportunity for recognition at graduation as a Leadership Fellows for students who:

1. Complete the class and Ropes challenge course;
2. Attend 5 extra hours of Professional Development programming;
3. Service as an officer of a Baylor Law School student organization for three terms;
4. Volunteer for 25 hours of community service; and
5. Participate in a 45-hour leadership externship.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.baylor.edu/law/currentstudents/index.php?id=933502>

<sup>23</sup> Baylor University's mission is "to educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community." The mission statement for Baylor Law states: "Baylor Law School strives, in the context of a Christian commitment, to integrate excellence in teaching and scholarship to develop lawyers who are able to practice law with competence, serve with compassion, and provide effective and ethical leadership."

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.baylor.edu/law/currentstudents/index.php?id=935914>

At Baylor Law, we are committed to growing the national movement in legal education to create and expand leadership development programming in law schools. Working with Debra Rhode, Ernest W. McFarland Professor of Law and the Director of the Center on the Legal Profession at Stanford University, as my co-founder we created a new Section for Leadership as part of the Association of American Law Schools and we continue to work with faculty and staff at law schools across the nation.

## Conclusion

Research into the current generation of law students and young lawyers reflects their desire to be agents for change.<sup>25</sup> Personal statements of our law school applicants overwhelmingly express desires to serve others and have a positive impact in society. Legal education and training, along with lawyers' professional status, afford attorneys daily opportunities to influence individuals, behaviors, transactions, organizations, communities and society. Every aspect of what lawyers are called upon to do in the representation of their clients is practiced leadership – influencing others and, hopefully, accomplishing the greater good. A commitment to character formation, professional identity and leadership development efforts in law schools not only benefits law students but also is essential for the future the legal profession and the preservation of the rule of law in our society. With the current state of public distrust in institutions, lack of civil discourse, and polarization of positions, those trained in the law are needed more than ever.<sup>26</sup> Now more than ever, we need lawyers who are better equipped to lead, solidly grounded with moral conviction and courageously seeking opportunities to make a positive difference each day.

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<sup>25</sup> Before the JD, a study based on a national survey conducted by Gallup for the Association of American Law Schools (AALS).

<sup>26</sup> See generally Alfred S. Konefsky and Barry Sullivan, *In This, the Winter of our Discontent: Legal Practice, Legal Education, and the Culture of Distrust*, 62 BUFF. L. REV. 659 (2014).