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Getting Noticed on a National Level

10.16.2007 | Law The University of Dayton School of Law is among a group of law schools the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has chosen to participate in its next examination of how American law schools educate their students.

"This project is an opportunity to participate in a national dialogue with other leading law schools about how to prepare tomorrow's lawyers to best serve society," UD School of Law Dean Lisa Kloppenberg said. "We are excited to share UD's innovations as well as benefit from the exchange of ideas."

UD's experiential learning through its mandatory externship program, capstones and clinics; strong legal research and writing program; Program in Law and Technology; and emphasis on ethics and Marianist values are some of the UD innovations Kloppenberg wants to contribute to the discussion.

The Carnegie Foundation also has invited law schools at Georgetown University, Harvard University, Stanford University, New York University, City University of New York, Indiana University, the University of New Mexico, Southwestern University and Vanderbilt University.

"Each of the schools we are inviting to participate have been (among the leaders in) assessing their own curricula in recent years," read an invitation letter from the Carnegie Foundation.

Representatives from each school will meet Dec. 7-8 at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., to start the nearly two-year process that the foundation hopes has "a deep impact" on legal education.

Philanthropist Andrew Carnegie established the foundation in 1905 "to do and perform all things necessary to encourage, uphold and dignify the profession of the teacher and the cause of higher education."

The foundation's report on legal education earlier this year said "many law students graduate with little experience working with real clients and an inadequate grounding in ethical and social issues."

Although UD wasn't one of the schools studied in that report, a Chronicle of Higher Education story about the Carnegie report highlighted UD, along with Harvard, Stanford and Vanderbilt, as a school that has started or will start programs geared toward addressing the report's concerns.

Recognizing particular challenges in legal education and responding to students and employers, UD started developing its Lawyer as Problem Solver curriculum in 2003. The International Institute for Conflict Prevention and Resolution honored the program with an award for excellence in 2006.

"The University of Dayton law school's curriculum was chosen because the judges believed its unprecedented focus on problem solving throughout the entire curriculum should be honored for its breadth," said Helena Erickson, senior vice president for research, development and education for the institute.

The UD program also has an accelerated option that allows students to finish in two years, instead of the traditional three years.

The word about UD's School of Law continues to spread nationwide. More than half of the students in the 2007 entering class come from outside Ohio.

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