

January 2002

Report of the Dean of the Univerisity of Wyoming College of Law

Jerry R. Parkinson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.uwyo.edu/wlr>

Recommended Citation

Parkinson, Jerry R. (2002) "Report of the Dean of the Univerisity of Wyoming College of Law," *Wyoming Law Review*. Vol. 2 : No. 1 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://scholarship.law.uwyo.edu/wlr/vol2/iss1/7>

This Special Section is brought to you for free and open access by Law Archive of Wyoming Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in Wyoming Law Review by an authorized editor of Law Archive of Wyoming Scholarship.

REPORT OF THE DEAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
COLLEGE OF LAW*

Dean Jerry R. Parkinson

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to report on the state of the University of Wyoming College of Law. It is a pleasure for me to be here.

The bulk of last year's report was devoted to the accreditation process, so I would like to begin with a quick update on that front. If you recall, at this time last year, we had received the accreditation reports from the ABA and the AALS (Association of American Law Schools, which examines a school for renewed membership at the same time as the ABA accreditation). Each of these entities had continued the College of Law in accredited (or membership) status, but had requested follow-up reports in selected areas. We have since responded to their concerns, but we are still in "report" status on a handful of fronts.

The ABA continues to express concern about the college's technological capacity and its library acquisitions funding. This is somewhat frustrating because we have made considerable progress on both fronts in the last two years. Since the ABA visit, we have wired all classrooms for Internet access, provided for multimedia projection capability in the classrooms, and installed wireless technology throughout the library. And in the last year, we have secured over a 10% increase (\$40,000) in library acquisitions funding, the first such increase in over a decade.

The AALS has requested additional reporting in two unrelated areas: the extent to which the college is addressing faculty diversity and the college's efforts to enhance the skills component of its curriculum.

We will continue to provide the ABA and the AALS with the information they seek, but, in the meantime, we continue in fully accredited status, and we take solace in these groups' findings that we are doing an outstanding job of providing a quality legal education despite

* Editor's Note: Full proceedings of the Wyoming State Bar's annual meeting in September of 2001 were not available when this issue of the *Wyoming Law Review* went to press. The *Wyoming Law Review* hopes to publish the full proceedings in its June, 2002 issue.

very limited funding.

One very exciting development at the college is the formation of a new Board of Visitors. This body consists of a diverse group of 30 alumni and friends who have committed to assisting the law school in fundraising, student recruitment, and other initiatives. The Board will be meeting for the first time in two weeks, in conjunction not only with the CSU football game, but also with our annual Winston S. Howard Distinguished Lecture by Mike Sullivan and a UW Honors Convocation address by Vice President Dick Cheney.

I want to remind all of you that the university is in the midst of a five-year capital campaign, and I hope you will assist us in boosting our private fundraising efforts to a new level. We have hired a full-time development director, Margaret Brown, and I am confident that with her efforts—and the good will and generosity of our alumni and friends—the College of Law will make exceptional strides as a result of this campaign. I want to recognize particularly the extraordinary leadership of Greg Dyekman, who has pledged \$50,000 to the College—to be matched dollar-for-dollar under the state matching program.

We have some new faculty members at the College. Leila D'Aquin has joined us permanently after several years of practice at a large Dallas law firm. She is a 1988 graduate of the Loyola University School of Law in New Orleans, and has had considerable teaching and practice experience. She will be teaching Trial Practice and Federal Courts. Lynne Boomgaarden is a visiting professor this year, teaching Legal Writing, Mining Law, and Oil & Gas. Lynne is a 1991 honors graduate of the UW College of Law and has worked for both Holland & Hart and as a law clerk for Judge Brorby. Finally, we are pleased to welcome Helen Norton as the E. George Rudolph Distinguished Visiting Professor in the fall semester. Most recently, Helen was Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Justice.

We are also pleased to be hosting a Russian lawyer and scholar-in-residence this year. Elena Gladoun has considerable legal experience in the environmental area, exceptional English language skills, and a delightful personality. I hope some of you have the opportunity to meet her if you are over at the law school.

Our visitors are filling in for Elaine Welle, who is spending the year on sabbatical leave in China, and Art Gaudio, who left the law school this past summer to assume the deanship at the School of Law of Western New England College. Art's departure has left a faculty open-

ing, and we are in the beginning stages of a search for his replacement. We are also renewing our search for a Jerry Housel/Carl Arnold Distinguished Professor. You may recall that this new position, created by Jerry's generous endowment prior to his death, was authorized last year. Unfortunately, we did not succeed in our search last year—in part, I believe, due to salary constraints—so we are trying again this year.

Speaking of the salary issue, this is going to be an absolutely critical year for both the law school and the University of Wyoming generally. The President will be going to the legislature and the Governor with a proposal to make a dramatic move in terms of faculty and staff salaries. With last year's raises, state employees are now at an average of 96.8% of market, and the university believes its employees should be on a par with other state employees. We need your help in this endeavor if we are to continue to attract and retain a strong faculty. We also have a long way to go—the university faculty as a whole is at about 85% of market, and I fully expect the latest salary surveys to show the law faculty back down around 70% of faculty salaries at peer land-grant institutions.

We've had good news on the student recruitment front this year. Applications were up over 17% from last year, and the quality of the applicant pool was very strong. Our "yield" was also significantly higher—we made the same number of offers of admission as we did last year, but ended up with a first-year class that was almost 20% larger. The percentage of acceptances from out-of-state students was double what we historically have experienced. The end result is a large first-year class—90—but we are pleased that the word apparently is getting out that the University of Wyoming has a first-rate law school and is truly a "best buy" among law schools in the United States. I credit many of these positive results to the hard work of our Admissions Director, Robyn Kniffen, and our Associate Dean, Brad Saxton, who oversees the admissions process.

We continue to select a diverse, mature student body. For the second year in a row, the average age of our first-year students exceeds 27 and we have attracted 12-15% minority students. And the first-year class this year is exactly 50% male and 50% female.

Last year I reported that one of our staff members, Patty Thompson, who coordinates our three clinics, had been named UW Staff Employee of the Year. This year, I'm pleased to report that our Admissions Director, Robyn Kniffen, is one of four UW staff members in the running for Employee of the Year. Robyn recently was named Staff Em-

ployee of the Quarter, and we are very proud of her. Both of these employees were very deserving of their awards, and their work on behalf of the college is indicative of the outstanding staff that we have.

The *Wyoming Law Review* put out its first two issues this past year, and we are very pleased by the quality and vitality of this journal. Our switch from the *Land & Water Law Review* generated a lot of interest from authors, and we believe that we are on a very positive path with this change. I hope you have had an opportunity to view the first two issues, and that you concur.

You may have noticed that the first two issues of the *Wyoming Law Review* included a series of essays from speakers at the "Frontier Justice" Symposium we co-sponsored last fall in Cody with the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, including a terrific keynote speech by former U.S. Attorney General Griffin Bell. The slate of speakers at this symposium was simply outstanding, and those who were in attendance uniformly praised the program. Indeed, many indicated that it was the most refreshing and enjoyable CLE program they had attended in a long time. We intend to continue the Frontier Justice series on a biennial basis, so I hope you will consider attending in October 2002. The focus of the next symposium will be on water in the West.

I'll close by noting that we are pleased to host this evening our annual Honors Banquet. This is the first year that we have held the banquet in conjunction with the bar convention, and I'm grateful to the bar staff for helping us to coordinate these events and to the publicity they've given us. We are delighted to be able to honor Winston Howard this evening as our 2001 Distinguished Alumnus, Laramie attorney Frank Nelson as our honorary member of the Order of the Coif, and our many generous scholarship donors. For those who will be attending, I look forward to seeing you this evening.

Thanks again for giving me this time to report. I believe the College of Law is as strong right now as it has ever been. I would love to tell you about other things that are going on at the law school, and I welcome your input, suggestions, or questions at any time.