



THURGOOD MARSHALL  
SCHOOL OF LAW



# STRATEGIC PLAN ROAD MAP 2014-15 TO 2019-20

**Our plan sustains the upward arc in the performance of our internal constituencies – our students, faculty, and staff. We are excited about their relationships to each other, to the University, to the legal profession, and to the greater community.**

*Dean Dannye Holley*



## DEAN'S SUMMARY

Preparation of the 2014 Thurgood Marshall School of Law Strategic Plan presented a great opportunity to reflect on the institution's history, evolution, and current status and to envision a future full of both opportunities and challenges. Most importantly, the Plan reflects our realization that intentional planning matters only when it embodies a commitment to accomplish what is planned. The 2014 Strategic Plan was adopted by the faculty on September 15, 2014.

We believe that the 2014 Plan appropriately reflects the common narrative of our unique history and our role in the legal academy. Our plan sustains the upward arc in the performance of our internal constituencies – our students, faculty, and staff. We are excited about their relationships to each other, to the University, to the legal profession, and to the greater community. We have proudly served as an engine of important social change for sixty-five years.

Throughout our 2014 Plan and specifically the first five goals, it is evident that our planning process and our Law School are student-centered: student learning, student life, and student careers. It will require that the Law School facilitate students' taking ownership of their education as well as collaborate with them to forge effective partnerships with other parts of the academy, members of the legal profession, and the community at large.

The 2014 Plan also focuses on its architects, the outstanding faculty of Thurgood Marshall School of Law. It documents their dedication to innovative and effective teaching. It documents that as a by-product of their production through faculty publications and research, faculty members have been asked to participate and play significant leadership roles in national and regional scholarly forums.

The seventh goal of the 2014 Plan is crucial. It calls for more effective efforts to brand, raise funds, engage with communities, and tell the good news of the school, its students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other connected persons. The final goal of the Strategic Plan focuses on ensuring that our infrastructure, library, and technology facilitate, rather than hinder, reaching all our other goals and performing action plans related to them.

Overall the 2014 Strategic Plan strikes the appropriate balance between institutional timidity and aspirations that exceed our current circumstantial and fiscal reach. The proof of the soundness of the 2014 Plan ultimately lies with our collective will to implement its proposals and to fairly assess their significance in helping the Law School and University, during the period 2014-2019, protect, improve, and pass on their great legacy.

Dannye Holley  
Dean and Professor  
Thurgood Marshall School of Law

# MISSION, VISION & CORE VALUES

## MISSION

The mission of Thurgood Marshall School of Law (“Law School”) is to prepare a diverse group of students for leadership roles in the legal profession, business, and government. In keeping with its rich tradition as an HBCU, the Law School continues to train and educate large numbers of African-American and Hispanic lawyers.

At the same time, the Law School has opened its doors to students from all backgrounds, gaining recognition as one of the most diverse law schools in the country. As part of a special-purpose institution for urban programming, the Law School is also committed to making an impact on urban communities.

## VISION

We enhance our preeminence as the Law School of inclusion and opportunity by continuing to rise on our standards of equality and excellence.

## CORE VALUES

Fairness...Learning...Integrity...Cooperation...Excellence...Fairness...**Learning**...Integrity...Cooperation...  
Excellence...Fairness...Learning.. **Integrity**...Cooperation...Excellence...Fairness Learning...Integrity...  
**Cooperation**...Excellence...Fairness...Learning...Integrity...Cooperation...**Excellence**...Fairness...Learning...  
Integrity...Cooperation...

What is the quality of your intent?  
We cannot ignore what we really want to create.  
We should be honest and do it the way we feel it. What we owe to ourselves and everyone around is to examine the reasons of our true intent. My intent will be evident in the results.

*Justice Thurgood Marshall*







Justice  
Thurgood Marshall

## 1947

The Law School opened in Fall of 1947 at a temporary location in Austin across from the Texas State Capitol, as a component of Texas State University for Negroes. The State appropriated \$100,000 to establish a law library. In the summer of 1948 the school was relocated to the University's main campus in Houston.

## 1948-1949

Between 1948 and 1949, the Law School received national recognition, gaining approval from the Texas State Board of Law Examiners and membership in the American Association of Law Libraries. In 1949, the Law School at Texas State University for Negroes received its first accreditation by the American Bar Association.

## 1968

Impressed by the fact that it was still producing a large percentage of the country's African-American lawyers, despite its small size and minimal resources, the Ford Foundation offered a one-time grant totaling \$700,000. In large part, because of the support of the Ford Foundation, the Coordinating Board rescinded its 1968 decision to recommend closing the Law School.





## 1978

On February 14, 1978, the new Law School building was dedicated and formally designated the Thurgood Marshall School of Law, in honor of the distinguished United States Supreme Court Justice and former lead attorney for the NAACP in *Sweatt v. Painter* (see photo on page 4).

## 1982-1985

From 1982 to 1995, under the leadership of Dean James Douglas, Law School enrollment doubled, increasing from 300 to 650 students. As a result of the increased enrollment, the Law School received increased funding and contributions from the State of Texas and both the state and local legal communities.

## 1995

By 1995, the Law School had become nationally regarded for its program in legal education.

## Today

In January of 2014, the law school was admitted to membership in the Association of American Law Schools. The ABA accreditation for over 65 years has been indispensable to the Law School's service as an engine for social change in Texas and the nation.



# 10 Reasons to Consider TMSL



## 01 OUR VISION

To remain committed to Thurgood Marshall's legacy of excellence and equality for our diverse students

## 02 OUR MISSION

To prepare our students for leadership roles in the legal profession, business, and government.

## 03 OUR VALUES

Cooperation, excellence, fairness, integrity, and learning

## 04 OUR INCENTIVES

Modest tuition, generous scholarships, supportive career services



## 05 OUR DIVERSITY

One of the nation's most diverse law schools





# 07

## OUR ALUMS

Leadership in state and federal legislatures, judiciary, government agencies, and private practice



State Rep.  
Senfronia Thompson,  
District 141  
TSU Alumna

# 09

## OUR COLLABORATIONS

Members of the profession, as well as scholars from other fields in our dual degree programs

# 06

## OUR ACADEMICS

Integrated and innovative academic programs that begin pre-enrollment and continue post-graduation

# 08

## OUR FACULTY

Engaged scholars and dedicated teachers



# 10

## OUR CREDO

Protect, improve, and pass on our legacy of changing the face of the legal profession in Texas and the nation



The proof of the soundness of the 2014 Plan ultimately lies with our collective will to implement its proposals and to fairly assess their significance in helping the Law School and University, during the period 2014-2019, protect, improve, and pass on their great legacy.



Faculty Retreat

## MILESTONES TO DEVELOPING THE 2014 STRATEGIC PLAN

- **2012:** Two-day Law School leadership retreat “Forging and Planning a Shared Law School Vision”.
- **2013:** Dean appointed the Strategic Planning/Self-Study and other committees to assess the degree to which the 2008 strategic plan was completed.
- **2013:** Committees submitted assessment reports in Fall Semester.
- **2013:** Dean charged Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) with crafting Strategic Plan and ABA Self-Study.
- **2013:** The SPC used assessments to guide the process in crafting the 2014 plan.
- **2013:** In November, SPC met with select group of Law School’s Blue Ribbon Committee for input regarding strategic plan.
- **2013:** In November, SPC and Dean invited student leaders to discuss the strategic plan.
- **2014:** Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis published by administrative staff in the month of January.
- **2014:** In February, TMSL retained firm to create and disseminate a comprehensive alumni survey.
- **2014:** The Law School invited the members of the Blue Ribbon Committee and the alumni board to a workshop for input on the preliminary drafts of the Strategic Plan and the ABA Self-Study in March.
- **2014:** In March, the SPC coordinated with consultants for a two-day faculty and staff retreat to further develop goals and objectives.
- **2014:** Dean and SPC held meetings during the summer with faculty and staff to finalize the draft plan.
- **2014:** Strategic Plan adopted by the faculty on September 15.

**Our strategic goals are broad statements of what is to be accomplished and are consistent with our mission and values.**



## OUR GOALS

The eight goals of the 2014 Strategic Plan are interrelated, as are their related objectives. Themes common to all goals are relevant curricular changes, faculty and student recruitment, space planning, and resource allocation. If TMSL is to fulfill its mission, we must be responsive and adaptable to the internal and external factors that change our environment and motivate us to navigate the changes as we take steps in furtherance of the goals.

TMSL will use assessment plans and tools to facilitate monitoring, performance measurement, evaluation, and documentation of progress in achieving the objectives of the 2014 Plan.

- GOAL 1** STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION
- GOAL 2** ENHANCEMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING
- GOAL 3** STUDENT ENHANCEMENT - EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM
- GOAL 4** STUDENT ENHANCEMENT - BAR PASSAGE
- GOAL 5** EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
- GOAL 6** FACULTY ENHANCEMENT AND MARKETING
- GOAL 7** GLOBAL MARKETING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- GOAL 8** INFRASTRUCTURE - LAW SCHOOL FACILITY, LAW LIBRARY, TECHNOLOGY, AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES



# GOAL 1

## STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Retain a diverse student body composed of students capable of taking advantage of TMSL's legal education program and of acquiring the skills necessary for success on the bar exam and in the practice of law.



2L SCHOLARSHIP DINNER 2014



TMSL proudly serves as a school of opportunity. In order to continue our excellent preparation of diverse attorneys to meet 21st century legal challenges, TMSL intends to recruit and retain more competitive applicants.



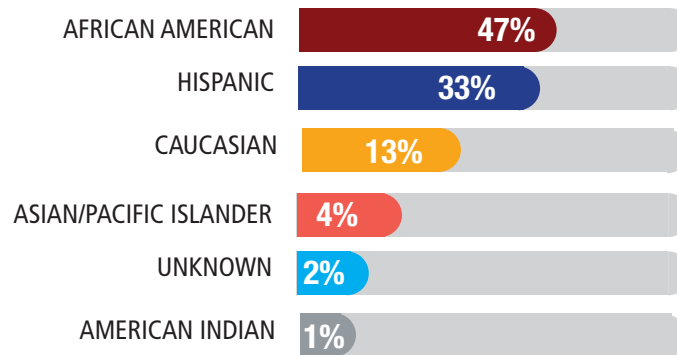
# 1 | STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Thurgood Marshall School of Law is proud of its status as one of the country's most diverse law schools, an intentional status which reflects our unique heritage as one of the few law schools in the American tradition of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (“HBCUs”).

## A Diverse Student Body – Commitment to Our Mission

TMSL believes that the diversity of our Law School community attracts many applicants to attend our institution. TMSL remains committed to continuing diversity in its admissions selections, as reflected by our student population trend.

### Diversity Overview



## Admissions Criteria – Standards and Innovation

In order to continue our excellent preparation of diverse attorneys to meet 21st century legal challenges, TMSL intends to recruit and retain more competitive applicants. We are committed to admit students who are likely to pass the bar and practice successfully without compromising our school's historic social mission or its continuing commitment to diversity. As trends emerge from past analyses, we recognize the shortcomings of relying on only the traditional admissions indicators, such as LSAT scores and UGPAs, as predictors of actual success. Our innovations and refined data from studies allow TMSL to admit some students whom we believe will not only thrive in our Law School community but will also succeed.

## Student Recruitment – Sharing Our Message

American law schools must adapt to a changing admissions landscape as applications numbers drop nationwide. Despite this challenge, TMSL looks for novel and effective ways to share its message with potential students and has adopted a multi-faceted recruitment program. After reaching out to potential matriculants, the TMSL Office of Admissions offers generous scholarship funding.

# 1

## STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

### Student Retention – A Student-Centered Law School Experience

With law-school enrollment figures declining nationwide, some law schools may invite transfer applications from TMSL's most-successful students. TMSL acknowledges the importance of retaining our best students after their first year of study. The retention of top students requires continuing positive communication with current students about the tremendous resources available to them as members of the TMSL community. Providing continuing merit-based financial support acknowledges the achievement of our top students and motivates them to continue striving for academic excellence through graduation.

admissions pipeline programs with undergraduate institutions and generate new similar relationships with additional institutions. Finally, TMSL will develop new funding sources to continue providing financial incentives for competitive applicants and students.

### Recent Initiatives

- Awards a full-tuition scholarship to every student who completes his or her first year with a cumulative grade point average in the top ten percent of the first-year class.

### Moving Forward

Moving forward, TMSL will strengthen its commitment to track the effectiveness of our current plan for recruiting and retaining students. TMSL will also aggressively pursue additional marketing opportunities to share our message with potential applicants and current students. TMSL will further strengthen its recruitment efforts by continuing to contact and aggressively recruit every potential student with LSAT, UGPA, and index profiles within our target range. Furthermore, TMSL will emphasize its current



# Strategic Objectives

## 1 | STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

TMSL WILL CONTINUE OBJECTIVES TO EQUIP ITS STUDENTS WITH SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND EXPERIENCE THAT ENABLE THEM TO ESTABLISH FULFILLING, PRODUCTIVE, AND MEANINGFUL CAREERS IN THE LAW.

- 1.1 Recruit and retain a student cohort capable of excelling in TMSL's academic programs and co-curricular activities and of passing the bar exam at a rate that satisfies an ABA Accreditation Standard.
- 1.2 Track the effectiveness of our current program for recruiting and retaining students through focused and innovative data collection and analysis.
- 1.3 Pursue additional opportunities to share TMSL's message with potential applicants and current students.
- 1.4 Enhance TMSL's current admissions pipeline programs with undergraduate institutions and develop similar programs with other institutions.
- 1.5 Develop new funding sources to underwrite substantial financial incentives for competitive applicants and students.



## GOAL 2

# ENHANCEMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

**PROFESSOR OF THE YEAR**  
**Dr. Ana Otero**

TMSL graduates have acquired the core lawyering skills and values to timely pass the bar exam and be competent, professionally responsible lawyers.



## 2 | ENHANCEMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

**TMSL continues to increase its engagement with the American Bar and other professional bar associations to enhance student learning.**



In addition to possessing legal knowledge, students will also need to be lifelong learners and excellent reflective thinkers. Today's law school graduates will enter a legal profession that is challenging, complex, and highly competitive.

### The Current Environment of Legal Education

The ABA's revised standards for accreditation of law schools reflect recognition of the importance of teaching students the skills necessary for practice. The new standards will require law schools to identify student learning outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills, and professional values, and develop methods of assessing those outcomes. Going forward, outcomes assessment will be increasingly important in developing the framework around which practice-related skills are identified, developed, and assessed. New models for delivering legal services, changes in law firm economics, advances in technology, globalization, and new forms of competition make it essential for graduates to possess the skills and competencies that will help them succeed in modern practice.

### TMSL Strengths

TMSL is currently well-positioned to take the lead among law schools striving to embody these values. TMSL has implemented a series of initiatives, programs, and interventions aimed at strengthening students' critical thinking and reasoning skills

and their abilities to be self-reflective learners and competent practitioners. These programs reflect one of TMSL's priority goals—which is to prepare our diverse group of students to successfully pass the bar exam and become successful lawyers.

### Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

In response to the changing landscape of the legal profession, TMSL continues to make a concerted effort to align legal education more intentionally with the demands of the legal profession in the 21st Century; to fine-tune a model of education that intentionally relates teaching and learning to professional competence, and to use reliable methods of assessment to measure adequacy of preparation for practice. Institutional assessment helps TMSL measure its effectiveness in achieving its fundamental goal, which is to provide our students with a quality legal education. In 2010, TMSL created an Office of Assessment in an effort to create a "culture of evidence" to guide decision-making on matters ranging from admissions to changes in the curriculum. The Assessment Office also measures student performance on the student learning outcomes that are part of the current TMSL Assessment Plan.



# 2

## ENHANCEMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

### Moving Forward

Moving forward, one of our challenges will be to continue to refine our efforts to measure student progress on specified outcomes. Another challenge is developing effective competency measurement, both in the classroom and throughout the institution. Finally, we will investigate measuring effectively our students' progress in developing these learning competencies from the first year of law school through graduation and beyond, and to measure the degree to which TMSL is adding value to our students' experience. TMSL is currently investigating the use of new classroom technologies, which we believe has promise as a tool for assessing our institutional efforts. We are also working to develop more effective measurement of competencies such as critical thinking and life-long learning, which are hard to measure. Finally, we will investigate measuring effectively our students' progress in developing these learning competencies from the first year of law school through graduation and beyond, and to measure the degree to which TMSL is adding value to our students' experience.

### Recent Initiatives

- TMSL's Center for Legal Pedagogy uses principles from the cognitive sciences to study, implement, and evaluate what law schools teach and how law students learn.
- TMSL has an integrated Academic Support Program that begins prior to enrollment, continues at every stage of a student's matriculation, and culminates with significant post-graduation support for preparation for the bar exam.





# Strategic Objectives

## 2 | ENHANCEMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

THESE OBJECTIVES FOCUS ON HELPING OUR STUDENTS DEVELOP THE CORE LAWYERING SKILLS THEY NEED TO BECOME COMPETENT, PROFESSIONALLY RESPONSIBLE LAWYERS.

- 2.1 Continue to implement programs that enable students to develop the skills and competencies required to become effective practitioners.
- 2.2 Systematically measure and document that our students have made substantial academic progress from entry through exit.
- 2.3 Assist each student to develop a strong professional legal identity and document the results of our efforts. “Professional legal identity” is the assumption by the student of the role of knowledgeable, ethical, service-oriented legal counsel.

## GOAL 3

# STUDENT ENHANCEMENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM

TMSL graduates are prepared by a robust experiential learning program for modern legal practice.



Externship Event



# Six credit hour experiential learning requirement...bridging the gap between law school and practice.

- ~ Practical work experience
- ~ Even playing field when seeking employment
- ~ Demonstrated skills in the profession



**Professor Stephanie Ledesma**  
Assistant Professor of Law and Director of  
Experiential Learning Programs

## 3 | STUDENT ENHANCEMENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM

TMSL recognizes that helping students develop the habits of mind and attributes of competent, ethical lawyers requires a robust program of experiential learning.

### Why Experiential Learning

Recently, the ABA recommended the approval of a six-credit hour experiential learning requirement. This new and important requirement, along with TMSL's institutional commitment to providing a "path to practice" for its graduates, drives the current experiential learning component of this strategic plan. By learning in context and through carefully structured experiences, students can develop complex skills in settings that help them gain professional expertise. Skills such as self-reflective learning, fact-gathering, and advocacy, and values such as fairness and integrity are developed in programs that bridge the gap between law school and practice.

### TMSL's Philosophy

TMSL recognizes that currently, and in all probability for the remainder of this decade, a significant majority of our graduates will commence their professional careers in small firms or as solo practitioners. Many of our students will graduate without the mentoring opportunities that typically are available in large firm settings. More importantly and historically, many TMSL lawyers often develop sustainable legal practices that serve low-and moderate-income clients with significant legal needs and limited resources. Therefore, an overarching goal of the program is to immerse each student in experiences that encourage them to

learn by observing, self-assessing, evaluating, experiencing, and by doing.

### Moving Forward

TMSL will continue to review and update its curriculum to meet the changing needs of the profession and provide its newly licensed attorneys with practice-ready education. Our commitment to excellence and to equipping our students for the practical world calls for further innovation in our curriculum, the identification of new programs, and applying additional resources to help our graduates find jobs or launch their own practices. Moving forward, one of our challenges will be to continue to commit funds and resources to experiment with innovative curricula and projects suited to train our diverse group of students so they can succeed in their future career opportunities.

Furthermore, we will continue to ensure adequate personnel and financial resources needed to plan for, incorporate, sustain, and grow new programs. We will continue to address concerns about tenure and scholarship expectations of experiential Law School faculty members. Finally, we will continue to identify best practices to enhance the support we offer students in developing their identities as professionals. This effort will include enlisting the support of the practicing bar to provide mentoring.

# 3

## STUDENT ENHANCEMENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM

### Recent Initiatives

- The Law School recently hired its first Director of Experiential Learning Programs to ensure coordination among TMSL's experiential learning programs and activities, and the doctrinal curriculum.
- TMSL also sponsors robust mock trial and moot court programs. For the past three years, the mock trial program has amassed a distinguished record, achieving honors in national and regional competitions.
- TMSL's moot court teams have a long history of advancing in several regional competitions, and teams have reached the semi-final rounds in recent competitions.
- The Earl Carl Institute for Legal and Social Policy (ECI) clinical internship program recently achieved national recognition for its outstanding work in juvenile justice.





## 3 | STUDENT ENHANCEMENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM

THESE OBJECTIVES FOCUS ON HELPING OUR STUDENTS DEVELOP THE CORE LAWYERING SKILLS THEY NEED TO BECOME COMPETENT, PROFESSIONALLY RESPONSIBLE LAWYERS.

- 3.1 Develop a comprehensive definition of experiential learning consistent with ABA Accreditation Standards.
- 3.2 Complete the curriculum survey to identify courses that instruct the knowledge and skills in the context of the experiential learning program as defined by the ABA Accreditation Standards.
- 3.3 Ensure the curriculum requires students to enroll in experiential courses that, at a minimum, meet with ABA minimal experiential requirements.
- 3.4 Integrate doctrinal and experiential learning by exploring the feasibility of developing a capstone course that blends theory and practice in the third year.
- 3.5 Increase experiential learning opportunities.
- 3.6 Encourage scholarship that focuses on the role of experiential learning and promotes TMSL as a national leader in the area.
- 3.7 Continue to further collaborations with the practicing bar to increase our understanding of the competencies needed in modern day practice, and to identify current practice fundamentals and trends.
- 3.8 Ensure that the experiential learning opportunities help the students' development as professionals, and prepare them for the modern law practice.



## GOAL 4

### STUDENT ENHANCEMENT - BAR PASSAGE

TMSL graduates will pass bar exams at a rate that satisfies an ABA Accreditation Standard, and our emphasis will be on satisfying an accreditation standard applicable to first-time takers.



## 4 | STUDENT ENHANCEMENT - BAR PASSAGE



**80-90%**  
of TMSL graduates  
who sat for the Texas  
Bar passed the exam  
within one year of  
their graduation.



Meeting or exceeding the ABA standard demonstrates that the Law School is meeting its charter objective of promoting diversity in legal education and in the legal profession by producing graduates who meet or exceed the minimum standards to practice law.

### Recent Improvements in Bar Passage

In recent years, 2009-2013, the Law School has shown an encouraging upward trend toward our bar-passage rate for first-time takers. In July 2013, we reached a milestone 79.23% pass rate for first-time takers on the Texas Bar Exam. In addition, statistics submitted to the Texas Legislative Budget Board for TMSL's annual ABEST report showed that, on average, between 80-90% of TMSL graduates who sat for the Texas Bar passed the exam within one year of their graduation.

### Resources and Initiatives

The Law School recognizes that it faces some formidable challenges to reach and sustain its bar-passage goals. The Law School commits a significant investment to maintain strong curriculum and academic support programs. TMSL's integrated approach to prepare students for the bar exam involves frequent collaborations between the Office of Academic Support, the Center for Legal Pedagogy, and the Office of Assessment. Academic Support works closely with these departments, commercial vendors, and the faculty to ensure that students are developing the skills, competencies,

and content knowledge required for successful performance on the bar. Academic Support faculty teach courses in elective bar-readiness curriculum, facilitate skills training sessions, and work closely with students as bar coaches.

### Meeting Historical Challenges with Bar Passage

The majority of our students have LSAT scores in the last quartile compared to the approximately 2,000 students who annually enter other Texas law schools. In view of the composition of our entering classes, we face substantial difficulties in sustaining a 75% bar-passage-rate for first-time takers, even with our offering academic remediation and skills training. The Law School faces the challenge of identifying the best predictors for success on a state bar exam. TMSL data also shows that the cohort of TMSL graduates who accelerate graduation are statistically less likely to pass the bar in February. Every failure on the February bar exam—by an accelerated graduate—runs the risk of disproportionately impacting the Law School's first-time bar-passage rate. We must also continue to find ways to teach substantive knowledge to develop the skills of students who we determine from the identified predictors are at-risk of not passing the bar.

# 4 | STUDENT ENHANCEMENT - BAR PASSAGE

## Moving Forward

TMSL will continue to devote resources and expertise to developing policies and programs that support our efforts to achieve a consistently high bar-passage rate. We accordingly have placed improved bar passage as a goal in our Strategic Plan.

## Recent Initiatives

- Offers learning interventions and skills training throughout the TMSL curriculum. In the last six years, the program has grown considerably.





## 4 | STUDENT ENHANCEMENT - BAR PASSAGE

THESE OBJECTIVES FOCUS ON HELPING OUR STUDENTS DEVELOP THE CORE LAWYERING SKILLS THEY NEED TO BECOME COMPETENT, PROFESSIONALLY RESPONSIBLE LAWYERS.

- 4.1** Continue to identify the legal knowledge, analytical skills, and core competencies tested on state licensing examinations, and evaluate the degree to which the knowledge, skills, and competencies are being taught in the legal education program.
- 4.2** Based on the findings of the report of bar-exam competencies described in Objective 4.1, Academic Support, and the Center for Legal Pedagogy in collaboration with the Curriculum Committee will develop programs and interventions addressing the skills and competencies not fully covered in the core curriculum.
- 4.3** Review current graduation requirements and current academic policies and procedures and formulate a policy that will deter early graduation for at-risk students.
- 4.4** Provide early counseling for rising 2Ls and 3Ls on bar readiness.
- 4.5** Continue to monitor the academic performance of at-risk students.

## GOAL 5

### STUDENT ENHANCEMENT - EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Work in partnership with students, graduates, and the profession to assist students in attaining their preferred career opportunity within a reasonable time after graduation.





## 5 | STUDENT ENHANCEMENT - EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

60%

Law Firm or  
Private Practice

TMSL Class of 2013 ABA  
Employment Statistics

Law Firm/Private Practice 60%

Business & Industry 21%

Government 14%

Education 2%

Unknown 2%

Public Interest 1%

TMSL remains committed to enhancing our students' employment options through continuing relevant data collection and reporting; responsiveness to the strengths and needs of our student body; and partnership with members of the profession.

### Collecting Meaningful Employment Data

TMSL must establish methods to comply with the American Bar Association requirement for law schools to provide detailed initial employment data excluding self-employed attorneys. The updates increase the scrutiny all law schools face when providing useful, accurate, accessible information about their student employment outcomes. The Law School has agreed to participate in a national longitudinal study of employment of its graduates. In addition to TMSL's participation in NALP's survey, it will continue to develop data collection and reporting methods. Accordingly, TMSL intends to be at the forefront of law schools that are developing innovative ways to objectively measure career outcomes of self-employed attorneys.

### Creating Profiles of Current Student Career Interests

Enhancing employment resources requires a detailed picture of the career goals of current TMSL students. Recent accomplishments in our career services area include use of software to identify students' interests in various practice areas and for tracking student employment data. TMSL will expand

its efforts to develop accurate profiles of students' career interests including aligning student strengths and goals with TMSL's available curriculum and program elements, connecting them to potential employers in their practice areas of interest.

### Identifying Employer Partners

Recent data indicate that large law firms are not hiring diversity candidates at an optimistic rate. TMSL will continue to expand our contacts with those firms and attorneys most likely to hire our graduates. We will identify prospective employers in our city, region, state, and nation that demonstrate an interest in our Law School and in hiring our graduates. By analyzing and tracking data on the factors we find correlate with our committed employer partners, TMSL will develop a list of predictive criteria for reaching out to future employers.

### Identifying In-Demand Skills

A fiercely competitive legal market demands job candidates who are prepared to add value for employers and clients the moment they arrive on the job. TMSL will continue assisting students find employment by generating a detailed profile of the knowledge and skills necessary to be a successful solo practitioner or small-firm lawyer—currently and in the years to come. The profiles will allow the Law School to assess whether its curriculum, experiential training, and collaborations with practicing attorneys will produce graduates who fit the job profiles.

# 5

## STUDENT ENHANCEMENT - EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

### Current and Former Student Information and Engagement

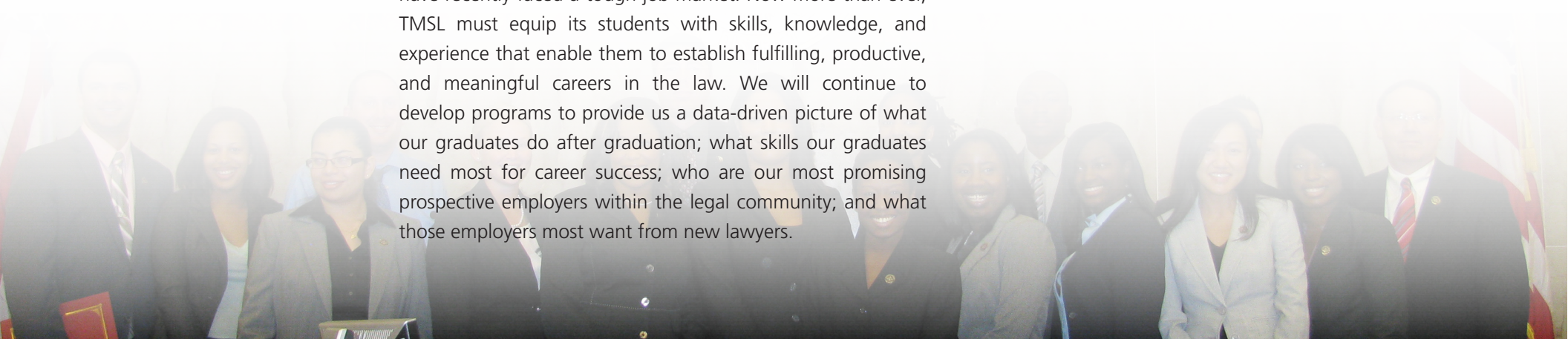
Institutional efforts to enlarge job prospects are effective only when students and alumni are engaged in the available programs and resources. Current students and alumni do not always take advantage of the career development support TMSL offers its graduates. TMSL will further develop initiatives to better inform and engage its current and former students in the Law School's career development resources. The TMSL Office of Career Services, partnering with others in the TMSL community, will generate additional informational and promotional tools profiling particular legal practice areas and marketing the Office's many programs.

### Moving Forward

TMSL graduates, along with the graduates of most law schools, have recently faced a tough job market. Now more than ever, TMSL must equip its students with skills, knowledge, and experience that enable them to establish fulfilling, productive, and meaningful careers in the law. We will continue to develop programs to provide us a data-driven picture of what our graduates do after graduation; what skills our graduates need most for career success; who are our most promising prospective employers within the legal community; and what those employers most want from new lawyers.

### Recent Initiatives

- Beginning to develop an individualized profile on each TMSL student to track the student's interests prior to entering the first year of law school and again later after post-graduation.
- Continuing to participate in programs designed to increase the likelihood of hiring by large firms such as in the national Leadership Council on Diversity's First Year Mentoring Program.





# Strategic Objectives

## 5 | STUDENT ENHANCEMENT - EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

TMSL WILL CONTINUE OBJECTIVES TO EQUIP ITS STUDENTS WITH SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND EXPERIENCE THAT ENABLE THEM TO ESTABLISH FULFILLING, PRODUCTIVE, AND MEANINGFUL CAREERS IN THE LAW.

- 5.1 Track and document the progress of students and recent graduates seeking and securing employment.
- 5.2 Create an ad hoc Career Services Committee to assist with and monitor the attainment of strategic plan goal.
- 5.3 Increase the quality and quantity of institutional contacts with prospective employers.
- 5.4 Assist students in evaluating the full range of career options based on their knowledge, skills, and experiences.
- 5.5 Identify in-demand skills.
- 5.6 Develop additional initiatives to inform current students and alumni in the Law School's career development resources, and engage them in using those resources.
- 5.7 Address collaboration between Career Services and faculty to prepare students for solo or private practice, or both.

## GOAL 6

### FACULTY ENHANCEMENT AND MARKETING

TMSL faculty achieve measurable and critical learning outcomes with students; earn an excellent reputation for the quality, quantity, and influence on their research and scholarship; and engage in an array of community services.



## 6 | FACULTY ENHANCEMENT AND MARKETING

**TMSL acknowledges the immeasurable value of its faculty. Faculty members are committed not only to teaching but to advancing the mission of the Law School through their scholarship and service in the community.**

Faculty members are committed not only to teaching but also to advancing the mission of the Law School through their scholarship and service in the community. TMSL acknowledges the immeasurable value of its faculty.

### Commitment to Teaching Excellence

The Law School must continue to devote significant institutional resources to enhance and assess teaching effectiveness, and to develop innovative teaching methods that take into account the evolving needs of the legal profession. TMSL is committed to continue its concerted efforts to maintain a faculty of excellent teachers dedicated to helping students develop the competencies needed to pass the bar and to succeed in the practice of law. The Law School will continue its efforts to hire candidates who embrace pioneering innovative and academically rigorous teaching methods, and who are excellent scholars. To this end, the Law School is committed to ensuring that its faculty governance policy, standards for faculty hiring, retention, and incentives conform to national benchmarks and best practices.

### Promotion of Research and Scholarly Excellence

Given the national explosion of experiential programs and the school's recent admission into the AALS, TMSL recognizes that it must sustain its current scholarly and pedagogical upward arc—and even extend it. The Law School must effectively guide faculty in the triple demands of teaching, scholarship, and service. The Law School has made substantial progress towards building an infrastructure and culture of scholarship to attract scholars with local, regional, and national reputations. We have placed greater emphasis on financial incentives, programs and intellectual support for research and publication. The Law School is emerging as a regional leader in scholarly engagement, nurturing scholarly production, particularly by scholars of color.

### Faculty Accomplishments and Collaborations

TMSL must continue to recognize faculty accomplishments. TMSL has made significant strides in establishing collaborations with other law schools. Faculty members have led and participated in seminars, symposia, and professional meetings across the country. Faculty members have led and served on committees, delivered papers, and served as panelists in national and international legal academic organizations and institutions. Hence, the Law School has made tremendous progress in building a sustainable, organic, and innovative, and entrepreneurial scholarly culture.



# 6

## FACULTY ENHANCEMENT AND MARKETING

### Moving Forward

Moving forward, the Law School will continue to ensure that the production of excellent scholarship remains as a predominant goal so that the current level of scholarly production is sustained. To sustain the upward momentum in both the legal profession and legal academy, while maintaining its historical emphasis on cutting-edge, student-centered teaching, requires a careful evaluation and implementation of the strategic goal related to student learning. The Law School is mindful that periods of rapid change and transition are bound to cause challenges, but the school remains committed to meet these head-on.

### Recent Initiatives

- Engaged in a scholarly exchange with its sister law schools in Houston, spearheaded the formation of a new scholarly regional consortium—the Southern Central Association of Law Schools.
- Established Scholars in Residence, establishing the Law School as a platform for solid scholarly contributions and as a launching pad for new scholarship by new and emerging scholars.
- Established the TMSL Lecture Series, an internal scholarly forum for tenured faculty.
- Resurrected the Quodlibet, an internal scholarly workshop for non-tenured faculty.
- Sponsored internal forums for presenting and critiquing works in progress and celebrating scholarly accomplishments.
- Launched The New Scholars Writing Workshop in 2012 aimed at supporting Law School faculty with less than four years on the tenure track in their research and scholarship.
- Hosted the Law School Lutie A. Lytle Writing Workshop for Black Women Law Faculty in 2011; and the Southeast/Southwest People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference in 2014.
- Sponsors an annual event that profiles faculty achievements.



## 6 | FACULTY ENHANCEMENT AND MARKETING

TMSL WILL CONTINUE OBJECTIVES TO EQUIP ITS STUDENTS WITH SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND EXPERIENCE THAT ENABLE THEM TO ESTABLISH FULFILLING, PRODUCTIVE, AND MEANINGFUL CAREERS IN THE LAW.

- 6.1 Continue to emphasize best practices in faculty hiring, including recruiting and competing nationally, while remaining mindful of TMSL's mission to maintain diversity, and the educational needs of students in the rapidly changing legal marketplace.
- 6.2 Create at least five new named Professorships in recognition of candidates who have demonstrated a history of continuing and noteworthy scholarship, as well as teaching excellence.
- 6.3 Conduct a benchmarking study to review TMSL's standards for faculty governance, criteria for faculty hiring, retention, incentives, and evaluation and determine whether current policies and rules are consistent with national best practices.
- 6.4 Prepare a curriculum map that identifies places in the curriculum where institutional outcomes are being taught and identifies gaps in the curriculum.
- 6.5 Collaborate to ensure that classroom teaching is in alignment with national best practices.
- 6.6 Continue to identify, evaluate, and provide faculty training on state of the art classroom technology.
- 6.7 Assess and adopt, where appropriate, the delivery of a trial number of JD degree courses online, and employ online courses for any LL.M program instituted.
- 6.8 Commit sufficient resources to assess annually the alignment between teaching assignments and the research and scholarly agendas of tenure-track faculty members.
- 6.9 Recognizes that classroom teaching may be enhanced by the production of quality scholarship, and that, likewise, quality scholarship may more likely be achieved by insights forged by engaged and effective teaching.
- 6.10 Commit sufficient resources to encourage production of interdisciplinary research and scholarship.
- 6.11 Implement fair processes of peer review for both teaching and scholarship.



## GOAL 7

# GLOBAL MARKETING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Establish a widely  
respected TMSL  
brand.





**TMSL was admitted into the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) in January 2014. Admission to AALS signifies a national vote of confidence in the Law School's achievements.**



## 7 | GLOBAL MARKETING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

TMSL's continual growth and astounding achievements over the years are a testament to its vision and leadership and the commitment of its faculty and staff. Despite its many accomplishments, however, the Law School has yet to achieve broad national visibility. We believe that not having broad national recognition is due in part to the fact that TMSL has yet to build a brand that proudly promotes its identity.

### Broad National Visibility

Developing a national reputation is even more important now because of the current environment in legal education. As law school applications continue to drop, competition among law schools for top students and faculty is becoming more intense. While TMSL has yet to fully commit resources to meet the goal of successful branding, the school has the infrastructure in place to aggressively pursue that goal.

### Community Relationships

TMSL recently created the Office for Institutional Advancement (OIA) to collaborate with the TMSL community, to promote the school's mission and cultivate strategic relationships, communicate the Law School's achievements and developments, and engage with the broader community to increase fundraising. In collaboration with the Office of External Affairs, OIA is making significant progress in enhancing TMSL's visibility in the legal community.

### Alumni Outreach

The Office of External Affairs (OEA) plays a vital role in increasing the visibility of the Law School through its connections with alumni, friends, and the greater community. OEA produces TMSL's monthly publication *Thurgood Today*, provides continuing legal education through its Center for CLE, engages with alumni, and solicits annual giving. Its primary strategic goal is to promote alumni engagement and support the Law School's fundraising efforts. The CLE programs offered through the Center for Continuing Legal Education strengthen collaborations between the Law School, TMSL alumni, and the greater Houston community. The CLE programs also educate the greater community on critical legal issues—particularly those issues that impact underserved communities. CLE programs also provide an opportunity for additional law school community outreach. Furthermore, OEA participates in advancing the mission of the Law School through its fundraising and efforts to ensure that alumni are recognized nationally for their accomplishments.

### Our Alumni

With only 5% of the total Texas law school enrollment, TMSL in the last five years has produced 43% of all of the newly-licensed African American attorneys graduating from Texas law schools. In 2011, we graduated our 1,000th Hispanic-American. Our persistence in producing a substantial number of attorneys, judges, and public servants is an important achievement.

# 7

## GLOBAL MARKETING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Moving Forward

Moving forward, the Law School will continue to build on the marketing efforts and commit substantial resources to develop and promote its brand and identity. The Law School also intends to strengthen its relationships with the local community. OIA and OEA will continue to collaborate with other TMSL departments, the University, alumni, and all TMSL constituents to maximize the Law School's exposure and to establish its brand.

Among key targeted projects is the creation of media resources to better profile the faculty, promote faculty scholarship, and broaden and deepen the involvement of the faculty with members of the community. The Law School will also commit resources to an aggressive fundraising campaign that includes outreach to potential donors, cultivating its relationship with current donors, and increasing the Law School's visibility through its fundraising efforts.

### Recent Initiatives

- According to a recent report by Hanover Research, TMSL is one of 15 law schools nationwide that has notably improved its reputation with lawyers and judges since 2012.
- TMSL was admitted into the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) in January 2014. Admission to AALS signifies a national vote of confidence in the Law School's achievements.
- TMSL's Earl Carl Institute for Legal and Social Policy, Inc., offers solutions to issues that affect urban and disenfranchised communities. ECI has received national recognition for its success in leadership, research, and advocacy that addresses the problems of underserved communities.
- Our students continue to receive recognition for their participation and performance in legal writing competitions and other scholarly activities. In the last three years, our Mock Trial and Moot Court Teams have gained national recognition for the quality of their preparation and performance.





## 7 | GLOBAL MARKETING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES SUPPORT THE LAW SCHOOL'S EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN ITS BRAND AND ENHANCE ITS RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY.

- 7.1 Develop the TMSL brand to promote our mission, values, and programs so that we can attract and retain the best and brightest students and faculty from across the city, state, and nation.
- 7.2 Work to promote and publicize the scholarship, expertise, and achievements of TMSL faculty and students.
- 7.3 Increase the involvement of TMSL faculty and students with TMSL's external community.
- 7.4 Expand fundraising initiatives targeted at community partners, government entities, and grant funding sources.
- 7.5 Encourage alumni support for and participation in TMSL programs.
- 7.6 Increase community outreach by providing professional development for TMSL alumni and the greater legal community.
- 7.7 Increase financial support to TMSL students and programs.
- 7.8 Promote the profile of TMSL by engaging our alumni and advertising our successes.



## GOAL 8

### INFRASTRUCTURE

- LAW SCHOOL  
FACILITY,  
LAW LIBRARY,  
TECHNOLOGY,  
AND OTHER  
SUPPORT  
SERVICES

TMSL infrastructure  
and support  
systems enable the  
school to fulfill the  
objectives in the  
Strategic Plan.

THURGOOD MARSHALL  
SCHOOL OF LAW



**TMSL is committed to having a state-of-the-art facility to support its program of legal education. TMSL has made great progress in expanding its facility, growing its technology, and maintaining a library that can fully support its needs.**

## **8** | INFRASTRUCTURE – LAW SCHOOL FACILITY, LAW LIBRARY, TECHNOLOGY, AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

The Law School is committed to having a state-of-the-art facility to support its program of legal education.

### **Law School Facility**

During the last two years, the Law School has completed remodeling and installations. The most recent renovation resulted in 10,000 square feet of additional classroom space and over 5,600 square feet added to the library. As a result of all these innovations, the Law School's instructional technology was substantially improved. As the Law School continues to grow, and despite the renovations and installations, even more space is necessary. Ample space is needed to meet the demands of a student-focused program of legal education and to accommodate the demands of the experiential learning program.

### **Law Library**

The primary objective of TMSL's Collection Development Policy is to grow and maintain the library collection to support the direction of the law school curriculum and the research interests of faculty and other users. The August 2012 leadership retreat identified the quality of the collection as being one of the Library's strengths; the Law School nonetheless plans to expand the Law Library's collection of basic materials and increase its collection of more specialized and advanced materials. The Law Library also maintains, and will expand, its collection of scholarly non-legal titles related to subject matter concentrations. It will continue to expand the availability of resources which best fit the Law School's research needs. The Library will, for example,

expand its resources on Immigration Law to support the Law School's proposed LL.M program.

### **Technology**

TMSL has embraced the changes in technology and recognizes that to keep up with the fast pace of innovations, the school must remain vigilant. During 2013-14, the Law School made a number of significant improvements and has already committed resources to a number of new projects for 2014-15. The demand for more technology in the classroom, the expectations that the classrooms should be state-of-the-art and the need for more innovative online administrative services require a continuous rigorous needs assessment.

### **Moving Forward**

The Law School will innovate and commit resources to new curricular activities and programs to fully prepare students for 21st Century lawyering. The new curricular programs, however, require state-of-the-art technology, adequate facilities, and a library that can serve as the center for learning for the Law School and the community. Moving forward, the Law School plans to continue to update its facilities and infrastructure. To this end, the Law School will conduct a needs assessment to evaluate space requirements over the next five years and simultaneously continue to plan for a new building. The Library Review Committee will continue to work with Library leadership to review the collection policy for currency and accuracy and to ensure full compliance with its underlying principles. The Law School will continue to increase and improve its technological



# 8

## INFRASTRUCTURE – LAW SCHOOL FACILITY, LAW LIBRARY, TECHNOLOGY, AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

infrastructure. Moreover, TMSL will strengthen its commitment to equipping our students with the knowledge they need to be technology-savvy lawyers.

### Recent Initiatives

During the last two years the Law School has completed remodeling and installations, as follows:

- Signage—Directional signs, photographs of significant individuals with motivational adages; and TSU logos with color to match the main campus (increasing connection to University);
- Television monitors;
- Upgrades to classrooms with items such as, podium monitors and touch screens;
- Overflow rooms equipped to provide real-time communication;
- New furniture;
- New student commons equipped with a secured entrance, four meeting rooms, eight televisions, Apple and Comcast TV, tables, and comfortable seating;
- Updated security, including more cameras and surveillance; and
- Clinic renovations, including a multipurpose conference room, six workstations for students, storage and file space, and exterior windows to ensure clients' confidentiality.





## 8

### INFRASTRUCTURE – LAW SCHOOL FACILITY, LAW LIBRARY, TECHNOLOGY, AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES SUPPORT THE LAW SCHOOL'S EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN ITS BRAND AND ENHANCE ITS RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY.

- 8.1** Evaluate and assess facility needs.
- 8.2** Review TMSL's Collection Development Policy for currency and accuracy, and to ensure that the collection fully reflects the curriculum and scholarship needs of the Law School in keeping with American Bar Association requirements and Association of Research Libraries guidelines.
- 8.3** Provide library services to support the Law School program of legal education, as well as the research and teaching needs of its faculty, students and staff.
- 8.4** Continue to create a library environment that is conducive to studying and conducting research, as well as functional to meet the current needs of the Law School and accommodate future growth.
- 8.5** Promote law library services through outreach to the Law School, the University, and the extended legal community.
- 8.6** Enhance the technology and infrastructure of the Library.
- 8.7** Continue to assess and enhance technology to ensure the Law School stays current with cutting-edge technology.



The Strategic Planning Committee for the 2013-14 term was composed as follows: Chair: Ana M. Otero; and Faculty Members: Fernando Colon-Navarro, James Douglas, Maurice Hew, Cassandra Hill, Marcia Johnson, Thomas Kleven, DeCarlous Spearman, and Edieth Wu; Student Members: Larandol Cowart and Philesha Torrence; and Ex officio Member: Docia Rudley. During the early part of 2014, the Chairperson invited the following members of the faculty and staff to assist on specific goals of the Strategic Plan: Marsha Griggs, Mary Kelly Yolanda Morgan, Stephanie Ledesma, and Tamara Tabo.