A Missing Link for Producing Practice-Ready Law Graduates and for Narrowing the Expectations-Reality Gap: 1L Judicial Internships

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I. Introduction

Mitchell Hamline School of Law (MHSL) is in a privileged position to help redefine legal
education in the United States. Its two predecessor schools, William Mitchell College of Law and
Hamline University School of Law, were regarded as practice-focused and devoted to public
service. As it goes through its first year since the law schools combined, MHSL’s new Dean and
President, Mark C. Gordon, is positioned to carve out a bright future for the school’s next 100
years. If the model MHSL implements proves to be groundbreaking—as the Langdellian model
was for American legal education starting in Harvard Law School in the 1870s—MHSL will
transform the history of American legal education.

One of the best ways for this to happen is to allow first-year law students (1L) to intern in
courthouses doing clerical and administrative work. Observing proceedings, drafting boilerplate
orders, making scheduling calls, and the like are invaluable for students exploring their law career
options. If the work they do varies week to week, then 1L students will get a taste of different
practices, styles, demeanors, and idiosyncrasies from the bench and from the bar. This exposure
would enrich classroom simulation exercises and doctrinal discussions.

The proposed See.Act.Do model of experiential learning establishes that law students
become better lawyers if they first see practitioners advocate in court, followed by acting or
simulating exercises in class, and then doing the legal work on behalf of real clients in a clinic or
externship setting, or as licensed attorneys. MHSL’s simulation courses set a terrific framework
for students to glimpse legal practice in a controlled environment. However, simulation alone is
insufficient to provide a realistic context for an assigned exercise.
This research report is based on the successful experience of judicial internships required for all law students starting within their first year of studies in the Universidad Tecnológica Centroamericana (UNITEC) in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. By incorporating the views of Minnesota judges, and MHSL alumni graduating between 1975 and 2015, this paper adapts the model to Minnesota’s reality, and to a MHSL objective: producing practice-ready attorneys.

First-year Judicial Internships also would be beneficial in reducing the Expectations-Reality Gap of students as they go into legal practice. A large majority of the sampled MHSL alumni from 1975-2015 were not practice-ready upon graduation; their expectations of legal practice were distorted. A majority of the surveyed alumni believe that 1L Judicial Internships would help students become more practice-ready and would reduce the Expectations-Reality Gap.

The proposed 1L Judicial Internship Program complies with the American Bar Association (ABA) Standards for field placements, as offered in this study.

II. Experiential Learning in Mitchell Hamline School of Law

Since enrolling in Hamline University School of Law in the fall of 2014, the author has attended over sixty networking events with practicing attorneys, judges, and justices. Besides the 2015 ABA Annual Meeting, which took place in Chicago, Illinois, all the events attended have taken place in Minneapolis or St. Paul, Minnesota. From my very first encounters with the bench and bar, the author has noticed a large proportion of attorneys complaining about their wasteful legal education, as some called it. It felt like a rite of passage, they exclaimed. Others said they learned how to pass the bar, but not how to be attorneys.

All these comments were confusing. The author assumed these experiences were, at best, isolated to these attorneys themselves, or, at worst, to whatever law schools they went to. A few months into the 1L year, the author started to understand what these dozens of attorneys were
talking about. One enrolls in law school to become an attorney. Nevertheless, it seemed like students were being trained to be good law students, not necessarily good lawyers. This perplexity led the author to dig into what caused this wide gap between legal education and legal practice. The author started by looking at his own law school, which had recently been rechristened after combining with another local law school.

MHSL takes rightful pride in preparing skillful students for entering the legal profession. The school offers a myriad of opportunities on campus and off campus for law students to become acquainted with the practice of law. The school’s motto reads: “Great in Theory. Even Better in Practice.”

On campus, MHSL requires 1L students to take a year-long course called Writing and Representation: Advocacy and Problem Solving (WRAP) for a total of six credits. Starting 2L year, students are required to take Advocacy class for three credits as a requisite for graduation; this course simulates a deposition, the different stages of a bench trial, an entire bench trial, and an appellate oral argument after writing an appellate brief. Additionally, students may take Simulation courses and Transactional Law courses.

1 Mitchell Hamline School of Law main webpage, http://mitchellhamline.edu et al. (last visited May 5, 2016)
2 Mitchell Hamline School of Law, Description of WRAP course, http://mitchellhamline.edu/writing-representation-advocacy-problem-solving/ (last visited May 5, 2016). Though WRAP will now be called Lawyering: Advice and Persuasion, its content and structure will not change. Change of name information provided by Paro Pope, WRAP Administrative Coordinator (email received May 16, 2016 at 9:31 CST)(on file with author). Note that the forthcoming name is roughly the same name that one of its two predecessor courses had two decades ago.
3 Mitchell Hamline School of Law, Description of Advocacy course, http://mitchellhamline.edu/advocacy/ (last visited May 5, 2016)
4 Mitchell Hamline School of Law, Description of Simulation and Transactional Law courses http://mitchellhamline.edu/simulation-courses/ http://mitchellhamline.edu/transactional-law/ (last visited May 5, 2016)
Off campus, MHSL offers its 1L+ students the opportunity to volunteer through Minnesota Justice Foundation (MJF).\textsuperscript{5} Starting in second year, students may choose from seventeen clinics\textsuperscript{6} and over 200 externship placements\textsuperscript{7}. Additionally, 3L+ students may enroll in two types of semester-long placements: Legal Residency Program, and Semester in Practice.

All in all, MHSL students have abundant opportunities to prepare for legal practice. The plethora of course and placement offerings are a reflection of MHSL’s commitment to an outcomes-based approach to legal education.\textsuperscript{8} One of MHSL’s predecessors, William Mitchell College of Law, has been known as the “lawyer’s law school.”\textsuperscript{9} In a survey conducted for this research paper,\textsuperscript{10} 94% of 128 surveyed MHSL alumni stated having participated in a legal clinic, externship, school-sponsored clerkship, semester in practice, or volunteering through MJF.

**Question:** While in law school, in which of the following school-sponsored placements or activities did you participate?

![Bar Chart]

\textsuperscript{5} Mitchell Hamline School of Law, Description of Experiential Learning http://mitchellhamline.edu/academics/experiential-learning/experiential-learning-progression/ (last visited May 5, 2016)
\textsuperscript{6} Mitchell Hamline School of Law, Description of Clinics, http://mitchellhamline.edu/clinics/ (last visited May 5, 2016)
\textsuperscript{7} Mitchell Hamline School of Law, Description of Externships, http://mitchellhamline.edu/externships/ (last visited May 5, 2016)
\textsuperscript{9} *Id.* citing Allie Shah, 100 Years Strong: As It Celebrates Its Centenary, St. Paul’s William Mitchell College of Law Is Looking Ahead to Its Next Set of Challenges, Star Trib., Nov. 26, 2000, at B1
\textsuperscript{10} 66% of respondents graduated from William Mitchell College of Law or predecessor; 34% of respondents graduated from Hamline University School of Law or predecessor.
Since the Great Recession started in 2008, law schools throughout the US have struggled with enrollment.\textsuperscript{11} This forced most law schools to change their focus; they are reshaping their curricula to make students more “practice ready.”\textsuperscript{12}

MHSL’s outcomes-based approach to legal education is not new. The school has had this focus for many decades now—a DNA distinct from most schools since its early years. “As early as 1973, William Mitchell College of Law graduate and future Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Wahl, along with [Professor] Roger Haydock, began a clinical program for William Mitchell’s students who attended school part-time.”\textsuperscript{13} Hamline University School of Law also has had a similar commitment by offering a weekend JD program.

MHSL has made a fair share of changes to its curriculum, some before the 2008 recession and some since. For example, WRAP was first offered in the fall of 2000.\textsuperscript{14} Advocacy class was offered in January 2002.\textsuperscript{15} There have been improvements to each simulation course throughout the years, but both courses “grew out of two previous simulation courses: Legal Writing and Lawyering, formerly known as Lawyering Skills.”\textsuperscript{16} This latter course was first offered in the fall of 1994; it “grew out of Civil Practice and Trial Advocacy…. [T]his required three-credit course explored a lawyer’s relationship with clients, decision makers, and opposing parties and counsel. Teaching methods included videotapes, live demonstrations, readings, class discussion, student performance, and critiques by adjunct professors.”\textsuperscript{17}

The WRAP and Advocacy courses today are laden with simulations of what would be real-

\textsuperscript{13} Duhl at 910
\textsuperscript{14} Id. at 911.
\textsuperscript{15} Id.
\textsuperscript{16} Id. at 910.
\textsuperscript{17} Id. at 913.
life legal work. However, exposing 1L students to the judiciary early in their legal education would provide a breath of fresh air to students who often find simulations too contrived. Feedback from adjunct professors would make more sense if 1L students knew how this feedback is related to legal practice. Also, professors would need to keep up their curriculum with the realities of legal work. This would make students appreciate the significance of their simulation exercises. More on this later.

III. The Expectations-Reality Gap in the US Legal Field

Nationwide changes in law school curricula have not yet yielded an extraordinary proportion of practice-ready law graduates. In a recent national survey conducted by BARBRI, “71 percent of 3L law students believe they possess sufficient practice skills. In contrast, only 23 percent of practicing attorneys who work at companies\(^\text{18}\) that hire recent law school graduates believe recent law school graduates possess sufficient practice skills.”\(^\text{19}\) Answering a similar question, “76 percent of 3L law students believe they are prepared to practice law ‘right now.’” In comparison, 56 percent of practicing attorneys who work\(^\text{20}\) with recent law school graduates believe that, in general, recent law school graduates are prepared to practice law.”\(^\text{21}\) Faculty opinion of the practice skills and practice-readiness of their own law graduates was very similar to the opinion of law graduates of their own practice skills and practice-readiness.\(^\text{22}\) One interpretation is that law students gauge their practice-readiness based on the feedback and assessment provided to them by their law professors. As it’s well known, most traditional law

\(^{18}\) BARBRI doesn’t define what it means by “companies,” but the general understanding is that they refer to private companies (that are not law firms) hiring law students upon graduation.


\(^{20}\) Compared to “companies” from the previous question, this is a broader segment of legal employment that goes beyond companies, encompassing law firm and government employers.


\(^{22}\) Id.
professors have practiced law very minimally—if at all.\textsuperscript{23} Prof. Zimmerman, from Drexel University School of Law, wisely suggests law professors should have a Continuing Practice Experience (CPE) requirement so that their teaching content and format translates into more practice-ready students.

LexisNexis released a white paper in 2015 on a study of 300 law firm hiring partners and senior associates about what skills they sought out in new lawyers.\textsuperscript{24} The study shows that though new lawyers do well with basic legal research skills, 95 percent of survey respondents believe recent law grads lack key practical skills at the time of hiring.\textsuperscript{25}

In Minnesota, some academics have researched whether law school curriculum is sufficient to produce practice-ready graduates. One of these academics is John O. Sonsteng, MHSL Professor of Law.\textsuperscript{26} Since the late 1990s, he and his colleagues have surveyed Minnesota attorneys regarding seventeen distinct lawyering skills. They borrow most of their categories from the MacCrate Report.\textsuperscript{27} In their 2014 publication, they state that “[l]aw schools do not offer a curriculum that trains law students to effectively use their law degrees for the practice in the current legal practice

\textsuperscript{23} See Emily Zimmerman, \textit{Should Law Professors Have A Continuing Practice Experience (CPE) Requirement?}, 6 NE. U.L.J. 131, 136 (2013). Recent data for this assertion are difficult to find but one of the most reliable sources is the Association of American Law Schools (AALS). A study using their 1996-2000 data showed that the average number of years of practical experience of full-time, tenure-track law professors was 3.7 years. The author was not able to find data to indicate that this reality has improved in the past twenty years. See Brent E. Newton, \textit{Preaching What They Don’t Practice: Why Law Faculties’ Preoccupation with Impractical Scholarship and Devaluation of Practical Competencies Obstruct Reform in the Legal Academy}, 62 S.C. L. Rev. 105, 128 (2010).


\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Id.}


system, in non-law professions, or for the changing future of legal practices.” After nationwide severe criticism on legal education and suggestions for its reform during the last several decades, Sonsteng and colleagues confess they “naively assumed that there would be significant change and improvement in legal education.” However, despite the waves of criticism and suggestions, “systemic changes in the delivery of legal education have not occurred.” Their 2014 report found that “[i]n nine of the seventeen legal practice skills, less than 50% of 1999 and 2013 survey respondents felt that they were well prepared immediately after law school.”

This study’s 50 percent rate seems too low as a reference point, however. A 75 percent rate would be more suitable. That is roughly a 2.0 in GPA standards, the minimum requirement to graduate law school. (Also, no one wants to get an education that has the same achievement rate as what a coin toss could dictate.) If Sonsteng’s survey results were evaluated using this heightened standard, then only three of the seventeen lawyering skills receive a “graduation-worthy” grade: (1) legal analysis and reasoning; (2) computer legal research; (3) written communication. That is deficient legal education for Minnesota lawyers.

The ABA has taken note of this reality too. “According to a recent survey conducted for the ABA Bar Leader, 75 percent of Generation Y law school graduates felt that their law schools failed to provide with much practical training and the ‘nuts and bolts’ of the practice of law.”

But even more telling, is the fact that “66 percent of those surveyed had ‘significant clinical

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28 John O. Sonsteng et al., The Unfulfilled Promise... at 18. See Appendix A herein for the full list of surveyed lawyering skills.
29 Id. at 19.
30 Id.
31 Id
32 It is unclear what “written communication” entails because, as a separate category, “Drafting legal documents” received a 45 percent mark in the 2013 survey. If it entails being able to write a letter to a client or being an overall writer in a non-legal setting, then written communication could be well learned outside of law school. After all, “good legal writing is plain English,” as Richard Wydick states in his class Plain English for Lawyers.
33 What New Challenges Do Millennial Lawyers Face? ABA Section of Litigation, Trial Practice, Practice Point from November 23, 2015, available at https://perma.cc/6P47-FSLQ
experience’ while in law school yet they felt under-prepared to practice.”34

A difference in perception of reality is what attorney author Stephen J. Harper calls the Expectations-Reality Gap.35 Not knowing and understanding how the practice of law works—in any of its manifestations—is a serious issue that produces unhappy attorneys.36 His theory is that “[a]ttorneys who lead lives that more closely resemble their pre-law dreams are more satisfied than those who don’t. The wider the gap between expectations and reality, the greater the likelihood of disappointment that contributes to a dissatisfying career.”37 He suggests narrowing the gap by changing both the expectations and the reality.38

The expectations portion is relevant to this paper. Harper blames the entertainment world, to an extent, for portraying on TV and movies a distorted reality of legal practice. “At some level, most pre-law students surely realize that such glamorous portrayals are far-fetched. But what psychologists call ‘confirmation bias’ is a powerful force. All of us have a tendency to see what we want to see, believe what we want to believe, and ignore facts and data that contradict our preconceived notions.”39

By exposing law students to judicial proceedings early in their legal education, they will get a view of how court is run, how attorneys and judges interact, and how clients with diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds exchange impressions with their legal counsel and interact with the judge while in court.

IV. The Expectations-Reality Gap in MHSL Law Graduates

Is MHSL, in fact, any different from law schools nationwide in producing law graduates

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34 Id.
36 Id.
37 Id.
38 Id.
39 Id.
who are not as practice-ready as they think they are? Having a longstanding outcomes-focused approach to legal education would presuppose more optimistic results. The author begs to differ.

For this research, the author conducted a survey of alumni who graduated from MHSL’s predecessors from 1975 to 2015. The survey results of this forty-year timespan have confirmed the author’s suspicion that MHSL’s legal education is not as adept at producing “practice-ready” graduates as it’s portrayed in its promotional literature. Compared to the national average, MHSL does a slightly better job, but it could do much better at reducing the expectations-reality gap and preparing practice-ready attorneys.

**Question 1:** In hindsight, how did your expectations as a student about the practice of law align with the reality of the practice of law once you were practicing? 5 = Very much aligned, 1 = Not aligned at all

![Bar chart showing survey results]

Fewer than one-third of MHSL law graduates said their expectations of the practice of law while students matched reality once they were practicing. This is a serious problem. Put another way, there is about a 70% chance that a MHSL student will graduate with an unrealistic view of legal practice.

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40 See Duhl generally.
**Question 2:** In hindsight, were you, in fact, ready to practice law when you graduated from law school? 5 = Very much practice-ready, 1 = Not practice-ready at all

If there were doubts about MHSL having a problem on how its students think of or view legal practice, then this next question displays more alarming results. MHSL law graduates are not likely to be ready to practice law upon graduation. Twenty-seven percent of respondents answered option 4 or 5 in terms of being practice-ready upon graduation. If 73 percent of a company’s customers are not able to rate 4 or 5 a given product or service, the company has failed its mission to deliver a quality product or service. It’s striking that respondents who answered 1 or 2 make up nearly half of respondents who believe they were not ready to practice law upon graduation.

Although MHSL’s website does not have a mission statement, its description in the About page says: “Our students graduate prepared to put their degree into practice or use their legal training in the profession of their choice.”[41] This could be taken to mean a variety of things. But the Admissions introduction webpage contains a clearer message for prospective students: “Mitchell Hamline prepares students from all walks of life to hit the ground running as lawyers

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[41] Mitchell Hamline School of Law, About webpage [https://perma.cc/VHB8-FRCM](https://perma.cc/VHB8-FRCM)
and leaders as soon as they graduate.” 42 Dean Gordon wrote similar words in the first volume of Mitchell Hamline Law Review. 43 These strong messages do not match the reality of forty-years-worth of MHSL alumni experience.

Reviewing the content of nearly twenty years of archived websites from predecessors William Mitchell College of Law (WMCL) and Hamline University School of Law (HUSL) reveal that earlier messages in the websites (circa 1996) provided general description of the prospective academic coursework. 44 Messages initially were not as bold and promissory as the current MHSL website; with time, the messages became clearer that law students would learn to be attorneys by doing attorney work while in law school. The websites eventually started referencing the success of notable alumni who excelled in legal practice. Around 2007, the websites became bolder with language about experiential learning and practice-readiness.

It’s worth noting that HUSL didn’t reach WMCL’s boldness of promising astounding legal skills and abilities for its graduates. Generally, HUSL played it safe by letting the coursework and available experiential learning opportunities speak for themselves. On the other hand, WMCL became increasingly loud in heralding the practice-readiness of its graduates. A message from WMCL’s 2013 website is striking: “Employers know that Mitchell graduates are prepared to practice.” 45

MHSL should be lauded for its proven track record of trying to focus on experiential learning, and intending to bridge the gap between academia and practice. But MHSL is far from realizing its maximum potential. It has long ways to go before producing law graduates who are

42 Mitchell Hamline School of Law, Prospective Students (Admissions) webpage  https://perma.cc/Z9JJ-XUDL
44 Review of websites from 1996-2015 in WaybackMachine Internet Archive  https://web.archive.org/. Content on the archive became less available for www.wmitchell.edu after the spring of 2013 because the school implemented a robots-exclusion standard limiting web crawlers and robots like those used by the Archive. See Appendix D herein for sample screenshots.
45 WMCL Degree in Practical Wisdom webpage. See  https://perma.cc/KE8N-ZY2F; See Appendix D herein.
competent to practice their selected field of law. New attorneys from MHSL should have confidence in their legal education. Certainly, new lawyers can’t know it all. Practice-readiness is a relative term—some have even called it “unintelligible” and “a millennialist fantasy.”

Regardless of criticism about practice-readiness initiatives, MHSL education should meet the legal workforce’s demands for new attorneys. If only one-quarter of MHSL’s 1975-2015 alumni were ready to practice law, what MHSL now staunchly offers to prospective students must be backed with a solid plan to create practice-ready students in a way that has not been done before. The percentage of practice-ready alumni needs to rise way above 25 percent with time so that the promise of being ready to practice law upon graduation becomes real.

MHSL alumni include persons who make the institution proud in believing it has a legacy of producing practice-ready graduates. These alumni are the exception, not the norm. That should change. The new President and Dean of the School, Mark C. Gordon, has suggested a plan to make this happen. This research paper intends to provide him and his leadership team with a fundamental tool in his mission: First-year Judicial Internships. This is a missing link.

V. Transforming the First-Year Law School Curriculum

The first year of law school is the most important. Its curriculum is the most sacred. Because it is “so different from the students’ previous educational experiences, [it is] bound to make a lasting, indeed a lifelong, impression.” Some say law school is like a marathon, not a

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46 See Robert J. Condlin, “Practice Ready Graduates”: A Millennialist Fantasy, 31 Touro L. Rev. 75 (2014). Condlin mistakenly assumes that the sole purpose for practice-readiness initiatives in US law schools is to get jobs for new attorneys. While this assumption may apply to many law schools who have retooled their curriculum upon the Great Recession, MHSL’s history of practice-readiness initiatives goes back half a century.

47 See Mark Gordon, Mitchell Hamline: Two Histories, A Common Future, 42 Mitchell Hamline L. Rev. 5, 6 (2016). Student Forum with Dean Gordon on Monday, February 1, 10-11:00 a.m. (MHSL Room 325) described as “Now that we’re MHSL, what does the future look like? Dean Gordon will share his vision in this open forum.”

48 Duhl at 918.

Certainly, students need to take care of themselves during the conventional 3+ years of law school. They should prepare for the long haul. But, to a large extent, law school success is a sprint students run in 1L year. The grades students achieve and the employment options these grades unlock during 1L year can determine the rest of their legal career. Summer legal employers weigh grades and writing samples very heavily. These job opportunities, in turn, open the doors to career prospects with the same employers or within the same field of law. So, before they know it, law students are set on a professional path that was more or less determined in 1L year.

By some measures, however, 1L year is the school year which new lawyers have found to be least helpful as an educational experience when they transition to complete work assignments as new lawyers. Only 37 percent of respondents rated the first-year curriculum from helpful to extremely helpful. In contrast, 78 percent rated summer legal employment from helpful to extremely helpful. Perhaps the difference lies in the ability to see the black-letter law come to life when out in the legal field. It’s in 1L year that students should start having direct contact with real legal practice. Waiting longer is a disservice.

Courses like WRAP, involving simulations, are helpful but do not give students a sense of how relevant the assignments and exercises are in real life. They can leave students wondering how exactly the voluminous assignments and tedious exercises come alive in practice—and if they actually do. Researching the standards of review for a motion for summary judgment and even simulating a hearing for summary judgment motion is good instruction for students, but the teaching capabilities of these assignments are exponentially increased when they are coupled with sitting in a real hearing for summary judgment motion, reading the case file, observing attorneys

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50 Jaya Ramji-Nogales, Law School is Marathon, Not a Sprint, Voices of Temple Law, https://perma.cc/5ZCT-U423
52 Id.
prepare, and taking notes of what judges find persuasive.

Expanding judicial contact to 1L students is not new in US legal education. “Law students have worked as interns in the chambers of judges for many years, well before the modern era of clinical education.”53 There are law schools that give law students a chance to come in contact with legal practice early in their studies. They are returning (slowly and carefully) to having early and direct contact with legal practice—including with the judiciary. For example, Yale Law School allows 1Ls to enroll in law clinics on their second semester.54 Chicago-Kent School of Law offers the 1L Your Way Program, which includes a 1L clinical rotation course—one of the first of its kind in the country.55 The University of Maryland School of Law and The John Marshall School of Law offer their 1L students clinical courses.56 Some of the former 1L students’ responses to these courses, irrespective of future career path, state that they:

- Were a key point in the students’ processes of developing professional (and personal) self-identities;
- Reminded them of the idealistic reasons that motivated them to come to law school, when that sometimes was hard to remember in the traditional first-year curriculum;
- Persuaded them to take a further clinical course;
- Motivated them to seek similar opportunities in practice;
- Gave them a leg up in job interviews (both for first-summer and second-summer jobs);
- Helped them understand better what they have to do to become good lawyers.57

Though the clinical course work referenced above is not identical to having 1L students interning in court, it is similar in that students are exposed to real legal work early in their careers.

Just as 1L students are required to read dense case law, understand convoluted legal arguments, and be ready for cold-calling, they also should have the opportunity to observe first-

53 Stacy Caplow, From Courtroom to Classroom: Creating an Academic Component to Enhance the Skills and Values Learned in a Student Judicial Clerkship Clinic, 75 Neb. L. Rev. 872, 873 (1996).
55 Chicago-Kent College of Law, 1L Your Way Program, https://perma.cc/VG5X-R9XJ
57 Id.
hand how all this rigmarole is connected to legal practice. The well-known Carnegie Report notes that:

[t]he dramatic results of the first year of law school’s emphasis on well-honed skills of legal analysis should be matched by similarly strong skill in serving clients and a solid ethical grounding. If legal education were serious about such a goal, it would require a bolder, more integrated approach that would build on its strengths and address its most serious limitations.\(^{58}\)

Although 1L judicial interns wouldn’t be serving clients, observing how clients are represented in court provides an array of examples of how practitioners advocate for clients. That’s how they develop a personal and professional identity that is rooted in real-life inspiration. Bob MacCrate said it best in his Foreword to Roy Stuckey’s *Best Practices* book:

[The] central message in both *Best Practices* and in the contemporaneous Carnegie Report is that law schools should broaden the range of lessons they teach, reducing doctrinal instruction that uses the Socratic dialogue and the case method; integrate the teaching of knowledge, skills and values, and not treat them as separate subjects addressed in separate courses; and give much greater attention to instruction in professionalism.\(^{59}\)

The earlier law students get exposed to a broad variety of real-life examples in the practice of law, the better they will understand what legal practice entails. There is no better venue for 1L students for observing diverse legal practices and styles, and for starting to develop a professional identity, than in recurring visits to a courthouse.

This goes hand in glove with the Carnegie Report’s assertion that the common goal of all professional education is to initiate novice practitioners thinking, performing, and conducting themselves like professionals.\(^{60}\) The Carnegie Report recommends an integrated curriculum as follows:

(1) the teaching of legal doctrine and analysis, which provides the basis for professional

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\(^{59}\) Roy Stuckey and others, *Best Practices For Legal Education: A Vision And A Road Map* vii (Clinical Legal Education Association, 2007).

growth;
(2) introduction to the several facets of practice included under the rubric of lawyering, leading to acting with responsibility for clients; and
(3) exploration and assumption of the identity, values and dispositions consonant with the fundamental purposes of the legal profession.  

Integrating the three parts of legal education would better prepare students for the varied demands of professional legal work.  

The first part is well done in law schools, including MHSL. The second and third parts are dealt with in several courses at MHSL, beginning with WRAP. However, seeing real-life examples of good and bad lawyering in a courthouse would cause a positive, long-lasting impression on practitioners in training.

These impressions and experiences cannot be simulated or modeled in any classroom because of the very nature of classrooms: they are confined in an academic setting detached from real legal practice, from real parties, with real problems. Even if court video recordings, video annotation software, and other advanced simulation technology described by Prof. Stephen Johnson are provided to students, there is no possibility to experience the full effect and interactions in a courtroom. These are achievable only by being in court proceedings, asking a judge in chambers why something happened the way it did, talking to attorneys during a break, or getting feedback from law clerks on an assignment. “Student clerkships offer a small slice of that rich learning experience which cannot be obtained in a traditional classroom.”  

The method of teaching in law school is more or less sacrosanct for many law schools. It

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61 Summary to Carnegie Report, 8.
62 Id.
64 Caplow at 876.
was founded on the ideas and works of Christopher Columbus Langdell from Harvard Law School in the 19th century. When considering curriculum change, law schools can find it to be “cumbersome, expensive, and risky…. The existence and effect of barriers to change in what law schools teach is perhaps most evident in the fact that the core, required curriculum of most law schools varies little from that introduced by Langdell in 1870.”

As early as the 1930s, jurists have been deriding the Langdellian model of legal education based on casebooks and the Socratic method. But casebooks aren’t really “case” books. They contain appellate opinions—decisions are a different thing. “For the law student to learn whatever can be learned of (1) the means of guessing what courts will decide and (2) of how to induce courts to decide the way his clients want them to decide, he must observe carefully what actually goes on in court-rooms and law-offices.”

Most courses taught in MHSL’s 1L curriculum are loosely based on the Langdellian model but have some modifications that include simulation exercises. MHSL professors mix in other teaching methods, but Langdell is alive and well—much to the detriment of effective student learning.

For example, MHSL students are still required to read from massive casebooks for most 1L courses. As said before, these casebooks are not really casebooks, but actually opinionbooks. The appellate opinions contained in these books do not explain the extralegal reasons why cases were decided the way they were—or even why the appellate courts chose to hear a case in the first place. “…[T]he study of cases which will lead to some small measure of real understanding of

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66 Id.
67 Twenty Years After the MacCrate Report: A Review of the Current State of the Legal Education Continuum and the Challenges Facing the Academy, Bar, and Judiciary 7-8 (Committee on the Professional Educational Continuum, Section on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, American Bar Association, 2013).
68 Frank at 907.
69 Id. at 916
how cases are won, lost and decided, should be based to a very marked extent on reading and analysis of complete records of cases—beginning with the filing of the first papers, through the trial in the trial court and to and through the upper courts.”

This is only possible if 1L students intern in courthouses where they would have abundant access to these materials. Here is where all the “opinionbook” doctrine would come alive.

It appears like strong recommendations from the 1930s haven’t yet been put into full practice by most US law schools. Federal Appellate Judge Jerome Frank’s words ring true still today in that “[s]ix months properly spent on one or two elaborate court records, including the briefs (and supplemented by reading of text-books as well as upper court opinions) will teach a student more than two years spent on going through twenty of the case-books now in use.”

Scholars like Karl Llewellyn expressed similar ideas after Judge Frank. He believed law is needlessly abstract, and needlessly removed from life. Seeing things done gives books new flavor. His pitch included having one afternoon a week, during one semester of one year, free of other classes, when students with an instructor would visit various courts. Each visit would be followed by time for discussion, comment, and criticism.

The Association of American Law Schools (AALS) Section on Teaching Methods published in its 2015 Newsletter fifty “creative and innovative teaching methods for introducing practical skills and knowledge into first-year law school classrooms.” Here are three salient examples:

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70 Id. emphasis in the original.
71 Id.
72 Karl N. Llewellyn, On What is Wrong with So-Called Legal Education, 35 Colum. L. Rev. 651, 675 (1935).
These innovations are refreshing and inspiring. The Langdellian model of legal teaching in America slowly is being transformed to a more comprehensive and useful model to prepare for real legal practice. The change is slow, nevertheless.

MHSL’s is not a stereotypical Langdellian-based law school. For several decades, it has implemented curricula intended to make law graduates more practice ready. But MHSL need not remain complacent with its current educational curriculum. As exposed in this research, the school is not producing practice-ready and realistic law graduates. This must change. Expanding 1L year’s curriculum to include out-of-class experiential learning in conjunction with in-class simulations is necessary to reach more positive outcomes.
VI. The See.Act.Do Model of Experiential Learning

The sooner attorneys-in-training start visiting courts on a regular basis and doing work for judges and their clerks, the earlier they will be on track to becoming formidable litigators, contract drafters, compliance counsel, negotiators, and overall legal professionals. But the benefits arrive before students are done with law school. In their class sessions, 1L students would be able to better understand the legal theories and to simulate class exercises with confidence—all because they have already seen the theory come alive in the courtroom.

This is what I call the See.Act.Do model of experiential learning. It follows the footsteps of one of Gerald F. Hess’ principles for adult learners.\textsuperscript{75} The fourth principle is pertinent to this research because it explains how adult learners need more context and explanations as to why an assignment is relevant:

\textbf{Context}

Education involves exploring ideas, skills, knowledge, and attitudes. But exploration does not take place in a vacuum. Adults learn new concepts, skills, and attitudes by assigning meaning to them and evaluating them in the context of their previous experience. The learning process is a cycle in which the learner becomes acquainted with new ideas and skills. The learner then applies these ideas and skills in real life settings or simulations, reflects on the experience with these new skills and concepts, redefines how they might apply in other settings, and then reapply them in other settings.\textsuperscript{76}

Under the See.Act.Do model, law students are able to see first-hand some of the activities attorneys deal with in legal practice. In class, students are able to act out their simulation exercises with more ease and dexterity because they have already seen it done in real life. And once serving real clients, MHSL students in clinics and externships, and MHSL alumni as licensed attorneys, would be able to do legal work as if it were second nature. The earlier law students start seeing real legal practice, the stronger the foundation they will have as they move forward in their legal

\textsuperscript{76} \textsuperscript{Id.} at 943.
career.

Starting as early as 1L year may expose students to fields of law and advocacy styles that they would have never considered—or if they had even conceived them in their mind, their conception did not match reality. By the time most students start 2L year they have been employed in a legal setting which may open the doors to successive employment opportunities. In due time, and often by happenstance, summer employment early in law school embarks students on a given legal practice. Under the 1L Judicial Internship Program, having experiences with a wider array of legal areas under court rotations would make students feel freer and better informed than by only taking into account what a summer job can offer them.

Currently, by making WRAP mandatory MHSL primarily avails 1L students only to the two latter parts of this proposed model: Act.Do. There are few school-sponsored ways for 1L students to See, unless they visit the courts on their own time in a recurring basis, or volunteer through MJF—but they get no class credit to do so. With high tuition expenses, students want as much course credit as possible.

Adjunct professors critiquing students in their simulation exercises can be helpful, but this often leaves students bewildered on why the critique of one adjunct professor is diametrically opposite to the critique of another adjunct professor, even though they are all practitioners. By experiencing court proceedings as early as 1L year, students would better understand conflicting critiques. They would see in court how judges and litigators are also very different from each other. There is no one right way to advocate. After all, law is a humanity not an exact science.

The experience of interning at a courthouse would help students compare and contrast the instruction provided for exercises in WRAP and Advocacy. This would keep faculty alert on how to improve and update their course content selection. If students are seeing real legal proceedings
as early as 1L year, their course instructors would need to keep their class exercises realistic and relevant; the course evaluations would reflect this need for change. Then, students would be able to simulate with more ease because they would emulate models they’ve seen from practicing attorneys in the courtroom; they would simulate with more confidence knowing that what they are learning in their simulation courses is, in fact, useful for legal practice.

Student satisfaction with simulation courses like WRAP would be higher if there was an out-of-class component. Simulation exercises seem contrived; their connection with real practice seems weak because there is no palpable context for students to make sense of the exercises’ bearing on their future practice. This leaves students disillusioned with their so-called experiential learning during 1L year. Immersing students into court proceedings would be refreshing and rewarding for simulation courses. That would make the See.Act.Do model complete.

VII. A Successful Honduran Approach: Borrowing from Foreign Legal Education

A First-Year Judicial Internship Program would be a lifesaver for MHSL students. This program follows the experience of Universidad Tecnológica Centroamericana (UNITEC) in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.77

Before the end of the first year in law school, UNITEC requires all students to start participating in internships in different courts according to their enrolled classes. There are three 30-hour internships and two 90-hour internships required prior to graduation. If a student is enrolled in Criminal Procedure, she would be assigned to a court specialized in criminal matters. If enrolled in Property class, she would be assigned to a court deciding property disputes. And so on and so forth. Even with specialized courts, the class-court alignment isn’t always perfect but the experiences are worthwhile.

77 The author obtained his first law degree in UNITEC’s law school (Abogado en el Grado de Licenciatura (Attorney at Law – LLB))
Starting these internships within the first year of law school can help students confirm their vocation (or lack thereof) to be a law professional. Prior to these internships, students may not understand how courses like Roman Law and Introduction to Legal Studies relate to legal practice. Theory and doctrine come alive once students start visiting the courts as 1L interns. Students’ understanding of legal practice is broadened, refined, and redefined all at the same time. Some students are so pleased with these internships that they participate in additional ones beyond the required minimum of five.

This research sought to survey the experiences and impressions of judicial internships from other UNITEC attorneys in Honduras. Nineteen practicing attorneys who graduated UNITEC between 2009 and 2014 participated in this survey. Here are the results most pertinent to this research paper:

**Question 1**: How helpful were the Judicial Internships to understand the content covered in Law courses while in UNITEC? (e.g., what you learned in Family Court helped you understand the Family Law course) 5 = Very Helpful, 1 = Not Helpful at All

![Bar chart showing responses to Question 1](image)

**Question 2**: How helpful were the Judicial Internships for your becoming a practicing law professional once you graduated from UNITEC? (i.e., did having completed an Internship in Civil

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78 The first class from this law school graduated in 2007.
Question 3: In general, how would you rate your experience in the UNITEC Judicial Internships? 5 = Excellent, 1 = Poor

Not everything is perfect in UNITEC’s Judicial Internships. Here is a summary of some of the survey respondents’ main complaints:

- The internships need better academic oversight. Perhaps there should be in-class discussions and debriefing sessions.
- Each internship should have an academic supervisor.
- Need for more diversity in assigned court activities. Too much clerical and administrative tasks overall.\(^7\)

\(^7\) Note that UNITEC’s law school does not have judicial externships involving primarily legal research and writing. MHSL offers these for 2L+ students, which is a good balance in assigned activities.
- Need for learning assessments and evaluations.

The Associate Dean of UNITEC’s School of Law in Tegucigalpa, Claudia Melissa Flores Laitano, confirmed that this program is still up and running, the hour requirement has been increased, and that a competitor law school copied UNITEC’s internship model. In terms of employability, UNITEC law graduates are hired at a higher rate and with a higher salary than their counterparts from other law schools. Associate Dean Flores Laitano also stated that employers who contact her seek associate attorneys who are ready to “hit the road running” after law school. UNITEC law graduates are better positioned than others from other law schools.

It’s as if UNITEC took the advice of Jerome Frank, 20th century American jurist and federal appellate judge, when he said:

What would we think of a medical school in which students studied no more than what was to be found in such written or printed case-histories and were deprived of all clinical experience until after they received their M.D. degrees? Our law schools must learn from our medical schools. Law students should be given the opportunity to see legal operations. Their study of cases should be supplemented by frequent visits, accompanied by law teachers, to both trial and appellate courts.

VIII. Differences between Minnesotan and Honduran Legal Education and Judicial Systems

It’s unlikely that these data alone would make MHSL want to incorporate Judicial Internships in its 1L curriculum. Not only is the legal academy generally resistant to change, but also these internships need to be adapted to Minnesota reality. Here are some key differences that

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80 Skype conversation with Associate Dean Flores Laitano on March 29, 2016 at 12:00 PM
81 Id.
82 Frank at 916. Emphasis in the original.
need to be noted and understood before adapting the UNITEC Judicial Internship model from Honduras to the MHSL reality in Minnesota:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNITEC Law (Tegucigalpa, Honduras)</th>
<th>MHSL (St. Paul, Minnesota, USA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law students enroll straight out of high school</td>
<td>Law students enroll after completing a Bachelor’s degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no age limit for enrollment, as long as they meet the academic requirements.</td>
<td>There is no age limit for enrollment, as long as they meet the academic requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law graduates obtain a terminal Bachelor’s degree in Law (LLB)</td>
<td>Law graduates obtain a Juris Doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law school courses follow a rigid curriculum for all students, with only a few electives in the last year.</td>
<td>Law school courses tend to follow a rigid curriculum for 1L students, but with a plethora of electives starting 2L year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court proceedings are increasingly oral in nature</td>
<td>Court proceedings are primarily oral in nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court filings, documentation, and docketing are primarily in physical form but with some electronic components.</td>
<td>Court filings, documentation, and docketing are predominantly electronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court scheduling is primarily physical but becoming increasingly electronic.</td>
<td>Court scheduling is primarily electronic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IX. Minnesota Judges Speak

To better understand the inner workings of the Minnesota judiciary, and to provide evidence of the viability of 1L Judicial Internships, the author embarked on an expedition to interview state trial court judges in the metropolitan area of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. Talking to judges in their chambers was helpful to understand their needs, and the needs of their court staff. It was good to learn what’s in their reach to offer to 1L students.

MHSL must foster a symbiotic relationship. The last thing that should result from the 1L Judicial Internship Program is a lopsided relationship in which one side gets considerably more benefits than the other—or no substantial benefits for either party at all.

Five out of six judges were from the 4th Judicial District of Minnesota and one from the 2nd Judicial District of Minnesota. The chief judge of each district was interviewed. When asked whether they’d be interested in being part of the 1L Judicial Internship Program, all but one judge

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84 For a summary of the in-person conversations I had with Minnesota judges, please see Appendix B.
answered “Sign me up,” “I would participate,” “This would be very helpful” or similar phrases. The one judge who was not interested in the program said that courts are not the best place for 1L interns to learn; she recommended placing them in law firms throughout the Twin Cities because there they would learn how attorneys run a legal practice. This is an unsound recommendation for two fundamental reasons: (1) the case flow in most law firms is not abundant enough to provide the right amount of work for 1L interns; and (2) the case flow in most law firms is not diverse enough to provide a wide range of work for 1L interns. These two limitations wouldn’t exist in a courthouse, where work is abundant and variegated.

The interviewed judges expressed contentment in what could be a relief in clerical and administrative chores for their own staff if 1L Judicial Internships were implemented. Court personnel, especially law clerks assigned to judges, spend large amount of time doing work that 1L interns could easily do. They don’t need special training. Law clerks should instead be doing more in-depth legal research and writing, and supervising the work product of interns assigned to them.

Currently, when one court chamber from the 2nd Judicial District needs extra help doing clerical and administrative work, the court staff sends out mass emails to all chambers requesting extra help. This process is inefficient and doesn’t allow for human resources to be allocated properly throughout the courthouse.

Courts would also benefit from the outside perspective of 1L interns. Because they are new to the legal circles and mindset, their fresh eyes would be keener at pointing out ways to be more efficient in court, and how to impart justice more fairly. Law students further into their studies would be more prone to groupthink than a 1L would.
The three most common concerns judges expressed about the 1L Judicial Internships were:
(1) limited space for interns to work; (2) inconsistent workflow; and (3) dealing with privacy issues.

The first concern is best tackled if only a discreet number of 1L students participates in the internship program, allowing for the courthouses to make proper use of their limited space. Having a staggered intern schedule throughout the week would also help limit the number of interns in the courthouses at one given time. One judge noted that the law library located in the main courthouse in St. Paul is not used that often at its full capacity, so that could be a temporary destination for some interns working on assignments. With time, courts will note the benefits of having 1L interns working for them and would be more willing to create a set space for them in their buildings.

There are certain times during the day in which there is little to no work that 1L interns could be assigned. This wouldn’t be conducive to learning or to an overall satisfaction with the 1L Internship Program. To solve this, the court should set up a portal using simple programs like Google Sheets or Google Forms. In the 1L Intern Portal court personnel would post their clerical and administrative needs for the day or the week. They would also share information about any proceeding that would be of particular interest to law students. Interns would check this portal in a periodic basis and sign up for the requested tasks. This portal would help forgo the need for inefficient and intrusive mass emails.

Privacy issues and conflicts of interest would be dealt with two-fold: (1) executing non-disclosure agreements about work product; (2) providing interns with suitable training to reduce privacy concerns; and (3) requiring interns to disclose to their supervisor if they are conflicted out. With these methods, 1L interns wouldn’t be any more susceptible of causing a privacy leak or a conflict of interest than would regular court staff.
With these concerns out of the way, a program for 1L interns can operate more seamlessly. The courts are interested in this program. The door is open. MHSL should start a conversation with the Minnesota judiciary and explore the program’s feasibility.

X. MHSL Alumni Speak

So far the opinions of foreign attorneys who experienced Judicial Internships, and the opinions of Minnesota judges about a 1L Judicial Internship Program, should help sway the opinion of MHSL’s faculty and administration. However, the opinion of MHSL alumni matters too. So MHSL alumni were also surveyed about this specific program. The majority of alumni respondents (55%) are in favor of implementing the Judicial Internship proposed in this research. This is coming from alumni of whom only a quarter said they were ready to practice law upon graduating from MHSL’s predecessors. So if professional life experiences are of any weight to the legal academy, then it’s important to note that even though the state of MHSL law graduates’ practice-readiness is not that positive, a majority of alumni believe that 1L Judicial Internships would foster practice-readiness, and would reduce the expectations-reality gap.

Question 3: Imagine implementing a 1-credit internship during second semester of 1L year. It would involve students doing mostly administrative and clerical work in judges’ chambers, in the courtroom, jury room, conference room, etc. How useful do you think it would be for 1L students to participate in this internship, in order to foster their practice-readiness and to reduce the expectations-reality gap about legal practice?
XI. A Decent Proposal: 1L Judicial Internships

MHSL should offer 1L Judicial Internships starting in the Ramsey County District Court in St. Paul.\(^{85}\) This internship program would have a classroom component, open to thirty 1L students during their first spring semester, and offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Understandably, full-time weekday students would be more likely to enroll due to their academic schedule.

For one credit per semester, judicial interns would be required to complete fifty hours of service in court.\(^ {86}\) Responsibilities would include clerical and administrative work assigned by court personnel or a judge, observing court proceedings, sitting in conferences, jury selection, drafting boilerplate orders, and the like. Students would not be involved in legal research and writing, because that is more geared for 2L+ students enrolled in Externships.

To assess learning outcomes, 1L internship instructors would require students to reflect on their experiences using a journal that would be graded for completion; faculty would provide feedback on the journal entries only if requested by the students or if the journal entries reflect glaring student misunderstanding or confusion of their court interning. Alternatively, students could be given the opportunity to complete two or three reflective essay examinations per semester probing on their overall learning experience in the courtrooms.

Clerical and administrative work might seem like an odd proposal for law students. However, if judges and law clerks do this kind of work on a daily basis, it can’t be below law students to do it. The skills learned through clerical and administrative work are invaluable. Most judicial externships for 2L+ students nationwide include this kind of work already. Few law

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\(^{85}\) Courthouses in 15 West Kellogg Blvd. and in 25 West 7th St.—a mere four blocks from each other.

\(^{86}\) MHSL would need to structure its course scheduling for 1L spring semester so that student interns may have a total of at least 2-3 open half days to visit court. For example, for its 2014 incoming class, HUSL scheduled all 1L courses Monday through Thursday, leaving Friday free for students to study or work.
schools are as intentional as MHSL in requiring that their judicial externs do legal research and writing.

Observing court has its benefits. Judge Richard L. Fruin from Los Angeles, California, for example, believes that “externs cannot be expected to provide definitive legal research on the quick turnaround schedule that trial judges require.” This is why his externs do mostly observational work like “read motions, watch the lawyers at hearings, kibitz trials,” and then talk to him about what they see. He believes these observational experiences “will make them better lawyers when they enter the profession.”

Prof. Blanco believes law students’ learning experience in a courthouse is rich on so many levels:

I sometimes think of judicial externs, in seeing the legal system from the inside, as “legal anthropologists”; they observe the relations between the attorneys and their clients and the interactions among the opposing counsel, the court staff, and the judge. They are also subtly learning the demographics of the profession, including the gender, race, age, styles, and working conditions among trial lawyers. They begin to see the interplay between trial work and professional values, as well as the ethical pitfalls around every corner in the practice of law.

When asked about his thoughts on the 1L Judicial Internship Program, and its focus on administrative and clerical work, MHSL Prof. Douglas Heidenreich said that when he became the Dean of William Mitchell College of Law in 1964, not many students were doing work in courts. “The students who had a chance to work or who did so out of necessity learned, sometimes the hard way, to deal with people and to see how professionals like lawyers and doctors and nurses

88 Id.
89 Id.
90 Id. at 45.
and engineers worked on a daily basis. These experiences were, in my judgment, invaluable not only because of the ‘legal’ experience, but for the life experience.”

These internships should begin in the Ramsey County courthouses and eventually expand to Hennepin County. With time, the foreseeable benefits will include richer classroom discussions and more practice-ready law graduates. When the benefits of these internships become noticeable to MHSL, the internships should become mandatory for all 1L students in the full-time weekday program.

First-year Judicial Internships would provide law students with a firm base for launching their legal career. They would be able to experience a broad range of legal practices, styles, idiosyncrasies, and demeanors very early in law school. This will help them consider fields of law and legal niches that they would have never imagined existed—or that they had misunderstood—before interning in 1L year. This prevents students from crystalizing their legal career options too early in the game. The Expectations-Reality Gap is too wide and it must be narrowed.

The learning opportunities in a courthouse are endless. In reference to his/her experience working in a courtroom, one student of Prof. Stacy Caplow from Brooklyn Law School gushed, “My role as an intern is a privileged one. I am submersed in the chambers, privy to many discussions, and am basically like a kid in Baskin Robbins who gets to taste all the flavors.”

In a recent communication with Prof. Caplow, she expressed to me that she “certainly see[s] the value of a student being exposed to the workings of a judicial chambers and the court. Presumably, they could spend time observing proceedings, lawyers and judges in action.” Her concern would be awarding credit “without the guided reflection of an externship seminar or

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91 E-mail from Douglas Heidenreich to author (April 2, 2016, 18:16 CST) (on file with author)
92 Caplow at 908.
93 E-mail from Stacy Caplow to author (April 3, 2016, 07:25 CST) (on file with author)
tutorial.”

The value responses from other academics have been varied yet informative. Prof. Erwin Chemerinsky, Dean of the UC Irvine School of Law, expressed “mixed feelings about having students doing clerical/administrative work rather than substantive work.” Prof. Eduardo R.C. Capulong, from the University of Montana School of Law, and one of the editors of The New 1L: First-Year Lawyering with Clients, said that he “can see [the] benefits [of the 1L Judicial Internships] but [worries] that, other objections aside, law schools would be unable to provide credit for such work—because it is not directly law-related.” He suggests imbuing clerical and administrative work with a knowledge component, e.g., the way the judiciary functions.

These educators and experts in experiential learning are right on the money with their assessments of the proposed 1L Judicial Internship Program. Having a classroom component and methods to assess learning would take care of their concerns. MHSL is the ideal school to implement 1L Judicial Internships. It already possesses the framework, channels, and clout to start and run this internship program. Other law schools would need to overhaul their 1L curriculum to implement this program. Not so MHSL. It’s just a step away. By implementing a 1L Judicial Internship Program, MHSL would put the See.Act.Do model to the test. The courts are ready for MHSL to approach them.

Expenses for both MHSL and 1L students are important to take into account. Prof. James H. Backman and Jana B. Eliason have written about “the need to minimize the costs to students who choose to participate in externships.” They look into distance, transportation, time, and

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94 Id.
95 E-mail from Erwin Chemerinsky to author (April 18, 2016, 09:42 CST) (on file with author)
96 E-mail from Eduardo Capulong to author (April 18, 2016, 09:43 CST) (on file with author)
97 Id.
remuneration as economic factors affecting a student’s decision to participate in a field placement. They also discuss how law schools can keep down their own costs for running externships. Since MHSL already has a framework for field placements, developing the 1L curriculum to allow Judicial Internships would not involve a gargantuan effort or expense for the school.

Authors like Erica M. Eisinger believe that a classroom component for field placements are not always necessary.99 In most cases, they should be a thing of the past. They should be mandatory only if they add value to the field placement. The angle she takes is correct: “If the generic externship class can be taught, it should be taught voluntarily, for sound pedagogic reasons, because it genuinely adds value to students’ experience in the field. It should not be required.”100 Whatever theory students need to learn can be already learned in their current 1L curriculum. There are sound pedagogic reasons for having a 1L judicial internship classroom component. It would help address the concerns voiced by the surveyed Honduran attorneys and experiential learning authorities. Learning assessments of the field placement extension can be performed via journaling or reflective essay examinations. Therefore, following Eisinger’s criteria for mandating a classroom component, 1L Judicial Internships should have one.

All in all, completing fifty hours of work in court, spread throughout thirteen weeks, is not a difficult task to achieve. The results would be very positive: MHSL will be graduating more practice-ready students whose Expectations-Reality Gap will be considerably narrower than it currently is. Even before graduating, students in their first year would have direct contact with legal practice that will allow them to better comprehend legal doctrine and to perform simulation exercises more effectively.

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100 Id. at 660.
XII. Meeting ABA Standards for Field Placements

For 1L Judicial Internships to qualify as field placements under ABA Standards, they must meet all the criteria established in Standard 305.\textsuperscript{101} Interpretation 305-3 of this standard makes reference to Standard 303(a)(3) as another requirement to qualify as an experiential course. In turn, Standard 303(a)(3) makes reference to Standard 302 as another component to the experiential course qualification. Because the 1L Judicial Internship Program will have a classroom component with assessment devices, and 1L curriculum already encompasses the required legal doctrine, Standards 303(a)(3) and 302 are met by this course. Creating an optional, for-credit course warrants discussing how the 1L Judicial Internship Program meets Standard 305 too.

Standard 305 regulates field placements. It seeks to provide proper learning outcomes that can be described clearly. The course goals must be matched with the right methods to reach these goals. This standard is concerned also with having faculty teaching and supervising the course. Evaluating and assessing students, and selecting and communicating with site supervisors, are other topics covered by Standard 305.

The 1L Judicial Internship Program intends to expose students to the inner workings of the judicial system early in their legal education. The purpose of this exposure is to demystify the judiciary, to improve persuasion skills before a judge, to develop soft skills necessary for legal practice, and to learn the pitfalls of poor legal writing by attorneys and of weak regulatory compliance by clients. These goals would be met by observing and taking notes on court proceedings, reading cases as completely as available, and reflecting on what’s been observed and

\textsuperscript{101} Interpretation 305-2 of Standard 305 might soon be amended or abrogated to lift the ban on pay-and-credit for work. If approved by the ABA House of Delegates in August 2016, this change would only affect the 1L Judicial Internship Program if students demand remuneration for court work. Law schools would be allowed to have policy prohibiting pay-and-credit for work, however. See https://perma.cc/R8RT-X7DQ

For a brief analysis of subdivision (e) with suggestions for how the 1L Judicial Internship Program meets each ABA criterion, please check Appendix C.
learned (either through journaling or reflective essay examinations). As part of the *See.Act.Do* Model, students would be able to gain confidence in their abilities, and develop dexterity, to represent positions and make arguments orally or in writing for their class assignments.

Because the 1L Judicial Internship Program would have a stand-alone classroom component, instructional resources, including faculty supervision, would need to be created for this program in MHSL. Academic performance would be assessed by the faculty through intern journaling or by reflective essay examinations. The site supervisor would check in with each intern on a periodic basis to see if their learning experience in the courts is satisfactory; he or she would be particularly mindful of students doing a disproportionate amount of mindless tasks (e.g., copying, scanning, stapling, stuffing envelopes).

Since students will begin interning in the St. Paul courthouses, the selection of site supervisors would be on rotations, according to what each chamber needs from interns. The Court Administrator should be the contact person from the court side; a MHSL faculty member should be the contact person from the school side. Communication between these two contact persons should be as fluid, constant, and direct as possible. As time goes by, MHSL faculty would modify the internship program according to court needs and availabilities.

It’s possible to allow 1L students start interning on day 1 of their legal education. However, in order to play it safe in this new program, the internships should begin after students have completed at least twelve credits in law school.\(^{102}\) This would allow students to adjust to law school dynamics and would permit MHSL to test out the internship program during one semester rather than during the entire 1L school year. With time, MHSL should allow students to intern as soon as they start law school. These internships should eventually become mandatory for all weekday

\(^{102}\) For most full-time weekday students, their 1L spring semester.
full-time 1L students; the state district courts in Hennepin and Ramsey counties can house all of these students\textsuperscript{103}—not to mention all the courts in the 7-county Metro Area of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

XIII. Conclusion

There are several links necessary in the supply chain for producing practice-ready graduates. The missing link in MHSL education is having students intern in courthouses as early as 1L year. Because MSHL has the infrastructure and clout necessary to make 1L Judicial Internships a reality, the investment to modify this curriculum wouldn’t be gigantic. As a result, 1L interns would get a taste of a wide range of legal practices, styles, and strategies. This would help students get a realistic sense of what’s involved in litigation, and what kinds of transactional and regulatory compliance matters end up in court. Students’ options for a legal career would be expanded earlier in their studies without the need of conforming to whatever job they can land before their 2L year and beyond. In the classroom, simulations would be more pleasant, and doctrinal discussions would be richer. This is what the See.Act.Do model offers to MHSL. The state district courts are ready for MHSL to approach them.

\textsuperscript{103} Hennepin currently has 62 judges while Ramsey has 29 judges. Hypothetically, these 91 judges could well house the nearly 150 full-time weekday 1L students of academic year 2015-2016.
**Appendix A**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to diagnose and plan for legal problems</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability in legal analysis and legal reasoning</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafting legal documents</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of the substantive law</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library legal research</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer legal research</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact gathering</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral communication</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instilling others’ confidence in you</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of procedural law</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and conducting litigation</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and management of legal work</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to obtain and keep clients</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to professional and ethical concerns</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B

### Summary of conversations with Minnesota District Judges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judge</th>
<th>Court</th>
<th>Summary of positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Honorable Elena L. Ostby</td>
<td>2nd Judicial District of</td>
<td>- Willing to participate in a 1L Judicial Internship program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>- Staff would be relieved with extra help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Activities for interns: check people in; coordinate continuance requests (phone calls, orders); draft clothing orders, furlough orders;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>observe voir dire, trials, and other proceedings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Accommodations: Law library may have space for carrying out certain assigned tasks. Suggested an intra-court portal for requesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>support from interns. Interns would sign up for tasks as needed and based on their interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Concerns: Transportation for interns between court and school; Confidentiality: bring own laptop, sign agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Honorable Thomas A. Gilligan</td>
<td>2nd Judicial District ofMinnesota</td>
<td>- Willing to participate in a 1L Judicial Internship Program. Is supportive of any kind of real-life experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Staff would receive well this program. They currently need help with certain tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Activities for interns: pretrial orders, notices, warrants, orders for protection, intervening orders, jury questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Concerns: Not enough space at times; lulls of no clerical or administrative work for interns; interns might be working more with court clerks than judge (not a bad thing, but must be noted); electronic security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Honorable John H. Guthmann</td>
<td>2nd Judicial District of</td>
<td>- Very interested in and enthusiastic about this program. “Sign me up.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>- Staff would very much welcome this initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Activities for interns: draft orders; observe court proceedings; sit in conferences; bounce off ideas with clerks and judges about their learning experience, and how to improve how court is run.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Suggests having a tutorial or crash course for interns before starting. Prepare a manual of rules and expectations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The Honorable Peter A. Cahill | 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Minnesota (Chief Judge) | - Accommodations: Space can be found for them. Work in jury room, conference room, law library
- Learning objectives or outcomes: “Interns would develop skills on how to work as a team.” “Doing clerical and administrative work builds humility and grounds people.” “Interns will learn how the judge thinks (persuasion—what is convincing, what is not).” Reinforces classroom learning and stronger link with casebook instruction.
- Concerns: Down time—this could be addressed with a portal listing current clerical and administrative needs throughout the court buildings
- Activities for interns: draft orders for expungement referees; work on scheduling (phone calls); manage courtroom and case flow.
- Accommodations: There would be enough space for interns to work. A portal for pending tasks would not work. Suggests getting assigned with a judge and then do rotations with other judges.
- Learning objectives or outcomes: learn how to do clerical and administrative work because “it’s a big component of our daily activities.” Interning as 1Ls would confirm or perhaps change their areas of interest (“remove misconceptions”).
- Concerns: There might not be enough work at times; some judges might not be interested in having 1Ls doing work of any kind |

| The Honorable Teresa R. Warner | 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District of Minnesota (Chief Judge) | - Not interested in the program. Believes 1L students would learn more working in a law firm.\textsuperscript{104} |

\textsuperscript{104}The late Chief Judge Harold H. Greene, from the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, might have answered that judges “cannot shut the courthouse door to a program of manifest educational value and then later complain if the quality of attorneys practicing before them is disappointing.” Harold H. Greene, *Judging the Students: Judicial*
- Has concerns about supervision and accountability (meeting deadlines).
- Sees little to no benefit to the court.
- If 1L students are drafting orders, as simple as these might be, the public might perceive it like it’s students who are making the decisions, not the judge.
Appendix C

Brief analysis of compliance with ABA Standard 305

(1) a clear statement of its goals and methods, and a demonstrated relationship between those goals and methods and the program in operation;

COMPLIANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demystify court proceedings for law students</td>
<td>- Observe court proceedings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Read entire cases from complaint to final judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn the penalties and defenses for criminal</td>
<td>- Take note of what the State needs to establish before moving forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and juvenile offenses</td>
<td>- See how the defendant tries to find a defense to the charges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Observe what judges take into consideration when suppressing evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- and sentencing a defendant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn the consequences and defenses in a civil</td>
<td>- Read how a plaintiff presents his/her case in a complaint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>case</td>
<td>- Learn the pitfalls of poor contract drafting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Observe how a judge interprets a contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Learn the consequences of poor regulatory compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve persuasion skills before a judge</td>
<td>- Read court rulings and understand how the judge analyzed the facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- and legal arguments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humility and a general understanding that legal</td>
<td>- Complete clerical and administrative work that may seem repetitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practice involves more than deep legal reasoning</td>
<td>- and tedious, but that exposes students to daily activities of court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(soft skills)</td>
<td>- Observe court treatment towards parties with diverse ethnic and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- socioeconomic backgrounds. Because racial bias prevails in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Minnesota judicial system, interns would observe first hand how this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- bias pans out.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) adequate instructional resources, including faculty teaching in and supervising the

program who devote the requisite time and attention to satisfy program goals and are sufficiently available to students;

**COMPLIANCE**
- One faculty member would be the instructor of the classroom component and the contact person for the Court to communicate with MHSL about the 1L Judicial Internship;
- Instructor or supervisor would perform unannounced visits to courtrooms where interns would be doing work;
- First-year interns would be required to complete journal entries based on their observations and reflections of court work. As an alternative to journaling measuring learning progress, 1L interns would have the option to sit in three examinations during the semester: one at the start of the semester, one around midterms, and one the week before final exams. For each exam, students would write reflective essays on topics selected by their instructors. The first essay exam should revolve around setting the expectations, and short-term and long-term goals of interning. The second essay exam should be a reflective essay on the progress of interning in court, as it relates to the students’ initial expectations. The final essay exam would entail how interning in court met student expectations, and goals set in the first exam. Students will be given the opportunity to complete a course evaluation at the end of the semester, as is usual in MHSL.

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**(3) a clearly articulated method of evaluating each student’s academic performance involving both a faculty member and the site supervisor**

**COMPLIANCE**
- The 1L Judicial Internship classroom component would be graded Pass/Fail. If the student fails the internship extension, he/she should be required to complete another 50-hour judicial internship before the end of 2L year. This re-do would involve all the assignments or examinations from the 1L Judicial Internship Program described above.
- The instructor would evaluate each in-class written assignment and provide feedback to each student.
- Feedback to students would be based on how realistic\(^\text{106}\) or not are their expectations and goals; on how their progress interning could be improved to maximize the opportunity of being in court; and what courses would be recommended for the student to take, and jobs to seek out, in order to achieve their career plans.
- The instructor would provide weekly office hours for interns who want to talk about their interning experience.

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**(4) a method for selecting, training, evaluating, and communicating with site supervisors;**

\(^{106}\) If a student’s expectations and goals are ambitious but manageable, feedback need not be necessary. But if internship expectations and goals are overbroad and ultimately non-realizable for the semester, the instructor should provide feedback on these points.
COMPLIANCE
- Selecting site supervisors wouldn’t be applicable as courts would allow students to rotate amongst judges and court personnel. There would be a Designated Court Coordinator, however. This could be the Court Administrator.
- Judges and court personnel might need training on how to manage their 1L interns. Specifically, they need to be conscious of the limitations of these new law students with the dynamics of court work; they would also need to be responsive to interns’ learning progress (or lack thereof).
- Students who should participate in a tutorial or crash course in their first class session to learn the inner workings of the court system. They would be provided with a written manual for their reading.
- The overall interning experience would be evaluated by the student’s in-class written assignments.
- Direct email or phone communication should suffice between the Designated Court Coordinator and the MHSL faculty.

(5) for field placements that award three or more credit hours, regular contact between the faculty supervisor or law school administrator and the site supervisor to assure the quality of the student educational experience, including the appropriateness of the supervision and the student work;

COMPLIANCE
- Not applicable because the 1L Judicial Internships would offer only one credit.

(6) a requirement that each student has successfully completed sufficient prerequisites or contemporaneously receives sufficient training to assure the quality of the student educational experience in the field placement program; and

COMPLIANCE
- The only prerequisite for 1Ls to enroll in this program is having completed a minimum of twelve credits.

(7) opportunities for student reflection on their field placement experience, through a seminar, regularly scheduled tutorials, or other means of guided reflection. Where a student may earn three or more credit hours in a field placement program, the opportunity for student reflection must be provided contemporaneously.

COMPLIANCE
- See Compliance of points 2 and 3 above.
Appendix D

Sample screenshots from HUSL and WMCL webpages from 1997-2013 available at http://web.archive.org. Pages are in chronological order from admissions materials or general information about each school.

A FIRST LOOK...

The Hamline University School of Law is a private school with a public mission. Our educational programs develop the analytical abilities and skills essential for law students and lawyers to serve competently and ethically in a variety of professional roles. Our enterprise is rooted in the university tradition of teaching, scholarship and service, and is shaped by the conviction that law school should serve society in local, national and international settings.

Mission statement of the Hamline University School of Law

CONTENTS

• A Community of Scholars
• Curriculum
• Student Services and Activities
• The Faculty
• Admissions and Financing
• Admissions Information Form
• Alumni Profiles

kldoane@piper.hamline.edu February 16, 1996

Screenshot from February 20, 1997 archive

From President and Dean
Harry J. Haynsworth

I am delighted that you are considering William Mitchell College of Law.

As we prepare to celebrate the law school’s centennial in 1999-2000, we remain steadfastly committed to our tradition and mission of making legal education of the highest quality available to a diverse, talented, and goal-oriented student body.

The real-world accomplishments of our graduates have earned William Mitchell a regional and national reputation for producing attorneys who have an excellent education in legal theory and legal skills and are well prepared to begin new careers — or, in many cases, to advance in continuing careers or combine law with previous professional experience.

Screenshot from February 3, 1999 archive
HUSL has achieved national visibility for our expertise in Alternative Dispute Resolution (6th in the nation); Law and Religion; Legal Research and Writing; and Advocacy and Trial Skills. The school has also developed significant offerings in Business Law; Public Law Government, and Ethics; and Child Advocacy and Family Law.

Hamline's curriculum reflects the changing requirements of the legal profession by offering course concentrations, practicums, and clinics in some of the most timely topics.

Law is more than a profession; it is the underpinning of civilization and as such it reflects the political, social, moral, and economic standards of society. A full understanding of the law must consider the purpose and consequences of particular rules and the processes by which the law is improved. Dean Ed Butterfoss says, "At Hamline, students consider the morality of law, ask hard questions about authority, discuss justice, and are challenged to reflect on their personal code of ethics. They have an obligation to serve the community." This sense of service to society at the local, national, and international levels is vital to Hamline's mission.

A Hamline legal education is both theoretical and practical. The goal is to equip graduates with a solid education in the fundamentals of the law and a sound understanding of its place in our society.

Hamline University School of Law offers students an atmosphere that is personal and supportive.

Screenshot from November 9, 2002 archive

Prospective Students

Academics Services Student Life Library

Academics
Faculty Profiles
Flexible Schedule
Mentor Program
Pro-Law/Prop Courses
Student Life
Why William Mitchell?
Admissions
Arrange a visit
Calendar
Request Information
Multicultural Affairs
Tuition & Financial Aid

Whether you dream of becoming a trial attorney or a business executive, working in public service or becoming a college professor, William Mitchell College of Law can get you there. We offer an academic program that blends legal theory with practical training, and flexible scheduling—all to prepare you for success.

- 95.4% of William Mitchell’s class of 2002 graduates were employed within nine months of graduating ... Read More ►
- More than 90 percent of graduates pass the Minnesota State Bar Exam on their first try ... Read More ►

Screenshot from August 15, 2003 archive
MISSION STATEMENT

School of Law

Hamline University School of Law educates students to apply legal knowledge with disciplined imagination, a global perspective, and creative conflict resolution skills. Our challenging yet humane environment inspires men and women to improve lives and enhance communities. We strive to strengthen society through professional excellence and ethical leadership.

HAMLINE UNIVERSITY MISSION, VALUES, AND VISION

Hamline University’s mission statement, values, and vision are not something that exist in words alone.

You can find them in the values that guide our education, in the way our community comes together, and in our professors, leaders, staff, alumni, and students’ hearts.

They are not static. Rather, they are continually active, guiding us in what we do, whether it is creating new programs, erecting new buildings, or charting a course into our next 150 years.

Mission

To create a diverse and collaborative community of learners dedicated to the development of students’ knowledge, values and skills for successful lives of leadership, scholarship, and service.

Screenshot from July 23, 2008 archive

Screenshot from August 20, 2008 archive

Our Vision

To pioneer a demanding legal education so engaged with the profession that our graduates have an enduring advantage as they meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world.

Our Mission

We serve the law. We teach it, study it, practice it, and work to make it just. This is our mission.

Our students come to William Mitchell with diverse traits, talents, and experiences, yet they have in common a desire to transform themselves into skilled and ethical legal professionals. They learn from us and from each other. We challenge and support them, and we are responsive to their family and career commitments.

We study law and the legal profession as critical observers and active participants. Our legal education incorporates scholarship and practice. maintains a strong connection to the profession, is intellectually rigorous, and instills an ethic of service to clients and community.

Our students graduate with the practical wisdom to put the law to work.
At William Mitchell, you will receive a degree in practical wisdom. Our legal education integrates the study of law with practicing it. It's an active, intellectually demanding learning process with skill-building, real-world experiences, and scholarly research.

From our writing and trial advocacy program to our clinical program, you'll gain experience. By the time you graduate, you will already have done many of the things you will do as a lawyer: researching cases, counseling clients, negotiating deals, writing legal briefs, and appearing before judges. Employers know that Mitchell graduates are prepared to practice.

Welcome, prospective students!

We invite you to discover more about Hamline University School of Law by reviewing our 2012 Class Profile, and we hope to meet you soon.

Hamline University School of Law prepares students to apply critical thinking, practice skills, and public service values in a variety of career settings, allowing you to be the kind of lawyer you want to be.