

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Section of Legal Education
and Admissions to the Bar

August 28, 2006

Office of the Consultant on
Legal Education to the
American Bar Association

321 N. Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610-4714
(312) 988-6738
FAX: (312) 988-5681
E-mail: legaled@abanet.org
<http://www.abanet.org/legaled>

Pauline A. Schneider, Esq., Chairperson
Jose R. Garcia-Pedrosa, Esq.
Professor Randy A. Hertz
Dean John C. Jeffries, Jr.
President John L. Lahey
Dean Richard J. Morgan
Dean Karen H. Rothenberg
Honorable Randall T. Shepard
Dean Steven R. Smith
Barry Sullivan, Esq.
Dean Kent D. Syverud

Re: Accreditation Policy Task Force

Dear Colleagues:

I appreciate your willingness to undertake what I consider to be a challenging and reflective endeavor relating to the accreditation of law schools.

The single most important activity of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar (and possibly of the ABA) is the accreditation of the nation's law schools. As you know, the Council has just completed a five-year review of the Standards and last year a study of the process of accreditation was completed. Numerous adjustments have been made in both the substance and process of accreditation. The Standards, Interpretations and Procedures have evolved over a substantial period of time. If we were designing a system of accreditation from scratch, it is doubtful it would look exactly like what we have today. I think the time is right to look at law school accreditation conceptually, from a distance, and from a policy standpoint.

You are asked to consider the relevant concepts and broad issues of accreditation. Your focus should be on what is a sound program of legal education and measure against that. I think the goal of accreditation should be to provide for a system based on standards which provide for the least possible amount of intrusion on the schools, recognize that one size does not fit all, and provide for maximum flexibility on the part of the schools. I would not want the Task Force to get bogged down in the details of the Standards or in drafting. Policy analysis and recommendations are what is desired.

CHAIRPERSON

William R. Rakes
Roanoke, VA

CHAIRPERSON-ELECT

Ruth V. McGregor
Phoenix, AZ

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Randy A. Hertz
New York, NY

SECRETARY

Peter A. Winograd
Albuquerque, NM

PAST CHAIRPERSON

Steven R. Smith
San Diego, CA

**SECTION DELEGATES TO
HOUSE OF DELEGATES**

Sidney S. Eagles
Raleigh, NC

Jose R. Garcia-Pedrosa
Miami, FL

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS
LIAISON**

Gary A. Munneke
White Plains, NY

**YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION
LIAISON**

Seth A. Mendelsohn
Hershey, PA

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Joseph F. Baca
Albuquerque, NM

J. Martin Borke
Missoula, MT

Diane Camper
Baltimore, MD
(Public Member)

Becky Ceperley
Charleston, WV
(Public Member)

Martha Craig Daughtrey
Nashville, TN

Robert D. Dinerstein
Washington, DC

Christine M. Durham
Salt Lake City, UT

Phoebe A. Haddon
Philadelphia, PA

Cesely M. Hopper
Chandler, AZ

Joan S. Howland
Minneapolis, MN

Mary Kay Kane
San Francisco, CA

John L. Lahey
Hamden, CT
(Public Member)

Dennis O. Lynch
Coral Gables, FL

John P. O'Brien
Boston, MA

Rennard Strickland
Eugene, OR

Barry Sullivan
Chicago, IL

**CONSULTANT ON
LEGAL EDUCATION**

Hulett H. Askew
312-988-6746

askewh@staff.abanet.org

DEPUTY CONSULTANT

Daniel J. Freehling
312-988-6743

freehld@staff.abanet.org

ASSOCIATE CONSULTANT

Camille deJorna
312-988-6742

dejornac@staff.abanet.org

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Carl A. Brambrink
312-988-6741

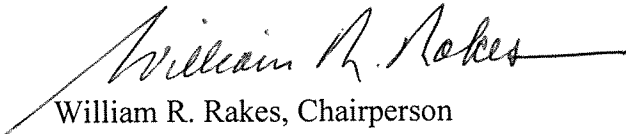
cbrambrink@staff.abanet.org

I ask that you a) review the standards for accreditation used by other accrediting groups, b) determine what the Department of Education requires of accrediting bodies, and c) formulate an agenda which will address those issues that raise concerns as to whether it is appropriate and necessary for our accreditation standards to prescribe conduct on the part of law schools which tend to limit innovation and impose requirements which are not basic to the goals of accreditation. It has been suggested that the standards should focus more on measurement and assessment of outputs and less on inputs.

In other words, you are asked to take a fresh look at accreditation from a policy perspective. Please provide status reports of your progress as you see fit and submit your report in time for the Council to consider it at its June 2007 meeting. Let me know what the Council or I can do to assist you along the way.

Thank you for undertaking this important work.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William R. Rakes". The signature is written in black ink and has a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

William R. Rakes, Chairperson
Section of Legal Education and
Admissions to the Bar

WRR:wgb

ACCREDITATION POLICY TASK FORCE

<p>Pauline A. Schneider, Esq., Chairperson Hunton & Williams 1900 K Street, N.W. Suite 1200 Washington, DC 20006 Phone: 202-955-1660 Fax: 202-778-2201 <i>pschneider@hunton.com</i></p>	<p>Former Chair of Council; Hunton & Williams</p>
<p>Jose R. Garcia-Pedrosa, Esq. Chief Operating Officer National Parkinson Foundation 1501 N.W. 9th Avenue Miami, FL 33136 Phone: 305-243-5813 Fax: 305-243-5742 <i>jgp@parkinson.org</i></p>	<p>COO National Parkinsons Foundation; Section Representative to ABA House of Delegates; Former Chair of Council</p>
<p>Professor Randy A. Hertz New York University Law School 245 Sullivan Street - 5th Floor New York, NY 10012 Phone: 212-998-6434 Fax: 212-995-4031 <i>randy.hertz@nyu.edu</i></p>	<p>Professor at NYU; Vice Chair of Council</p>
<p>Dean John C. Jeffries, Jr. University of Virginia School of Law 580 Massie Road Charlottesville, VA 22903 Phone: 434-924-7343 Fax: 434-924-4750 <i>jjeffries@virginia.edu</i></p>	<p>Dean, University of Virginia</p>
<p>John L. Lahey President Quinnipiac University 275 Mount Carmel Avenue AB-PRES Hamden, CT 00518 Phone: 203-582-8700 Fax: 203-582-8936 <i>john.lahey@quinnipiac.edu</i></p>	<p>President, Quinnipiac University</p>
<p>Dean Richard J. Morgan University of Nevada - Las Vegas William S. Boyd School of Law 4505 Maryland Parkway Box 451003 Las Vegas, NV 89154 Phone: 702-895-1876 Fax: 702-895-1095 <i>morgan@cmail.nevada.edu</i></p>	<p>Dean, University of Nevada - Las Vegas; Chair of Standards</p>

ACCREDITATION POLICY TASK FORCE

<p>Dean Karen H. Rothenberg University of Maryland School of Law 500 West Baltimore Street Baltimore, MD 21201 Phone: 410-706-2041 Fax: 410-706-4045 <i>krothenberg@law.umaryland.edu</i></p>	<p>Dean, University of Maryland</p>
<p>Honorable Randall T. Shepard Chief Justice Supreme Court of Indiana 304 State House Indianapolis, IN 46204 Phone: 317-232-2550 Fax: 317-233-2990 <i>rshepard@courts.state.in.us</i></p>	<p>Chief Justice of Indiana; Former Chair of Council; Chair Conf. of Chief Justices;</p>
<p>Dean Steven R. Smith California Western School of Law 225 Cedar Street San Diego, CA 92101 Phone: 619-525-1405 Fax: 619-525-1408 <i>srs@cwsl.edu</i></p>	<p>Immediate Past Chair of Council; Dean, California Western</p>
<p>Barry Sullivan, Esq. Jenner & Block, LLC One IBM Plaza, Suite 4300 Chicago, IL 60611 Phone: 312-923-2652 Fax: 312-923-2752 <i>bsullivan@jenner.com</i></p>	<p>Former Dean W & L; Jenner & Block</p>
<p>Dean Kent D. Syverud Washington University School of Law One Brookings Drive St. Louis, MO 63130 Phone: 314-935-6400 Fax: 314-935-6420 <i>syverud@wulaw.wustl.edu</i></p>	<p>Dean, Washington University; Chair of LSAC; Former Chair of ALDA;</p>
<p><i>Ex-Officio:</i> William R. Rakes, Esq. Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore, LLP P. O. Box 40013 Roanoke, VA 24022-0013 Phone: 540-983-9374 Fax: 540-983-9468 <i>bill_rakes@gentrylocke.com</i></p>	<p>Chair of Council</p>

ACCREDITATION POLICY TASK FORCE

<p><i>Staff Liaison:</i> Hulett H. Askew, Esq. Consultant on Legal Education American Bar Association 321 N. Clark Street Chicago, IL 60610 Phone: 312-988-6721 Fax: 312-988-5681 askewh@staff.abanet.org</p>	<p>Consultant on Legal Education; Former Member of Council and the Accreditation Committee</p>
--	--