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### The Opportunity to Lead

You have come this far, we believe, because you are interested in improving legal education. You would like to help better prepare students for gratifying careers that serve society well. You hold that “thinking like a lawyer” is an important professional skill, but by no means all that there is to being a lawyer. You think that being a professional calls for the development of a wide range of competencies. You think that being a professional should involve the exploration of the values, guiding principles, and well-being practices foundational to successful legal practice.<sup>1</sup> You seek to understand these competencies, values, and guiding principles better, and to turn the law school’s attention to those competencies, values, and principles in new and effective ways. You want change. You are willing to innovate.

The timing has never been better. Like you, generations of lawyers and legal educators have aspired to help students grow to become good, well-rounded, well-grounded, ethical lawyers – indeed, consummate professionals. Only recently, however, have the necessary tools been devised to take law school support of the professional development and professional identity formation of law students to a new level. The tools for a purposeful and effective curricular approach to professional development and formation are at hand.

The preceding pages provide you with a comprehensive framework to proceed with your own work. Theoretically and empirically based, it is

<sup>1</sup> At its February 2022 meeting, the ABA House of Delegates adopted revisions to Standard 303 that require each law school “to provide substantial opportunities to students for: . . . the development of a professional identity.” Newly adopted Interpretation 303–5 defines “professional identity” as an exploration of “what it means to be a lawyer and the special obligations lawyers have to their clients and society. The development of professional identity should involve an intentional exploration of the values, guiding principles, and well-being practices considered foundational to successful legal practice.” <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/images/news/2022/02/midyear-hod-resolutions/300.pdf>.

a framework that also is practicable. Follow the framework, and you will be setting clear goals that really matter – PD&F goals that students need to achieve success. Follow the framework, and you can pursue your goals smartly, efficiently, and confidently. Over time, in gradual steps, you will realize your goals.

No one can do it all alone. Every page of this book has been premised on the crucial fact that most of a law school's stakeholders have an interest in successful student progression toward the four PD&F goals we have detailed. Not everyone will be inclined to participate in the effort, but almost all stand to see their own interests advanced – although they may not yet realize it. As we have detailed, the four PD&F goals reflect and serve the values and objectives of applicants, most faculty, staff and administrators, enrolled students, legal employers and clients, and the profession itself. Fostering each student's growth toward later stages of development on any of the four PD&F goals is going to benefit the dean, associate deans, faculty teaching doctrinal courses, experiential faculty teaching clinics, skills courses and externships, admissions, career services, and academic success professionals.

Where interests converge lies great opportunity. This book has explained how to build bridges that connect a law school's stakeholders in the common cause of advancing student development toward PD&F goals. Build those bridges, and students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders will increase their engagement and support. Build those bridges, and the natural resistance to change that is found in any institution will lessen. The framework, principles, and practical suggestions we have offered are meant to enable you to visualize and seize opportunities within your own law school. Use them to empower your own efforts to innovate. Use them to help you lead others to join in, each as each can.

As you and your colleagues take up opportunities at your own school, you have resources to tap. Faculty, staff, and administrators who want to foster student growth toward later stages on any of the four PD&F goals need scaffolding support to make their efforts at experimentation as effective, simple, and efficient as possible, and with the highest probabilities of good outcomes.<sup>2</sup> Those who undertake new initiatives also need and deserve a sense that their work is meaningful and recognized. As indicated throughout this book, literature in the field of professional identity formation is valuable and expanding. A growing number of legal educators are focusing on professional

<sup>2</sup> Scaffolding provides a guiding structure and successive levels of support in the early stages of learning new skills. Becton Loveless, *Scaffolding in Education*, [www.educationcorner.com/scaffolding-education-guide.html](http://www.educationcorner.com/scaffolding-education-guide.html).

identity formation and experimenting with ways to advance PD&F goals. Many of those faculty, staff, and administrators are part of an informal but effective national network that can be consulted for assistance of all sorts. Included in that network is the Holloran Center at the University of St. Thomas School of Law, and one of its major near-term objectives is to sustain and grow that network and facilitate the sharing of ideas and experiences.<sup>3</sup> No interested reader should hesitate to contact the Holloran Center through its website to get connected, find help, or share ideas.<sup>4</sup>

The Holloran Center's mission is to provide the scaffolding support that you, your colleagues, and people like you need to foster student development on one or more of the four PD&F goals. The center's plan for scaffolding and recognition includes the following:

1. Ongoing development and improvement of Milestone Models for the PD&F goals that law schools are adopting as learning outcomes;<sup>5</sup>
2. vetting of Milestone Models with legal employers of all types to bring the models into alignment with employer competency models;
3. providing short online education modules along with short readings for faculty, staff, and administrators who want to move their school's curriculum to support any of the four PD&F goals;
4. providing an online training program and certification for coaches, including a simulated coaching meeting with feedback to the coach-in-training;
5. supporting the creation of low-cost effective assessment tools for all four PD&F goals, including a direct measure for each outcome that will meet accreditation requirements for program assessment as well as practicable formative and summative assessments for each PD&F goal;
6. establishing a recognition program (in the fashion of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-type certification<sup>6</sup>) for

<sup>3</sup> The center envisions one of its roles to be "connective tissue" between legal educators who are working on professional development and formation objectives, even though they may be using widely differing terminologies and thus may not see their strong and natural connections to one another.

<sup>4</sup> Go to the center's website. <https://www.stthomas.edu/hollorancenter/>

<sup>5</sup> The Center's website has Milestone Models on self-directed learning, cross-cultural competency, teamwork, integrity, and honoring commitments. In spring 2022, the Center will include Milestone Models on commitment to pro bono service, active listening, professional communication, grit/resilience, growth mindset, self-awareness, team leadership, and reflection.

<sup>6</sup> LEED is the most widely used green-building rating system in the world. Available for virtually all building types, LEED provides a framework for healthy, highly efficient, and cost-saving green buildings. LEED certification is a globally recognized symbol of sustainability achievement and leadership. <https://www.usgbc.org/help/what-leed>

schools that are innovative with respect to one or more of the PD&F goals; and

7. facilitating the creation of national learning communities on each of the major PD&F goals.

Legal education has made marked and encouraging movement toward the support of PD&F goals in recent years. Numerous schools have instituted programs and courses to assist students in their formation of a professional identity. Many have declared aspects of PD&F goals to be among the stated learning outcomes of their program of legal education. Conferences, symposia, and colloquia on professional development and formation are frequent, and the topic has become a regular feature of the annual programming of the national groups that support law school faculty, staff, and administrators. An illuminating literature has been developed, both theoretical and empirical, and research is ongoing. Collaborative initiatives are generating Milestone Models. Pedagogies have been identified. Assessments are being devised. The materials and expertise for supporting the development of faculty, staff, and administrators to do solid, purposeful work on behalf of professional development and formation are available.

The movement has the hallmarks of a *movement*, and it invites your participation. As William M. Sullivan, an astute student of American professional education, has observed, there is distance yet to be traveled, “[b]ut if history is a guide, the new focus in legal education on professional identity formation and the creation of core groups of faculty and staff at different schools around the country portend a possible breakthrough moment” with the potential to effect a “catalytic reframing” of legal education.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> William M. Sullivan, *Professional Formation as Social Movement*, 23 PROF. LAW 26, 31 (2015).