MEMORANDUM
April 12, 2004

To: Vice President Rusty Barcelo, Office of Minority Affairs
From: Dean W.H. Knight
Re: University of Washington Law School Appraisal of Diversity Efforts

Let me begin by thanking you for your patience with me in submitting this document. We have just completed our seven-year sabbatical visit by the American Bar Association and I have been able to turn my attention to some other pressing issues.

History and Context

- We are a comparatively small law school with a 2003-04 enrollment of 702 J.D., LL.M. & Ph.D students.
- Washington is a state with a comparatively small minority population—12.5% combined among African-American, Native American & Hispanic-Americans.
- Within the enrollment of 702, 130 (18.5%) are minority students.
- Within the 702, 55 (7.8%) are underrepresented minority students.
- Our law school minority enrollment breaks down as follows: African-American -15; Native American-15; Hispanic-25; Asian-75.
- The 55 underrepresented minority students in the Law School constitute 44% of all professional students at the UW (Medicine, Dentistry, Law, etc.)!

Barriers to Diversity

We see barriers of three types: Environmental, Resource-based (pipeline), and Support (financial, academic, and socio-cultural)

- I-200, the Washington State voter initiative passed in 1998 and sought to prohibit the use of race as a consideration in university admissions process. Subsequent to the initiative’s passage, enrollment of underrepresented minority students in the Law School fell from 81 to 39 in the space of two years. Since 1998, we have worked dutifully to create a sense of a welcoming environment despite the initiative. Our numbers of underrepresented people of color has now climbed to 55.

- Diminishing state support for higher education has led me as a professional school dean to seek and receive permission to raise law school tuition to $13,510 residents and $19,810 for non-residents this fall. The increase in resident tuition represents a near doubling since 2001.
• Historically, our law school has been one of the most affordable among the highly ranked law schools with which we compare ourselves. Scholarship fund-raising has not caught up with escalating tuition and other costs of attendance. Our financial aid offers are not yet competitive with most top-tier law schools. We lose admitted students of color to other schools principally because of need & merit based scholarships at both top-tier and lower tier schools that have more financial aid resources available. Developing student financial support will be one of our greatest challenges during the coming years.

• The UW is one of the most competitive law schools in the country. Last year, we received more than 2,700 applications for 191 first-year spaces. Environment has multiple aspects. Currently, faculty members of color comprise 14% of the total.¹ This summer, Professor Joel Ngugi, a Kenyan national, will join our faculty (raising our faculty totals to 8/53=15%).

• Staff diversity may be one of the greatest challenges. We have one Latina and one Asian among our professional staff. Beyond our maintenance staff (where six of eight people are under-represented minorities), only one member of our classified staff is a person of color.

• Recent university efforts to bring faculty of color together to discuss their own circumstances and those of our students of color and the university in general represent an important step. We need far more leadership and encouragement from our Board of Regents and University administration to set a different tone and course for both the Law School and the University.

**Inventory of Current Law School Diversity Programs**

• Student Access and Opportunities

Confronted by the effects of I-200, we have created the “Road to Law School,” an effort to substantially enlarge the pipeline of underrepresented minority middle, high school and undergraduate students who will be competitive for law school admission. In 2003, we increased the resources that support this effort, and that support is ongoing. The “Road to Law School includes the following components:

All entering freshmen from underrepresented minority groups are invited to become members of the “Road to Law School.” From their first UW quarter onward to their senior year, they are encouraged to take part in law school events likely to engage their interest in law and strengthen their preparation for admission. Among others, these include:

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¹ Dean W. H. Knight, Professor Lea Vaughn, Professor Gregory Hicks, Professor Toshiko Takenaka, Associate Professor Anita Ramasastry, Assistant Professor Bob Anderson, Assistant Professor Ron Whitener (WOT). 7/50 = 14%
The Freshman Law Seminar, a credit-earning class that looks carefully at the work of attorneys involved in addressing issues of great importance in minority communities, such as racial profiling, migrant farm worker rights, and Native American land claims.

The Pre-Law Diversity Seminar, a credit-earning class that targets juniors and seniors of color who have indicated they are strongly interested in applying for law school admission. The class offers practical advice on all aspects of the admission process, much of which is presented through interaction with law students and law graduates of color.

Whether they are enrolled in the seminar or other "Road to Law School" activities, students are offered unlimited opportunity to work with our diversity coordinator as they develop their applications.

Our seminars are taught by tenured faculty members who assume these diversity responsibilities over and above their regular teaching and research duties.

Through private support from an alumnus, we offer substantial financial assistance to students enrolled in LSAT prep courses.

The School of Law hosts pre-law events for underrepresented students of color in middle and high schools with significant minority enrollments.

This spring, we will hold a readiness conference for some 100 Native American college and high school students from Washington, Alaska and Idaho. This is one of three $40,000 initiatives in the United States approved for funding by the Law School Admissions Council. During the past year, we have increased the Law School's enrollment of Native American students from nine to 15. Through activities like these, and through increased collaboration with our Native American Law Center and the Northwest Indian Bar Association, we hope to increase our Native American enrollment.

In the past two years, 60 per cent or more of entering UW law students have been women.

- Student Development and Retention

Student Development and retention remain a high law school priority. Our commitment to diversity is reflected in both her work and that of staff members who report to her. This group includes our admissions, financial aid and diversity coordinators. Some of the work accomplished includes:

  Recruitment

  Student Affairs staff, including the assistant dean, regularly recruit minority students at Law School Admission Council Forums, pre-law association recruitment caravans, and visits to colleges and universities around the country.
Minority members of our Alumni Ambassadors actively participate in our recruitment efforts nationally, and serve as mentors for matriculated students.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

In the past four years, the proportion of School of Law scholarship money awarded to minority students has increased from 19 to 24 per cent of total scholarship awards, rising from $96,100 to $172,500.

In 2003, the School of Law received an endowment of nearly $1,000,000 from the estate of alumnus Gordon Livengood. Funds from the endowment annually support four $10,000 diversity awards and research assistantships.

During March of this year, the law firm of Davis Wright Tremaine committed to establishing a $150,000 endowment for diversity scholarships to honor their founding partner, John Davis, a member of our class of 1940. Later last month, law graduates David Stobaugh and Lynn Prunhuber made a $100,000 commitment to endow a scholarship for first generation law students. This endowment will also provide an opportunity to assist under-represented students of color, many of whom come from such backgrounds.

- Engagement with the External Community

As Dean of the Law School, I dedicate a substantial part of my time to promoting law school diversity and recruitment in local, regional, and national settings.

Last summer, in collaboration with a law faculty colleague, I ghost-wrote an editorial page article encouraging our governor and Legislature to amend Initiative 200. To strengthen the impact, I invited other University Deans to co-sign the article. Although a bill was proposed during this past legislative session, that offering died in committee. Proponents intend to introduce another bill at next year’s session.

The Law School is an active and supportive partner in the work of the King County Bar Foundation’s Scholarship and Diversity Committee. We contribute strongly to the planning and implementation of the Foundation’s annual Future of the Law Institute for high school students.

Dean Madrid (winner in 2003 of the King County Bar Foundation’s “Champion of Diversity” award) works closely with law students of color and is their constant advocate. She and her staff have contributed strongly to a climate of understanding and support for diversity with the School of Law.
Student Affairs staff members work closely and supportively with the Black, Latino/a, Native American, Asian and Pacific Islander Associations, the Law Women's Caucus, and the Gay and Lesbian Students Association.

As part of our effort to enlarge the pipeline of K-12 students who will be well qualified for University and Law School admission, we have improved and extended our partnership activities with Washington State high schools with significant minority enrollments.

We attentively support and encourage the work of our minority Alumni Ambassadors program, coordinating two or more formal meetings with their membership each year.

The Law School's Career Services Center works aggressively with law firms and other employers to provide law students and graduate of color with career opportunities. This includes mock interview and resume services. It actively assists and coordinates the Northwest Minority Job Fair, the Puget Sound Area Minority Clerkship Program. It works closely with law firms, local and beyond, to promote the creation and expansion of minority scholarship, summer employment, and clerkship programs.

All of these are activities that promote a climate of understanding and support of law school diversity within the School of Law, the University community and the wide community beyond the University.

We have made good progress recovering from the long-term effects of I-200; however, we have miles to go before we can call our institution a truly diverse and welcoming place.