University of Washington  
School of Law  

Memorandum  

To: UW Law School Faculty  
From: ABA Outcomes and Assessments Working Group (Christine Cimini, Michael Hatfield, Sanne Knudsen, Shannon McCormack, Scott Schumacher, Kathryn Watts, and David Ziff)  
Date: May 11, 2017  
Subject: Proposed UW Law School Outcomes to Satisfy Standard 302  

1. Relevant ABA Standards for Accreditation of Law Schools  

The ABA Accreditation Standards were revised on August 13, 2014 with relevant changes to Standards 301(b) and 302 Learning Outcomes; Standard 314 Assessment of Student Learning; and Standard 315 Evaluation of Program of Legal Education, Learning Outcomes, and Assessment Methods. These new standards will be applied to site visits beginning in the 2016-2017 cycle.¹ The relevant portions of the ABA Accreditation Standards are below:  

A. 301: Objectives of Program of Legal Education:  
   “(a) A law school shall maintain a rigorous program of legal education that prepares its students, upon graduation, for admission to the bar and for effective, ethical, and responsible participation as members of the legal profession.  
   
   (b) A law school shall establish and publish learning outcomes designed to achieve these objectives.”  

B. 302: Learning Outcomes: “A law school shall establish learning outcomes that shall, at a minimum, include competency in the following:  
   (a) Knowledge and understanding of substantive and procedural law;  
   
   (b) Legal analysis and reasoning, legal research, problem-solving, and written and oral communication in the legal context;  
   
   (c) Exercise of proper professional and ethical responsibilities to clients and the legal system; and  

(d) Other professional skills needed for competent and ethical participation as a member of the legal profession.”

C. 314: Assessment of Student Learning: “A law school shall utilize both formative and summative assessment methods in its curriculum to measure and improve student learning and provide meaningful feedback to students.”

D. 315: Evaluation of Program of Legal Education, Learning Outcomes, and Assessment Methods: “The dean and the faculty of a law school shall conduct ongoing evaluation of the law school’s program of legal education, learning outcomes, and assessment methods; and shall use the results of this evaluation to determine the degree of student attainment of competency in the learning outcomes and to make appropriate changes to improve the curriculum.”

2. Draft Outcomes to Satisfy Standard 302

The first step in the outcomes and assessment process is for the faculty to agree upon a set of learning objectives for JD students. Based upon standard 302, we propose adoption of the following learning outcomes, which incorporate the working group’s changes in response to faculty feedback:

Students graduating from the University of Washington’s Juris Doctor Program should be able to:

1. Understand substantive and procedural frameworks. This includes the ability to:
   a. Synthesize information, doctrines, and arguments from a diverse body of sources such as judicial opinions, statutes, regulations, and other relevant materials;
   b. Apply foundational legal principles;
   c. Identify and analyze novel legal questions and ambiguities within the law;
   d. Integrate the application of procedural and substantive law; and
   e. Recognize the roles played by legislative, executive, and judicial actors in the legal and policy-making arenas.

2. Communicate effectively—both orally and in writing—with a variety of audiences, such as clients, lawyers, judges, other professionals, and the public. This includes the ability to:
   a. Understand that different forms of communication may be more effective for different audiences;
   b. Explain legal arguments and advice in both formal and informal settings;
   c. Draft motions, briefs, memoranda, emails, and other standard forms of written communication; and
   d. Present persuasive arguments during a hearing, mediation, negotiation, or appellate argument.

3. Provide client-oriented legal services. This includes the ability to:
   a. Listen to and engage with clients to identify objectives and interests;
   b. Counsel clients by assessing, developing, and evaluating both legal and non-legal options to meet client goals;
   c. Engage in appropriate legal research, factual development, and strategic analysis;
   d. Advocate for clients; and
   e. Manage a complex workload diligently, reliably, and within deadlines.
4. Work collaboratively with others. This includes the ability to:
   a. Give and receive criticism effectively;
   b. Reflect and reassess work on an ongoing basis;
   c. Understand and appreciate the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of clients, colleagues, adversaries, and others; and
   d. Engage in active listening.

5. Fulfill proper professional and ethical responsibilities to clients and the legal system. This includes the ability to:
   a. Pursue clients’ interests, as guided by the relevant rules of professional responsibility;
   b. Manifest professional and ethical behavior and encourage others to do the same;
   c. Commit to improving the law, access to the legal system, and the quality of service in the legal system; and
   d. Become a person with whom others want to work, always demonstrating a professional, courteous, and civil attitude toward all.

6. Situate issues in their extra-legal context. This includes the ability to:
   a. Understand the law from diverse and global perspectives;
   b. Recognize the political, social, and economic forces that shape various areas of the law; and
   c. Consider not only the likelihood of an argument or strategy’s legal success, but also the moral, economic, social, political, and other factors implicated by the argument or strategy.