



Strategic Plan Update (2025 - 2030)

Penn State Dickinson Law

Mission: Penn State Dickinson Law is committed to being a teaching and learning community that is diverse, open, and safe, by emphasizing law’s role in achieving progress on behalf of humanity.

Vision: Dickinson Law articulated Four Vision Priorities in 2020. These were:

- Ensuring the Law School’s distinctiveness within the academy and the profession
- Promoting diversity in legal education and the profession to achieve equity in society
- Activating our 8000+ member alumni network
- Enhancing the Law School’s reputation by breaking into the Top 50 US News Best Law Schools ranking

The Vision Priorities have been updated to reflect the pre-merger vision, mission, and goals of Penn State Dickinson Law in Carlisle. The merger of the two, separately accredited law schools necessitate workshopping the updated, pre-merger vision priorities. The ABA Council process governing the merger itself was an extensive strategic planning process that required specific action related to meeting ABA accreditation standards. For Strategic Plan 2025-2030, Penn State Dickinson Law will workshop the below listed vision priorities after all Law School policies have been aligned.

- Strengthen the Penn State Dickinson Law Brand
- Engage with Institutional Antiracism in support of the Land-Grant Mission
- Build a Culture to Sustain One Penn State Dickinson Law in Two Locations
- Activate Penn State Dickinson Law Alumni *Writ Large*

Institutional Values:

INTEGRITY	We act with integrity in accordance with the highest academic, professional, and ethical standards
RESPECT	We respect and honor the dignity of each person, embrace civil discourse, and foster a diverse, inclusive, and safe community
RESPONSIBILITY	We act responsibly and hold ourselves accountable for our decisions, actions, and their consequences
DISCOVERY	Through advanced research and scholarship, we seek and create new knowledge and understanding, and foster creativity and innovation, for society's benefit
EXCELLENCE	We strive for excellence in all endeavors as individuals, an institution, and a leader in higher education and research
COMMUNITY	We work together for the betterment of the University, the community, and the world

Optional Additional Values:

Community

Penn State Dickinson Law has moved from an intentionally small school to a reunified law school in two

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locations that embrace every member of our community in an integrated fashion. We engender an ethos of success, wellness, and support, both inside and outside the law school.

Diversity

Dickinson Law fosters an environment that reflects, celebrates, and champions diversity, in the most comprehensive sense, using human-centered design thinking methods to deliver its program of legal education.

Teaching and Learning

We leverage critical pedagogy, antiracism, technology and generative AI, and the expertise of our scholars and staff professionals to achieve an educational setting that effectively prepares students for the successful practice of law in an increasingly global society.

Research and Scholarship

We engage in research and scholarship to advance dialogue on democracy, the rule of law, equality, justice, teaching and learning, and society, consistent with Penn State's role as a world-class research institution.

Service

Every member of our community has an obligation to contribute to the betterment of humanity by performing service that has a positive impact on Penn State Dickinson Law, Penn State University, our communities, and the world at large.

Planning Process

Penn State Dickinson Law has been in a posture of strategic planning from 2015 to the present.

First, Dickinson Law went through an extensive planning process from 2013-2015, when the then-unified law school underwent applications to the American Bar Association (ABA), the accrediting body for law schools, to separate the two law school campuses into two separately accredited law schools under the Penn State umbrella.

Second, between 2015-2017, the two separate law schools underwent their respective strategic plans in order to achieve separate accreditation from the ABA. That planning process, and subsequent reports to the ABA not only formed the basis for the previous strategic plan but serves as the underpinning of subsequent in time plans.

Third, in 2018-19, the University conducted a search for a new Dean for Dickinson Law, culminating in the appointment of Danielle Conway as the first woman and first African American Dean at Dickinson Law. Dean Conway took the helm at Dickinson Law at the beginning of the 2019-2020 academic year. She articulated four "vision priorities" for the law school, which serve as the cornerstone of the current strategic plan.

Fourth, beginning in Fall 2022, Penn State University decided that it was not in the university's best interest to have two separately accredited law schools. President Neeli Bendapudi created a reunification panel and charged the panel to recommend structure(s) that would align with having one

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law school. The panel engaged in a significant, deep, and long strategic planning process to arrive at recommendations for President Bendapudi to consider. Based on the recommendations from this strategic planning process, President Bendapudi adopted a one law school, two location structure. As a result, a recommendation was made to and accepted by Penn State to reunite the law schools as Penn State Dickinson Law, with the primary location in Carlisle, PA. To secure approval from the law school's primary accreditor, the American Bar Association, the law school went through another extensive strategic planning process, through the composition of an ad hoc committee on reunification, describing the steps necessary for the reunification to be accomplished. Both the reunification panel and the ad hoc committee benefitted from significant input from administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and other stakeholders inside and outside of the university. While many steps have been accomplished, including the adoption of a unified curriculum and admission of a unified class, the law school continues to implement the strategic plan of reunification, including harmonization of shared governance policies.

Finally, the responses herein are meant as updates for the strategic planning process for 2025-2030, consistent with the ABA reliable plan that functions as the most current strategic plan for the law school.

Personnel and constituents included in the planning process

Please refer to the description above, and the Panel and ad-hoc committee strategic planning documents that were provided to OPAIR.

We prepared slides to facilitate the conversations about mission, values, and vision. We took notes from these sessions which we have housed in a Microsoft Teams folder. Almost all faculty participated in one of the meetings, and a vast majority of staff members also participated.

Publicity for the plan

The university provided change management colleagues from the Office of the Provost to facilitate, document, and catalog all the strategic planning activities. The university also engaged external consultants in the strategic planning process for the unified law school.

Plan Approved By

The plan was approved by President Bendapudi, who named Dean Conway as dean of the unified law school.

Goal 1: Strengthen the Penn State Dickinson Law Brand

Penn State Dickinson Law was founded in 1834 in Carlisle, PA. It is the oldest law school in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Dickinson Law fully became a part of Penn State in 2000. With the unified Penn State Dickinson Law, the goal is to strengthen the one law school, two locations brand within the legal academy, among prospective students and their advisors, and among employers who hire Penn State Dickinson Law graduates. This goal will be achieved through leveraging the power of the Penn State University brand.

Supporting 2025-30 University goal: Enhancing student success

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Objective: 1.1 Faculty

To solidify the Penn State Dickinson Law—one law school with two locations—brand within Penn State University and within the legal academy.

Having a robust and productive faculty enhances the reputation of the Law School (see also Goal #4). One of the challenges faced by the Law School is brand weakness resulting from the confusion produced by operating two separately accredited law schools, which pitted these institutions against one another and fragmented university support for one or the other law school depending on prevailing circumstances or leadership. The ability of the now unified Law School to attract and retain top faculty talent depends on clearly establishing the reputation of and support for the one law school with two locations. An active, productive, and engaged faculty is critical to the vision and mission of the law school, which includes delivering a student focused program of legal education to bright and curious students, who themselves model the values and the integrity of a strong and committed faculty. Stewarding faculty to become connected to one culture will enhance the brand strength of and support for the unified Law School.

- Engaging Our Students, Staff, Faculty, and Administrators
- Support and Empower Outstanding Faculty, Staff, and Administrator Colleagues
- Promote Contributions Through Team Building and Strategic Communication

Key Performance Indicator(s):

- Drawing faculty into a dynamic cohort working relationally between and among one another to deliver an effective and welcoming:
 - teaching and learning environment;
 - scholarly environment and culture;
 - entrepreneurial environment and culture;
 - communal environment and culture.
- Actively engage in interdisciplinary partnerships between and among faculty, staff, and administrators across Penn State University.

Objective: 1.2 Admissions

To solidify the Penn State Dickinson Law brand with prospective and admitted students as well as with the organizations and entities that engage with the Law School, specifically with prospective and matriculating students.

To attract and retain outstanding students, measured holistically, the Law School must strengthen its post-merger brand—one law school with two locations. Penn State Dickinson Law’s reputation is strengthened by its ability to leverage the Penn State University brand, its leadership at all levels of the legal academy, and its commitment to sustaining an environment that is accessible, affordable, diverse, inclusive, and welcoming.

- Advancing an Expansive Understanding of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging and Leading on Antiracism in the legal academy, Penn State University, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the nation, and around the world.
- Expand Pathways by Partnering More Effectively with Pre-College Educators, Pre-Law Advisors, and

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Penn State University Administrators, Faculty, and Staff.

- Promote Contributions and Reach Through Team Building and Strategic Communication

Key Performance Indicator(s):

- Launch pathway programs that prepare students for the rigor of law school;
 - generate applications to Penn State Dickinson Law from prospective students within and outside of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania;
 - generate brand awareness of the Law School by leveraging technology and social media platforms;
 - and raise awareness about the Law School by strengthening relationships with pre-law advisors within and outside of Penn State University, with emphasis on PASHE schools.

Objective 1.3 Career Services

To solidify the Penn State Dickinson Law brand with current and prospective employers, partners, and sponsors offering career opportunities, externship placements, and professional organization and association memberships.

Employers are not uniformly aware of the brand—one law school with two locations. Penn State Dickinson Law must launch a rebranding campaign to update and reinform employers across the U.S. and abroad about the new structure of the Law School. This is especially critical because a critical mass of legal employers have initiated direct contact protocols to recruit law students, a worrisome change to the prior model of on campus recruiting.

- Advancing an Expansive Understanding of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging and Leading on Antiracism in the legal academy, Penn State University, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the nation, and around the world.
- Prepare Students for Success with the recruitment process, the career mapping process, and the Life prioritization process.
- Create Impact by Leveraging Relational Partnerships
- Promote Contributions and Reach Through Team Building and Strategic Communication

Key Performance Indicator(s):

- Promote and maintain a vibrant and coherent on-campus (or virtual) interview program;
 - incentivize greater employer participation in general education and presentations about the career recruitment process;
 - increase the breadth and scope of externship placements locally, nationally, and internationally.

Goal 2: Engage with Institutional Antiracism in Support of the Land-Grant Mission

Institutional antiracism is the work of acknowledgment, knowledge acquisition and iterative historicity, and constant action to promote systemic equity. Institutional Antiracism requires acknowledgment of the full history in which race and racism, oppression, and subordination shape and are shaped by law and legal architecture. Law Schools have special duties and obligations to teach and learn about

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equality and justice for all. The Land Grant mission is tied to a history of dispossession and, therefore, must be explored and restructured to create opportunities for all to benefit from equity and justice. The Law School will play a pivotal role in producing scholarship, practicing teaching and learning pedagogy, and meaningful and justice-infused service to re-envision the role of land-grant universities, generally, and Penn State University, specifically.

Racism, bias, oppression, and subordination threaten American democracy and the rule of law. The primary mission of a law school is to use the tools of the law to promote justice and equality for all. To meet this responsibility, law schools must recruit, retain, teach and research according to antiracist principles for the benefit of students, staff, faculty, and administrators as well as for the benefit of society.

Supporting 2025-30 University goal: Fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging

Objective: 2.1 Increase Access to Legal Education for All, Not Just a Few

Foster a community that values student diversity, broadly defined, by incorporating Penn State University's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion objectives using law's distinct context embodied in the Equal Protection of the Laws, the 19th Amendment, and the legal academy's commitment to antiracist critical pedagogy.

Dickinson Law is a leader in antiracism both inside the University and throughout the United States. Attracting and retaining students from all backgrounds and continuing to foster a culture where every member of the community is invested in the success of the other is part of the Law School's ethos, designed to create a more diverse and inclusive legal profession.

- Advancing a Historical and Contextual Understanding of the Power and Promise of the U.S. Constitution to Restructure Society Along the Lines of Systemic Equity, Justice, Equality, and Fairness for All
- Prepare all colleagues to teach and learn about institutional antiracism in support of a new commitment to the land-grant mission that is structured for all to benefit from educational, career, and social opportunities built on the core value of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging
- Prepare colleagues and community members to build skills that support working together to ideate and develop ethical, historically and contextually informed solutions to society's most pressing challenges
- Empathize, Ideate, and Create prototypes to develop human-centered generative AI technologies alongside tried and true analog technologies that, together, scale to address perennial and emerging challenges facing society

Key Performance Indicator(s):

- Leverage the Penn State Dickinson Law brand and its leadership on Antiracism to attract students, staff, faculty, and administrators committed to providing access to a legal education or access to employment opportunities to all qualified candidates who are dedicated to promoting the rule of law and defending the U.S. Constitution;
 - publicize the Law School's commitment to leading on antiracism in service to promoting the rule of law and defending the U.S. Constitution;
 - engage actively with civic education and leadership on antiracism inside and outside of

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the Law School, with a particular emphasis on building knowledge and understanding about civic duties and responsibilities within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by being in conversation with all members of the community.

Objective: 2.2 Increase Staff Diversity

Foster a community that values staff diversity, broadly defined, by incorporating Penn State University's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion objectives using law's distinct context embodied in the Equal Protection of the Laws, the Nineteenth Amendment, and the legal academy's and the Law School's commitment to antiracist critical pedagogy.

Continuing to increase diversity, broadly defined, at Penn State Dickinson Law at all levels is critical to the ongoing commitment to expanding access to meaningful employment opportunities for candidates who are underrepresented in the University and at the Law School.

- Advancing Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity and Antiracism
- Prepare all colleagues to teach and learn about institutional antiracism in support of a new commitment to the land-grant mission that is structured for all to benefit from educational, career, and social opportunities built on the core value of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging
- Prioritize Investment in People and Community Through Human-Centered Design

Key Performance Indicator(s):

- Leverage the Penn State Dickinson Law brand and its leadership on Antiracism to attract students, staff, faculty, and administrators committed to providing access to a legal education or access to employment opportunities to all qualified candidates who are dedicated to promoting the rule of law and defending the U.S. Constitution;
 - publicize the Law School's commitment to leading on antiracism in service to promoting the rule of law and defending the U.S. Constitution;
 - engage actively with civic education and leadership on antiracism inside and outside of the Law School, with a particular emphasis on building knowledge and understanding about civic duties and responsibilities within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by being in conversation with all members of the community.

Objective 2.3 Increase Faculty Diversity

Foster a community that values faculty diversity, broadly defined, by incorporating Penn State University's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion objectives and using law's distinct context embodied in the Equal Protection of the Laws, the Nineteenth Amendment, and the legal academy's and the Law School's commitment to antiracist critical pedagogy.

Consistent with Goal #1, Penn State Dickinson Law is committed to building a faculty that consists of nationally recognized scholars and teachers. The Law School's commitment to faculty diversity, broadly defined, reinforces the core values of scholarship, teaching and learning, and community.

- Advancing Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity and Antiracism
- Prepare all colleagues to teach and learn about institutional antiracism in support of a new commitment to the land-grant mission that is structured for all to benefit from educational, career, and social opportunities built on the core value of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging

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- Provide members of the Law School Community with The Skills to Work Together to Develop Ethically and Historically Informed Solutions to Our Most Pressing Problems
- Prioritize Investment in People and Community Through Human-Centered Design

Key Performance Indicator(s):

- Leverage the Penn State Dickinson Law brand and its leadership on Antiracism to attract students, staff, faculty, and administrators committed to providing access to a legal education or access to employment opportunities to all qualified candidates who are dedicated to promoting the rule of law and defending the U.S. Constitution;
 - publicize the Law School's commitment to leading on antiracism in service to promoting the rule of law and defending the U.S. Constitution;
 - engage actively with civic education and leadership on antiracism inside and outside of the Law School, with a particular emphasis on building knowledge and understanding about civic duties and responsibilities within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by being in conversation with all members of the community.

Goal 3: Activate Penn State Dickinson Law Alumni *Writ Large* and Cultivate General Donors

Activate the 11,000+ members of the Penn State Dickinson Law alumni base and cultivate unaffiliated donors who are motivated by the leadership, programs, and initiatives at the Law School.

Penn State Dickinson Law recognizes and values the importance of alumni partnerships and donor relationships as a function of comprehensive engagement to secure success for the institution and the members of its community, now and into the future. Through engagement in all areas of the life of the Law School—to include alumni and donor development initiatives, academic programming and curricular innovation, academic and bar examination success, admissions, career services, and student services—Penn State Dickinson Law seeks to strengthen the alumni network, increase alumni engagement, and improve alumni and donor participation and financial investment.

Supporting 2025-30 University goal: Increasing land-grant impact

Objective: 3.1 Alumni & Donor Development Programming

Engage alumni and donors through targeted alumni programming and outreach, volunteer leadership opportunities, and cultivation and stewardship activities.

Penn State Dickinson Law has a relatively large alumni base and a growing general donor base. Finding innovative ways to engage with alumni and donors enhances alumni and donor affinity for the Law School, and promotes engagement with administrators, faculty, staff and students. Active engagement solidifies the Law School's future through enhanced alumni and donor investment of time, talent, and treasure.

- Enabling Access to Foundational and Continuing Education

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- Engaging Faculty, Students, Alumni and Donors in Knowledge Creation and Dissemination
- Provide members of the Law School Community with the Skills to Work Together Intergenerationally and Intersectionally
- Align Alumni and Donor Expectations with the Needs of Administrators, Faculty, and Students to Debunk Mythology About What is Being Taught in the Classroom so that Alumni and Donor Trust Increases, Leading to Investment in Students, Faculty, and Programs

Key Performance Indicator(s):

- Engage human-centered design techniques to re-envision how to build excitement and trust with, between, and among alumni and donors, both active and dormant; capitalize on alumni and donor desires for continuing education opportunities;
 - tantalize alumni and donors with meaningful study travel and networking opportunities inside and outside of the country;
 - develop leadership opportunities for alumni and donor volunteers;
 - and celebrate alumni and donors at meaningful events, such as dinners, receptions, graduation, orientation, alumni weekends, and leadership council advisory board meetings.

Objective: 3.2 Academic Programming and Curricular Innovation

Engaged alumni and donors serve as resources and volunteers for faculty produced keynotes and demonstrations, classroom instruction, clinic and experiential learning opportunities, and supplemental academic programming.

Invited alumni and donors participate in Law School academic programming to create connections between academic work and practical application of that work. The team building approach demonstrates how knowledge can be co-created between students, faculty, and alumni and donors, bringing myriad perspectives and new approaches to the subject matter that benefit all participants. This often leads to student networking opportunities, which can help lead to career success.

- Enabling Access to Foundational and Continuing Education
- Engaging Faculty, Students, Alumni and Donors in Knowledge Creation and Dissemination
- Provide members of the Law School Community with the Skills to Work Together Intergenerationally and Intersectionally
- Align Alumni and Donor Expectations with the Needs of Administrators, Faculty, and Students to Debunk Mythology About What is Being Taught in the Classroom so that Alumni and Donor Trust is Achieved, Leading to Investment in Students, Faculty, and Programs

Key Performance Indicator(s):

- Alumni participation in courses and academic programming will break down the stereotypical narratives often conveyed by practitioners, which include “this is how we do things in the real world.”
- By bringing students, faculty, and alumni and donors together in the academic classroom, all participants are exposed to current curricular innovations and substance.
- Alumni and donors are also exposed to new pedagogical techniques that can be transferred to the

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developmental efforts of the workplace.

- Faculty regularly include alumni, donors, and prospects in programming and curricular innovation meetings, as appropriate.
- Alumni and donors can also attend discipline-specific conferences and association meetings to forge stronger, deeper relationships with faculty and students.

Objective: 3.3 Investment in Student Success and Wellbeing

Engage alumni and donors through wellness and wellbeing activities to provide students with models for self-care and to support the Office of Admissions with encouraging students to make this part of their professional and personal identity formation.

- Enabling Access to Wellness and Wellbeing Regimens
- Match Alumni and Donor Wellness and Wellbeing Expectations to Practice Self-Care that Leads to Resilience in Careers and in Life
- Align Alumni and Donors Interests with Students Personal Needs

Key Performance Indicator(s):

- Conduct targeted wellness and wellbeing programs featuring alumni and donors who model best practice self-care regimen.
- Pair alumni and donors with students during designated programming to model best practice professional and personal identity formation.

Objective: 3.4 Career Opportunities Complementing and Shaping Students' Professional Identities

Engage alumni in Career Services programming and enlist their support in developing students' networks, developing students' professional identities, and expanding opportunities in the market for post-graduate employment.

Active and engaged alumni and donors participate in mentorship and sponsorship opportunities that help to create intentional and coherent employment pathways as students establish an arc of career trajectory that complements their professional and personal identities.

- Center Students in the Development of Mentorship and Sponsorship Programs
- Match Alumni and Donor Career Trajectories with Development of Students' Professional and Personal Identities
- Align Expectations of Alumni and Donors with Students' Professional Needs

Key Performance Indicator(s):

- Deploy Law School Alumni Association and The Leadership Council Advisory Board to Launch Mentorship and Sponsorship Programs that Invest in Students' Formation of Their Professional and Personal Identities.
- Incentivize Alumni and Donors to intentionally and coherently work with On-Campus Interview Process to Support Student Outcomes.
- Engage Alumni and Donors in Career-focused Pathways Course and Incentivize Student Participation in These Programs.

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Objective: 3.5 Building Bridges with Alumni & Donors Through Student Programming

Engage alumni as special guests, contributors, participants, and donors in events and programming offered through the Student Services Office, student organizations, and student-driven initiatives.

Having alumni engaged in student-driven initiatives helps those alumni maintain a connection with the Law School, while Promoting and Incentivizing Leadership Opportunities for Students. Building connections Between Alumni and Donors and Students, through the lens of leadership, allows students the opportunity to demonstrate readiness for additional responsibilities.

- Center Students in the Development of Student Programming Aimed at Encouraging Investments by Alumni and Donors
- Match Alumni and Donor Interest and Investment with Student Programming
- Align Expectations of Alumni and Donors with Student Programming Needs

Key Performance Indicator(s):

- Develop live showcase of student programming that will encourage human-centered interaction and will introduce Alumni and Donors to student-led activities that will encourage the former to invest in student professional development and success.

Goal 4: Build a Culture to Sustain One Penn State Dickinson Law with Two Locations

There is a nascent germ of trust, respect, and dignity being built across the two locations. This nascent germ requires constant cultivation, nurturing, and tending to develop into a shared culture that supports the one law school. It will take time and practice with both success and failure during the exercise of building a shared culture. The one law school and its community need regular meetings, activities, collaborative projects, and joint programs to begin to experience comfort within the community and with those external to the community, such as central administrators, executive leadership, and advisory boards.

Supporting 2025-30 University goal: Fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging

Objective: 4.1 Build a Bridge Between and Among Colleagues Straddling the Two Locations

Develop new and deeper opportunities to work together on committees but also informally to learn about the other. Practice identifying the “us versus them” narrative and seek methods to diminish the narrative. Chart the progress toward deeper empathy through exercises and meditations.

- Promote internal collaborations to practice bridge-building across the two locations
- Practice empathy incrementally, then occasionally, then regularly, and finally radically
- Seek commitment from all colleagues to attend the Annual Legal Educators’ Workshop and to

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attend at least one ADI Design Thinking Workshop

Objective: 4.2 Build Trust in Leadership and Administration

Invest in one another's humanity and learn about the lived experiences of those in leadership and administration. Develop the empathy muscle so that patience and grace become automatic responses. Seek out intermediaries who are not regular sounding boards to appreciate another's perspective and frame of reference.

- Promote and Model Mutual Respect, Integrity, Responsibility, and Community
- Promote and model mutual patience and grace when communicating with colleagues
- Seek commitments from all colleagues to attend the Annual Legal Educators' Workshop, request attendance at one ADI Design Thinking Workshop, hold a dean's open session for faculty and staff each semester

Objective: 4.3 Engage Design Thinking to Practice Empathy Between and Among All Colleagues

Engage with consultants who have experience with or expertise in formal and informal dispute resolution, mediation, and culture building. Practice with these methods to become more comfortable with identifying vulnerabilities within and outside of a particular vantage point.

- Engage a consultant to assist with using design thinking or other forms of mediation and coalition building methods.
- Encourage colleagues to work together to present their own design thinking exercise
- Seek commitment from all colleagues to attend the Annual Legal Educators' Workshop and to attend at least one ADI Design Thinking Workshop