

Indiana University School of Law – Indianapolis 2005-2006 PRAC Learning and Assessment Report

Narrative:

Indiana University School of Law – Indianapolis is an integral part of the IUPUI campus and supports its efforts in building a university of the first rank, yet takes care to emphasize its status as an independent professional component of Indiana University. The law school is accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA).

The Indiana University School of Law – Indianapolis has articulated its' missions as being:

- To provide an excellent graduate and professional legal education for its students;
- To contribute through research, writing, and publication to knowledge, understanding and improvement of law, legal institutions, and legal processes;
- To serve the university, the legal and academic professions, and the wider society;
- To maintain a vibrant and humane community of persons engaged in various aspects of teaching, learning, scholarship, service, and support for those activities.

While the law school is collectively committed to these broad missions, it is also committed to fostering wide intellectual and professional freedom to its faculty. Because of the intellectual and professional freedom of its faculty, the law school has not adopted any formalized methods or requirements for assessing learning outcomes as anticipated by the Principles of Undergraduate Learning (PUL's). While a trend is developing for adapting the PUL's to legal education with a conference and publication of the Symposium issue, *Seven Principles of Good Practice for Legal Education*, 49 J. LEGAL EDUC. 367 (1999), this law school has not undertaken any consideration for their application here.

At the present time, faculty on the tenure or long-term contract track typically use the standardized course and faculty evaluation form from the Testing Center at the conclusion of each semester. The results are tabulated and reported on the faculty member's Annual Survey to the Dean of the law school for use in determining salary recommendations. The results are also included in the materials submitted to the law school's Promotions and Tenure Committee for use in determining the faculty member's progress toward promotion and tenure. A number of faculty, notably those in the law school's clinical ranks, combine the standard evaluation form with one tailored to obtain feedback related to the specific course. For example, it may ask for input on the teaching methods employed – such as the use of simulation, role-playing, or technology-based information sharing.

In a typical law school course, assessment of student performance and learning is based upon a final examination at the conclusion of the semester. A few faculty members may give an additional mid-term test or provide a pre-exam workshop to assist students with test-taking skills. Assigning the final grade for each student in each course and reporting

it to the administration is the responsibility of the faculty member. Further reporting of learning outcomes is not required or expected.

As a cumulative measure of student learning, the law school tracks performance of its graduates on the Indiana bar examination.

Bar Passage Rates:

The bar examination provides the easiest available data, but is only part of the cumulative measure the school uses to gauge the achievement of our school's endeavors. While the following table suggests that the law school's bar passage rates have been somewhat below average for the February 2005 and July 2005 overall bar passage rates, the law school's rates would not be considered alarming or even out of step with the national trend for bar passage rates. The overall bar passage rate for all Indiana first-time bar takers in July 2005, for example, was only 83%, and our students' bar passage rate for first-time takers in July 2005 was 78%. Our percentage is not that significantly less, especially considering that our law school has more students taking the Indiana bar exam than any other Indiana law school. Further, the national trend of lower bar passage rates suggests that our rates are not unique.

Even so, the law school has taken steps to investigate and address the matter. It has assigned a law professor to study the matter; she has already attended several conferences. In addition, another member of the law faculty is studying the criteria used in the national law school rankings, one of which is the bar passage rate.

Our results from the February 2006 bar examination were positive. The law school's overall pass rate equaled the overall pass rate for all exam takers, our first-time takers were only 1% below the overall average, and our repeat takers were 7% above the overall average.

Date	Overall Pass Rate	IU-I Pass Rate	Overall 1 st Time Takers	IU-I 1 st Time Takers	Overall Repeat Takers	IU-I Repeat Takers
February 2005	72%	63%	85%	78%	51%	49%
July 2005	76%	67%	83%	78%	21%	17%
February 2006	68%	68%	77%	76%	54%	61%

The bar exam results are a single portion of a three-part licensing process adopted by the Indiana Supreme Court. Graduates must also take a professional responsibility and a multi-state exam, along with the state bar examination. A better measure of the success of our graduates can be found in the ultimate employment figures, which are extremely positive:

Employment Statistics:

2005 EMPLOYMENT SURVEY

(Students graduated in December 2004, May and August 2005)

Employed	238	94.8%
Unemployed	7	2.8%
Studying for the Bar Full Time/ Not Seeking Work:	5	2.0%
Pursuing Full Time Degree:	1	0.4%
Total Class of 2005	251	100%

Conclusion:

The law school has established a Teaching Committee which has engaged faculty members in dialog related to teaching issues over the past several years. The Teaching Committee encourages the sharing of teaching methods and is open to suggestions about improving the quality of teaching. The Teaching Committee may be the logical vehicle to generate discussion about the principles of good practice for legal education in the future.