

Special Committee on the College of Law
Florida A&M University Board of Trustees
June 11, 2025

Presented by Trustee Belvin Perry, Jr

Opening Remarks

- Committee launched April 2025 following Gunster Report by Simone Marstiller
- 20+ hours of public Zoom meetings and strategic contributions
- Focused on transformational change, aligned with Boldly Striking Strategic Plan

Committee Structure

Four Subcommittees

- **Bar Passage & Nextgen Bar Prep**
 - Strategies to improve bar passage rates
 - Early Intervention and curricular enhancements
 - Faculty alignment with the NextGen Bar Exam
- **Strategic Partnerships & Experiential Learning**
 - Strengthening externships, clinics, and professional development Enhancing positioning in high-growth legal fields
- **Effectiveness & Faculty Development**
 - Faculty accountability and assessment practices
Governance, leadership continuity, and institutional practices
- **Facilities Assessment and Local Needs**
 - Assessment of current facilities
 - Facilities needs
 - Student Housing Needs
 - Assessment of services needed;
 - working relationship with main campus

Committee Membership & Collaboration

- Esteemed and dynamic representation: trustees, students, faculty, alumni, and legal professionals
- Public sessions and strategic workgroups
- Reviewed reports, data, and trends to guide implementation

Special Committee Members

- Judge Dan Traver
- Professor Patricia Broussard
- Student Representative, Dr. Carl Cartwright
- Mr. Earnie Ellison
- Trustee Emery Gainey
- Professor Jonathan Fineman
- Interim Dean Cecil Howard
- Professor Lundy Langston
- Student Representative, Miss Amber Newsome
- Professor Robert Abrams
- Attorney Sean Pittman
- Professor Eurilynne Williams

Ex Officio: Provost Allyson Watson, Avery McKnight, President Timothy Beard

College of Law Strategic Recommendations

Summary of Key Priorities for
Improvement and Reform

1. Pause Curricular Changes

- No further changes affecting legacy bar exam students.
- Wait until post-February and July 2025 bar exam results are analyzed.

Notes:

The COL implemented several curricular changes prior to the Report, which changes have produced positive bar results since February 2024.

2. Strategy for Academic & Bar Success

- Develop a measurable, data-driven plan for NextGen Bar.
- Include bullet points, timelines, and accountability benchmarks.

Notes:

- Gap identified between students and real-world legal practice
- Centers of Excellence in high-demand fields planned (2025-26)
- Certificate Programs planned beginning (2025-26)
- Partner with Florida law firms and legal community
- Career Development to Collaborate with Clinic Programs
- RISE program integrates BARBRI, Themis, Kaplan
- Considering additional academic coaches and support staff
- Instructor-to-student ratio: 1:25

3. Data & Instructional Consistency

- Launch centralized data analytics system with actionable insights.
- Mandate collaboration between doctrinal, LRW, and ASBP faculty.

Notes:

- Data Analytics System to be purchased with LBR Funds
- Doctrinal, LRW, and ASBP faculty to collaborate and teach during Orientation.

4. Reinstitute 0L Summer Program

- Required for all admitted students; focus on law school readiness.
- Teach core skills and 1L subject overviews; seek university funding.

NOTES:

- Launching Fall 2025 in preparation for Fall 2026 for incoming 1L students
- Fall 2025 has highest-ever GPA and LSAT cohort
- Early access to free BAR/BRI platform provides early preparation for NextGen Bar Exam

5. Overhaul Assessment & Evaluation

- Revise assessment plan to measure student learning effectively.
- Tie faculty performance reviews to learning outcome metrics.

Notes:

1L Diagnostic Exams began at end of 2024-25 Year.
Learning outcomes must be indicated on syllabi

6. Faculty Engagement & Pedagogy

- Review learning objectives and align with ABA/NextGen standards.
- Use assessments, share best practices, and revise tenure review criteria.
- Recruit faculty with recent practice and strong academic credentials.

Notes:

Continue monthly (in-person) BAR/BRI Faculty Enrichment sessions.

Faculty to receive Next Gen Professional Development

7. Enrollment Strategy & Leadership

- Reevaluate prior recruitment model.
- Fill key interim posts with permanent appointments.

Notes:

- New Recruitment Model resulted in 91% increase in seat deposits from previous year.
- Fall 2025 has highest-ever GPA and LSAT cohort
- Early preparation for NextGen Bar Exam

8. Leadership Structure Enhancements

- Create roles for data, assessment, and faculty development.
- Elevate Strategic Initiatives role to Assistant Dean level.

Notes:

New or enhanced data, assessment, and faculty development roles have been identified with appointment of permanent Dean.

9. Leadership Faculty Performance & Instructional Quality

- Annual Faculty Assessment: including student course evaluations as a weighted component of overall performance.
- Curriculum Relevance: Course scheduling and teaching assignments strategically tied to bar-tested subject areas
- Performance Improvement Plans: Faculty exhibiting poor teaching performance, low student feedback scores, or disengagement. Faculty Performance Improvement Plan (FPIP).
- Positive Reinforcement: For excellence in teaching, research, or service
 - Teaching or service-based grant stipends
 - Recognition through merit acknowledgment
 - Graduate or teaching assistantship support
- Priority consideration in new curricular initiatives or strategic partnerships

Recommendations for University Trustees

Governance & Vision:

Revise mission statement to reflect the College's transformation

Adopt a new vision statement emphasizing HBCU legacy, service, and inclusivity

Adopt a new mission statement focused on academic rigor, professionalism, and public service

Strategic Priorities for Long-Term Growth:

Improve stakeholder engagement and reputation

Expand experiential learning (clinics, internships, externships)

Establish Centers of Excellence to lead legal thought

Develop high-growth, high-demand legal programs

Set optimal student enrollment target

Strengthen student recruitment (pipelines, 3+3 programs, scholarships)

Improve campus infrastructure to address geographic disparities

Boost alumni engagement and fundraising

Leadership & Oversight:

Align Dean search profile with strategic priorities

Seek legal opinion on expediting post-tenure review for law faculty

New Vision and Mission

- Rewritten to emphasize practice-readiness, rigor, and service
- Focus on underserved communities and professional excellence
- Faculty will consider edits during Fall 2025

Strategic Plan Redesign

- 7th Edition aligned to Boldly Striking Strategic Plan
- Redrafted with deliverables, timelines, benchmarks
- Focus on accountability and measurable impact

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UNIVERSITY

- Collaborate with the College of Law to streamline administrative processes and eliminate inefficiencies.
- Provide adequate budgetary support for:
 - Student recruitment and retention scholarships
 - Faculty recruitment, including clinical faculty
 - Development and implementation of a 0L summer pre-matriculation program
- Pursue specific legislative appropriations to address infrastructure needs and student service disparities between the College of Law and other state public law schools.

Closing Remarks

FAMU COL is on a path to excellence and sustainability
Focused on bar passage, student and faculty outcomes
Thanks to Provost Watson, Dean Howard, and all
committee members