

UVA LAW | Dean Risa Goluboff Discusses State of the Law School in 2019

RISA GOLUBOFF: Welcome to your reunion and welcome back to the law school. It is such a privilege for me to stand here in front of you as your dean. And I do so for the same reason that you are all here today, I think, and that is because I love this school. I love the students. I love the faculty. I love the staff, and I especially love the fact that you all are here.

And that even when your law school days are behind you, a little bit behind you or a lot behind you, the law school remains a meaningful presence in your life. And I'm so glad that that's true for all of our JD graduates and also for our LLM graduates, many of whom have come from far and wide, along with JDs who have come from far and wide-- Merch from Hong Kong, and all across-- Hong Kong, yeah-- all across the world. And so I'm so happy to see all of you here.

I thought I would spend the next little while sharing with you some of what continues to make this place so special, how we continue to be the law school that you all know and love, but even better. That's my hope, if that's possible. And share some highlights about how we continue to educate students who will be the next generation of lawyers and leaders like you, who will serve and lead our profession, our commonwealth, and our nation.

So what do we do? How do we do that? First, we take top-notch students who are diverse in every way, who have different backgrounds, experiences, views, attitudes, politics, interests, hopes, and dreams, and we provide them access to the law school and the legal profession. We provide that access for all of those with the talent and drive to join us.

Our new class is shaping up beautifully, and your support allowed us to award a record number of scholarships to students in the current first-year class and a record number in the class that we are creating now.

We are now at a steady state number of our new smaller class size that we've been moving toward for a number of years of around 300, though for the last couple of years, we keep coming in a little high. People just really want to come here.

And the smaller class size I mentioned, it seems like a small thing, but it actually really fundamentally shapes what we do here. It enables us to keep the quality of our students high and to provide the best possible employment outcomes for our students, which I will talk more about in a minute.

It also allows us to continue to improve the education that we provide. And especially because the expectations for legal education are changing, those expectations require us to do more and more for our students, which we're happy to do. So we take the best students from all over, and we bring them together.

And then what do we do? This is the most important part. We build a community together, a collegial and collaborative while intellectually challenging community that is committed to free exchange of ideas. Our differences serve as a source of strength and a source of learning. We are committed to dialogue across those

differences.

And in this, I think, the law school is unique not only among law schools, but among almost any institution I can think of. There are institutions who have members with different views, but very few of those institutions couple their pluralism with the kind of community commitment that we have. And when you have pluralism without community, you often have silos, and division, and polarization, and an inability to speak to one another.

But because we care about each other and we care about our community, we speak with respect, we listen with empathy, we learn from one another, and we really do have a free exchange of ideas. We don't take that for granted. We are always looking for ways to enhance our community and to enhance that free discourse.

Last year, we launched the new Karsh Center for Law and Democracy. You might have heard about the extraordinary gift from Martha and Bruce Karsh of the classes of 1981 and 1980, respectively. Part of that gift was to create the Karsh Center to support interdisciplinary research and programming focused on respect for the rule of law, civic engagement, civil discourse, the ideas of a plural society, and the indispensable values of truth, integrity, and ethics.

For our inaugural event last year, Justice Anthony M Kennedy came to the law school. He taught our students. He ate with them. He met our faculty. And he was interviewed by David Rubenstein, which we broadcast on both Bloomberg TV and PBS nationally, so you can still see it online.

And the Karsh Center launch, I think, really reflects so many of our core values of both what we do as a community and what we do in intellectual exchange. Our community is so vibrant. I can't even get into all the things that we have done in the past year, but let me say a few.

Our students hosted literally hundreds of speakers, including numerous sitting judges, practitioners in government, public interest, private firms, and industry leaders. We hosted last year the first annual Law Student Wellness Summit in Virginia.

We welcomed to the law school Virginia Supreme Court justices, the deans of almost every other law school in the Commonwealth, students and practitioners from around the Commonwealth to talk about how we develop not only excellent lawyers, but holistically healthy law students and then lawyers.

We have too many student honors to mention, but I will mention just two. First, we had a group of five students who won the International and European Tax Moot Court Competition in Belgium last year for the second year in a row. We are the first and only US law school to have won that competition. And second--

[APPLAUSE]

You will sense a theme about tax today. And second, and on a lighter note, the Virginia Law Weekly won the ABA's the Student Division 2018 Law School Newspaper Award also for the second year in a row.

[APPLAUSE]

So within this vibrant community, we teach, and learn, and serve together. Our curriculum is more extensive and more varied than ever, and it is enhanced and facilitated by this smaller class size.

So in addition to the basic black-letter law classes that are the fundamentals of every law school education and are now taught in much smaller class sizes than most of you would remember, we also have a broad range of small seminars that engage extralegal interdisciplinary perspectives so that our students have a broad understanding of the law and its place in the world throughout their careers, as well as smaller experiential learning classes.

These are faculty-intensive classes that provide our students with skills, with simulations, with externships, and especially with clinics. In the year 2000, we had five clinics. We now have 19, and we look to be adding two or three next year.

This curriculum is taught by a faculty deeply committed to teaching and the success of our students. They share with our students and model for them the kind of open and yet supportive intellectual discourse that is crucial to our intellectual community, and they bring to their teaching in-depth expertise from their own world-class and world-changing research, their own practice experience, and their own leadership.

Just to mention a few highlights, we made three hires last year. Kimberly Robinson will become a new tenured professor. We hired her from the University of Richmond down the road. She is an expert in education law and equity. We heard Kevin Koepp, who's a new junior faculty member who focuses on law and economics, international relations, and international law. And we rehired Leon Szeptycki, who is an environmental law expert most recently at Stanford's Woods Institute.

Our faculty members this past year won prestigious fellowships, book prizes, article prizes, teaching awards, Supreme Court arguments, and appointments to boards and committees of national importance. Just to give a couple of examples, last year and the year before, the United States Supreme Court cited professors at the University of Virginia School of Law more than any other faculty of any law school in the country.

[APPLAUSE]

One other thing, just because I can't help it when I have an audience this large, to mention, is that Vice Dean Leslie Kendrick and I launched a podcast last year, whose goal is largely to highlight the work of our faculty and make that work accessible to a broad audience. The podcast is called *Common Law*. You can find it anywhere you listen to your podcasts. But we hope you'll listen, and a number of you have already mentioned that you've been listening, and that warms the cockles of our heart.

Our faculty are so productive and working so hard that I am running out of the research chairs that we need to support them. It's not really a hint, but maybe a little.

[LAUGHTER]

Our faculty, like our students, are not only incredible scholars, but they are also such leaders, both in our own community and elsewhere. So last year, Toby Heightens of the class of 2000 became Solicitor General of Virginia, following in the footsteps of Stuart Rafael of the class of 1989, who is here, I believe.

[APPLAUSE]

You can also hear Toby on our podcast talking about the law of *Game of Thrones*, if you're interested in. And Carrie Abrams left the law school. Usually, we don't love when our faculty leave the law school. But she left to go become dean at Duke Law School. And that means that there are four current or former female faculty of UVA Law School who are deans at top law schools.

[APPLAUSE]

Of course, right here at UVA, our graduates are also leading. Former professor and alumnus Jim Ryan of the Class of 1992 took the reins as president last year. And I think if you ask anyone at the university, they will tell you what enormous energy and success he has already brought to the university. Obviously, he won the men's basketball championship single-handedly.

[LAUGHTER]

And he has asked three other members of our law school community to join his leadership team. You've already heard about Tim Hafey of the class of '91, who is now the general counsel. In addition, former Dean John Jeffries of the class of '73 is now senior vice president for advancement leading the upcoming capital campaign.

And Liz McGill, class of 95 95, will actually return from serving as dean at Stanford Law School. So sadly, our four deans go down to three. But that's because she becomes the provost of the University of Virginia, so I think that's

a real win.

[APPLAUSE]

This is a true dream team at the helm of the university. There are some around grounds who have described it critically as a law school takeover, but I've heard others say, you take talent where you find it.

[LAUGHTER]

So this is exactly what I've been talking about and what we do here. We find, we nurture, and we launch talent at the law school every day, every year, and every decade. We take the best students, we create a supportive, challenging, and vibrant community, and we teach and learn with field-changing faculty and leaders across a broad and deep curriculum.

And then finally, we do everything in our power to make the hopes and dreams of our students come true. There is really only one main point here, though there will be many subpoints. We are excelling in all types of postgraduate employment, which is not true at many law schools.

The most common three sectors that our students enter immediately after graduating are private practice, clerkships, and public service. They also go directly into business increasingly and elsewhere, but I'm going to focus on these three as the most prominent paths.

So as a general matter, we have five-- well, as a general matter, our numbers are incredibly impressive. We have a 98% employment rate overall, 98%. And we were number two nationally in the percentage of graduates-- this is a mouthful, but think about what it means-- with full-time long-term jobs that require a law degree, right? So these are the best jobs you can get as a law graduate. We were number two, after only Columbia last year.

Our students who want to go into big law can do that, and we also ensure that our students don't do that if that's not what they want. We ensure that they can go to smaller markets, to smaller firms, especially high-end boutiques and market leaders in smaller or mid-sized cities. But it is our goal to make their hopes and dreams come true. We do not have hopes and dreams separate from theirs, and we send them, as a result, all over the country and all over the world.

A few more specific metrics in each of these sectors. So on the private practice side, we have five full-time professional staff. And for the class of 2018, these numbers just came out. UVA Law School was number one in the country, number one in the country in what's called the elite jobs metric, which are those students heading to either large law firms or clerking for federal judges.

Now, one way that we keep ourselves accountable to our students, given how much law school cost these days, which is a lot, is by measuring the first-year salary of our students who enter private practice.

So for the students going into the private sector in the class of 2018, the 75th percentile of those students, the top 25% of those students, will be making \$190,000 a year. The top 50% of those students will be making \$190,000 a year. And the top 25th-- sorry, the top 75% of those students, all the way down to the 25th percentile, will be making \$190,000 a year. So that is really a tremendous accomplishment.

[APPLAUSE]

Of course, many of our students clerking will also be going into those jobs with a bonus, to boot. The debt of going to law school is real, and we take it seriously. But it is also sustainable on salaries like these.

As for clerkships, we have 91 known alumni currently clerking in the federal courts. The market for alumni clerks-- it used to be that you applied to clerk during law school. We still have many students who do that. But more and more judges are hiring law students after they've graduated.

So if you know of young graduates, recent graduates interested in clerking, please spread the word. We have more judges who want to hire our students than we can find clerks to fill their slots, so let us now.

We have 40 of those 91 are at the federal courts of appeal, which is the most that we have had in any single year as far back as we've been counting, which is 1980. And overall for the class of 2018, we were fourth in federal clerkship placements, after only Yale, Stanford, and Chicago, which yes, if you're thinking about it, puts us ahead of Harvard.

[LAUGHTER]

[APPLAUSE]

On the public service side, more and more students are coming to UVA because of our public service support and entering public service immediately upon graduation. Our 3Ls who are graduating this month will be heading all over the country to begin their careers in public service. They're going to the Department of Justice, the US Government Accountability Office, the Army Jag Corps, public defender and prosecutors' offices, and legal aid offices all across the country.

Ensuring access to public service careers means providing financial and personnel support so that our students are not precluded from those careers by debt, so that they are trained for those careers, and so that they can find the jobs that they dream of. We have what I call a classroom to career public service program.

Starts with full tuition public service scholarships to two incoming students. We have three career counselors at the Mortimer Kaplan Public Service Center. We have a travel fund program we instituted two years ago to help students afford the cost of traveling for public service interviews. When you interview at a law firm, they pay. When you interview for a public service organization, we now pay.

We have mentoring and dedicated courses through the program in law and public service that President Jim Ryan created when he was vice dean here. We have 108 students currently being mentored through our public service alumni mentorship program. We have an annual conference where we honor graduates working in public service and invite them to network with our current students.

We have guaranteed funding for eligible students for summer public service work, that this summer is funding 166 students to the tune of over \$700,000.

We also have full-time postgraduate fellowships in public service for one or two years, the Robert F Kennedy of the class of '51 Public Service Fellows, for our students to serve as prosecutors, legal aid attorneys, advocates for the Environment Capitol Hill Counsel. We provide entry-level jobs into public service because of your generosity.

We have alumni career counseling, and last year, over 120 alumni interested in making a transition to public service were counseled by our career counselors. And finally, we have our loan forgiveness program. In 2018, we funded almost 100 graduates of the law school working in either small firms in Virginia in underserved areas or in public service anywhere in the country, and we spent over \$330,000 paying back their loans for them so that they can work in the jobs that they want in public service.

[APPLAUSE]

So there are two final rankings that I want to mention, and they are, I think, actually, the most important. We are dead last in two of the things that get counted for employment outcomes, dead last out of 201 law schools counted. We are dead last in the number of students who are unemployed and dead last in number of students underemployed. Those are numbers to be proud of.

[APPLAUSE]

So I hope you see that we are thriving, excelling, and setting the course and the standard. And you don't have to just take it from me. There are other numbers that I will leave you to brag about so you can go away from your alma mater weekend and tell people how great your law school is doing.

The Princeton Review does a survey with thousands and thousands of law students every year. This year, again, we were number one for best professors. Again, we were number one for best quality of life for our students. We were number two, again, for best career and for best classroom experience. And so far as I can tell, the difference between best professors and best classroom experience has got to be temperature control in the classrooms.

[LAUGHTER]

As you can see, it's a little warm in here. We're working on the temperature control. And number four for best career prospects. You are the people who make all of this possible. You make it possible for us to bring students here from all backgrounds, buoy them with community, challenge their viewpoints from across the spectrum, teach them with the best scholars and teachers in the country, literally, and launch them on meaningful and successful careers. In the end, they become leaders in every realm. They become you.

So if you are energized and excited right now about all that we are doing, I'm right there with you. The law school has never been more itself, more vibrant, collegial, exceptional, and transformative, and I'm looking forward to continuing that into our third century. Yes, our third century.

This year, 2019, marks 200 years since the university and the law school as one of the original departments of the university were chartered by the Commonwealth of Virginia. We began celebrating our bicentennial last year and will continue to do so over the next several years. We did not actually have our first classes until 1826, so we have some time for our celebration. A nice long, long ramp-up.

[LAUGHTER]

And the first event that we hosted was a commemoration of Gregory Swanson, who came to the law school in 1950, and was the first African-American student to integrate UVA Law, UVA, the University, and any institution of higher education in the South. We also honored John Merchant in this room last year when he was here for his reunion. He was the first African-American graduate in the class of 1958, and his daughter is here today.

[APPLAUSE]

The law school Mr. Swanson and Mr. Merchant helped to create is one committed to joy, humanity, respect, dialogue, collaboration, and community across our differences. Our students become friends, colleagues, and future networks. They make relationships that they will cherish forever, and you all are testament to that.

We will celebrate the whole history of this law school in a number of ways in the next few years. If you haven't already seen *UVA Lawyer Magazine*, which is hot off the presses this week, please look for it. There's a wonderful

installment there of the celebration. It's called "100 Change Agents, 200 Years of History."

As we look forward from our past 200 years to our third century, we're looking at quite a moment-- a new century, a new president, a moment of renewal, and as Harry mentioned, a capital campaign is appropriately in the pipeline.

[LAUGHTER]

We at the law school kicked off our part of the capital campaign by the gift given by Martha and Bruce Karsh, and they will serve as honorary co-chairs of the campaign.

The co-chairs, they will be joined by four co-chairs who will be Warren Gorrell of the class of 1979, the former CEO and current CEO emeritus of Hogan Lovells, Katherine Keating of the class of 1987, the CEO of BNY Mellon, a wealth management in New York, Dave Berke of the class of 1993, the CEO of McKenna Capital and Silicon Valley, and Dasha Smith of the class of 1998, the EVP and Global Chief Human Resources officer for Sony Music.

These folks represent the breadth of the modern law school and our unique community in every way. Their generosity, their service, and their leadership are an extraordinary testament of faith and confidence of the law school and its future, and that faith of calm and confidence is matched by all of you.

In our last capital campaign, which ran from 2004 to 2012, 72% of our alumni made a gift. 72%, that is a level of participation that sets us apart just like this over 50% annual giving rate. And it is the kind of support that Martha and Bruce and our campaign co-chairs want to inspire. I look forward to our campaign, and I hope you will join us.

Let's set that aside for now, though. Today, you all are here to reconnect with old friends, celebrate each other, and our law school, and enjoy ourselves. Your love for this institution is legend. It is legendary, and it is crucial, and it is matched only by your love for one another. So thank you for that, for all of it, and for making all that we do here possible.

[APPLAUSE]