GUIDED BY A STRATEGIC PLAN,
DEAN
OUELLETTE
PREPARES TO REDEFINE ALBANY LAW SCHOOL


What will law school look like in five years? Where will the legal job market be strongest? What will the market look like in the Capital Region? These answers are moving targets.

Albany Law School is prepared to redefine legal education to get ahead of the fast-changing legal market.

After much work and continuous research over two years, we developed a strategic plan that calls on us to prepare our students for success in six career-related pathways. The pathways will organize the student experience and define our learning and curricular goals. Courses, internships, clinical experiences, mentoring and more will define each pathway.

The plan calls for flexibility. The pathway approach will ensure students master transferable skills and knowledge. The pathways themselves can change in response to market changes.

The plan leverages our core strengths: government law and policy, criminal and civil advocacy, business law, and public interest advocacy. These will not change.

Our exclusive location lends itself to supporting these areas of law. Our alumni have always served as ready resources for support, mentorship and employment.

National law school rankings have never accurately measured the quality of our programs in these areas, but we know we deliver an education in these pathways that is as strong as any law school, and better than most.

As we move into the future, the plan has us building programs in developing legal markets. We have the foundation to deliver a strong experience in health law, as well as in the areas of entrepreneurship, innovation, and financial market regulation.

Before we commit resources to increasing capacity, we will do the research — specifically in our region—to ensure the legal market will sustain these offerings.

We will also rely on experts in each field to redefine our program of legal education. We are holding focus groups and conducting surveys in each pathway domain to determine what outcomes should be the hallmark of an Albany Law School education.

We think this plan reflects an accurate, thoughtful and realistic assessment of the past, present and future. President Andrews and I spent enormous amounts of time working with the Board of Trustees, alumni groups, faculty, staff and students to build this vision. I am excited by the opportunity to implement the plan with its precise, measurable goals.

Affiliating with University at Albany

Leveraging strategic partnerships is part of our vision for the law school of the future. Many of you know we have been working with the University at Albany for the past several months, exploring how our students can benefit best from aligning our programs and operations. We believe the University’s educational resources create ample opportunities for our students. We already share numerous joint-degree programs, such as the JD/MBA, JD/MSW, and JD/MPA (Public Administration and Policy). There is also a 3+3 accelerated program where a student’s fourth year at UAlbany is spent as a first-year at Albany Law School.

There are obvious areas of alignment between the two schools, such as with UAlbany’s highly ranked School of Business, School of Criminal Justice, Rockefeller Institute, the School of Public Health, and School of Social Welfare. There are other areas faculty committees from both schools are discovering together: environmental, international, accounting, and cybersecurity, to name a few.

DOWNLOAD THE PLAN AT WWW.ALBANYLAW.EDU/STRATEGICPLAN.
Essentially, the more we explore with each other, the more opportunities we discover for students of both schools. Regardless of where the relationship goes, we are still the same school and our strategic plan will serve to ground us in our core strengths. Our career pathways will be strengthened by access to UAlbany programs, faculty, and facilities beyond the capability of a small, independent law school. While this relationship creates exciting opportunities as it develops, we will advance in this direction carefully and be mindful of engaging all our stakeholders. We will continue to communicate our progress every step of the way.

Albany Law Right Now

In the past three years we have become a much smaller school. Our Class of 2017 is 119 students. Our entering class in the fall will be about the same size. The small class size represents two things: decreased law school applications nationwide, and a firm commitment to maintaining the quality of our student body. We can operate at this size. Our traditionally strong programs remain strong. We are financially sound, our endowment is at its largest level in recent history, and we have our generous alumni to thank for that.

We remain the same school that you attended. Our alumni continue to be there for us. They continue to believe in us and demonstrate this by the generous gifts we continue to receive. No one knows the school or this region's legal market more than our alumni. We make up the bulk of attorneys in the area. We will continue to engage the collective knowledge and intellect of our alumni.

These are challenging times. We have to be aggressive and creative with our student recruitment strategies. It is an extremely competitive environment. We need to be smart.

As a former student, graduate, professor, academic dean, and soon-to-be president and dean, I have spent most of my professional career at Albany Law School. This is my law school. I am proud of it. I believe in it. The students are great, the faculty is great, and my fellow alumni are great. I look forward to working for you.