Dean Hosts Donors

UB Law Forum
"We've got a good shot to do something dramatic here."

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"A much better, more professionally competent graduate" is the goal, and the Law School's ambitious New Curriculum is the means, Dean Barry B. Boyer told 150 attendees at the Dean's Dinner.

"We're poised for a big takeoff. And if we can start putting the resources behind it, then this is really going to be a fun and exciting time, and the Law School can make us all proud," he said.

The Dean's Dinner enables the dean to communicate directly with alumni/ae and friends who have contributed a minimum of $350. It was held in Oliver's Restaurant in February.

Boyer took the opportunity to discuss the philosophy behind the New Curriculum.

"The market is telling us that we need lawyers who understand both the theoretical and the practical. Our students must be familiar with the business-oriented context in which law is practiced," he said.

"If we're successful in getting the resources to put this curriculum in place, I think we'll be producing graduates who will be extremely attractive in the job market and extremely valuable to their firms and their clients."

For first-year students, the dean cited renewed emphasis on research and writing, one of the first elements of the new curriculum to take effect.

As well, he said, "We want to present a better theoretical overview of the law during the first year. We'll be doing case analysis as we do now, but we also want
the students to understand how these pieces fit together — how there are different ways of thinking about and describing the legal profession."

Also in that crucial first year, Boyer said, "We want to have some opportunity for our students to work on problems that cut across different areas. ... We've compartmentalized things too much. We don't present problems in the way that they come across lawyers' desks in the real world, as different pieces of law that have to be sorted out and brought together into a real-world problem and solution."

Then, in the second and third years, "We want to bring our students to a higher level of skill and sophistication by giving them some greater opportunities and encouragement to specialize, in the sense of getting a progression of courses, a sequence, a concentration in some field — like corporations and securities, or environmental or criminal law.

"They can start with a simple course, they can progress, and ultimately they can wind up in clinics and seminars and simulations where they're really doing highly sophisticated work — something that has a real-world flavor to it."

Boyer spoke with excitement about the possibilities of the New Curriculum, and thanked those alumni and friends who have been so supportive of us. "We've got a good shot to do something dramatic here at UB Law."