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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 25, 2021

Senator Jean Hunhoff
Lead Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Appropriations

Representative Chris Karr,
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Appropriations

Response to the Letter of Intent Regarding USD Law School Budget Approved in the 2018 Session

Dear Senator Hunhoff and Representative Karr:

Attached you will find detailed information regarding the USD Law School Budget Approved in the 2018 Session as requested in the Letter of Intent (LOI) dated July 25, 2018. The LOI requests a report addressing items identified by the Knutson School of Law as two-year and four-year goals.

The information attached includes a letter from Neil Fulton, Dean of the Knutson School of Law.

Sincerely,

Brian L. Maher
Executive Director & CEO

Attachments:
A – Law School Annual Update October 25, 2021

Cc: President Gestring
Dean Fulton

ATTACHMENT A

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA
KNUDSON SCHOOL OF LAW

October 25, 2021

Senator Jean Hunhoff
2511 Mulligan Drive
Yankton, SD 57078

Representative Chris G. Karr
7421 W. Luke Drive
Sioux Falls, SD 57106

Dear Senator Hunhoff and Representative Karr:

This letter is the annual update on USD Knudson School of Law operations called for in the July 25, 2018 letter from the Joint Committee on Appropriations.

CLASS OF 2024 COMPOSITION

The entering Class of 2024 has 79 students—13 more students than last year. This continues an upward trend in enrollment. We currently have 228 total students, up 21% over the last five years.

These are the LSAT and undergraduate grade point average by percentile for the Class of 2024:

25th: 148/3.06

50th: 150/3.44

75th: 154/3.77

Our median LSAT continues to improve, up two points from last year. We also continued to raise our floor, seeing the 25th percentile LSAT score up two full points from last year as well.

BAR PASSAGE

The South Dakota bar exam pass rate for the Class of 2021 was 80%. For applicants from other law schools, the rate was 75%. Please recall that the out-of-state number may not only be recent graduates, it is all applicants taking the

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South Dakota bar exam for the first time, some may be experienced lawyers seeking admission in South Dakota.

INTERNSHIPS

Most internship placements occur during the summer. In Summer 2021, the Law School had these internship placements:

Summer 2021 Internship Placement

Class of 2022	Total students placed:	72/85 (85%)	
	Sioux Falls		23
	Rapid City		11
	Pierre		6
	Vermillion		3
	Yankton		3
	Elk Point		2
	Aberdeen		1
	Madison		1
	Mitchell		1
	Huron		1
	Lake Andes		1
	Beresford		1
	Belle Fourche		1
	Sioux City, IA		3
	Other out of state		14
Class of 2023	Total students placed:	44/62 (71%)	
	Sioux Falls		13
	Rapid City		6
	Yankton		3
	Huron		3
	Pierre		2
	Mitchell		2
	Elk Point		1
	Belle Fourche		1
	Eureka		1
	Sisseton		1
	Winner		1
	Sioux City, IA		3
	Other out of state		7

These numbers are based on student self-reporting, so there were likely additional internship placements for some student who did not report their placement to career services.

In addition to summer placements, the Law School offers several for credit "internships" of various kinds. A summary of those placements in the 2020-2021 academic year is here:

Externships	8
Judicial Externships	5
Legislative Externships	5
Criminal Defense Practicum	7
Criminal Prosecution Practicum	1
Health Law Practicum	2
Innocence Project	13
Low Income Tax Clinic	16
Tribal Wills Clinic	21

We are continuing to expand our internship and experiential learning offerings. For example, we have students this academic year working on name, image, and likeness compliance issues with the USD Athletic Department. We have other students assisting a tribal government with revisions to their constitution. Many placements are in Sioux Falls, but we are establishing connections for students to engage in hands on learning across South Dakota.

IMPACT OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING AND POSITIONS

We continue to see direct benefits of the additional funding and positions for Admissions and Career Services. Our enrollment has steadily increased in both student numbers and credentials. The targeted recruiting and personal attention from the two Admissions positions is key to attracting students. We are now able to build personal connections with students as they begin to consider law school, match their preferences with our offerings, and aggressively compete with other schools on scholarships and curriculum.

The expanded resources in Career Services have resulted in steadily increasing placement rates in the last three years. Our placement in J.D. Required or J.D. Advantage jobs has increased in each year. Our placement rate in 2018 was 79%, in 2019 it was 86%, and in 2020 it was 90%. Placement for the

Class of 2021 is at 84% already; some students wait until after the bar exam to begin their job search, so the 2021 number will continue to climb and is higher than recent years at the same point in time.

CONCLUSION

These investments in the School of Law continue to bear fruit. Everyone at the School of Law thanks the Joint Committee on Appropriations for its ongoing interest and support. I am happy to answer any follow up questions.

Sincerely,

Neil Fulton
Dean
USD Knudson School of Law