

The time is now.



REGENTS APPROVE FUNDING PROPOSAL

New Law School Building on Horizon

This is a pivotal moment for Washburn University School of Law. The Washburn Board of Regents at its July 2012 board meeting approved a funding proposal for a new law school building to be located on the southeast corner of the Washburn campus.

The decision follows completion of intense and thorough evaluations of the current facilities and projected needs required to meet the ever-changing landscape of legal education. Administrators spent three years evaluating the law school's existing building, examining other campuses, and soliciting proposals from architecture firms. What followed was a law school design charette process in which three architecture firms presented proposed conceptual designs and associated costs for both an expansion of the existing law school building and a new law school facility. Administrators considered an addition and renovation to the existing space, but determined that constructing a new building was the more cost-effective option.

"It was only after a careful review of the learning and teaching spaces in our current facility and comparing

them with future needs that the decision was made to move decisively forward with our goal of a new law school building," Dean Thomas Romig said. "People were talking about a new building for the law school when I arrived as dean in 2007," he added. "There was a sense that we really needed it because we were out of space. Every time we have required new offices or more meeting space, we had to carve it out of the library. This has been a thorough, deliberate process."

The current law facility has provided the backdrop and learning environment for the exceptional educational experience of our alumni since 1969. In the nearly 50 years since its construction, the Washburn Law facility has met the changing needs of its students and advances in curriculum with additions and renovations. The continuing evolution of legal education requires more specialized courses and programs that emphasize group learning.

"We continue to be quite challenged by the lack of space in the law school. The law curriculum is much different than it was 50 years ago. New kinds of courses require different

“It was only after a careful review of the learning and teaching spaces in our current facility and comparing them with future needs that the decision was made to move decisively forward with our goal of a new Law School building.”

—Dean Thomas J. Romig

types of classroom spaces and teaching resources. The curriculum is broader, with more specialized courses and programs. Spaces in the new building will facilitate Washburn Law’s hands-on training educational experience,” Romig said. “To remain on the leading edge of legal education and successfully recruit talented faculty and students, we must provide the best possible skills training experience and legal educational environment for our students. Our current facility does not meet today’s needs or those for the future.”

The proposed 152,600-square-foot facility will be an investment in a 21st century learning and technology environment that will accommodate a broader, deeper legal curriculum and provide much-needed space for classrooms, a student commons area, collaborative work areas, courtrooms, the four Centers for Excellence, the Law Library, and the Washburn Law Clinic. Its estimated \$40 million cost will be financed through a \$20 million fundraising effort, with an additional \$10 million coming from university reserve funds and \$10 million in short-term bonds.

“We are fortunate to have a wide base of support for this project from the University administration, Board of Regents, Board of Trustees, Board of Governors, law school alumni, faculty, staff, and students,” Romig said. “A new building will perpetuate Washburn Law’s stellar reputation and enhance its already distinguished faculty/student interaction, faculty accessibility, and practical skills training experience.”

Washburn will unveil detailed plans of the building, a video and 3D animation at the Dean’s Circle Dinner on Sept. 22. If you are interested in learning more about the Law School building project, please contact Joel Lauer at 785.670.1702 or jlauer@wufoundation.org.

BARRISTER’S BALL PROCEEDS PRESENTED TO UNITED WAY OF GREATER TOPEKA



Jill Ethridge, president of the Washburn Student Bar Association, right, and Dean Thomas Romig, left, present a check for \$6,843.63 to United Way of Greater Topeka President and CEO Miriam Krehbiel. WSBA students organize the annual Barrister’s Ball with proceeds donated to a local charity. Law students volunteer to solicit donations from professors, staff, and local merchants that are used as auction items. The week before the Ball, Washburn Law professors, students, and staff participate in a silent auction, which continues throughout the dinner at the Barrister’s Ball. Following dinner, two professors don their auctioneer hats to raise the bids during the live auction. Some of the donated items, such as a Spam dinner with Professor **David Pierce, ’77**, are legendary and offered each year by professors.