




AFI 2.0 Project

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Why add a DEI based Learning Outcome?

According to a National 2020 Law School survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE), “one out of every five (21%) law students who is Native American, Black, or Latinx notes that they do not ‘feel comfortable being myself at this institution.’” Even more troubling, students who are not white men reported that they feel less welcomed and part of the law school community.



Further, our
published DEI
Mission
states:

Our community's success is greater when we appreciate diverse perspectives, values, identities, and lived experiences.

- Suffolk Law is driven by ongoing efforts to center diversity, equity, and inclusion in every way possible, and by a foundational tenet of advocating for acceptance and systemic transformation. At Suffolk Law, diversity, equity, and inclusion are not mere aspirational concepts. Rather, they are meaningful endeavors to commit university standards to substantive systemic and institutional change.
- Diversity, equity and inclusion are critical components of Suffolk Law's ongoing efforts to not only enhance diversity in all forms, but to equalize access and opportunity for those who have been historically underrepresented and institutionally underserved so that all have the capacity to reach the heights of their ambitions.

The Learning Outcome was successful at the April 2022 faculty meeting:

Suffolk University Law School's learning outcomes identify the desired knowledge, skills, and values students should master upon their successful graduation, and are guided by the Law School's mission to provide an excellent legal education as well as the Law School's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion...

- E. In accordance with ABA Standard 302*, the successful Suffolk graduate should demonstrate the ability to:**
- 1. Recognize how personal position (including but not limited to race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, socioeconomic status or military status) shapes understanding of the law and its impact on these with different positions; and**
 - 2. Appreciate law's relationship to past and present conditions of social justice and equality.**

*Standard 302. LEARNING OUTCOMES A law school shall establish learning outcomes that shall, at a minimum, include competency in the following: (a) Knowledge and understanding of substantive and procedural law; (b) Legal analysis and reasoning, legal research, problem-solving, and written and oral communication in the legal context; (c) Exercise of proper professional and ethical responsibilities to clients and the legal system; and (d) Other professional skills needed for competent and ethical participation as a member of the legal profession. *Interpretation 302-2 A law school may also identify any additional learning outcomes pertinent to its program of legal education.*

**There was
more to it
though...**

We still needed a mechanism for assessing this outcome (as we have for each of our published learning outcomes)

One measure would be answers to the LSSSE Survey of Suffolk Students (which we get each year)

But, our participation rate in answering the survey is fairly low.

My AFI 2.0 project was to add a graduation requirement as a form of assessment:

- I. The proposed graduation requirement:
 6. Prior to graduation, every student must satisfactorily complete:
 - a. six credits of upper-level skills courses,
 - b. two continuing legal education seminars, and
 - c. a minimum of 50 hours of practice-based learning in any of the following ways: (i) a clinic; (ii) internship for credit; (iii) First Year Summer Internship Program placement; (iv) 50 hours of legal work completed through the Pro Bono Program; or (v) 50 hours of legal work completed under the supervision of an attorney, and 2.

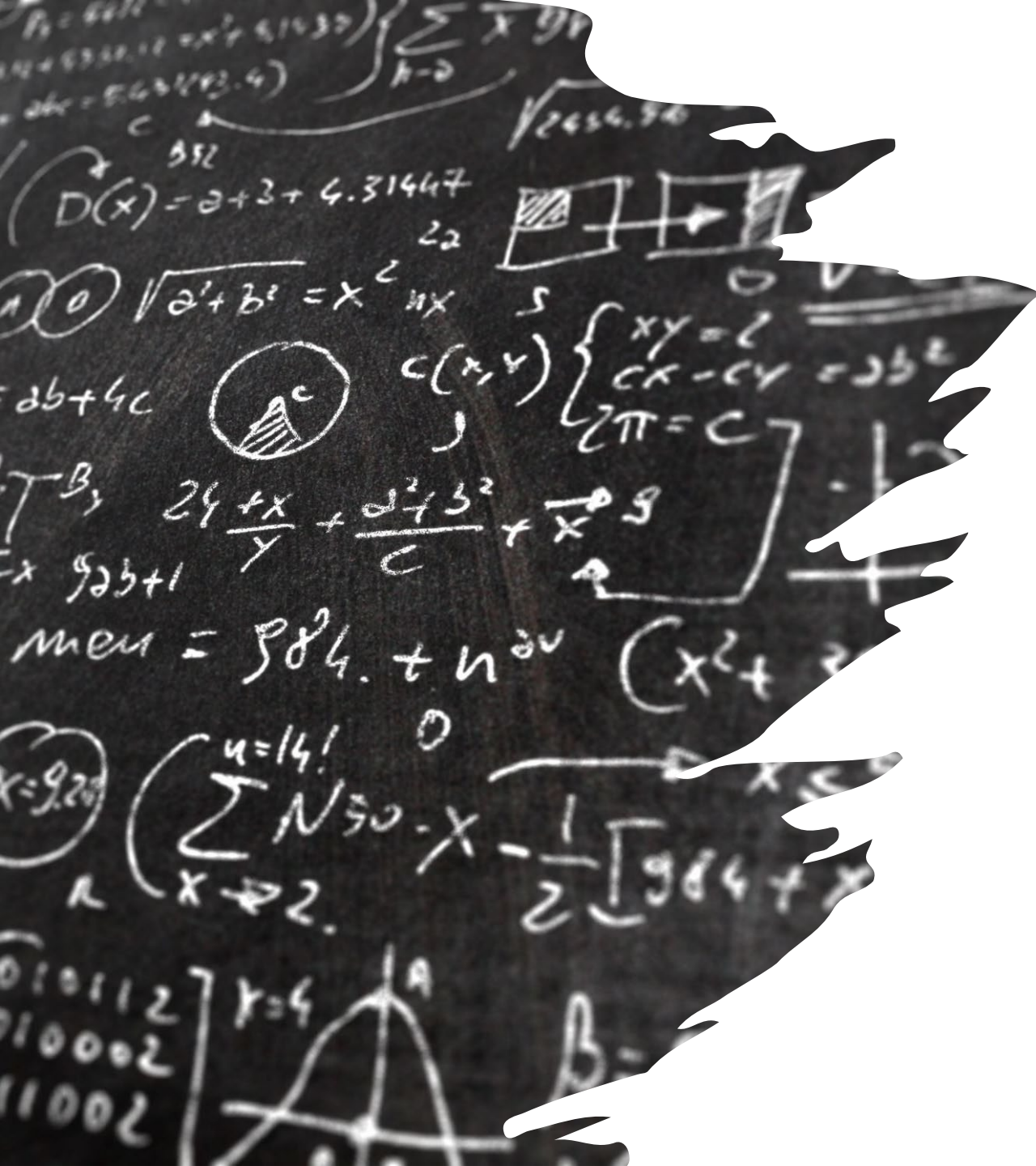
d. one course from the Race, Equity, and Law (REAL) menu.



And then
also create a
way to put
courses on
the menu...

Process:

- I led the Learning Outcomes subcommittee in meetings to brainstorm.
- I used that feedback as well as comments from a faculty deep dive (non-faculty meeting to float ideas without votes).
- We asked the entire Curriculum Committee to weigh in.
- We revised our proposal based on that feedback
- We placed the proposal on the 5/2022 Law Faculty Meeting Agenda



Both the requirement and the mechanism were voted in at the May faculty meeting!

“A course will be added to the REAL menu if the course offers substantial instruction that aligns with published DEI outcomes. A course offers substantial instruction when:

There is a course learning outcome that aligns with any of the published DEI outcomes; or

The course has DEI as an organizing principle; or DEI subjects and sources are significantly incorporated into the course. Inclusion of courses on the REAL menu will be determined at appropriate intervals by an Academic Dean in consultation with the Assistant Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion or others as necessary.”

Current Website:




The image shows a screenshot of the Suffolk University Law School website. The top navigation bar is dark blue with 'SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY' in white and 'Law School' in yellow. Below the navigation bar is a dark brown bar with a home icon and the following menu items: 'Academics & Clinics', 'Careers', 'Admission', and 'Faculty & Research'. A vertical orange line is positioned to the left of the text below. The text below the navigation bar is as follows:

established in ABA Standard 310(b), as set forth in Regulations I(B)(2) and I(C)(2).

5. Prior to graduation, every student must satisfactorily complete:

- a. six credits of upper-level experiential learning courses (as defined by ABA Standards 303 and 304),
- b. two continuing legal education seminars,
- c. a minimum of 50 hours of practice-based learning completed in any of the following ways:
 - i. First Year Summer Internship Program placement;
 - ii. 50 hours of legal work completed through the Pro Bono Program; or
 - iii. 50 hours of legal work completed under the supervision of an attorney, and
- d. one course from the Race, Equity, and Law (REAL) menu.

Students completing Sections b and c of this requirement must submit certification of completion to the Academic Services Office.



*Potential
Courses that
might satisfy
the
requirement:*

- Administrative law
- Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession
- Education, Equality, and the Law
- Employment Discrimination
- Federal Indian Law & Rts of Indigenous People
- Housing Discrimination
- Human Rights in Europe
- Human Rights Project & Survey
- Mass Incarceration
- Movement Lawyering
- Race, Gender & the Law
- Mental Health Law
- Race & Social Health
- Race & American Law
- Children with Disabilities
- Police Misconduct
- Coding the Law
- Housing in America
- Advanced Criminal Law
- All clinics

Next up:

- University-wide land acknowledgement?
- Held an exec board meeting here in September and realized we do not have one....
- Cobbled this one together:

Suffolk University resides on land which is the unceded territory of the Massachusett Peoples who have stewarded this land for hundreds of generations. We recognize the repeated violations of sovereignty, territory, and water perpetrated by invaders that have impacted the original inhabitants of this land for over 400 years.

We extend our respect to citizens of this Nation who live here today, and their ancestors who have lived here for over five hundred generations, and to all Indigenous people. We also affirm that this acknowledgement is insufficient. It does not undo the harm that has been done and continues to be perpetrated now against Indigenous people, their land and water.

