

# Strategic Plan

2013-2017



**Suffolk** University  
Law School



TREMONT ST

DO NOT ENTER

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY

DAVID I. SARGENT HALL

SUFFOLK BOOKSTORE LAB SCHOOL



# Table of Contents

A Letter from the Dean .....	1
Introduction .....	3
Mission.....	5
Core Values .....	5
Strategic Action.....	7
Conclusion.....	17



# A Letter from the Dean

I am very pleased to unveil Suffolk University Law School's new Strategic Plan. You will see that it responds to significant changes in the law school landscape by promoting best practices and innovation in legal education. Under this Plan, Suffolk Law will be at the forefront of the movement to create the lawyers of the future.

Following the completion of Suffolk University's Strategic Plan, the Law School answered the President's call for each of the academic units to engage in a strategic planning process. I am grateful to all of those in our community who gave generously of their time to produce this Strategic Plan.

This process of institutional self-reflection was especially timely for us. As higher education and the legal academy in particular face challenges that have led to increased scrutiny and critique, we at Suffolk were eager to engage in a serious process of self-reflection. Change is not easy

– it is much easier to avoid frank conversations and ignore the reality of changing times. But, as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “There are all too many people who, in some great period of social change, fail to achieve the new mental outlooks that the new situation demands.”<sup>1</sup> Our Strategic Plan demonstrates the Law School's ongoing commitment to preparing our students for the 21st century's changing professional roles while maintaining a diverse, inclusive, respectful and professional community.

This Plan was produced through a process organic to the Law School that involved extensive outreach to our faculty, administrators, staff, students and alumni. I am grateful for the leadership from the many voices who came together to inform, produce, and complete this strategic plan. As this process was new to us, there were the inevitable ups and downs, but I am particularly grateful that the community took this endeavor seriously, as evidenced by the passion of our efforts and the final product, with its identification of Strategic Action in nine vital areas.

Our students, past, present and future, deserve our full commitment and work to be the best law school that we can be. We also must work to overcome whatever constraints impede our best efforts toward excellence in all that we do, be that teaching, scholarship or service inside or outside the halls of the Law School. This Strategic Plan is a critical step in accomplishing those goals.

I am honored and privileged to be a part of this community, especially at this time of challenge and opportunity. I believe we are moving forward in the ways demanded by this new situation. Suffolk Law will maintain its tradition of dedication to students, while innovating in our teaching, scholarship and service.

With thanks,



Camille A. Nelson  
Dean and Professor of Law

**“This process of institutional self-reflection was especially timely for us.”**



“Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution,”  
Commencement Address for Oberlin College, June 1965, at <http://www.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/BlackHistoryMonth/MLK/CommAddress.html>.

## INTRODUCTION

# Suffolk University Law School is **TRANSFORMING**

Suffolk University Law School is undergoing a process of transformation. Our goal is to ensure that our students graduate with the skills and knowledge to succeed when they enter a dynamic legal marketplace, and over the course of their careers.

The legal market and practice of law have changed dramatically over the last five years. Fewer traditional jobs are available to new law school graduates. However, professional jobs in non-traditional legal fields are increasing. Some of these fields like electronic discovery, on-line legal services, and legal process outsourcing did not exist just a few years ago. At the same time technology has greatly changed the way attorneys conduct their practices, interact with clients, and provide legal services. These changes present substantial and formidable challenges to all law schools. Those that fail

to adapt to these challenges will find it difficult to attract quality students and graduate lawyers who can succeed in the transformed 21st century legal marketplace.

In early 2013, Dean Camille Nelson created a strategic planning committee to assess the challenges, consider the Law School's strengths, and chart a course for the future. Over the spring semester and into the summer, the committee—composed of faculty, administrators, trustees, and a student—met regularly to discuss and debate the issues, while considering relevant data. Throughout the process the committee sought feedback from faculty, administrators, and staff, both through surveys and direct contact, and used this feedback to inform their deliberations.

The result is this Strategic Plan. As we undergo our transformation, Suffolk University Law School is poised to be an innovative leader in legal education. By leveraging the strengths of the Law School—its talented and diverse student body, exceptional faculty, committed

A portrait of Professor Richard Susskind OBE, a man in a dark suit and blue tie, speaking and gesturing with his right hand. The background is a warm, abstract painting with orange and blue tones.

Professor Richard Susskind OBE, author  
of “Tomorrow’s Lawyers”

alumni, dedicated administration, and Boston location—we will provide increased support to our students from all backgrounds, find innovative ways to prepare them to practice, and help them transition to become successful professionals. We will continue to promote the important scholarly work of the faculty while pioneering new ways for law students to acquire the knowledge and skills for success. And we will ensure that our students will be prepared to serve and lead in an increasingly diverse profession and society.

**“And we will ensure that our students will be prepared to serve and lead in an increasingly diverse profession and society.”**



# MISSION

Suffolk University Law School is dedicated to welcoming students from all backgrounds and circumstances and educating them to become highly skilled and ethical lawyers who are well-prepared to serve in their local communities, across the nation and around the world. Because the lawyer's role has evolved and expanded since Suffolk's founding in 1906, the Law School seeks to develop in its students the skills necessary to serve the profession's changing needs in an increasingly diverse, global and technologically-dependent society. As one of the nation's largest law schools, Suffolk meets that challenge by providing students with a core foundation in legal education, a breadth of courses and programs, and excellent training by a diverse and accessible faculty engaged in scholarship and service to their profession and communities. Suffolk's goal is to provide its students with access to an excellent legal education, inspire a commitment to justice and provide its graduates the opportunity to achieve their career aspirations.

## CORE VALUES

The Law School is **COMMITTED** to the University's values and mission

### STUDENT CENTERED

Suffolk University believes in providing a student-centered experience that includes offering pedagogically appropriate class sizes and personal mentoring relationships with faculty and staff. We are committed to providing an integrated educational experience that builds confidence and empowers our students to become successful contributors to our global world.

### OPPORTUNITY

Suffolk University provides the opportunity for an enriching education to academically qualified students. We are committed to creating opportunities for students to pursue an education that will help them to achieve their personal and career goals.

### SCHOLARLY AND PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

Suffolk University believes in a teacher-scholar model that fosters excellence in teaching and scholarship across multiple

academic domains. We are committed to academic freedom, the intellectual exchange of ideas, and the development of knowledge that is practical and relevant locally, nationally and globally.

### SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Suffolk University is committed to managing its resources and operations in the most fiscally prudent manner so as to enhance the University's goal of providing an excellent, focused educational experience at the most reasonable cost.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Suffolk University actively promotes relationships with the community to exchange knowledge and provide pathways for internships, career development, and job placement. We engage with our students, alumni and the broader community in collaborative relationships that promote local and global connections enhancing learning and scholarship.



## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Suffolk University believes in the integration of civic engagement and service learning throughout the curriculum to foster the development of responsible global citizens. We are committed to acting ethically, professionally and collaboratively.

## DIVERSITY

Suffolk University values an inclusive community and supports diversity among our students, faculty and staff. We believe that our community is enriched by people of different backgrounds and cultures, and we are committed to building a culture of cooperation among diverse groups.

## INTEGRITY

Suffolk University respects and empowers students, faculty, and staff to provide accurate and comprehensive information to all constituents. We are committed to an ethical and effective governance structure based on transparency and the free flow of information among administration, faculty, and the larger University community.



**“The Law School seeks to develop in its students the skills necessary to serve the profession’s changing needs.”**



## STUDENTS



“**Foster** a culture of inclusiveness that enables students to **thrive.**”



## Strategic action #1



### STRATEGIC ACTION

## PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY LEGAL MARKETPLACE

**INTRODUCE** new substantive knowledge and augment practical skills across the curriculum, such as problem solving, entrepreneurship, collaboration, professionalism, technological proficiency, and cross-cultural competence.

**ENSURE** that students can proficiently and successfully practice upon graduation.

**DEVELOP** effective assessment and outcome measures across the curriculum that are consistent with best practices.

**FOSTER** a culture of inclusiveness that enables students from all backgrounds to thrive.

**PREPARE** and sustain student and alumni to provide access to justice and leadership in public service.

**STRENGTHEN** student support programs and policies related to academic success, professional development, health and wellness, and bar passage.

## Strategic action #2



### ENSURE QUALITY STUDENT ENROLLMENT

**DEVELOP** and market an institutional identity and related programs that attract a new generation of talented students, leveraging the Law School's location in Boston.

**"MONEYBALL"** admissions—supplement GPA and LSAT scores with data-driven, non-traditional metrics that correlate with student success on the bar exam and in practice.

**CONTINUE** to monitor and reevaluate class size in light of marketplace realities.

**ENSURE** that the Law School continues to attract and admit an increasingly diverse class.

## Strategic action #3



### IMPROVE LONG-TERM AFFORDABILITY OF THE LAW SCHOOL

**ENSURE** development efforts prioritize student affordability.

**EXPLORE** additional revenue sources related to new programs and services, including non-degree programs and grant opportunities.

**ENGAGE** students, faculty, administration, staff, and alumni in fundraising initiatives of the Law School and the University.

STUDENTS





## Strategic action #4



### ENHANCE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**PREPARE** students for an increasingly diverse legal marketplace that includes emerging professional opportunities.

**INTEGRATE** career development and professionalism skills into the curriculum.

**ENCOURAGE** greater faculty and alumni involvement in students' professional development and the creation of employment opportunities.

**SUPPORT** use of innovative technology to enhance career development opportunities.

**PROMOTE** greater geographic diversity of employment opportunities.

**EDUCATE** traditional and non-traditional employers of Law School graduates about the advantages of hiring the Law School's students and alumni.

## FACULTY



“**Leverage** individual strengths of the faculty to advance the Law School’s institutional mission.”

## Strategic action #5



### PROMOTE FACULTY EXCELLENCE

**PROVIDE** faculty with the tools to promote the success of a diverse and changing student body.

**LEVERAGE** individual strengths of the faculty to advance the Law School's institutional mission.

**PROVIDE** incentives to faculty to engage in innovative pedagogy, excellent scholarship, and dedicated service that further the Law School's institutional mission.

**ENSURE** that faculty are assessed and evaluated in a manner that is consistent with current best practices in legal education.

**ENSURE** that the faculty appointments process emphasizes diversity and considers the evolving educational needs of students in light of the changing legal marketplace.

## Strategic action #6



### FOSTER A POSITIVE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

**PROMOTE** a culture of inclusiveness, engagement, collaboration, and community interaction.

**DEVELOP** transparent, clearly articulated, and fair metrics for identifying and correcting inequities in, for example, teaching load, service, and compensation.

**RECOGNIZE** extraordinary achievements in teaching, scholarship, and service, including innovative contributions that promote the Law School's institutional identity.

**PROMOTE** and support diversity in the Law School's faculty.

ALUMNI



**“Strengthen** faculty, administrator, and staff **engagement** with alumni.”





## Strategic action #7



## PROMOTE ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT WITH AND SUPPORT FOR THE LAW SCHOOL

**STRENGTHEN** faculty, administrator, and staff engagement with alumni—including new graduates—in the Law School's work, programming, and other activities.

**IMPROVE** alumni planning, communications, outreach, and development through enhanced alumni management systems and the use of social media.

**BRING** renewed focus to alumni fundraising to help offset the Law School's tuition dependence.

**ENSURE** adequate administrative and financial support for enhanced alumni outreach, engagement, and fundraising as well as metrics for measuring their success.

## ADMINISTRATION



**“Facilitate** faculty and administrator input into **decision making.**”

## Strategic action #8



### SUPPORT THE LAW SCHOOL DEAN'S EFFORTS TO RESPOND TO EVOLVING INSTITUTIONAL DEMANDS

**PROMOTE** fiscal responsibility and fairness, both within the Law School and relative to the University, in responding to changing institutional demands and resources.

**ENSURE** that decisions regarding the Law School's operations are transparent and appropriately communicated.

**FACILITATE** faculty and administrator input into decision making consistent with effective and efficient administration of the Law School.

**ENSURE** that decisions about whether to hire faculty, administrators and staff are consistent with anticipated class sizes, available resources, and programmatic needs.

## Strategic action #9



### PROMOTE ADMINISTRATIVE AND STAFF EXCELLENCE

**FOSTER** a positive academic community by promoting a culture of inclusiveness, engagement, collaboration and community interaction.

**PROVIDE** incentives and recognition for administrators and staff to engage in dedicated service and assume responsibilities that further the Law School's institutional mission.

**COMMUNICATE** clear expectations and responsibilities to ensure that assessments and evaluations of administrators and staff are fair and accurate.

**PROMOTE** and support diversity amongst administrators and staff.




# CONCLUSION

This strategic plan is an excellent step forward for Suffolk Law. Like all calls to action, our strategic plan will prepare us for a future of new challenges and opportunities. As teachers we continue to be educated and to educate, and as students of the law we continue to learn. This dynamic cycle is a hallmark of any great educational institution, and this strategic plan offers a blueprint for those efforts. It will assist in the prioritization of institutional goals and will be a lens we use to craft a vision for 21st century Suffolk lawyers.

With thanks,

Camille A. Nelson  
Dean and Professor of Law



“It will assist in the prioritization of institutional goals and will be a lens we use to craft a vision for 21st century Suffolk lawyers.”

DAVID J. SARGENT HALL

