

2012 Assessment Report on Student Achievement
School of Law
Institutional Commitment to Student Achievement
Indicators and Targets by Program

St. Thomas evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission. These efforts are linked to the mission in the 2012-2017 Strategic Plan through its goal: “**St. Thomas will graduate academically superior students prepared for professional success.**” These ongoing efforts to document and improve student achievement are linked to the academic programs. In 2012, the dean and faculty of each college/school identified a set of appropriate indicators of student achievement and targets for each indicator at the program level.

These indicators include enrollment data; state licensing examinations; student portfolios; qualifying examination pass rates; and graduate school placement rate. The dean and faculty of each college/school review these indicators and their targets on an annual basis and use the results of these reviews to improve a program (See links to annual reports at end of this narrative.)

At the School of Law, student achievement is measured and evaluated through tracking enrollment, licensing examination pass rates, job placement, and thesis/dissertation completion.

Enrollment Target. The enrollment target for the JD program is 690 students. This enrollment target reflects the down turn in law school applications over the past few years. The LLM in Environmental Sustainability is a new program whose enrollment target has been set at 10 students. The enrollment targets for the LLM and JSD in Intercultural Human Rights are based on an average enrollment based on enrollments over the years since their inception in 2001 and 2005, respectively.

Table 3.1
School of Law: Target and 2012 Enrollments

Program	Enrollment Target	2012 Enrollment
<i>Juris Doctor (JD)</i>	670	688
LLM Environmental Sustainability	10	4
LLM Intercultural Human Rights	25	34
JSD Intercultural Human Rights	11	10

Use of Results: The enrollment in the J.D. is within 5% of the target at a time when the numbers of students enrolling in law schools was down 11% for the year and 24% over three years. The numbers for the LLM in Environmental Sustainability are down and the Law School is considering suspending the program. The enrollment in the Intercultural Human Rights programs is excellent and exceeded the 25 student average achieved since 2001; the J.S.D. Program is on an even keel of deliberately selective enrollment limited to the best and most promising students.

Licensing Examination Target. The School of Law faculty adopted the competencies covered in the Florida Bar Examination as the basis for measuring student achievement for the *Juris Doctor* program and joint degree programs. The average pass rate on the Florida Bar Examination for the first-time taker from St. Thomas is to be within five percent (5 percent) of or to exceed the state average for each administration. The 2012 state average was 79.31%, but this number can fluctuate widely from year to year, making a steady target not feasible. All graduates of the LLM program are expected to earn the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) credential from the US Green Building Council.

Table 3.2
School of Law: Target and 2012 Examination Pass Rates

Program	Licensing Examination Target	2012 Examination Pass Rate
<i>Juris Doctor</i> (JD)	79.31%	75.14%
LLM Environmental Sustainability	100%	-

Use of Results: The performance target for the JD is objective is for approximately 79.31% of the students to pass the bar examination. Overall, the bar examination results meet their academic target. We will continue to stress the bar examination topics, practice skills and knowledge of the subject matter within the respective courses. With respect to the LLM in Environmental Sustainability, the LEED metric was not adopted until after the existing students had enrolled.

Job Placement Target. The School of Law's Career Services Office staff collects data for the graduates in the JD program whose employment status is known at nine months after graduation. This data can be an indicator of student achievement for the School of Law's JD and joint degree graduates but the current employment market makes it an unreliable indicator. The current job placement target reflects these conditions. The percentages of graduates who are either employed or in graduate school after nine months have been combined to create this target.

Table 3.3
School of Law: Target and 2012 Job Placement Percentages

Program	Job Placement Target	2012 Job Placement Percentage
<i>Juris Doctor</i> (JD)	75%	74.8%

Use of Results: The JD program met the employment target. In order to improve the job placement numbers, in a continuing difficult hiring market, three initiatives are planned:

1. *To continue a robust offering of internships, clinic offerings and networking opportunities for law students;*
2. *To offer practice interviewing, career counseling and resume review with career services staff so that opportunities are matched with students and students are prepared for interviewing.*
3. *To create Lunch & Learn programs and promote networking opportunities that allow students to engage and connect with practicing attorneys.*

Thesis/Dissertation Target. All LLM in Environmental Sustainability will submit a paper to the Florida Bar Environmental and Land Use Law Section’s Annual Maloney Writing Competition. All LLM in Intercultural Human Rights are expected to write an acceptable thesis based on the guidelines in the current School of Law catalog. All JSD in Intercultural Human Rights are expected to write and defend a dissertation based on the guidelines in the current School of Law catalog.

Table 3.4
School of Law: Target and 2012 Thesis/Dissertation Pass Rates

Program	Thesis/ Dissertation Target	2012 Thesis/Dissertation Pass Rate
LLM Environmental Sustainability	100%	100%
LLM Intercultural Human Rights	100%	100%
JSD Intercultural Human Rights	100%	N/A

Use of Results: While some of the LLM Environmental Sustainability students submitted papers to the Maloney Writing Competition, others sought publication in journals. The LLM Environmental Sustainability program will consider encouraging both competitions and publication if the program is resumed. The LL.M. in Intercultural Human Rights students all completed the thesis required of them. It takes students in the JSD in Intercultural Human Rights between two and five years to complete a dissertation. A snapshot of the students completing the dissertation in one specific year is not a meaningful indicator of student achievement for this program. Job placement with a target of 75% is a better indicator of the achievement of these students. This new indicator and target will be incorporated into the School of Law’s 2013 Assessment Report.