

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 3rd, 2021

2021 a year in reflection for UWLA.

My dear UWLA family. This is a time of self-reflection for all of us. Last year this time, we were anxious and fearful of what the future held, in all facets of our lives. But we did what we have always done, we marched bravely into the future. Now that future is our past. I am proud to inform you that the administration and leadership of this institution did not allow the uncertainty of the future at the time to curtail how we moved forward this year. We moved steadfastly forward to attempt to capitalize on the “down time” to achieve initiatives to put this university in the best position to be successful as we emerge from the effects of the pandemic.

As I wrote to you last year and I write to you again now as 2021 comes to a close, the past two years have evidenced both the best and the worst that any of us have experienced. It must be largely true, because so many of us seem to have this collective reference. This prompted me to again attempt to catalogue the events that have transpired over the past year. Here is a reflective digest:

In January, our institution opened the Spring semester, and term to an online format for the first time and began the formal process of requesting accreditation in a post COVID-19 world to be able to continue to offer our programs in an online/distance education modality, in addition to our on-campus in the seat formats.

In February, UWLA hosted our first virtual panel discussion celebrating Black history in Los Angeles. The discussion can be viewed on our UWLA YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KetcpiF78Rk>. Additionally, in February, the California Bar’s Provisional Licensure Program (PLP) was expanded to include expanded eligibility. Professor Robert Barrett serves on the PLP Working group and helped draft the rules for the PLP. To date twenty-three (23) UWLA alums have become Provisionally Licensed Lawyers in California due to his leadership and efforts.

March contained another new first and turning point for UWLA. We successfully hosted our first online Virtual Site Visit by our accrediting agency, WSCUC. Meanwhile, UWLA alum Quincy Newell was appointed COO of Hidden Empire Film Group and alum Latasha Wells Amerson was recognized by Southern California Chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives. I, as well, published a paper on “The Fierce Urgency of Now: We must stop hate and violence against our Asian brothers and sisters!” which can be read at https://www.uwla.edu/apps/news/show_news.jsp?REC_ID=709535&id=0.

April was an incredibly busy time as UWLA hosted our five-year annual accreditation site visit by the California Committee of Bar Examiners. UWLA also hosted the first ever online Traynor Moot Court Competition. UWLA’s School of Law students Dalia Maayah and Patricia Snyder went on to win the 2021 Roger Traynor Moot Court Competition. Please use this link to watch the final round of competition on UWLA’s YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/clxF_jY1h70. This is the second time in the last four years that a UWLA moot court team under the direction of Professor David Glassman has won the Traynor

Moot court competition. Our team bested students from some of the finest law schools from throughout the State of California.

In May, UWLA hosted Dr. Talene Keshishian as she presented a Mental Health Webinar on coping with COVID-19 and the accompanying stresses it uniquely placed on students who were forced to transition to an online modality due to the pandemic. UWLA School of Law also hosted its first Bar Day event. Bar day is an online full simulation of the California Bar Examination testing the subjects that you have learned to date with feedback to both you and your professors to help improve UWLA's student's learning and ultimate bar passage. Also, in May, UWLA received confirmation that 40% of its first-time February 2021 California Bar Examinees had passed the bar. This is the highest first-time pass rate UWLA has recorded for a February examination in twenty-seven (27) years. This is doubly amazing during a pandemic where most of the examinees had spent the last year learning online and then sat for the bar in an online format.

In June, UWLA appeared before WSCUC and received approval to offer its Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree in a distance education format. Additionally, I published a second letter concerning the Juneteenth celebration which can be read in full at https://www.uwla.edu/apps/news/show_news.jsp?REC_ID=728092&id=0.

In July, UWLA continued to sponsor, the now 9th Annual Cultural Competency in Family law hosted by the Iranian American Lawyers' Association. This year the conference focused on Viewing Access to Justice Through the Lens of: Diverse Belief Systems, Socio-Economic Related Issues, and Disabilities. This event is always heavily attended by the majority of family law judges in our region. This year was no exception. Professor Steve Zand is responsible for making certain that the conference is held at UWLA and it makes a dramatic impact on the attorneys and judges that annually attend. It is also a great driver of the elevated UWLA reputation and stature. Very significantly, UWLA appeared before WSCUC and received approval to offer its Juris Doctor degree in a distance education format. This means that in the future, UWLA has become eligible to offer its JD program in any of the various modalities. This will create innovative and exciting opportunities for our students and professors for the future.

In August, UWLA appeared before WSCUC and received approval to offer its Master of Science in Organizational Leadership and Business Innovation degree in a distance education format. While at the same time UWLA's School of Law appeared before the California Committee of Bar Examiners for a major change request to be permitted to offer an accredited JD program on-site, online, and in a hybrid format.

In September, ULWA's latest School of Law course offering "Bridging the Gap between Law School and Practice of Law" course took its place as part of the curriculum to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's court operation and court custody facilities. Law school classes are traditionally designed to teach students to gain the knowledge and skills requisite to pass the Bar exam and become minimally competent in general legal principles. However, they are not designed to teach students how to practice law. This course was designed by Professor Zand and the Honorable Judge Short of the Los Angeles Superior court, who co-taught the course to correct that deficiency.

In October, UWLA's highly regarded Provost and Dean for the School of Law, Jay Frykberg, was appointed Chair of the Committee of State Bar Accredited and Registered Schools (CSBARS). The CSBARS advises the State Bar of California's Committee of Bar Examiners (CBE) on matters relating to the promulgation of new rules, guidelines, and amendments to the rules and guidelines for California-

accredited Law Schools, and for Unaccredited Law Schools, as well as other issues related to legal education. In fact, the new rules drafted by the CSBARS and approved by the CBE will go into effect next week with the advent of the new year. These new rules are focused upon the pillars of Consumer Protection and Transparency; Student Success; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in legal education; and Preparation for Licensure. Which are very similar to our institutional values of: Family, Equity, Educational Empowerment, and Leadership ("FEEL").

In November, UWLA published its second edition of its "Law & Business" Newsletter. In which it announced the appointment of UWLA's first Vice Dean, David Chaney as well as featured articles on UWLA's newest and longest serving employees, Grace Williams and Rodrigo Cobarruvias, respectively. You can read the entire newsletter at https://www.uwla.edu/apps/news/show_news.jsp?REC_ID=757913&id=0. Additionally, in November UWLA received confirmation that 28% of its first-time July 2021 California Bar Examinees had passed the bar, this is the highest first-time pass rate UWLA has recorded for a July examination in thirteen (13) years. Again, this is doubly amazing during a pandemic where most of the examinees had spent almost the last two years learning online and then sat for the bar in an online format.

In December, UWLA broke ground at both campus facilities on the installation of an expansive technology investment to enable hybrid learning. Each classroom is being fitted with the latest in technology to allow both students and professors to elect to learn and teach respectively in the modality of their preference (i.e. online, on campus, or hybrid).

Wow, what a year!!! I feel myself nearly out of breath just writing these words and thinking about how much we accomplished and how fast the year passed. But don't think for a minute that we are about to rest! As a matter of fact, we are working feverishly to put UWLA in the best possible position to address the tendencies of our students and professors as we move forward into this new era overshadowed by the implications of COVID. How will our students and professors desire to interact in the future? No one is sure. Will it be online, hybrid or on-campus? One thing for certain is that no one seems to have a concrete answer. How will our administration resume their work responsibilities to address the needs of our constituents? Will they continue to work from home, or will they return to our offices at our campuses?

UWLA is preparing our campuses; our curriculums; and our workforce, students and professors to best utilize whichever of these formats presents the best environment for engaging in our programs and curriculums and empowering the learning capabilities of our students. We are in the process of re-designing our campuses to hopefully make them attractive venues for students and professors to collaborate on educational or social engagements, both in and out of the classroom. We are incorporating what we believe will be the finest technology to enable our students and professors to interface effectively either online or on campus. We are also surveying our business partners and law affiliates to find out what they believe are the business and legal skills sets required for our students to be successful and competitive in our modern career environments. We are then conveying that information to our professors and curriculum developers to attempt to formulate curriculums that are innovative and effective to assure our students are endowed with the educational skills such that they can be effective contributors in their respective career paths. Finally, we will work with our professors to achieve new and innovative techniques to educate our students to promote effective learning and communicating.

Family, welcome to UWLA 3.0! Ambitious, courageous and challenging. That is our FEEL. My request of you is to bring your deepest commitment to our new institution as we turn the chapter on 2021 and progress forward into the years ahead. We will succeed together.

One last thing... I can assure you as the leader of this institution, that I take the health, safety and welfare of all of our stakeholders extremely seriously and paternalistic. In the interest of everyone's safety, I will mandate standards and policies designed to protect the health and safety of everyone collectively engaging in our learning activities. Vaccination requirements will be strictly enforced, and masks will be required as recommended by the applicable health authorities for anyone on our campuses. However, I also reserve the right to institutionally enforce even stricter health standards where I unilaterally feel that to do otherwise would put our students, professors and workforce unduly at risk, in my estimation.

Like I said at the end of my letter to you last year, to quote Frank Sinatra "The Best is Yet to Come". It is because of you that we will be successful and prosperous as a family. Happy New Year and please continue to stay safe. Thanks to all of you for being members of the UWLA family. I remain...

Your humble president,

Robert W. Brown

P.S. I would like each of you to take a moment to review our mission, values and vision statements. Our mission statement reflects our overarching purpose. Our values are what we cherish and hold as principles to guide our course and our actions as we pursue our mission, and our vision is what our mission yields if we are successful. Our board, administration and faculty came together to attempt to synthesize the essence of UWLA through this platform. We are in gratitude for their time, patience and contributions toward making this endeavor a prideful statement of what UWLA holds dear.

Mission Statement

University of West Los Angeles is a family.

Our culture of diversity creates a unique equitable educational empowerment environment. We provide opportunities for resilient learners to become servant leaders to their communities.

Values:

FEEL Definition - FEEL an experience (an emotion or sensation).

Family

Equity

Educational Empowerment

Leadership

Family –

Our Family value of interpersonal relationships requires that we care for and treat all *members of our community in a constructive but honest and respectful manner.

*members of our community are all who share our values.

Equity –

Our value of Equity encompasses diversity and inclusion, it requires that we support each member based upon their unique needs for support and gives them fair access to educational empowerment. UWLA affirms its position as an antiracist institution.

Educational Empowerment –

Educational Empowerment adds to and refines the members of our communities' existing capacity and knowledge with the creation of opportunities for professional development and social mobility.

Leadership –

Irrespective of titles or names, the value of Leadership is the ability to bring about transformative change from vision to completion, while at the same time remaining a humble lifelong learner.

Vision Statement:

Liberation through educational empowerment.