University of Illinois College of Law Institutional Transparency Plan

In November 2011, the University of Illinois concluded that a single, former College of Law employee – acting on his own initiative and without the knowledge of others – was responsible for inaccuracies in LSAT and GPA statistics, as well as acceptance rates, for a period of several years. The report determined that the College lacked the institutional controls capable of deterring or detecting the misconduct in question, and recommended eight measures designed to ensure the accuracy and verifiability of the College’s data going forward. The investigation found no evidence of misreporting in any of the other areas examined, including career placement, bar passage, and financial aid.

In response to these findings and recommendations, the College promptly engaged external and internal experts to conduct a thorough review and assessment of its procedures for data compilation, analysis, and reporting. Participants in this review process included Duff & Phelps, an advisory firm with extensive expertise in accounting, data analysis, and corporate compliance; campus legal counsel; representatives of University Audits; the University Ethics Office; and members of the College’s Dean’s Advisory Board, including individuals with extensive experience in global compliance within Fortune 100 firms.

The College invited a multi-person team of corporate compliance experts and data analysts from Duff & Phelps to undertake a comprehensive review of its processes of data compilation, analysis, and reporting. The team traveled to Champaign-Urbana to meet with the dean and members of the College’s administrative staff, to review methodologies and data sources, and to assess work papers and documentation. At the request of the College, the team also undertook a line-by-line analysis of the College’s 2011 ABA Annual Questionnaire to verify all data entries. As such, the review assessed the College’s data compilation, analysis, and reporting in the areas of admissions, bar passage, faculty size, financial aid, philanthropic support, and placement, among other areas.

In the wake of this review and assessment process, the College adopted an Institutional Transparency Plan. As the plan reveals, the College’s approach to data integrity rests on a robust set of internal and external controls, including:
• formalization of the College’s methods for collecting data, including data maintained by the Law School Admission Council (LSAC), the campus’s Office of Student Financial Aid, and the Office of Business and Financial Services;

• separation of the steps of data compilation and data review, with those responsibilities conducted by different senior administrators operating in different functional areas of the College;

• extensive documentation of methodologies, explanations, interpretations, and work papers; and

• a robust monitoring and auditing function, which commits the College to third-party verification of all admissions, placement, and budgetary data.

In addition to these measures, which are designed to ensure the accuracy and verifiability of the College’s data, the Institutional Transparency Plan also advances the College’s commitment to financial transparency, guaranteeing students a stable tuition rate over three years and scholarship assistance to all scholarship recipients who remain in good academic standing.

The College of Law is justifiably known for its first-class faculty, outstanding students, and accomplished alumni. We understand the importance of conveying these institutional attributes accurately and regret our failure to do so in the area of admissions. We have designed our compliance program to be the most robust of any law school in the nation. And we are committed to strengthening and refining our measures in the future. Indeed, earlier this year, the College informed the ABA that it intends to participate in the inaugural ABA/LSAC program on verification of admissions-related data. We are confident that the measures we have adopted will ensure the accuracy and verifiability of the College’s data moving forward.