

Mitchell Hamline provides the skills needed to practice law and the encouragement to strive for social justice, while instilling a regard for the rule of law. Our modern and flexible programs prepare students to practice law no matter the career path they choose. Together, our faculty, staff, and board work with our students to fulfill their professional goals in the communities where they live and work.

The strategic plan was created through the work of more than 100 members of our community, with input from students and alumni as well. This summary document contains the five key strategic areas of focus, all of the goals, and a sampling of the key desired action steps and outcomes under each goal.

1 Curriculum

Goal #1: Emerging Skills and Competencies: Identify emerging practice-ready lawyering skills and competencies that are currently under-addressed in our curriculum and integrate a progression of these skills and competencies into our curriculum. These skills and competencies might include: (1) cultural competence; (2) research; (3) technology; (4) character; and (5) professional identity.

Desired Future State:

- Identify practice-ready skills
- Map out progression of courses in which these skills will be taught and assessed
- Prepare a report on methods to teach and assess these skills

Goal #2: Student Performance Tracking System: Implement a school-wide system to assess progress on institutional learning outcomes by tracking student performance in core courses by 2025.

Desired Future State:

- Identify measurable sub-competencies on institutional learning outcomes and core courses
- Identify and build consensus on best practices for basic rubric conventions
- Create rubric lines of measurable sub-competencies on institutional learning outcomes
- Implement a system to track through Canvas a core set of competencies in all core courses

Goal #3: Social Justice Curriculum: Infuse social justice into the curriculum and build a defined path and program for students admitted in fall 2026 that offers support and guidance to students who want to pursue social justice work vocationally or avocationally after graduation.

Desired Future State:

- Explore what social justice means for us as an institution and build consensus on our social justice curriculum
- Create a plan to increase curricular offerings and experiences that promote social justice
- Evaluate our current social justice offerings and experiences and identify areas for development
- Include additional social justice clinic offerings for Blended students and ensure Blended students have a proportional number of seats available in clinics that promote social justice

Goal #4: BAM/Blended Integration: Offer 85% of all upper-level courses to students regardless of enrollment option by 2025.

Desired Future State:

- Identify potential barriers to students cross-enrolling in BAM and Blended courses
- Innovate and pilot courses that can be offered across enrollment options
- Pilot delivering upper-level classes in a variety of Hyflex formats and offering some upper-level BAM courses with asynchronous instruction
- Develop a scheduling and registration protocol that eliminates barriers to cross-enrollment
- Train faculty on best practices for asynchronous and Hyflex course delivery

2 Access and Opportunity

Goal #1: Diversified JD Student Body: In an effort to diversify the student body, increase the number of J.D. students from groups underrepresented in the legal profession so that the student body is more representative of a designated larger population.

Desired Future State:

- Define and measure the dimensions of diversity we seek
- Identify barriers to access in marketing, recruiting, and admissions, as well as in our program
- Create programs and procedures to support recruiting and retaining students from historically underrepresented groups
- Implement conditional or alternative admission program and expanded law school preparation programs using new technology or current technology in new ways
- Develop partnerships with other institutions to create pipelines and pathways for students from underrepresented groups
- Institutionalize recruiting and admissions efforts to produce more predictable enrollment that meets institutional goals

Goal #2: Funding Alternatives: Leverage resources, including alumni and institutional connections, to create funding alternatives that provide equitable and affordable law school financing for students from underrepresented groups and modest means, and those who plan public law or lower-paid careers.

Desired Future State:

- Research student needs for financing legal education and alternative financing models
- Create a plan for funding appropriate financing models to respond to those needs
- Complete first phase of funding for new financing models and begin to award funding

Goal #3: Learning Opportunities for Non/Post-JD: Create and implement valuable and marketable learning opportunities for non-JD students to pursue law-related careers and for post-JD students to continue developing their law-related knowledge and skills.

Desired Future State:

- Identify subject and work areas and target audiences
- Consider how programs can strengthen alumni connections and improve access to historically underrepresented students, and how technology can be used to support new programs
- Create new offerings by developing relationships with educational and community institutions, identifying faculty and staff to develop the programs, and seeking appropriate accreditation
- Market, admit students to, and execute selected programs and start evaluating results

3 Student Experience

Goal #1: Empowered Members of Legal Profession: Empower all students, especially students from groups underrepresented in the legal profession, to see themselves as members of the legal profession throughout their enrollment at Mitchell Hamline.

Desired Future State:

- Communicate expectations and all aspects of curriculum and requirements for successful completion of law school
- Develop benchmarks to determine if expectations and competencies about critical information needed to practice law are being delivered
- Increase participation in experiential learning opportunities
- Increase percentage of passing and satisfactory grades and reduce withdrawals and missed graduation requirements
- Encourage students to engage with each other through participation in the peer mentoring program

Goal #2: Student Trust in Mitchell Hamline: Faculty, staff, and administration demonstrate their investment in all students' personal and professional well-being.

Desired Future State:

- Ensure the physical campus is accessible to all
- Strengthen universal design for learning in the brick-and mortar and online classrooms
- Support students with well-being practices and opportunities including resiliency and trauma-informed teaching and practice

Goal #3: Relationship Building Opportunities: Increase opportunities for students to build relationships across enrollment options. Increase relationships with alumni through highlighting and respecting similar and diverse backgrounds as well as commending on achievements.

Desired Future State:

- Develop a baseline of student participation in extracurricular activities
- Share and market student success to celebrate students' backgrounds and paths to Mitchell Hamline
- Build community with alumni around shared experiences and respect and compassion for differences
- Define and operationalize what it means to be a Mitchell Hamline student and alum, and share these definitions

4 Organizational Excellence and Culture

Goal #1: Communication: Implement a communication structure and plan for Mitchell Hamline Administration, Staff, Faculty and Board that is designed to educate and inform one another of Mitchell Hamline policies and initiatives, provide timely updates, solicit feedback, and encourage dialogue and collaboration.

Desired Future State:

- Identify all current policies, and form a group to review and approved proposed policies
- Select new technology to manage and communicate policies
- Implement a new system to manage and communicate policies
- Implement a new communication plan for informing all constituencies about new initiatives and new/updated policies and procedures

Goal #2: Organizational Excellence: Create effective strategies and practices that promote and support cross-functional collaboration across the institution, resulting in the breakdown of silos and a shared responsibility for institutional priorities.

Desired Future State:

- Identify tools that support cross-functional collaboration, and begin training all employees
- Make hiring and performance assessments reflect the high value on cross-functional collaboration
- Identify and utilize experience and expertise of all staff members

Goal #3: Mutual Respect: Create and maintain a workplace grounded in mutual respect and accountability.

Desired Future State:

- Create a framework for addressing these issues
- Establish an elected council to advise the dean on matters of equity and workplace environment
- Create a culture in which each person knows they are respected and valued, which will position Mitchell Hamline as a desirable employer

5 Community

Goal #1: Sense of Belonging: Create a sense of belonging for the entire Mitchell Hamline community.

Desired Future State:

- Begin every event with an acknowledgement of the ancestral tribal land on which the event is happening
- Complete physical changes on campus to create welcoming space
- Create virtual and local activities to bridge student and alumni communities.
- Ensure language used in the building is not offensive
- Create “one community” atmosphere for legacy Hamline Law and William Mitchell people

Goal #2: Partnerships: Serve our community internally and externally to create necessary partnerships and engagement to further the mission, vision, and strategy of Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

Desired Future State:

- Create process for centers, institutes, clinics, and key staff/faculty to showcase school assets
- Conduct listening sessions to identify concerns and areas of need
- Develop an annual strategic plan that includes community engagement
- Include mutual learning and education in the annual Development plan
- Implement and continuously assess the annual community engagement plan

Goal #3: Influence Law Reform: Influence and reform the law and delivery of justice to reduce the disparities and inequities in our community in meaningful ways.

Desired Future State:

- Connect with alums in public positions and host public meetings
- Conduct listening sessions with key faculty/staff/alums
- Educate our community on innovative practices of the law to eliminate inequities
- Create a speaker series on current inequities
- Create fundraising efforts for donors and alums to help reduce inequality