Law School Dean Follows Local Reporting on Applicant Drop-Off with Radio Interview

Dean David Herring addressed a recent report of a drop off in law school applicants across the country in a KSFR radio interview this morning, noting that the volume of law school admissions test (LSAT) takers across the country has declined over the last four years from a high of approximately 171,500 test-takers in 2009-2010, to approximately 112,500 test-takers in 2012-2013.

“The national economic downturn nationally has impacted the numbers of students across the country, over a number of years, applying to graduate programs, including law schools. Students have become more concerned about debt in a bad economy. Previously, there was great freedom in thinking about graduate school, including law school,” said Herring.

Herring was asked what plans the University of New Mexico School of Law has to address any decline it might face. “I want to make it clear where we are in this national picture of a declining applicant pool. Many law schools are right now trying to be like New Mexico. The University of New Mexico School of Law is not in the same position many other law schools across the country are in. Many law schools are reducing class size and their faculty. New Mexico is not doing that and does not need to do that; we are in a very good position,” he said.

Asked what makes New Mexico’s law school different and what else he would like to share, Herring responded, “New Mexico’s law school has for decades had a small class size and very low tuition for in and out-of-state students, and out-of-state students also become residents after their first year. It also has a very low student-to-faculty ratio and an intense training program with our required clinic. All law schools are trying to get here and this puts New Mexico’s law school in a huge position of strength, and our student career outcomes demonstrate that.”

Herring added, “Where we are going is toward a position of leadership in legal education. Because of our stability we will have the freedom to focus on leading in legal education, we will be trying new approaches, building student skill portfolios, experimenting with our curriculum and teaching methods and measuring the results of our teaching experiments. I want to emphasize that, yes, there is some decline in applications, but the student body here has a spirit and commitment I have not seen before. This place is so refreshing and is the reason I came here - this spirit and the position of strength the University of New Mexico School of Law is in, because it has been doing this right for such a long time.

About the University of New Mexico School of Law

New Mexico’s only law school, the University of New Mexico School of Law is ranked in the Top Ten Best Value Law Schools Nationwide by the National Jurist, is an Above the law Top 50 Law School and regularly receives a high Top Graduate Schools for Hispanics ranking from Hispanic Business Magazine. Students can earn a J.D. and dual degrees and certificates in the School’s well-regarded Indian Law and Natural Resources & Environmental Law programs. The School’s Clinical Law Program is consistently nationally recognized. Learn more at lawschool.unm.edu.