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The Dickinson School of Law of The Pennsylvania State University Building on Strong Traditions for the Future

Dr. Graham B. Spanier*

Shortly after I arrived as President of Penn State, I came across a survey that ranked the law schools of the Big Ten. Needless to say, it surprised me greatly to read that Penn State's law school ranked well among Big Ten universities.

Yet, there must have been something serendipitous in that survey, for soon thereafter intensive discussions began between Penn State and The Dickinson School of Law regarding a merger between our two institutions. Such discussions had taken place at least three times before in the last thirty years, but never successfully concluded. This time, however, the timing was right and the opportunities were mutually attractive, leading to the historic agreement that has brought Penn State and Dickinson together in the same university family.

The foundation for this new relationship is one of shared mission and tradition. Both Penn State and Dickinson are dedicated to making education available to students of modest means throughout the Commonwealth and beyond, with a focus on quality, accessibility, and service. Both are among the most highly rated institutions of their kind. Both have opened their doors wide to students and benefitted from the wisdom and support of graduates who are committed to ensuring that the same opportunities that were extended to them will be extended to future generations. And both are actively involved in public service and outreach.

The joining of Penn State and The Dickinson School of Law will strengthen these vital qualities and enhance the longstanding traditions of each institution. The merger also will bring important

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new opportunities to both. Even before discussions for a possible merger began, a joint degree program in law and public administration was being discussed between the law school and Penn State Harrisburg. That program is now in place. Such collaborative efforts will grow with the many possibilities that exist with Penn State's College of Medicine in Hershey, the Smeal College of Business Administration, the College of Communications, the College of the Liberal Arts, and other academic interests within the University. Joint JD/ MBA and BA/JD programs are among the educational possibilities. From a research and outreach perspective, medical ethics and the changing environment for health care delivery; the environmental, international, and technological dimensions of business; first amendment rights and telecommunications developments; children's and family concerns; and governmental issues are just some of the areas of mutual interest between Penn State and Dickinson.

Whether through formal joint programs or more informal collegial activities, interdisciplinary initiatives in such areas are important to Penn State. The complex problems that challenge our society require many different perspectives and an increasing number have legal dimensions. Educational opportunities for our students and collaborative research and outreach opportunities of our faculty have been constrained by the absence of a law school. In fact, a 1974 report by the Pennsylvania Department of Education that looked at bringing a law school to Penn State noted that in addition to making law degrees available to the University's students, other undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs "would be strengthened considerably by the creation of a law school." In the present market for legal education, the creation of a new law school is not desirable. However, the addition of The Dickinson School of Law to Penn State is a wonderful way to make the University complete.

The merger will give Dickinson new visibility in the higher education community. As an academic unit of Penn State, the law school will be able to participate in activities of the Committee for Institutional Cooperation, the academic counterpart of the Big Ten. The CIC promotes collaboration among member institutions including the sharing of information and resources and the development of special cooperative initiatives. These efforts, which occur at every level and in every area of university activity, will offer Dickinson's faculty, students, and administration the opportu-

nity to benchmark and work with their peers at some of the leading universities in the nation. Other colleges and administrative units at Penn State find these opportunities to be of tremendous benefit.

The body of mutual Penn State/Dickinson alumni is a source of great strength for the future. There are currently about 600 individuals who hold degrees from both institutions and about 10 percent of the current Dickinson student body are Penn State graduates—more than from any other undergraduate institution. Our common alumni fill important positions in government, industry, and the law throughout the Commonwealth and the nation. These men and women exemplify the ideals of excellence, leadership, and service that have brought Penn State and Dickinson together. They are committed to the traditions of both institutions and have been overwhelmingly supportive about the joining of their alma maters. There is none more enthusiastic than the Chairman of Penn State's Board of Trustees, Jesse Arnelle—Penn State, Class of 1955, Dickinson Class of 1963—who has said there is no question that both institutions will benefit enormously by their union and secure a sound and vigorous position in the world of legal and higher education in the United States.

Beyond these mutual alumni, the alumni base of both the school of law and Penn State is greatly expanded by the union, increasing opportunities for networking and support for all. There are nearly 400,000 living alumni of the University, and it is our presumption that there are more practicing lawyers with a Penn State affiliation than with a Dickinson degree. These Penn Staters are likely to take a special interest in the new addition to their University family. Dickinson's new alumni audience represents a significant resource for the law school, its students, and its graduates. In Dickinson's graduates, Penn State gains a new alumni constituency whose leadership will be valued throughout the University.

On July 1st, Penn State and Dickinson entered a transitional period that will culminate in a complete merger of the two institutions at the end of three years. The tangible results of this new relationship will be multifaceted, having an impact not only on students and faculty, but on such areas as administrative operations and information technology capabilities as well. The *Dickinson Law Review* also will be among the beneficiaries of the merger. As the law school enjoys greater access to multidisciplinary approaches and increased visibility in the legal and higher education commu-

ity, the *Law Review* will have the potential to include a broader range of perspectives than ever before and to reach an expanded group of readers. The timing of the merger of Penn State and Dickinson could not be more auspicious from the publication's perspective. The *Law Review* has just begun its second century, now with the added vigor of a new University community in addition to its long record of outstanding legal scholarship and writing.

Penn State is greatly excited about the future possibilities for the *Dickinson Law Review* and for every aspect of the University's association with The Dickinson School of Law. In sharing the opportunities and challenges of our institutions, the traditions of quality and service so important to both will be tremendously enhanced. The students, faculty, and staff of Penn State very much look forward to working with their new colleagues at The Dickinson School of Law.