October 31, 2016

Memorandum

To: Venesa Heidick
   Registrar

cc: Sandra Williams
    Associate Registrar

   Ruth Smith
    Associate Registrar
    School of Law

From: Cynthia Alkon
      Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
      School of Law

Re: School of Law Pass/Fail Grading

On May 11, 2016, the School of Law faculty approved a change in the pass/fail grading, effective fall 2016. As part of this change, the faculty voted to end the practice of giving students who performed poorly in the class a “P” (pass). The new grading scheme gives students a letter grade if they earn a C- or below in the course.

The change was due to faculty concern that the previous pass/fail grading scheme was not sufficiently rigorous. Under the old pass/fail grading scheme, students could pass a class even if their performance was well below average including if it was a D- grade (which is only marginally above a failing grade). The faculty were concerned that some students elected to take courses pass/fail with the intention of doing only minimal work in contrast to their normal work ethic in graded courses. The faculty decided that the new grading scheme better reflects the rigor that we demand without lowering standards for classes that students elect to take on a pass/fail basis.

Under this change, the grading scheme for courses students elect to take on a pass/fail basis is:

P (pass)
C-
D+
D
D-
F (fail)
The grading scheme will be a grading option for all elective law school courses and only applies to the juris doctor program.