

# Law school attracts more minority students

By Alice Wheeler  
Emerald Editor

Attracting and retaining minority faculty and students to the law school remains a challenge to University administrators and recruiters.

In the University's current funding crunch, law professors who are members of minority groups are especially vulnerable to job offers from schools that pay higher salaries, said law school Dean Maurice Holland.

"In every case they (minority professors) moved on to another university," Holland said.

This spring, University Pres. Myles Brand announced that the law school had hired a new minority faculty member, Ibrahim Gassama, a 1984 graduate of Harvard Law School, who was supposed to begin teaching in January 1991.

Unfortunately, because of prior commitments, Gassama will not arrive on campus until fall 1991. "Gassama was the first minority candidate in four or five years," Holland said.

"We have not had any luck with minority or non-minority faculty, because our salary structure is seriously non-competitive."

Salaries are not the only problem caused by lack of funding; money for library ac-

*But there's plenty of room for improvement, officials say*

quisitions, travel and faculty research is also limited, he said.

Competition among law schools to attract minority students is also fierce.

Although the University law school has substantially increased the amount of scholarship money for minorities in the past year, it still is not competitive with other schools.

"There is very limited financial support available from the University for minority scholarships," said Jane Gordon, assistant dean of the law school.

During the past year, the law school raised an additional \$40,000 for scholarships from the Oregon Law Foundation and U.S. West Corporation, she said.

"This year, almost all first-year minority students will receive some scholarship money," Gordon said.

Holland said he agrees the law school needs to increase the financial aid offered to minority students. "Financial support is an area in which we really want to improve," he said. "We are losing out on some very qualified minority students."

The University's law school must compete with the extensive scholarship programs de-

veloped by schools such as the University of Iowa in Iowa City.

"Typically we can offer a student free tuition and some living expense money for the full three years," said Dennis Shield, assistant dean and director of admissions at the University of Iowa law school.

Shield said his university spends close to \$500,000 a year for minority scholarships. The money is appropriated from the state through the Board of Regents.

"Minority enrollment has been increasing every year for the past four years as has the strength of our applicants," Shield said. In the past, many of Iowa's minority students came from Chicago; now, "students are now coming from all over the country."

About a third of this year's incoming class at Iowa are members of minority groups. At Oregon, about 15 percent of the incoming student are minorities; last year, minority students composed 10 percent of the first-year class.

Gordon said she is encouraged by the increase in minority enrollment. "The more encouraging thing is that this year for the first time there is a real cultural mix among the enter-

ing class," she said.

Both Gordon and Holland said they believe that the lack of available tuition grants severely reduces the number of minority students who actually enroll at the law school.

"We are successful in getting interest and applications, then we lose them when it comes to cost and financial assistance," Holland said.

Law school students are also concerned about minority representation and are trying to help diversify the faculty and student population.

Christopher Young, a third-year student and a member of the law school's Diversity Coalition, knows that offers of financial support are an effective method of recruiting minorities.

"A lot of other schools will offer you full tuition. If someone had offered it to me, it would have been very attractive," he said.

The Diversity Coalition was formed two years ago by a group of law students who wanted to increase awareness of the lack of minorities — including women, gays and lesbians, people of color and people with disabilities — at the law school and in the legal profession in general.

This spring, the coalition organized a boycott of classes to call attention to the lack of minorities.

Law schools across the country participated in the boycott. "Some schools did walkouts," Young said. "We wanted to do a day of awareness, to bring attention to the problems, not to demand, 'We want change right now.'" Young said.

Aside from a lack of financial incentives, minorities may be reluctant to come to the University for other reasons, Young said.

"There is a stigmatism about Oregon being anti-minority," he said. "But the University has done a lot of good work. Minority enrollment is up and I think there are two disabled students starting this term."

"But we have to keep working for change. We don't want the University to say, 'We've got one minority professor and that's enough.'" Young said.

The law school sends recruiters and sometimes minority students to college fairs across the country. Gordon also sends information about the University's law school to all undergraduate schools with an enrollment composed of at least 25 percent minorities.

She also writes to more than 100 minority graduates of the

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## Better law school funding planned

*Students, Legislature asked to foot the bill*

By Christopher Blair  
Emerald Managing Editor

University law students will literally pay the price to satisfy the complaints of the American Bar Association's accreditation committee.

When they register for classes this week, first-year law students from Oregon will pay a \$750 resource fee on top of their tuition, a \$150 increase over last year. First-year students from out of state will pay \$900.

And that's not all. The fee increase, part of an emergency funding plan for the law school, will continue to rise over the next three years. By 1993, residents will pay a \$900 fee; non-residents, \$2,400.

The trouble began last year with a series of letters from the American Bar Association, which threatened to revoke the law school's ABA accreditation if funding and academic conditions were not improved.

The most recent letter, dated Jan. 30 of this year, demanded progress in improving faculty salaries, the faculty/student ratio and law library resources.

At its July 20 meeting, The Oregon State Board of Higher Education approved a plan to increase the school's funding. The board voted to ask the Legislature for a \$750,000 increase in the law school's annual budget, and also to increase the law student resource fee to raise an additional \$250,000 to \$300,000 a year.

If approved, the law school administration will be able to create five more regular faculty



Maurice Holland



David Dix

positions, bringing the total to 27. The law library will hire two more librarians and add more books.

The next step will be for Thomas Bartlett, chancellor of the Oregon State System of Higher Education, to submit the increase as part of the governor's budget proposal to the Legislature. Of course, this will have to wait until the next governor takes office in January.

"There's not much we can do until the next governor's elected," said law school Dean Maurice Holland. "The main concern then will be to make sure the funding proposal becomes part of the governor's budget submitted to the 1991 legislature."

Holland said the chancellor will work with the new governor to bring him or her "up to speed" not just on the law school issue but on higher education funding in general.

"The effort will be to persuade the Legislature to actually appropriate the funding to finance the law school request because that is the funding that

has been pointed to as absent by the ABA accreditation committee," Holland said.

Holland said the fee increase should raise between \$250,000 and \$300,000 a year, depending on the mix of in-state and out-of-state students.

Added to the money he hopes the Legislature will approve next year, Holland said the additional revenue will "certainly be enough" to appease the ABA, whose representatives will meet with the law school administration Dec. 15.

No one from the ABA could be reached for comment.

Student response to the fee increase may come as soon as law school registration begins this week.

Barbara Buckley, vice president of the Student Bar Association, said the group had not yet formed an opinion on the fee increase, but they plan to discuss it at their next meeting within the next two weeks.

State Rep. David Dix, D-Eugene, who represents the Uni-

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