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**Message from Dean Bob Jerry re 2010 US News Law School Rankings**

As most of you know, the *US News 2010 Graduate School Edition* has now hit the news stands, and the Levin College of Law at the University of Florida moves from last year's 5-way tie at #46 to #51 this year.

Even under the odd formula that *US News* uses to generate its ranking, it's disappointing that the calculations somehow produced a decline this year. Of the ten categories in the *US News* formula, we had improvements in four (the acceptance rate for the 2008 entering class improved by over 3%; the student-faculty ratio, which is hard to move, improved by 0.3; the 2007 class had bar pass data that beat the overall by twice the margin of the 2006 class; and our financial data, which is a conflation of several categories, improved slightly). We held even in two categories (median LSAT; lawyer/judge assessment of reputation), and we had extremely slight declines in four categories (peer assessment of reputation from 3.2 to 3.1; the median GPA of the 2008 entering class declined 4/100ths of a point; and a 1.6% decline in at-graduation employment and 0.9% decline in nine-months-after-graduation employment for the 2007 graduating class). I must add that *US News* does not measure many of the things which make us good, such as our new facilities, our robust array of outside speakers and visitors, our fundraising successes, and the achievements of our students in a variety of extramural, co-curricular, and student organization settings. I must also add that it is well known that many schools game the system and that over half of the information upon which *US News* relies cannot be verified. For more discussion of these problems and others, see Prof. Brian Leiter, "An Open Letter to Bob Morse of U.S. News," <http://leiterlawschool.typepad.com/leiter/2008/11/an-open-lette-1.html>, Nov. 14, 2008 (visited April 22, 2009); Amir Efrati, "Law School Rankings Reviewed to Deter 'Gaming'," Wall Street Journal, Aug. 26, 2008, [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121971712700771731.html?mod=hpp\\_us\\_pageone](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121971712700771731.html?mod=hpp_us_pageone) (visited April 22, 2009); Andrew P. Morriss & William D. Henderson, "Measuring Outcomes: Post-Graduation Measures of Success in the U.S. News and World Report Law School Rankings," 83 Indiana Law Journal, No. 3 (2008),

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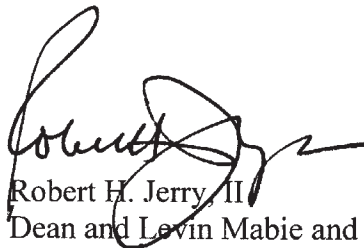
[http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=954604](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=954604) (visited April 22, 2009). Although *US News* has assured us that this did not affect the rankings, it is worth noting that *US News* published incorrect information (due to an error in my office) for our entering class GPA at the 75<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> percentiles; both are actually almost one-tenth of a point higher. This underscores the problems with verification and accuracy that are pervasive in the *US News* ratings process.

On the positive side, I am pleased that our reputation among academics and among lawyers and judges places us among the 40 best law schools in the nation. (Some argue that this is the most important and the only reliable factor in the *US News* rankings formula.) Our tax program continues to be rated second in the nation and first among public law schools.

Our reduction in the size of the law school, which begins in the fall of 2009 with the enrollment of a 300-student entering class, will produce improvements in most of the measures upon which *US News* relies. This transformational change in the Levin College of Law will improve our faculty-student ratio, our clinic-student ratio and skills courses-student ratios, the ability of our infrastructure to serve our students, the quality of our student body, and more. This will make us a more attractive destination law school not only for Floridians but also for prospective law students from around the nation. These changes will occur not because of *US News* but because these changes will make us a better law school.

Do not assume from this message that I am unconcerned about this *US News* ranking. This is not the case. I have always said that despite the flaws in the *US News* ranking system, we ignore it at our peril. But I believe we are doing the right things to improve the quality of this College and that ultimately these efforts will be properly and appropriately recognized.

Please don't hesitate to e-mail me if you have questions about anything in this message.



Robert H. Jerry, II  
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