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## Newsroom: Logan: A Decade of Legal Changes

Roger Williams University School of Law

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# Newsroom

## Logan: A Decade of Legal Changes

Dean Logan is guest columnist in today's GoLocalProv, authoring a "Mindsetter" opinion piece on the changing face of the legal profession in Rhode Island.

From GOLOCALPROV: "[RWU Law Dean David A. Logan: Reviewing RI's Legal Landscape](#)"

*RWU Law Dean David Logan reflects on the great strides RI has made in law, and the progress still to be made.*



**Thursday, September 12, 2013:** Much has changed in the legal profession since I became dean of Roger Williams Law in 2003, and the completion of 10 years as head of Rhode Island's only law school prompts some recollections and predictions.

First, legal education will continue to respond to the needs of the marketplace, as legal employers continue pressuring law schools to turn out graduates better equipped to add value on Day One. No longer are clients willing to pay for junior lawyers to learn at the side of seasoned lawyers, and efforts by the organized bar to formalize mentorships for beginners – or to insist on “bridge-to-practice programs” – have largely failed. Fortunately, virtually all law schools are doing a better job of skills training than they did a generation ago; here at Roger Williams, we are now so committed to this aspect of a well-rounded education that we are guaranteeing every student a substantial practical/clinical experience before graduation.

Second, the legal profession, and thus the bench and bar, will better reflect the diversity of our state. The fastest-growing (perhaps the only growing) ethnic group in Rhode Island is currently Hispanics, but – with some notable exceptions – the leadership of the legal profession looks largely like it did a generation ago.

At Roger Williams, fully half of this year's entering class is female, and 25 percent come from groups traditionally underrepresented in the legal profession. Both are signs of great promise as these young lawyers begin to make their mark in the coming years.

Third, while we all hope that the Rhode Island economy will improve and that the benefits of this growth will be broadly spread, it is naive to ignore the fact that many of our fellow Rhode Islanders will remain unable to afford legal assistance, despite the valiant efforts of Rhode Island Legal Services and the Rhode Island Bar Association's Volunteer Legal Services Program. One innovation that has made a significant difference is our Pro Bono Collaborative, which links leading law firms, community-based organizations and RWU Law students to provide a broad array of service to help, for example, the homeless, at-risk youth, immigrant workers, low-income families with severely disabled children, and individuals in need of expungement counseling.

Fostering voices

Finally, the rule of law will continue to improve in Rhode Island. Two decades ago, the late Chief Justice Joseph Weisberger, together with some (but not all) of the leaders of the profession, argued that a law school in Rhode Island would raise the level of debate and discourse on important public issues, while also enhancing public respect for the legal profession and the rule of law. I believe this has happened, as members of the RWU Law faculty have tackled important issues, such as separation of powers and judicial selection, and offered fearless opinions on issues that were, and often are, too controversial for practicing lawyers to address publicly. This ability to provide "unbossed and unbought" opinion on the issues of the day must continue in order for this great state to reach its full potential as America's "lively experiment."

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*David A. Logan has been dean of Roger Williams University School of Law since 2003. Next year, he will return to full-time teaching at the school. He was formerly a law professor at Wake Forest University School of Law, and is a frequent media commentator on legal issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. His academic specialty is tort law, and he has been widely quoted in recent years on the complex litigation arising out of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. He was born in New York City, grew up in the Washington, D.C. area, and currently resides in Tiverton, RI.*

For full article, click [here](http://m.golocalprov.com/news/rwu-law-dean-david-a.-logan-reviewing-ris-legal-landscape). [http://m.golocalprov.com/news/rwu-law-dean-david-a.-logan-reviewing-ris-legal-landscape]