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"Unanimous Approval for Rhode Island's First Law School"

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Roger Williams University, "Unanimous Approval for Rhode Island's First Law School" (1992). *Founding of the Law School (1991-1993)*. 12.

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ROGER WILLIAMS COLLEGE

JANUARY 1992

Unanimous Approval for Rhode Island's First Law School

The Roger Williams College Board of Trustees at its December 3 meeting unanimously approved the establishment of Rhode Island's first law school. The Board accepted the Law School Feasibility Study and approved recommendations of consultant Anthony J. Santoro, dean and professor of law at the Widener University School of Law.

The law school will be located on the Bristol Campus, with a law clinic in Providence, and will enroll students as early as Fall 1993.

Rhode Island is one of only three states without a law school. When the Roger Williams College School of Law is accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA), the College will join a select group of only 160 colleges and universities in the United States with ABA-approved schools, of more than 3,000 institutions of higher learning nationwide.

Appointed in June 1991 by Roger Williams College President Natale A. Sicuro to conduct an in-depth study concerning the establishment of a law school at the College, Dean Santoro currently heads the Widener University School of Law, with campuses in Wilmington, Del., and Harrisburg, Pa.

Dean Santoro was a member of the founding faculty at Western New England School of Law (Springfield, Mass.); the founding dean of the Bridgeport

(Conn.) University School of Law and the Widener University School of Law (Harrisburg Campus); and the American Bar Association Consultant for St. Thomas University School of Law, Miami, Fla.

In his capacity as a consultant to Roger Williams College, Dean Santoro worked closely with the Law School Advisory Board, chaired by Rhode Island Supreme Court Justice Joseph R. Weisberger. The Law School Advisory Board passed a resolution in November concluding nearly two years of comprehensive feasibility studies.

The Weisberger resolution strongly recommended the creation of a law school to "enhance the legal culture in Rhode Island and provide opportunities for research and continuing legal education which are not now available in the state."

The Board of Directors of the Bristol County Chamber of Commerce and Roger Williams College Community Advisory Board also passed resolutions in November endorsing the establishment of a School of Law at the College and recommending that it be located in Bristol.

Expected start-up costs of the new law school, including construction of a facility, library acquisition and furnishings, is projected at \$10.9 million.

While no school of law may be accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA) until it has first earned and maintained provisional accreditation for a period of at least three years, the College is working closely with the ABA to ensure that provisional and full accreditation are received at the

earliest possible date. That date could be as early as August 1995, so that the first graduates of the school could earn their degrees from an ABA-accredited institution, according to Dean Santoro.

A nationwide search for a dean of the School will be the first step in creation of the School of Law, according to President Natale A. Sicuro.

Once the dean has been appointed, the next step will be to construct a Law School building with a separate law library; develop curriculum; hire faculty and administrators; and recruit prospective students.



(From left) Victoria Lederberg, secretary to the Board of Trustees and chair, Board of Trustees Law School Committee; Natale A. Sicuro, president of Roger Williams College; The Honorable Joseph R. Weisberger, justice, Rhode Island Supreme Court and chair of the Law School Advisory Board; and Ralph R. Papitto, chairman of the Board of Trustees of Roger Williams College.



"There is almost a universal belief that Rhode Island is badly-served by the lack of a law school. In addition to educating aspiring lawyers, the Roger Williams College School of Law will enhance the delivery of legal services in the state by becoming the focal point for law reform, legal research and continuing legal education of the bar."

Justice Joseph R. Weisberger
Chairman, Law School Advisory Board
Supreme Court of Rhode Island

"The announcement that Roger Williams College was considering opening a law school has drawn an unprecedented number of inquiries and interest from throughout New England and beyond.

"Capitalizing on this momentum that has been generated, the Board of Trustees is enthusiastic about moving full-speed ahead to take the steps necessary to admit the first students in Fall 1993."

Ralph R. Papitto
Chairman, Roger Williams College Board of Trustees



Why Bristol?

Although a Providence site was carefully considered, the 80-acre Bristol Campus was selected for the following reasons:

- Accessibility to other campus resources including the new \$8 million Library and Computing Center;
- Availability of affordable, safe housing for full-time students;
- Proximity for part-time students in the Newport, East Bay and southeastern Massachusetts markets; one half-hour commute to Providence;
- Availability of student services including cafeteria, snack bar, and bookstore;
- Availability of secure on-campus parking;
- Ability to integrate programs with other campus disciplines; availability of faculty from other Schools and programs.

Law School Chronology

December 1989

Law School Study Committee, chaired by Rhode Island Supreme Court Justice Joseph R. Weisberger, formed to explore feasibility of establishing Rhode Island's first School of Law at Roger Williams College;

January 1990–April 1991

Subcommittees explore sites; and library acquisitions; conduct market surveys; estimate costs;

May 1991

Preliminary Feasibility Study completed; Law School Advisory Board chaired by Justice Weisberger formed to oversee in-depth study;

June 1991

Dean Anthony J. Santoro of the Widener University (Delaware) School of Law retained as consultant to Roger Williams College;

October 1991

First Draft of Final Report from Dean Santoro submitted to President Natale A. Sicuro; report recommends establishment of School of Law at Roger Williams College;

How Much Will It Cost?

CAPITAL COSTS

(Summarized from Final Report of Dean Anthony J. Santoro)

Building Construction	\$7,500,000*
Furnishings	1,000,000**
Library Acquisition	1,500,000**
Contingency	900,000
TOTAL	\$10,900,000

* Does not include purchase of land. Final feasibility study projects that School of Law will be built on land owned by College. Based upon construction costs of \$100 per square foot, plus or minus 10 percent.

** Based upon costs incurred by other recently-established schools of law.

"... the College is working closely with the ABA to ensure that provisional and full accreditation are received at the earliest possible date. That date could be as early as August 1995, so that the first graduates of the school could earn their degrees from an ABA-accredited institution."

Dr. Malcolm H. Forbes, Chair
Legal Studies Committee
Vice-President for Academic Affairs,
Roger Williams College



October–November 22, 1991

First Draft of Dean Santoro's Final Report reviewed by key College constituencies for their input;

November 1991

College Community Advisory Board, Law School Advisory Board and Bristol County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors pass resolutions endorsing establishment of a School of Law at Roger Williams College;

November 26, 1991

Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees reviews and unanimously approves the Final Report from Dean Anthony J. Santoro;

December 3, 1991

Full Board of Trustees unanimously approves the Feasibility Study to Establish a Law School;

December 4, 1991

Roger Williams College holds media conference to announce it will establish first law school in the State of Rhode Island.

Q&A

Q. *What is the projected enrollment of the School of Law?*

A. The School would eventually enroll 350-400 full-time day and 175-230 part-time evening students, with most from Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts. Based upon

law schools in the region. Part-time tuition would be about \$9,000 per year.

Q. *How will start-up costs be financed?*

A. Financing for the project is expected to come through refinancing of the College's Debt, which will include approximately \$11,000,000 for the law school itself. Debt service was calculated at slightly more than \$1,000,000 per year.

Q. *When may I apply?*

A. Admissions information will be available by June 1992. We'll be happy to take your permanent address now and mail you materials when available.

Q. *What can I do before then?*

A. If you are currently enrolled at another undergraduate college or university, you should contact the pre-law adviser at that institution immediately. All prospective candidates for admission should plan to take the LSAT exam in 1992.

The College Department of Public Relations (401-254-3245 or 254-3178) will be happy to take your name and address and mail you 1992 exam dates and sites. You may also contact the Candidate Inquiry Service in Newton, Pa., at (215-968-1001) for dates and locations.

Q. *What will admissions requirements/curriculum be?*

A. No information will be available before June 1992. The College will be happy to take your name and address and mail you materials on or before that date.

Q. *What is the projected tuition?*

A. Tuition would be in the \$13,500 range for full-time students, competitive with that of other

"There is no interest on the part of anyone on the Law School Advisory Board or the Board of Trustees in establishing a marginal school of law. We would not have voted for establishment of a school of law had we not been convinced that ABA accreditation was feasible at an early date."

Trustee Victoria Lederberg, Esq.
Chairman, Board of Trustees
Law School Committee
Vice-Chairman,
Law School Committee



"Most colleges and universities considering schools of law fail to plan adequately. That has certainly not been the case at Roger Williams College. I have been extraordinarily impressed by the depth of the planning process."

Anthony J. Santoro
Dean and Professor of Law
Widener University School of Law



"We are convinced that the leadership Roger Williams College has displayed in taking this action will create unparalleled national visibility for the College."

Dr. Natale A. Sicuro
President
Roger Williams College



tentative surveys conducted by the Law School Advisory Board, it is anticipated that 100-200 would be drawn from outside the region.

Law School Advisory Board

**The Honorable Joseph R. Weisberger,
Chair**

Justice, Supreme Court of the State of
Rhode Island

**The Honorable Florence K. Murray,
Vice Chair**

Justice, Supreme Court of the State of
Rhode Island

Richard Alegria

Rhode Island State Senator and
President, Alegria Construction, Inc.

The Honorable Francis J. Boyle

Chief Judge, United States District
Court

Ferdinand Bruno

Law Office of Ferdinand Bruno;
Chairman, Roger Williams College
School of Social Sciences Advisory
Board

Dr. Patrick T. Conley

Chair, Roger Williams College Library
Advisory Board

Marie D'Amico

President, ParaSearch, Inc.

The Honorable Albert E. DeRobbio

Chief Judge, District Court of the State
of Rhode Island

Alan S. Flink

President, Rhode Island Bar
Association; Partner, Edwards &
Angell

The Honorable Anthony A. Giannini

Presiding Justice (Retired), Superior
Court of the State of Rhode Island

The Honorable Thomas F. Kelleher

Justice, Supreme Court of the State of
Rhode Island

Lee Ellen O'Shea '91

Alumna, Roger Williams College
School of Social Sciences

Gary R. St. Peter

Managing Partner, Adler Pollock &
Sheehan

The Honorable Donald F. Shea

Justice, Supreme Court of the State of
Rhode Island

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