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Letter from the President

Roy J. Nirschel
Roger Williams University

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Dear Readers,

As President of Roger Williams and Ralph R. Papitto School of Law it is my pleasure to pen a few words as introduction to this special issue of the Law Review.

Ten years is not yet adolescence in the life of an individual or an institution, yet it is the entire life of the law school. While many have spoken over the decades about the need for a law school in Rhode Island, it was the determination and vision of Ralph R. Papitto, the outstanding early work by Anthony Santoro, and the engagement of the legal community within Rhode Island (and beyond) that made this vision a reality.

I am not a lawyer by training; my degrees are in U.S. History, Public Administration and Sociology. Serving for well over two decades in senior administrative positions at major universities, including the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Miami, I know the impact having a law school has on campus.

Law school students and faculty contribute to intellectual curiosity, academic rigor, community service, diversity and civil discourse. All of these are values I and the university cherish and which constitute some of our guiding principles and core values. Having a law school at Roger Williams on the cusp of excellence was a factor in attracting me here three years ago.

The primary role of the law school is to educate a new generation of lawyers. But there are other important stakeholders that merit consideration. At Commencement 2004, Trustee John Tarantino noted that an independent and strong judiciary is a key to achieving the implementation of justice.

In addition, those who are dependent on pro bono legal services, the powerless and underrepresented in our society, are stakeholders. This important outreach effort is a hallmark of the school of law. And the greater legal community, the state, regional and national bar associations, professional societies and the scholarly community are all important relationships for the law school.

Having seen numerous past issues of law reviews here and elsewhere, I know that this issue is unusual in that it consists largely of articles written by faculty members, rather than by professors and practitioners from outside of the law school. It is certainly a fitting tribute and honor to bestow upon the faculty.

Without outstanding students and faculty to teach them, the rest of us can go home.

Universities are special places in American society. We are communities that celebrate academic freedom and discourse. At the same time we are institutions that attempt to convey other important values as well. Since arriving in 2001 I have committed myself to a number of initiatives deriving from our core values. We emphasized the importance of liberal arts, professional training, service, and being more global and diverse as a campus. This past year I dedicated much of my time and effort to the notion of "Civil Discourse: Discussing the Great Issues of Our Time with Respect and Reason." This effort is another core value that the university – including the school of law – does and should celebrate.

It is the right and responsibility of faculty members and students to question court decisions, review books, examine emerging contemporary issues and contemplate the state of the law. It may be a given, but it also strikes me that discourse in scholarly and peer reviewed publications needs to be scholarly, substantive and befitting the highest standards of both journalistic and academic integrity. This might be considered the academic responsibility corollary to academic freedom.

The *Law Review* is an important tool for civil discourse and for examining the great issues of our time with respect and reason. Its academic standards and pursuit of excellence serve as hallmarks for the emerging intellectual culture we are creating at Roger Williams University.

I congratulate the Editorial Board, Senior Staff and Staff of the *Roger Williams University Law Review* on their service to the school of law.

Sincerely,

Roy J. Nirschel, Ph.D.
President
Roger Williams University and
Ralph R. Papitto School of Law