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Law School News: Roger Williams University School of Law Withdraws From US News Rankings 1-17-2023

Roger Williams University School of Law

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January 17, 2023

Law School News

Roger Williams University School of Law Withdraws from US News Rankings

Dean Bowman shares why RWU Law will not report its data to US News this year.

January 17, 2023



Dear Roger Williams University School of Law Family,

After careful consideration and consultation with key constituents, Roger Williams University School of Law has made the decision not to participate in the US News and World Report ranking process this year. Other law school deans have spoken eloquently about flaws in the formula currently used by US News for its law school rankings, and I share their concerns. While academic rankings can provide consumers with important information, US News' current formula and announced changes continue to devalue key parts of what we believe make for great law schools.

RWU Law has always been driven by a social justice mission, and we care deeply about the people and communities we serve. We have been an access school for first-generation students, and we are proud to improve the lives of our students and the communities we serve, including the legal profession. We celebrate our public interest and pro bono culture. In contrast, the current US News ranking formula incentivizes law schools to make key decisions—on budgetary matters, student admissions, academic programs, public service, and more—that undermine these core values and are not always in the best interests of students.

Also, RWU Law is a national leader in incorporating matters of race, diversity, equity, and inclusion into the law school classroom. We pride ourselves not just on what we do with our own *Race and the Foundations of American Law* course, but also on helping other institutions think more broadly and constructively about how they too can incorporate these subjects into their classrooms. Our *Doctrine & Diversity Speaker Series*—in partnership with CUNY Law, Jurist, George Washington Law, and UC Berkeley Law—brings hundreds of US law professors together on a regular basis to discuss these matters. We just co-hosted a half-day seminar on diversity, equity, and inclusion at the Association of American Law Schools Annual Meeting in San Diego. We are a leading institution, and we do not need a ranking to demonstrate or validate that fact.

We are proud to be Rhode Island's law school, and to serve an important mission that is vastly undervalued by the current metrics of the US News ranking formula. We are a strong regional law school with a national voice—but our unique value is lost when weighed artificially against law schools with different missions. As a school that works hard to open doors, level playing fields, and build a bar that is representative of the population it serves, we know our value and do not need a ranking to affirm it.

We recognize that US News will continue to rank schools using publicly available data regardless of whether RWU Law participates. Still, we hope that US News will hear the national critique and reevaluate its ranking practices in meaningful ways that center on the student experience, diversity, and social impact.

Sincerely,

Gregory W. Bowman
Dean & Professor of Law