May 12, 2020

Dear Graduates,

Congratulations again on the tremendous accomplishment of earning your degree.

I’m writing now because, for most of you, there is a new challenge on your horizon: the bar exam. I don’t need to tell you that there is considerable uncertainty about the July exam, but I wanted to share with you what the law school has been doing thus far and address several questions that have arisen.

• First, on the difficult issue of whether and when the Virginia bar exam will be held, I have been in regular contact with the Virginia Board of Bar Examiners about its plans. Together with the other deans of law schools in Virginia, we have pressed the VBBE to provide students with as many options for taking the bar as possible—both in terms of date and location. Unfortunately, I have no additional information to report beyond what has already been reported, which is that, as of now, the VBBE “remains committed to administering the Virginia Bar Exam in July 2020.” In the coming weeks, the VBBE will no doubt continue to assess the advisability of holding a July exam. For those taking the bar in a state other than Virginia, we have been paying close attention to other states as well. Although we have less involvement in their decision-making process, I would encourage you to reach out Professor Reeves if you have any specific concerns that we might be able to address.

• Second, given that the July bar has been postponed in some states, and may be postponed in still more states, some of you may be exploring whether to take the bar in a state that is likely to hold the July bar. I would urge you to be cautious. First, it is quite possible that states who have announced an intention to hold the July bar will change their positions and postpone the exam—even at a late date. Second, various factors may significantly limit the “portability” of UBE results. For example, some UBE states are limiting seating for the 2020 bar and others are requiring applicants to demonstrate intent to be licensed and/or practice law in the jurisdiction. Thus, unless you are open to practicing for several years in the state where you take the bar, you should do a lot of research before registering for that state’s bar exam. As with any matter related to the bar, we are here to help you with any such questions.

• Third, unless the state in which you plan to take the bar has unequivocally cancelled the July exam, you should study for the July bar as though it will be on schedule. I know this will be difficult because the chance of the exam being postponed is not insignificant. Yet there is there still a strong chance that states will offer a July bar in some form or another. If you delay studying until you are sure that the July bar will be held, you will likely find that you are too far behind to prepare adequately for the bar. In contrast, if you study for the bar as though it will be held in July, that extra studying will put you in a far better position for passing the bar when it is finally administered.

• Fourth, regardless of when or where you take the bar, we will be here to support you. This support includes:

203 Richmond Way
University of Richmond, VA 23173
(804) 289-8740 Fax: (804) 289-8992
law.richmond.edu
Bar Advisors. As in past years, faculty members are available to serve as “bar advisors” while you study for the bar. The job of bar advisors is not to teach or nag you; it is simply to help you sort through any challenges and questions that come up during the bar prep process. You can choose your own bar advisor and will receive a survey in the coming days asking you to register your preferences from among the available faculty members.

Individual Tutoring. As you get further into the bar prep process, Professor Emmy Reeves and Professor Reid Flinn will be available for individual tutoring beginning in early June (or later if the exam is postponed). (For those of you who do not know Professor Flinn, he is an adjunct professor who has expertise in preparing for the bar exam.) We will contact you as June approaches to tell you how to set appointments with these professors.

Individual Counseling. Studying for the bar, obviously, can be stressful and to help you manage that stress, Hilary Delman from CAPS will be available to meet with students. If you’d like to make an appointment with her, just email her directly. In addition to providing services to students one-on-one, Ms. Delman will hold a workshop on managing stress while studying for the bar exam in late May or early June (details forthcoming).

In closing, let me reiterate that we are here to help in any way possible. This has been an extraordinarily difficult time, but working together, we have nonetheless accomplished so much. There remains one final accomplishment before you, and we will continue to support you along the way.

Wendy C. Perdue  
Dean and Professor of Law  
University of Richmond School of Law  
203 Richmond Way  
University of Richmond, VA 23173  
Email: wperdue@richmond.edu; Office: (804) 289-1779  
(Title/Pronouns: Dean/she/her/hers)