October 15, 2014

President Judy Bonner
University of Alabama
P. O. Box 870100
203 Rose Administration
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0100

Dean Mark E. Brandon
University of Alabama
School of Law
P. O. Box 870382
101 Paul W. Bryant Drive East
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487

Dear President Bonner and Dean Brandon:

Attached please find the decision of the Accreditation Committee at its meeting on September 18-20, 2014, with respect to the University of Alabama School of Law.

The Committee's Findings and Conclusions do not reflect a comprehensive checklist evaluation of each Standard and each facet of the institution. Indeed, this letter focuses, by the very nature of the process, essentially on concerns or possible aspects of non-compliance identified in the site evaluation report of the School or arising out of submissions or questionnaire answers by the School. Because the general impressions of different site teams are inherently noncomparable, the Accreditation Committee does not attempt to summarize all the information that could be gleaned from a site evaluation report, and recipients of this letter are encouraged, therefore, to consult the full site evaluation report for collegial advice and general impressions of the team. The site evaluation team does not make the official findings or conclusions for the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association. These are made by the Accreditation Committee and the Council of the Section.

In accordance with the U.S. Department of Education regulations applicable to recognized accrediting agencies, the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar is required to conduct interim monitoring of each ABA-approved law school to determine whether each school remains in compliance with the ABA Standards for Approval of Law Schools. This monitoring and review is in addition to the regular site evaluation process and is being conducted on an annual basis. The School may receive in any year a request for information as a result of the interim monitoring.
A law school that is approved by the American Bar Association continues in that status pending final action by the Accreditation Committee and Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar.

Please feel free to call me, Deputy Managing Director William E. Adams, Jr., or Executive Assistant Cathy A. Schrage if you have any questions. Please send the response requested in the Committee’s Decision Letter electronically, in .pdf format, no later than March 1, 2015, to cathy.schrage@americanbar.org. A hard copy is not required.

Sincerely yours,

Barry A. Currier
Managing Director of Accreditation and Legal Education

BAC/cs
Attachment

cc: Professor Ngai Pindell
    Professor Mary Beth Beazley
    Mr. Bedford T. Bentley, Jr.
    Professor Michael Chiorazzi
    Professor Stuart L. Deutsch
    Professor Peggie Smith
    Dr. Christine K. Wilkinson
audio, and text chat features; and allows students to see and speak with the instructor, chat with classmates, and view and share the white board. In addition, professors are available outside of class as they are in a traditional class. The course management system permits the Law School to verify the identity of students enrolled in distance education courses.

(21) The Law School offers several options for students to study in foreign countries. Students may participate in a five-week summer program at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. The program permits students to earn four to seven credits during the exchange program. The Law School also has a formal summer program with The Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, Australia’s capital city. Alabama students study for five weeks in Canberra every summer, accompanied by faculty from Alabama. Both programs have received ABA approval.

(22) The Law School offers the following degree programs in addition to the J.D.: a special one-year program leading to the Masters of Law (LL.M.) for individuals who have completed their basic legal education in another country; an LL.M. in Taxation offered via distance learning; an LL.M. Concentration in Business Transactions offered via distance learning; a Graduate Tax Program for part-time students; and the Doctor of Juridical Science (J.S.D.) program. ABA acquiescence was granted for each of these non-J.D. degree programs.

(23) Students must maintain an overall grade point average of at least 2.33 to remain in good standing. Students who fail to maintain a 2.33 or higher at the end of any semester or summer term are normally permitted to remain in the Law School on a probationary status during the next semester or summer term for which they enroll. Students are then dismissed if they fail to achieve the mandatory minimum grade point average at the end of the probationary period. However, students may petition the Admissions and Readmissions Committee to be allowed to continue for one additional semester on probation. Students dismissed because of a failure to maintain a 2.33 at the end of the first year may petition to repeat the first year. If the petition is granted, the first set of first-year grades does not carry forward in the law school grade point average.

(24) A faculty advisor is assigned to each incoming law student. Faculty Advisors typically meet and/or communicate with their 1L advisees several times in the first few months of classes. Before spring semester registration, faculty advisors again initiate contact with their advisees for the purpose of offering advice about course selection during the fall of the second year. Students often consult with several professors regarding course selection and law school progress.

(25) Since the last self study, the Law School’s academic support efforts have significantly increased. In 2008, the Law School reinstalled its Summer Academic Excellence program to assure that all admitted students have a good chance to succeed. The Law School Registrar’s Office and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs monitor students’ academic progress at the end of each semester. Throughout the school year, the Law School offers workshop sessions to help insure student