Survey of Law School Learning Outcomes (Feb. 15, 2018)

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To what degree are law schools creating learning outcomes that give further definition to Standard 302(c)’s competency in “the exercise of proper professional and ethical responsibilities to clients and the legal system” while also defining “other professional skills needed for competent and ethical participation as a member of the legal profession”? As of Feb. 15, 2018, 138 out of the 202 ABA fully-accredited law schools had posted learning outcomes on the school’s website. Of these 138 law schools, 47 have adopted essentially the minimum Standard 302(c) learning outcome that students will be competent in “the exercise of proper professional and ethical responsibilities to clients and the legal system,” while 91 have adopted learning outcomes that go beyond the minimum of Standard 302(c). Of the 91 law schools:

1. 50 law schools have adopted a version of a learning outcome that includes the competency of demonstrating understanding and integration of pro-active self-evaluation and professional development toward excellence at the competencies needed to serve clients and the legal system (self-directed learning). This includes 13 schools that have adopted the competency of self-evaluation and reflection;

2. 48 have a learning outcome that includes competency in understanding the value of providing pro bono legal services to the disadvantaged;

3. 44 law schools have adopted a version of a learning outcome that includes the competency of professionalism, high or the highest ethical standards, a personal code of ethics, or the internalization of values grounded in morality or faith;

4. 42 law schools include the competency of teamwork/effective collaboration; and

5. 42 include a learning outcome that students develop self-awareness and cross-cultural competency to work with those of diverse backgrounds.

6. 24 include a learning outcome on integrity;

7. 19 include judgment;

8. 17 include active listening; and

9. 8 include leadership.

A number of schools have also adopted learning outcomes relating to additional skills like interviewing and counseling, fact investigation, negotiation and trial practice.

If these same proportions hold true when all 203 ABA-accredited law schools post learning outcomes by May 31, 2018, approximately seventy-three law schools will have adopted a learning outcome relating to self-directed learning. Seventy will have a learning outcome of understanding the value of pro bono legal services. Sixty-four schools will have adopted a learning outcome on professionalism/high ethical standards/personal code of ethics. Sixty-two will have adopted a teamwork learning outcome, and sixty-two will have adopted a cross-cultural competency learning outcome. Twenty-four will have adopted an integrity learning outcome.