

Annual Report of the Dean (2006/2007)

By Taddese Lencho, Acting Dean 2006/2007 Academic Year

Introduction

The Dean's Report had been a regular feature of the Journal of Ethiopian Law since its first publication in 1964. The Report featured in the 1st to 12th Issues of the Journal and then unaccountably disappeared in the subsequent issues. To be sure, the fortunes of the Journal were never the same again since 1973 (when the 9th volume appeared in just nine years) and the disappearance of the Dean's Report might have something to do with the Journal's precarious publications after that year. Although there was an attempt to resuscitate the Report in the Journal in the 11th and 12th issues, that effort did not seem to hold. The Report never appeared again. The whys and wherefores of the disappearance of the Report might take several pages to report, as is the case of the publication of the Journal after 1973, but that is not the purpose of this Report.

The Reports that appeared in the successive issues of the Journal served as important means of communicating the Faculty's achievements and setbacks to the wider public. In retrospect, these Reports were windows to what the Faculty did to take off the ground and get to where it is today. Anyone who wants to appreciate the importance of the Report should try searching for it in other places, and finding dead ends in the process will realize how useful the Report has been. Yes, it is still possible to access information about the Faculty from the Minutes of the Academic Commission or from word of mouth, but how much easier, more accessible and reliable would it have been if the tradition of the Report had continued in all the issues of the Journal of Ethiopian Law? After all, it is not as if nothing worthwhile happened in those periods in which no report appeared on the Journal. Something worth reporting always happens in the Faculty, and it might as well appear in the Journal, which is available to the wider public.

I must admit that I have always regarded those reports with respect, and the report I am now presenting is in many ways a plea to reinstate that tradition, for whatever it is worth. I have always wanted to see the Report featured in the Journal, and now that I am in a position to do that, I have deemed it appropriate to resume the tradition with few pages of a report on the major

activities of the Faculty over the last year or so during which I served as an Acting Dean of the Faculty.

I cannot presume to cover everything in a space of few pages. I have chosen to incorporate what I personally think are significant events both in terms of their effect upon the Faculty and their impact upon the community. You can take what you may, and you are certainly at liberty to consign the rest to insignificance.

1. Programs

a. The Undergraduate Program

The Faculty runs undergraduate LL.B programs for regular day-time and evening/extension students. The day-time LL.B program is the longest running program of the Faculty, having been there since its establishment in 1963. For a greater part of the Faculty's history, the day time LL.B program was a five year study. The only exceptions were the end of the 1970s and most recently the first part of 2000s, when the LL.B program shrank to four years as a result of Government policy to reduce the period of study for degree programs to three years from four and four years from five. This academic year the pendulum has swung back again to the five year LL.B program as a result of the introduction of a new curriculum. All the public law schools in the country have started implementing a five-year LL.B program and it is expected that the private law schools and newly emerging public law schools in Ethiopia will follow suit as of the coming academic year (for curriculum reform see below).

In the 2006/2007 daytime LL.B program, the Faculty admitted close to 120 students.¹ Of these, about 60% of them are female, which is a significant development in terms of narrowing the gender gap in the legal profession. The Faculty will not take credit for this development as placement is made by the Ministry of Education, but it could not have been less happy for that. The number of females admitted into the Faculty has seen a steady growth over the last decade (see, table below). This demographic change in our student population can only be good for legal education and the legal profession, which has for a long time been dominated by males. It is quite ironic that the

¹ Placement for the day-time LL.B program is made by the Ministry of Education. This number does not include students who join the Faculty through inter-Faculty and Inter-University transfer.

statue of justice has been represented by a blind-folded female while males dominated the actual workings of the justice system so far.

The Faculty of Law also runs an evening LL.B program. The evening LL.B program was with the Faculty of Law on and off. Back in the 1960s, the Faculty had an evening LL.B program, which was well-sought out, as can be gathered from some illustrious graduates of the evening program. In 1981, the LL.B program was discontinued, and in its place, a diploma program became the trademark of the evening program. In 2003 (more than two decades later), the University decided to phase out diploma programs and adopt degree programs in their place. As part of the general shift in the policy of the University, the Faculty of Law reintroduced an evening LL.B program in place of the diploma program. Since then, the Faculty has admitted an average of 100 to 150 students in the evening program.²

The evening LL.B program admits students from all walks of life and ages, provided they meet the minimum requirements of admission. The diversity of the evening student body, particularly in terms of age and experience, has been its prime attraction. Ever since its reintroduction, however, it must be said that the evening LL.B program has suffered from lack of uniform policy and attention. Some of the students are admitted on the basis of their law diplomas, some are admitted either because they are members of the University staff or because they hold diplomas or degrees in other disciplines. Some are admitted straight out of high schools. This lack of uniformity in the academic background of the students has created an enormous administrative burden for the Faculty.

Since some of the evening students are admitted on the evidence of their law diplomas, the Faculty had to design an exemption policy to relieve them off courses they took while studying for their diplomas. The Faculty took the high ground of exempting students on the basis of their individual performance in each course. Our Faculty exempts students on law courses only if they have scored an A or B. Students must in addition establish substantial similarity between the courses taken in their diploma studies and the courses of the LL.B syllabus. The result is inevitably some students getting more exemptions than others. There is nothing wrong with that, except that, in such state of affairs, it is impossible to find an optimal number of courses which students can take at any given time. Although the Faculty tries its best to offer as many courses as

² The diploma program has been phasing out since 2003 and this year the Faculty will graduate the last batch.

it is **optimally possible**, at the end of the day, some students will end up taking fewer courses than they should with the inevitable prolongation of their years of study. There is only limited number of courses and of classes to go around. The evening LL.B program also suffers from shortage of experienced academic staff. Not that the day program is immune from this, but the problem seems to be more pronounced in the evening program.³ This is for a number of reasons. In the first place, the evening program is totally dependent on the consent of the instructors. The full-time instructors of the Faculty are reluctant to take additional classes in the evening program, mainly because the pay for teaching evening classes is not attractive. For lack of interest on the part of the full-time staff, the Faculty now **depends overwhelmingly** on part-timers who come from other law Faculties or institutions. The students have expressed displeasure at various times, but unless the pay is somehow raised, there is no incentive for full-time instructors to take up additional classes in the evening program. If the pay remains at the current level, I am afraid fewer and fewer of them will be willing to take up additional classes in the evening program.

The other problem of the evening program is that it has never really been owned by the Faculty. To be sure, most of the work (the coordination, the assignment of classes and instructors) has been devolved to the Faculty. But the income (however small) derived from the running of the program has rarely trickled down to the Faculty. There is a general sense of discontent within the Faculty that the Faculty is made to bear the brunt of running the evening program without having to share from the dividends. The result is general indifference towards the evening program. It is a classic case of what economists would call 'externalities.'

In the strategic planning document, the Faculty has called for a decentralization of the continuing and distance education program (currently under the administration of the University Continuing and Distance Education) in order to improve the quality of education in its evening program. There is no body closer to the reality on the ground than the Faculty of Law to admit an optimal number of students for a high quality education. While that is true for all programs, it is even truer for the evening program, which should be governed by the laws of demand and supply.

b. The Postgraduate Program

³ Of the twenty seven full-time staff members, only a maximum of four or five instructors are willing to take up evening classes at any one time.

The Faculty of Law is a late-comer to postgraduate programs in the University. While many Faculties of the University launched graduate programs in the 1980s, the Faculty of Law stuck to its original format of offering LL.B until 2003, when, under pressure from the University, the Faculty opened a graduate program in two loosely distinguished streams of 'public law' and 'private law.' An LL.M curriculum was quickly designed and the Faculty had postgraduate program before anyone noticed. The LL.M curriculum produced at the time showed all the signs of the haste and pressure the Faculty was under at the time of its launching. Most of the courses offered in the graduate program were already offered in the undergraduate program, creating problems of repetition for the instructors and *déjà vu* for the students. And each course in the curriculum carried six credits and took a year to complete, which was quite a departure from the customary semester calendar of the Faculty and the University. This design was a constant source of worry for the instructors, who had to find ways of getting through the whole year for a course which normally should not have taken more than a semester. The postgraduate students had a leisure ride for a better part of the year as they had little work to do (and some of the part-timer students clearly wanted things to remain that way).

For these and many other reasons, it was clear that the LL.M curriculum needed an overhaul, which is exactly what the Faculty did two years after the introduction of the graduate program. In its place, the Faculty designed a new curriculum, creating four streams instead of two: Business Law, Human Rights Law, Constitutional and Public Law, and Public International Law.

The old LL.M curriculum has now fully phased out and the Faculty graduates its first batch from the new curriculum this academic year. The new curriculum has stayed clear from repetition of the courses in the undergraduate program. With the exception of some common courses, most of the courses in the new curriculum are carefully selected not only to keep distance from the courses in the undergraduate program but also to confer a fair amount of specialized knowledge upon graduate students. In place of a program which set students on wild-goose search, the new curriculum offers students an opportunity to study research methods before they write their LL.M thesis. Everyone involved in the graduate program could not help but notice that many of the students stumbled on the last hurdle: writing an LL.M thesis that could pass muster. While there are many reasons why graduate students failed in their research, it was recognized that lack of research experience might have something to do with it. That is why a course on research methods is included in the new curriculum. It is expected that the mandatory course on research methods will improve the quality of research produced by graduate students.

The biggest concern of the Faculty in running the LL.M program has been finding appropriate specialized staff to conduct classes and supervise graduate student researches. In some occasions, the Faculty has come close to removing some courses from the curriculum solely for reasons of not finding appropriate staff. In this regard, the Faculty is not fully out of the woods yet, but over the years, it has developed strategies for accessing appropriate staff for some of the courses. One strategy it has used to good effect is drawing from the specialized staff of the regional and international organizations headquartered in Addis Ababa, such as UNHCR Regional Office, the ICRC Regional Office and UN Regional High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is one of the pleasant surprises of the new graduate program that these organizations were excited to support the Faculty in every way they could. It would be remiss on my part to not mention some of the staff of these organizations who have made significant contributions to the graduate program so far. Mr. Patrice Vahard, from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, has been extraordinarily supportive in teaching in the postgraduate program since the introduction of the new curriculum and has been there for the Faculty ever since. So are Mr. Gert Westerveen and Ms Louis Aubin from the UNHCR Regional Office, Ms Ishoy Rikke from the ICRC Regional Office and Mrs. Mor Parnass from Israel Embassy here in Addis, Mrs Nadia Bassiwetz from the EU delegation and the USAID WTO-accession team in the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The Faculty is grateful to them all.

The biggest support to the graduate program, at least in terms of staff, came from the academic staff of the Ethiopian Civil Service College, some of whom obtained their PhDs with the requisite specialization just in time for the LL.M program to stand on its feet. In spite of the low pay and bureaucratic red tape in the University, all of them have kept faith in the utility of the graduate program. The involvement of the Ethiopian Civil Service College staff members is particularly critical in the design and implementation of the new LL.M curriculum. It would be quite wrong if Ato Tsegaye Regassa and Ato Solomon Abay were left unmentioned, for they were very closely involved in the design of the curriculum and provided invaluable services for the program to take off the ground. The Faculty is grateful to all of them.

c. Summer In-service Program

The summer In-service program was launched in the summer of 2006 as part of special arrangement entered into between the Faculty and Oromia Regional Justice Bureau. The Regional Justice Bureau received financial assistance from the World Bank to provide training to prosecutors working in the Region and

contacted the Faculty for provision of advanced training to the prosecutors, all of whom have law diplomas. Close to 240 students are now undergoing training for an LL.B degree in a curriculum which reflects their future professional direction and the need of the Region in upgrading their knowledge and skills in the area of public prosecution and criminal justice. This program is a test case for the Faculty, as it bids to collaborate with various government and non-government institutions in building the capacity of the justice sector.

Faculty of Law 2006/2007 Enrollment Summary

Program	Female	Male	Total
Undergraduate (day)	280 (45.5%)	332 (54.5%)	612
Undergraduate (Evening)	109 (22 %)	378 (78%)	487
Undergraduate (Summer In-Service)	31 (13%)	206 (87%)	237
Postgraduate	10 (9%)	106 (91%)	116
Total	430 (30%)	1022 (70%)	1452

Faculty of Law 2006/2007 Undergraduate (Day) Admission

Female	Male	Total
94 (61%)	60 (39%)	154*

* This number includes all day-time admissions, i.e., placements by the MoED, internal and external transfers

2. Curricular Reform

Curricular reform of the undergraduate LL.B program began back in 2004 when the Ministry of Capacity Building assembled a Steering Committee and Technical Committee⁴ to coordinate and develop a legal education reform

⁴ The members of the Steering Committee included the Minister of Capacity Building (His Excellency Ato Teferra Walwa), the Commissioner of the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, the Minister of Justice, the Vice-President of the Federal Supreme Court, the

program at the national level. The National Legal Education Reform, as it is sometimes dubbed, was an ambitious project of the Government that sought to reform not just the law curriculum but also the law school management and administration, the delivery, and research, publications and consultancy services in the law schools throughout the country.⁵ After numerous meetings, discussions and tours of foreign countries, the Technical Committee, comprised of representatives of most of the Law Schools, finally developed a reform proposal in 2006, which was approved by the members of the National Steering Committee. The reform document was further enriched by discussions held with academic staff members drawn from several law schools of the country. The Faculty of Law took an active part in developing and enriching the reform document.

All public law schools in the country have started implementing the new curriculum developed in the reform program and, as of next year, all other law schools are expected to follow suit. The National Legal Education Reform document has developed standards and guidelines for all law schools in the country in the areas of curriculum, delivery, law school management and research/publications/consultancy services. To my knowledge, it is the first time that national standards and guidelines in legal education have been put in place.

In place of the four-year program (currently in place after the abolition of freshman programs in the Universities), the new curriculum envisions a five-year program for all law schools offering LL.B degrees in the country. The new curriculum is also notable for introducing several optional courses which students can take towards the end of their study. Perhaps the most radical

Minister of Education, Presidents of the Supreme Courts of the Oromia Regional State and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State, head of the Amhara Regional State Justice Bureau and a representative of the Ethiopian Bar Association. The members of the Technical Committee were constituted from our Faculty, Faculty of Laws of Haromaya University, Jimma University, Hawassa University, Mekele University, Bahir Dar University, Saint Mary's University College, Gondar University, Ethiopian Civil Service College and Rift Valley University College, and representatives from the Federal High Court, Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA), Addis Ababa City Administration and a curriculum expert from the College of Education (AAU).

⁵ The reform agenda of the Government embraced much more than legal education; indeed the reform of legal education was part of the broader project of the government to reform the justice system in the country. The four main planks of the Government Justice Reform program are: reform of the judiciary, reform of the law enforcement organs of the police, the prosecution and prison administration, the reform of the lawmaking bodies and the lawmaking process, and the reform of legal education.

proposition of the new curriculum is the introduction of a national exit exam, which is a mandatory exam for all law students in order to graduate with a degree in law. The aim of the exit exam is to ensure that all law schools in the country provide comparable knowledge and skills to their students, and that those entering the legal profession have the requisite knowledge and skills to practice law at all levels. As bar examinations have never been administered in Ethiopia, employers will be (if they have not already been) at a loss to judge the competence of those who graduate from several higher education institutions in the country. The results of the exit exam will be an important source of information for employers in this regard. The exam will also no doubt stir a spirit of competition among the law schools, seeing the exam as an opportunity to test how their students are performing vis-à-vis students of other law schools. (For curricular reform at the graduate level, see above).

3. Faculty Strategic Planning

The University had been working on university-wide strategic planning since January 2006, when a Strategic Planning Steering Committee was formed. The University Strategic Planning Office was established to develop strategic planning for the University and to coordinate strategic planning at the Faculty/Institute level. At the behest of the University, a strategic planning committee was formed in the Faculty of Law at the beginning of January 2007. The Faculty Strategic Planning Committee was composed of eleven members drawn from the academic management of the Faculty, academic and support staff representatives and three student representatives. The committee members met at least once a week and went on retreats in Akaki campus and Adama to complete all the phases of the strategic planning.

The final document, more than 100 pages, contains all the usual components of a strategic planning document, viz., internal situation analysis, SWOT analysis of the external environment, strategic issues, vision, missions and values of the Faculty, action plan, budget estimates and monitoring and evaluation schemes. The document has been sent to the University Strategic Planning Office for review and approval. Implementation will start as of September 2007. It is impossible to render justice to a hundred or so page document in a report of this size, but it will suffice to draw attention to some of its most significant proposals.

The strategic planning document, among other things, proposes:

- i) the construction of a Law School Building fit for the teaching of law in the 21st century;
- ii) the acquisition of financial and administrative autonomy by the Faculty;
- iii) the establishment of a Legal Research Center with its own autonomy and management;
- iv) the creation of a Law School Trust Fund with a view to supporting the development and expansion of the Law School;
- v) the establishment of Faculty IT services and acquisition of large numbers of computers, printers, photocopiers and interactive technological gadgets;
- vi) the development of Faculty research database accessible to all law schools; and
- vii) the establishment of Legal Clinic.

These and many other proposals of the strategic planning will require close monitoring and evaluation from all parties involved in the implementation of the strategic planning. The development of strategic planning for the Faculty is one, and a small one as that, and its successful implementation is quite another.

4. Alumni Relations

The Faculty's Alumni Association was re-established in 1999, after fading into oblivion soon after its establishment in 1968. Since its re-establishment, the Association has been working with Faculty members and students to achieve one of its stated objectives of assisting 'the development of legal education, and raising the legal awareness of the society.' The other objective of the Association to 'assist the Law Faculty in publishing law journals and other related research activities' is yet to be realized. The Association had the aim of commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Faculty (which would have been in 2003) but that did not happen owing to lack of preparations and financial problems. Having missed that opportunity, the Association settled on commemorating the 40th anniversary of the graduation of the first batch from the Faculty (i.e. in 2007). Again the original idea was for the former professors to join in the celebration in a formal reunion of the professors with their former students. That didn't work out and finally it was decided to organize a panel discussion to mark the occasion. A one-day panel discussion was held on January 13, 2007 and more than one hundred members of the Association (graduates of the Faculty) attended the discussion held in the FBE hall.

Members of the Faculty and alumni working in different institutions presented papers reflecting on the role and contributions of the Faculty of Law. The occasion was an emotional reunion for the few surviving members of the first graduates. Ato Selamu Bekele, a long-time Faculty member and one of the first graduates, presented a paper on the 'History of the Faculty' in which he related his personal experiences of the early years of the Faculty. Flavored with wit and anecdotes, his presentation took the audience to the early days of the Faculty and the professors who are known by most of us through their books and teaching materials.

The occasion showed how little the Alumni members did for the Faculty and how much they could do, if only they could come together and think about the welfare of the Faculty. In the future, the Association and the Faculty should work more closely in order to realize the aspirations of the Faculty and its graduates.

5. Moot Court

The Faculty of Law began sending teams to international moot court competitions in 1971, and since then, the Faculty teams have earned some notable results in the prestigious International Jessup Moot Court Competition. Although nowhere near the performance of the 1972 and 1974 teams (the Faculty was runner-up twice in the International Jessup Competitions, the first from Africa), successive teams from the Faculty have tried to emulate the performances of those teams. For a long time, the International Jessup was the only competition on the calendar of the Faculty's Moot Court Competition.

In recent years, the Faculty has diversified its participation in moot court competitions around the world, with notable results. In 2004, for example, the Faculty team comprising then students Abadir Mohammed, Desta G/Michael and Legesse Alemu participated in the 5th International Moot Court competition on International Humanitarian Law held in Arusha, Tanzania. The team brought a trophy for the Faculty as runner-up.

In 2006, the Faculty went from sending teams to hosting one: the 15th African Human Rights Moot Court Competition. Organized by the Center for Human Rights of the University of Pretoria in collaboration with another African host University, the African Human Rights Competition has become a premiere moot court competition in Africa, drawing teams from all across Africa and from three language zones: English, French and Portuguese. In the 15th African Moot Court Competition, a record 61 teams from universities all across Africa came to the Faculty and took part in competitions from August 28 to

September 2 of 2006. The final competition was held in the Africa Hall of the African Union Building to celebrate and coincide with the 20th anniversary of the coming into force of the African Charter for Peoples' and Human Rights. The symbolic significance of the final competition was not lost on anyone.

Hosting a competition of this size presents enormous challenges for any organization, let alone for our Faculty, which, prior to this, had little experience in organizing or hosting any competition, big or small. If it hadn't been for the last minute financial commitment by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Finnish Embassy, the hosting would have been called off and moved to another venue. As it turned out, the whole organization of the Moot was a resounding success. Some people who participated in other Moots called it the 'best Moot Court Competition ever.' The Faculty would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Capacity Building, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Finnish Embassy, the American Embassy and the Rwandan Embassy for their financial support of the competition. It would have been such a great shame if the hosting had been cancelled for lack of funds! That it didn't was in large part due to the support of the sponsors.

The anxiety of the Faculty on securing funding for the event was more than compensated by the approbation of the participants. And that is in large part due to the enthusiastic support of staff and student volunteers who for well over a week stood on duty to ensure the safety and comfort of the guests. The instinctive hospitality of Ethiopians was out there for everyone to see throughout the competition. The team from the Faculty did not disappoint either. Our team, of Blen Asemrie and Gedeon Timotheos, worked hard to make sure that our hosting efforts were crowned with a win. They made it to the best ten in all categories: 3rd for the written memorials, 6th for the oral competition and 4th overall. This is the best showing of the Faculty in as many years.

The hosting of the Moot Court Competition by the Faculty and the spirited performance of our Team has stirred renewed interest in moot court competitions. Many students are now more eager than ever to participate in moot competitions to show their mettle. But the students need lots of support and exposure. The regular curriculum has very little in the way of preparation for students who want to take part in moot court competitions. The Faculty needs to include a calendar of events which prepare students for competitions abroad. National Moot Court Competitions, like the one organized annually by

the Action Professionals Association for People (APAP), will in the future produce teams that will mount serious challenges in international competitions. The Faculty has been more than pleased to send teams to these national competitions, and so far the future seems promising for the Faculty. The Faculty team (of Bien Asemrie and Gedeon Timotheos again) won the first National Moot Court Competition (2005) and the Faculty team (of Michael Schul and Timkher T/Haimanot) was runner-up in 2006. We will need more of these kinds of competitions in order to produce teams which mount serious challenges in international and continental moot court competitions. Perhaps we should start our own.

6. Law School Building

For more than forty years, the activities of the Faculty of Law have been confined to the architecturally beautiful but old and inadequate law school building. Lack of space for classes and offices has to date remained our biggest challenge. As space was a university-wide problem (although, admittedly our Faculty was the most affected), the University set out to address the problem of space by constructing additional buildings for some Faculties. The University built a large building next to the Law School Building in order to overcome the space problems of the Faculty of Law and College of Education. But by the time the construction of the new building was complete, the new Faculties of Journalism, Rural and Local Development Studies (RLDS) and School of Social Work sprang up in the University to claim space from the new building at the expense of our Faculty. Although the Faculty of Law managed to get few offices for its staff and some classrooms, the Faculty's chronic problems in this regard have remained unsolved to this date.

The Faculty is forced to run its postgraduate program outside the university campus simply because of lack of space within the University. In the main campus, classes are centrally managed by the Registrar, and as a result, it has become nearly impossible to get free classes to conduct make-up classes or arrange additional classes for the students. A substantial number of academic staff members do not have their own offices to prepare for classes and conduct research. The old law school building has been falling down for quite sometime, and many of the occupants continue to operate from the old building in spite of the dangers involved.

At the time of writing, the old Law School Building is being renovated. The Law Library has already been moved to a makeshift building nearby to make

way for the renovation. Unfortunately, the building to which the Library has been moved is four times less than the size of the space in the old building, exacerbating the serious problem of space in the Library. There was already a complaint by users of the library that the library was too small to provide service to users. Now, with a size four times less and student population quadrupling, one can understand the gravity of space problem in the law library.

There is only one way out for the Faculty: its own building. The law school building should be constructed either near the old building or even outside of the main campus to accommodate the growing demands upon the Faculty. Only a building built for the law school can meet the needs of the law school. Both the strategic planning document and the National Legal Education Reform program have incorporated the need for a law school building, and if they are carried out, the problems of the Faculty regarding space will have been solved.

7. Legal Clinic

Legal clinic is one of the subjects that I report with a shudder. Over the years, attempts to institutionalize clinical programs in the Faculty have ended in failure. Back in the 1990s, there were attempts by the Northwestern University Law School to start clinical programs in the Faculty, but those attempts went nowhere. Most recently, a local NGO named Organization for Social Justice in Ethiopia (OSJE) expressed interest in collaborating with the Faculty in order to establish clinical programs in the Faculty. The Organization went further than anyone else in covering the initial costs of a clinical program but even that was not enough to launch a clinical program in the Faculty. The Organization and others are still committed to supporting a clinical program if and when it becomes operational. The good news is that the new LL.B curriculum requires the Faculty to provide a legal clinic to all students that graduate from the Faculty. The bad news is that we are still ill prepared for a legal clinic. After so many starts and failures, it is now not a question of if but when.

8. Partnerships

The Faculty of Law is one of seven partner Law Faculties in Africa of the Center for Human Rights of the University of Pretoria.⁶ Our Faculty

⁶ The others are 1) American University in Cairo, Egypt; 2) Catholic University of Central Africa, Cameroon; 3) Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique; 4) Faculty of Law,

collaborates with the Center on a number of programs, of which the hosting of the 15th African Human Rights Moot Court Competition was an illustrious example. Each year, the Faculty accepts exchange students from the LL.M program of the Center. The students spend six months with the Faculty where they write their LL.M thesis (under the supervision of Faculty member), attend LL.M classes (when available), take French/English lessons (depending on their background) and go through internships in some of the Regional and/or international organizations headquartered in Addis Ababa. In the first year of its partnership with the Center for Human Rights, three exchange students came to the Faculty in June 2006 and spent six months writing their LL.M thesis, attending language classes and interning in the African Union. The exchange students were: Anganille Mwefinimbo (from Malawi), Maindi Grace Wakio (from Kenya) and Thabang Masingi (South Africa).

And this year (2007), four exchange students have joined the Faculty in August. They are: Ruth Esemeje from Nigeria, Horace Sgnonna from Benin, Ololade Olakitan from Nigeria and Tanoh Armand from Cote d'Ivoire. Located in Addis Ababa, the seat of the African Union and many other regional and international organizations, the Faculty of Law is one of the major attractions for exchange students from the Center.

So far, the Faculty has only received exchange students from the Center, without sending its students the other way. The Faculty has not had the means to do it. If the exchange is to be strictly exchange, however, the Faculty will need to find ways of sending its students to the Center in order to do what the exchange students from the Center do at the Faculty.

The Faculty has also signed a memorandum of understanding with the ILO Skills and Employability Department to incorporate Legislative Guidelines for Employment of People with Disabilities in its undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The program, funded by the Irish Government, is part of a world-wide effort of the Department to incorporate disability issues in the curricula of Law Faculties. The ILO has agreed on its part to supply technical assistance in this regard, send guest lecturers and allocate funding for research on training and employment of persons with disabilities.

Partnerships with other organizations and universities are likely to expand in the future as the Faculty diversifies its programs and increases its visibility in the community.

University of Ghana; 5) Faculty of Law, Makerere University, Uganda; and 6) Community Law Center, University of Western Cape, South Africa.

9. Visitors to the Faculty

2006/2007 was a fairly busy year for the Faculty. Hosting more than 250 visitors as a result of the 15th African Human Rights Moot Court Competition, the record for the year is unlikely to be broken any time soon. Our location in the capital, nonetheless, makes us an attractive stop over for those coming to Addis for business or just personal visit. In June 2006, members of the National Bar Association (the largest and oldest association of attorneys, judges and legal scholars of color in North America) paid a visit to the Faculty. The President of the Association, Mr. Reginald Turner, delivered a public lecture to our students and staff on the topic 'Legal Aid and Community Service.'

Professor Norman Singer, formerly a professor of law in the early years of the Faculty, and now a professor of Law and Anthropology at the University of Alabama Law School, visited the Faculty in December 2006. He came to participate in the 40th Anniversary celebration of graduation by the Law Faculty and reunite with his former students (as was originally planned by the Alumni Association). Although he was not able to participate in the Anniversary, he used his time to visit some of the newly established law schools in the country and gave a lecture to students of legal history on the subject of 'legal transplantation.' His personal experiences in the early days of the codification process in Ethiopia and his background in anthropology threw some fresh light on the path Ethiopia took to modernize its legal system.

Professor Singer also brought the news of the establishment of a Fund, known as the Tides Fund, to benefit certain research projects in the Faculty of Law. The fund, being administered by the Tides Foundation in Washington D.C., (after which it has been named) can be used to finance research on issues of federalism, access to courts, police reform, civic education at grass roots level and other areas of the rule of law, among other things. The first dean of our Faculty, Professor James C.N. Paul, was the originator of the idea and he managed to assemble other former professors to create the Fund. He is also the principal contributor and directed all the fees that he received from the Ethiopia-Eritrea Claims Commission (of which he was a member) for the setting up of the Fund. The other contributors are Professors Norman Singer, Peter Strauss, Stanley Z. Fischer, and William Ewing. If properly used, the Fund can become an important precursor for the creation of a Trust Fund for the Faculty in the future. The Faculty is obviously grateful that the former professors have not forgotten it.

A team from DLA Piper LLP and the Northwestern University Law School visited the Faculty at the beginning of May 2007. DLA Piper LLP is one of the largest law firms in the world, with more than 3500 partners and offices in 59 countries throughout the world. Northwestern University Law School is one of the top ten law schools in the United States. The team members are keen on finding ways of helping the Faculty, in particular by sending some highly specialized academics and practitioners to teach and do some research in the Faculty. The Faculty used their presence to organize public and guest lectures on areas of their specialization. Mr. Sheldon Kranz (a partner of DLA piper) spoke on 'White Collar Criminality'; Mr. Gary Klein (also partner) spoke on 'Government Regulation of Business' and Professor Geragthy (from Northwestern University Law School) spoke to students on topics of 'Juvenile Justice' and 'Legal Clinic.' Mr. Harry McPherson (a partner of DLA Piper and a one-time counsel to American President Lyndon Johnson) spoke on 'Possible Shifts in American Foreign Policy after 2008 US election.' All of the speakers were well received in their lectures. The tripartite relationship between our Faculty, DLA Piper LLP and the Northwestern University Law School might turn out to be one of the most exciting partnerships to have ever happened to the Faculty.

10. Looking Ahead: Challenges and Prospects for the Faculty

A cliché of the times is to raise the 'millennium' as a standard-setter for everything, big or small, permanent or ephemeral. There is no denying that a 'millennium' is an epoch of great proportions, and those of us who accidentally find ourselves at such a juncture should be grateful just for that. As the cliché has it, 'as the new millennium unfolds,' our Faculty faces enormous challenges as well as prospects.

Even for such a small Faculty, the challenges are very many to count (and recount), but not so overwhelming as to cut and run. Some of these challenges have been with the Faculty from its very inception. Such is the case for example of facilities. The Faculty started business in a building which was not meant for running classes, no matter how compelling the architecture might be. Almost half a century later, the Faculty is unable to construct its own building or find one appropriate for teaching and legal research. The Faculty will not be able to run its business effectively until its problem of space is solved, and this should be its first priority over the next five, and at the latest ten years.

The other challenge is the quality of its programs. To be sure, the Faculty has added new programs, including a graduate program. With the new wave of

PhD programs in the University, the Faculty might even launch a PhD in the near future. But, what of these new programs? Quality is quite a subjective matter, of course, as controversies everywhere indicate. And we are not alone in this, if that is a consolation at all. Almost everywhere one goes, one hears the now familiar complaint about the decline in quality of education at all levels. The complaints about the decline in quality are so common and persistent; one cannot dismiss them as cries sounded by those nostalgic about the past (there are always those, although their numbers and influence are clearly exaggerated).

There are many factors out there why the quality of the programs in the Faculty is a cause for concern. Take the undergraduate LL.B program. Before the Freshman programs were taken away from the University, the Faculty managed to admit only the best performing students in the Freshman program. When the Freshman program was removed from the University, the Ministry of Education took over admission completely, and many in the Faculty suspect that the quality of students admitted into the Faculty (placed by the MoED) is not on par with those admitted from the Freshman program. Although the Government insists the courses offered in the Freshman program are now being offered in the preparatory schools, there are many in the University who rue the absence of freshman programs. Whatever the truth may be, the Faculty has lost one of its most cherished powers (its crown jewel) over admission of students, and with it may have gone the quality of students.

The number of students admitted each year has also affected the quality of education in the Faculty. In the undergraduate program alone, the number of students admitted each year has tripled. This is without counting the new programs opened over the last five years. The Faculty has added the evening LL.B program and LL.M programs in this period, and the total student population in the Faculty has quite simply exploded over a very short period of time. The Faculty has not made adequate preparations for the increase in student population. The facilities meant for few hundred students at best are now being used by more than one thousand students at one time. The number of staff has not shown any marked rise over the last five years in spite of the exponential increase in the number of students. Nothing eloquently expresses the direness of the problem as the Law Library. The Library, meant for a student population of fewer than two hundred, is now 'serving' more than one thousand and a half. To use the term 'congestion' in such a case is clearly an understatement. Because of lack of space, the library is now 'open' only to 'active' students and staff of the Faculty. External users can no longer access

the library. Many of us (by 'us' I mean staff members) are repulsed by the awful congestion in the library and rarely visit it.

These and many other challenges facing the Faculty would be enough to bring down the Faculty, if it were not for the prospects. There is no doubt in my mind that the Faculty would be able to overcome the challenges. Just what are its prospects?

Our Faculty is the oldest, and arguably the best law school in this country. Although the reputation built by the hard work of the early Faculty is quickly fading away, the Faculty still commands a prestige which it can easily exploit to regain and even scale its former achievements. In spite of the low pay, the best and the brightest in the profession are still willing to work for or with the Faculty in order to improve the quality of programs. Although our library leaves much to be desired (as mentioned above), it is still the best law library in the country. In spite of its problems, the library is not beyond recovery.

As the oldest and most famous Faculty in this country, our Faculty still attracts partners and well-wishers from around the world. All that the Faculty needs is to be proactive in its relationships with other universities and institutions around the world, and there is no reason why it cannot achieve its objective of being a premier center of excellence in legal scholarship.

The reforms the Faculty undertook recently also promise a brighter future for the Faculty. The Faculty five-year strategic planning can take the Faculty to the next level if it is fully implemented. The introduction of new and better curriculums in both undergraduate and postgraduate programs of the Faculty is another evidence of a rosier prospect for the Faculty. When all is written down, the future of the Faculty of Law is not so gloomy after all, but a lot needs to be done, sooner.