

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES

Resolution 9

Commending the ABA Task Force on the Future of Legal Education Report

WHEREAS, law schools, the organized bar, state supreme courts, and others have collaborated to create a respected system of legal education in this country; and

WHEREAS, the existing system of legal education faces pressure from many sources including the high cost of education, changes in the demand for law graduate jobs, and the need for more practical, clinical training; and

WHEREAS, the American Bar Association (ABA) created a Task Force on the Future of Legal Education which included four current or former members of the Conference of Chief Justices and was charged with examining the current problems and conditions in American legal education; and

WHEREAS, the ABA Task Force produced several key findings including:

1. The current system of pricing and funding in legal education demands serious reengineering.
2. The accreditation system would better serve the public interest by enabling more heterogeneity in law schools and by encouraging more attention to services, outcomes, and value delivered to law students.
3. The accreditation system should also seek to facilitate innovation in law schools and programs of legal education.
4. The balance between doctrinal instruction and focused preparation for the delivery of legal services needs to shift further toward developing the competencies and professionalism required of people who will deliver services to clients.
5. To expand access to justice, state supreme courts, state bar associations, admitting authorities, and other regulators should devise and consider for adoption new or improved frameworks for licensing or otherwise authorizing providers of legal and related services.

WHEREAS, the Task Force Report not only offers general themes and findings, it also makes specific recommendations to particular participants or groups in the system of legal education;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices commends to its members the ABA Task Force on the Future of Legal Education Report and encourages them to review and to consider implementing the findings and recommendations in general and specifically those directed to state supreme courts, state bar associations, and other regulators of lawyers and law practice. The Conference also recommends that law schools, the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, and others in the legal education community undertake to examine the Task Force report and consider action on its recommendations.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ Professionalism and Competence of the Bar Committee at the CCJ Midyear meeting on January 29, 2014