River Mid-Rise

The strong geometry of Machado and Silvetti Associates’ contemporary architecture rises 15 stories in a modern interpretation of Harvard housing on the Charles:

One Western Avenue: graduate student housing on the Allston side of the Charles River

Photograph by Jim Harrison
JOHN HARVARD’S JOURNAL

$400 Million for Law

It rained on the Harvard Law School (HLS) rainmakers gathered in Langdell Hall for dinner on Friday, June 13, and in a heated tent on Holmes Field the next day. But no matter: the school’s $400-million “Setting the Standard” capital campaign launched its five-year public phase robustly. At the Saturday luncheon, chairman Finn M.W. Caspersen, LL.B. ’66, announced gifts and pledges in hand totaling $70.1 million, nearly 41 percent of the sum sought—a goal he promptly urged the donors and volunteers on hand to exceed.

Several themes sounded during the kickoff weekend. Where the previous campaign, begun exactly a dozen years earlier, sought $150 million, and raised $183 million, to “rebuild some of the foundations of the school—the refurbishing of the library, the building of Hauser Hall, additional faculty chairs...and so on,” according to John F. Cogan Jr. ’49, J.D. ’52, this effort is forward-looking (see the chart below for specific goals). In an interview published in the campaign newsletter, he cited the HLS strategic plan (see “The Law School Looks Ahead,” September-October 2001, page 64), with its emphasis on faculty research support, extensive new facilities, and internationalization. Indeed, Cogan embodies part of the school’s new ambitions: he co-chairs the campaign’s international committee, soliciting 4,000-plus alumni situated outside the United States. Underscoring the school’s global scope, the impatient plants set on each table Saturday were festooned with little flags representing the 11 different nationalities of the 300 or so participants in the kickoff events.

Another theme was the beginning of a new campus era, as Robert C. Clark’s 14-year deanship was nearing its end June 30 and his successor, Elena Kagan, prepared to assume leadership of both the school and the campaign (see “Legacy at Law,” March-April, page 62, and “At the HLS Helm,” July-August, page 66). In his dinner remarks, beyond thanking Clark, President Lawrence H. Summers made a point of reflecting on both the school—“I applaud its ambitions for the future,” given the role of law as a source of reason, order, fairness, opportunity, and freedom in the world—and on his appointee. Kagan, J.D. ’86, is “a revered and popular teacher,” he said, and “a truly important legal scholar.”

For her part, the new dean confessed that “pretty much from the first day” of her legal studies 20 years ago this fall, “I fell in love with this place” for the “mind-bending interaction of its faculty and students. Today’s students, she said, “are getting an education as rigorous as it is engaging, as intellectually stimulating as it is professionally grounded.”

At the luncheon, Clark did the heavy lifting in spelling out the campaign goals—appropriately so, since he shepherded the strategic plan that undergirds them. During the planning and “quiet” phase of solicitation, Clark had spoken repeatedly of legal scholarship—the academic priorities—and of education for the lawyering profession. The strategic plan emphasizes interaction between students and professors; interdisciplinary research; and internationalization of the student body, of scholarship, and of faculty expertise and experience. Very similar themes have been sounded University-wide since Summers took office in mid 2001.

Clark rephrased those priorities in the terms now used in the campaign case statement, unfolding what he called “megathemes—to improve the student experience at Harvard Law School so we can continue to get the best and brightest from around the world, and to enhance the academic programs” to sustain excellence and keep up with the needs of a changing world.

Under the “student experience” priorities, Clark listed “feedback, facilities, and financial aid.” The first relates to the school’s new, smaller, first-year sections (80 students each, down from 140) and further efforts to enrich the learning of each of these cohorts, plus evaluation of written work during the year (instead of sole reliance on exams), and other mea-

LAW SCHOOL CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

- Research support $40 million
- Financial aid $66 million
- Facilities $100 million
- Additional faculty members $75 million
- International programs $24 million
- Legal profession and public service $15 million
- Annual fund operating support $40 million
- Curriculum and teaching enhancements $20 million

Chart by Steve Anderson