Increased student employment at graduation, consideration of certificate programs, additional chaired professorships, and stronger connections with alumni are included in the School of Law’s Strategic Plan for 2004–09. Both the faculty and National Council unanimously approved the new five-year plan, which aims to accelerate the School’s progress initiated under the 1999–2004 plan.

“Our challenge within the next five to 10 years is to develop a law school program as effective and well regarded as the University’s internationally recognized undergraduate program,” says Joel Seligman, dean and the Ethan A.H. Shepley University Professor. “Under the new Strategic Plan, our primary goals will continue to be attracting talented and diverse students, recruiting and retaining outstanding faculty, and augmenting our commitment to public service.”

On the student front, the plan includes recommendations for continued progress in the quality of student applicants; creating an individualized academic counseling program; consideration of first-year elective courses; enhancing career services efforts; and developing additional educational opportunities in law and business, global legal studies, intellectual property law, and clinical education.

Focusing on faculty, the plan recommends continuing to increase the number of full-time faculty and chaired professorships; working with the central University and other schools to create greater opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching, scholarship, and service; initiating a pre-tenure sabbatical program to encourage scholarship among newer faculty hires; and enhancing existing initiatives in international, clinical, and intellectual property law.

Other proposals include an increased commitment to financial assistance, enhanced communication efforts related to electronic and print materials, additional resources devoted to public service, and strengthened ties with alumni.

The strategic planning process included a detailed self-study; committee site visits to five peer law schools (Northwestern University, University of Chicago, New York University, Georgetown University, and Vanderbilt University); a brainstorming retreat with faculty, administrators, and National Council members; and extensive review of proposals from various law school constituents. A Faculty/Senior Administrator Strategic Planning Advisory Committee and a National Council Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, as well as groups of students, alumni, faculty, and administrators, provided specific recommendations for the plan.

“Throughout the entire process, we emphasized transparency and involvement,” Seligman says. “We benefited greatly from an impressive array of insightful, imaginative, and ambitious proposals suggested by various members of the law school community.

“The plan builds upon the School’s current sense of momentum and suggests some areas of focus for the School’s next leadership team,” sums up Seligman. “It offers a blend of general proposals and specific recommendations designed to move the School forward while leaving room for flexibility.”

Reaccreditation
The American Bar Association has reaccredited the School of Law, following a site visit last fall and review of extensive documentation. Law schools undergo reaccreditation every seven years.

The School’s 1,700-page response to the ABA Site Evaluation Questionnaire included detailed information about the School’s curriculum, faculty, students, administration, facilities, and resources.