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Dear Marshall-Wythe Alumni and Friends,

Recently, more than 400 alumni and friends returned to Williamsburg for Alumni Weekend. We had a grand gathering in celebration of our common and enduring ties to Marshall-Wythe. For those of you who were not part of Alumni Weekend, I write to bring you up to date on some recent developments at your law school.

This year, we received 6,287 applications for slightly more than 200 seats in the J.D. class of 2013, breaking the record of 4,984 applications we received last year. Our applications have increased 26% during the past year, and 48% since 2007. Come August, we will enroll an astonishingly talented and diverse group of law students into our J.D. program. They will be joined by about 25 foreign lawyers from throughout the world who will be pursuing our one-year LL.M. degree in the American Legal System.

Competition for the most outstanding law students has sharply increased in recent years, particularly as students have become much more sensitive to the amount of debt that they must assume in order to finance their legal education. Law student debt has dramatically increased nationwide in recent years – including at William & Mary – and the poor job market has made law school applicants extremely sensitive to the price of their legal education. Because we have lost almost one-third of our state support in recent years, we are implementing a larger than normal tuition increase for next year. Next year’s tuition and fees will be $23,800 for in-state students and $33,800 for out-of-state students. This has necessitated further increases in financial aid. In fact, we have doubled the financial aid that we offer students within the past several years. Raising private funds for student scholarships remains a high priority.

One of our most important goals during the past year has been to expand our faculty. This year, William & Mary Law School had the worst student-faculty ratio of any of the nation’s top 50 law schools. We have taken a major step towards remedying this deficiency by hiring three marvelous new faculty members who will join us this summer: Allison Larsen, Nancy Leong, and Jason Solomon.

Allison Larsen is “returning home,” having received her undergraduate degree from the College of William & Mary in 1999. Allison attended the University of Virginia Law School where she graduated first in her class in 2004 and served as a member of the managing board of the Virginia Law Review. Thereafter, she clerked for Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and Justice David Souter on the U.S. Supreme Court, and worked at the Washington office of O’Melveny & Myers. Allison will teach courses in Administrative Law, Constitutional Law, and Statutory Interpretation.
Nancy Leong graduated from Northwestern University in 2001 and from Stanford Law School in 2004, where she was a Notes Editor on the *Stanford Law Review*. Since her law school graduation, Nancy has clerked for Judge Kermit Lipez on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and Judge Frederick Weisberg of the D.C. Superior Court, and has been a visiting scholar at Georgetown Law School. Nancy will teach courses in Civil Rights Legislation, Criminal Procedure, and Evidence.

Jason Solomon joins us from the University of Georgia Law School where he has taught for the past five years. Jason graduated from Harvard University in 1993, and Columbia Law School in 2001, where he was a Notes Editor on the *Columbia Law Review*. Before entering academia, Jason clerked for Judge John Gleeson on the U.S. District Court in the Eastern District of New York and Judge Chester Straub on the U. S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. He also worked for two years as Chief of Staff to the President of Harvard University. Between college and law school, Jason worked as a speechwriter in the Clinton White House. He is widely regarded as one of the most outstanding young torts scholars in the nation, and will teach courses in Administrative Law, Employment Law, and Torts.

Expansion of our faculty remains a high priority. We need to expand our faculty from its current size of 34 to 40, and so will continue to recruit new faculty to Marshall-Wythe for the next several years.

Our faculty have enjoyed an outstanding year. In February, Paul Marcus received the State Council of Higher Education’s Outstanding Faculty Award, the Commonwealth of Virginia’s highest faculty honor. Christie Warren has been tapped to serve as special mediator for the United Nations and is spending much of 2010 traveling the world to mediate conflicts. Linda Malone received a Distinguished Fulbright Award to teach in Italy. Jayne Barnard, Jim Dwyer, and Alan Meese received three of the College’s prestigious Plumeri Awards for Faculty Excellence.

Our faculty continue to publish influential scholarship. During 2009 and 2010, faculty members published (or will soon publish) 14 articles in the nation’s “top twenty” law reviews, including those at Harvard, Yale, and Stanford. Other faculty published (or will soon publish) books with Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press.

Our law students continue to impress with their energy, intelligence, and enthusiasm. The National Trial Team, which has emerged as a national powerhouse in recent years, won three major trial team competitions this year, including the prestigious Gourley competition in Pittsburgh (which William and Mary has won for three of the past four years). Our Moot Court Team also enjoyed success, capturing the Federal Bar Association moot court tournament in Washington, D.C. Our Veterans’ Benefits Clinic continues to prosper and to attract national attention and funding.

Each of our four law reviews is thriving. And a particularly energetic group of students has created and launched Marshall-Wythe’s newest law review, the *William & Mary Business Law Review*, which recently published its first issue.

The George Wythe Society, dedicated to preserving the ideal of the citizen lawyer, is now one of the largest student organizations at the Law School. This summer, the Law School will provide
109 students with Public Service Fellowships to engage in public service work with various government agencies, judges, and non-profit groups throughout the nation and in several foreign countries. This is the largest number of summer Public Service Fellowships that we have ever awarded.

I could go on. Suffice it to say, we have had a remarkable year.

We do face challenges. Our law students face the most difficult legal job market in memory. I have traveled the country this year meeting with our alumni. At every stop, I ask about possible employment opportunities for students. I return to Williamsburg from each trip with a pocketful of business cards from our alumni friends who are eager to help. Please contact me if you know of job opportunities for our students.

Our greatest challenge right now is financial. As mentioned, the state has cut its support for William and Mary by one third in the past two years, and that support will only continue to decline as we move forward. These recent cuts have been offset in part by federal stimulus dollars, but beginning in the fall semester of 2011, those federal dollars will disappear and we will experience the full brunt of the cut in state support. The 2011-2012 academic year will pose considerable financial challenges.

But with the ongoing support of our many friends and supporters, we will continue to prosper as one of the nation’s leading law schools. Our best days lie ahead of us.

Sincerely yours,

Dean Davison M. Douglas