

April 7, 2014

Dear Alumni of Texas Wesleyan University School of Law,

Since our discussion in September, we have continued to review the standards and principles for higher education related to the request some of you have made to reissue your Texas Wesleyan University diplomas.

As I have shared with many of you, I fully recognize the personal and professional importance of the networking, professional development, social interaction, mentoring, and leadership opportunities you have enjoyed as alumni of the Texas Wesleyan University School of Law, and I am happy to report that these services will continue in the future.

As Interim Dean Short and I reviewed the law school budget for this initial year, we made adjustments to ensure that the law school is capable of providing opportunities for you to engage. CLE courses are being offered, access to the law library continues, law review symposia have taken place, social gatherings such as the Crawfish Boil and Greenhill Golf Tournament are quickly approaching, and law school staff can assist you in obtaining bar certifications and transcript services. Please see the message from Interim Dean Short for a full listing of benefits and services.

With that said, our decision regarding diplomas remains the same: we will not be re-issuing your diploma. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) authorized Texas A&M University to confer Juris Doctor degrees in January of 2013. At that time, however, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the regional accrediting body of Texas A&M University and the American Bar Association (ABA) had not yet reviewed the proposed acquisition. Over the course of the summer of 2013, SACSCOC approved the addition, and the ABA acquiesced, resulting in a transfer of accreditation effective on the date ownership transferred August 13, 2013. On this date the law school began operation as Texas A&M University School of Law.

The degree you received was awarded by Texas Wesleyan University, which was authorized to certify your degree requirements. As a university, Texas Wesleyan University remains; only the School of Law has become part of Texas A&M University. Had we acquired the entire institution, as did some of the national examples that have been cited, there may have been other options. That is not the case, however.

Additionally, the authorization by the State of Texas (THECB), combined with accreditation standards to which we are accountable, are clear as to when and how an institution certifies the degree being awarded. SACSCOC accredits institutions, not parts of institutions (such as departments or colleges). The *Principles of Accreditation* (2012), indicate that our privilege to confer law degrees began at the moment of our substantive change (acquisition) and not before.

I do understand and share your concerns about accurate representation in your professional careers. Rest assured, as the recent letter sent to you by Texas Wesleyan University noted, Texas Wesleyan University will continue to fulfill its responsibilities to attest to the completion of your degree from an accredited institution prior to the transition.

Several of you have asked our opinion about how to properly list your graduating school and its relationship to Texas A&M University. The State Bar of Texas has agreed that the following statement would be appropriate for use in professional directories, social networking sites, and on resumes:

*As of August 13, 2013, Texas Wesleyan University School of Law became Texas A&M University School of Law with appropriate accreditations from the State of Texas, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), and the American Bar Association (ABA).*

For resumes, in particular, one more succinct option would be to list the university and school that you graduated from, Texas Wesleyan University School of Law, and then designate the transition by putting “now Texas A&M University School of Law” in parenthesis afterwards.

Additionally, each of you received communication from Texas Wesleyan University in February, acknowledging the acquisition of the law school and your rights to opt out of sharing your information with us. As their letter indicated, Texas Wesleyan University remains committed to serving your needs as graduates and assisting the School of Law in fulfilling any needs you may have for certifications and transcripts.

Regardless of which name is on your diploma, you are an important part of our law school community. In acknowledgment of the transfer of your law school from Texas Wesleyan University to Texas A&M University and acknowledging services and benefits to which you are entitled, we would like to provide you with a personalized certificate that you can view [here](#). Each of you who opted to allow your information to be shared by Texas Wesleyan University will receive a personalized version in the mail in the coming weeks. Our hope is that you will display the certificate in conjunction with your Texas Wesleyan University diploma in your office or home.

Finally, we believe the set of combined benefits and services to be offered by the Texas A&M University School of Law and the broader Aggie Network will provide you a continued quality alumni experience. The Texas Aggie Bar Association, a chartered constituent network of The Association of Former Students, amended their bylaws to make Texas A&M University School of Law students, as well as graduates of Texas Wesleyan School of Law, eligible for membership. This is just one example of how you can connect more broadly with the Aggie Network in the manner of your choosing.

I know for some of you, these gestures will not be enough, but I am hopeful the majority of you will see opportunity in these offers of inclusion. I am inviting each of you to join us at the start of what I hope will be a sustained and mutually beneficial partnership.

Thank you,



Karan L. Watson

cc: John Sharp, Chancellor  
Dr. Mark Hussey, Interim President  
Aric Short, Interim Dean  
Faculty of the Texas A&M University School of Law