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Penn State Law Gets Its Own Alumni Society

In 2014, Penn State's two law schools received separate accreditation for the first time. Both Dickinson School of Law in Carlisle and Penn State Law at University Park had operated as one school with two campuses up until that point, and the two schools shared an alumni society—the Dickinson School of Law Alumni Society.

That was the case until April 21, 2017, when the Alumni Association's Alumni Council approved the charter for the Penn State Law Alumni Society, meaning both campuses now have their own societies for the first time.

As **Matt Esworthy '01** recalls, the seeds for this "split" were planted back in 2014. According to Esworthy—the president of the newly-formed society, the immediate past president of the unified alumni society, and a graduate of the Dickinson School of Law—the deans of both schools approached him and asked him to spearhead this campaign.

"When the law schools decided to seek separate accreditation, both deans—and I think rightfully—thought that it was best to have two separate alumni bodies to service the individual needs of the law schools, which have varying missions and goals," Esworthy said.

Esworthy articulated that graduates are allowed to be members of both societies while stressing that the reason for having two societies is that both schools need their own unique representation.

From there, Esworthy and his fellow board members went through the process of becoming officially recognized by the Alumni Association. Upon getting approved and operating as a provisional board for a year—Esworthy especially praised the help that Interim Law School Dean James W. Houck, Director of Development and Alumni Relations Jeff Horwitz, and Assistant Director of Alumni Relations Anita Baumann, provided during this process—the focus of the Penn State Law Society shifted toward its short- and long-term goals.

Included in the short term are the hopes that the society can support new graduates of the school in a number of ways.

"In my short-term goals, every year we want to make sure that every student knows [the society is] there for them, that they all find gainful employment that gives them the opportunity to launch their careers, and that the school knows that we're there to support them," Esworthy said.



Beyond that, Esworthy hopes that graduates learn about the importance of mentoring and engagement, namely by promoting activity through any means possible. In Esworthy's mind, the society's mentoring program has been solidified with the help of the law school.


And on an even larger scale, Esworthy wants the group to strengthen its national presence. The group has board members based all over the country—of its 27 members, 13 are in Pennsylvania (including president-elect **Kevin McGarry '11**);

five are in Washington, D.C.; three are in Maryland; and the remainder live in six states ranging from Delaware to California.

In Esworthy's eyes, "We've done our best to have a diverse board that reflects more of what Penn State is now, which is a global organization and entity."

For more information about the Penn State Law Alumni Society, contact [Horwitz](#) or [Baumann](#).





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