

Dear Johnette,

Thank you for your hard work and diligent efforts to keep all of us apprised of the latest developments affecting higher education and the business community of our region. I am sending this brief note in response to your commentary published April 16, 2013, in *The Weekly Newsletter of the SBBA*, regarding the Pressler School of Law of Louisiana College. As the former dean of the institution, I wanted to make you and other SBBA members aware of some additional information.

As you noted, Louisiana College ("LC") in Pineville selected Shreveport, and the former Joe D. Waggoner federal building, as the site for its new law school in late 2010. I was hired as dean to begin building the program of legal education, hiring faculty, and managing all of the myriad aspects of a new institution. Things progressed very well, thanks in large part to the groundswell of local support for our efforts, and we were able to recruit an exceptional law faculty (including former deans of other law schools and nationally known professors) and develop a distinctive program of legal education that would cater to the needs of our region.

However, developments beyond our control in Shreveport adversely affected the ongoing efforts. In December 2011, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the regional accrediting body, announced that it was placing the law school's parent institution, LC, on "Warning" status for 12 months following the college's decennial review. (In December 2012, that status was extended for a second year.) Then, in June 2012, SACS voted to deny LC's application for "Level V" membership status, which is required before any undergraduate school is allowed to offer doctoral degrees, such as the Juris Doctor.

In light of those unforeseen developments, our hands in Shreveport became tied and the law school project inevitably delayed until the accreditation issues in Pineville are fully corrected. I reluctantly resigned because I and the existing members of our distinguished founding faculty were left with no choice but to engage in our other professional endeavors. It is important to note that the law school was never "denied accreditation," but rather, was never afforded the opportunity to proceed to that point.

It is my understanding that the administration and governing board of LC remain committed to their law school as a future project, though it now appears uncertain whether it will be located in Shreveport or on the main campus in Pineville. I was as surprised (and saddened) as anyone to see the Waggoner Building be listed for sale last week. It is my hope that does not mean that Shreveport is no longer being considered as the site for the future law school. I am one of many who remain convinced that the opportunity for quality legal education in north Louisiana and our surrounding region is long overdue.

Again, thank you for all of your energy and efforts on behalf of SBBA. Like you, I am stubbornly optimistic about the future of business and higher education in our area, and I truly believe our best days are ahead of us.

Sincerely yours,  
Mike Johnson