

Name: Abigail Barnes

Year(s) of graduation and degree(s): JD/MEM'16 joint degree (VLS/Yale)

What is your vision for VLS in the next five years?

I believe Vermont Law needs to do a better job of marketing and playing to its strengths, which are many. Having attended courses at Yale Law School as part of my dual-degree, I found the quality of the instruction to be comparable if not inferior in some respects to my legal education at Vermont Law School. Professors at Yale were less accessible, and overall, I would say the caliber of teachers was in many respects superior at VLS. I was fortunate to study under Pat Parenteau, Firestone, Hanna, and many other legal legends. The students VLS attracts are generally lovers of the outdoors that are looking for an exceptional education but also a liberal arts environment. Think Middlebury.

I'm concerned about our recent drop in national ranking in environmental law programming, and the loss of so many cherished and brilliant professors who are largely what make VLS so special and attractive for prospective students. VLS is in close proximity to world-class skiing and hiking, which needs to be highlighted in marketing materials, as this is a unique selling point that VLS should play up. Looking back, given the opportunity to attend Yale Law School and Vermont Law School, I would have chosen Vermont Law School. Nowadays, I'm less sure.

What skills do you bring to the VLSAA to accomplish these priorities?

I am an attorney licensed to practice in Wisconsin and an author of two guidebooks on corporate social responsibility with Yale and Patagonia. I am the Co-Founder & CEO of a venture-backed biotech company, Allergy Amulet, Inc., that has raised over \$5M in institutional capital. As CEO and Co-Founder, I have grown a company from 1 to 8 employees, and we are slated to grow again this year. All of our first employees are still with us. I am also a board member.

In other relevant experience, I served as a paralegal in a toxic tort litigation firm for several years before law school. After law school, I clerked for a judge in the appeals court in Wisconsin, served as a fellow at the Conservation Law Foundation, and worked as a Summer Associate at Foley & Lardner where I was offered a job. I turned down the job as we secured venture capital funding around the same time.

Please refer to my [LinkedIn page](#) and [company bio](#) for more information.

How would you galvanize the energy and enthusiasm of alumni to increase participation in VLS events and giving?

I think we need members on the board with strong business acumen, but that also appreciate the unique character of VLS and what makes it so special. I have ties to Yale and Patagonia as a result of my graduate studies and work on the guidebooks, and I think I could be useful in forging relationships between the school and socially responsible companies. We need leadership that understands the importance of communication, and has a vision that will ensure VLS stays in the top rankings in environmental law going forward.

We need members that will help bridge and connect VLS with local businesses and universities—which could help bring some welcome partnerships and relationships to the school and offer some (sorely needed) positive PR.

List and describe your alumni service.

I have engaged with potential candidates for the JD/MEM program with Yale and VLS and have organized local VLS alumni events in Madison, WI. I also invited VLS to be part of a second guidebook I co-authored on Certified B Corporations (B Corps) and benefit corporations for a legislative audience. The first book I authored was only with Patagonia and Yale and was focused on entrepreneurs. Both guidebooks can be found on Patagonia's website.

List your activities as a VLS student.

As a VLS student I was an Energizer and an editor with VJEL. I co-wrote a law review article with Pat Parenteau on fracking which was published in the Idaho Law Review and was also a fellow with the US-China Partnership. The culmination of my writing with the Partnership was featured in The Economist.

List any appropriate professional and community activities and please describe how that experience would serve you as a Board member.

I believe my experience working in the non-profit sector, private sector, and start-up space will bring a unique perspective to the current board. Having also served on the board of my own company for six years, I am intimately familiar with how to work effectively and efficiently with boards.

Having reviewed the standing committees on the VLSAA Board, which committee(s) would you choose to serve on and why?

I would like to be considered for the nominating committee. As someone who has spent a significant amount of time hiring and vetting candidates for my own company, I think I may be able to provide insight into the leaders we need right now at VLS to ensure the school's long-term success and ensure that the school is led by individuals who appreciate and understand what attracts great students and professors to VLS and protects the reputation and integrity of this unique and special institution.

Discuss whether you have the resources and ability to make the Board a priority over the next three years. Board responsibilities include quarterly in-person Board meetings, regular committee meetings and projects, alumni outreach and community initiatives, and providing thoughtful consultation to alumni and the law school.

I am routinely in the Boston area, which is where our lab is located, and my co-founder is a Dartmouth professor, and so I am occasionally in the South Royalton area. For these reasons, I do not foresee bandwidth issues around attending quarterly meetings.