

Name: Karis L. North

Year(s) of Graduation and Degree(s): J.D., 1995

Statement of interest answering/addressing the following:

What is your vision for VLS in the next five years? My vision is for a strong, sustainable, diverse VLS, which continues to provide an excellent education for advocates who want to change the world. I want VLS to be the cutting edge law school, leading the way in innovation and flexibility in the way a legal education is developed and delivered – whether that education is for a JD, a Masters, or an LLM – while still retaining the unique community and culture that is at the core of VLS. I believe that is work that I have been doing and supporting in my last three years as Alumni Trustee, and in my last 12 years as a member and leader of the VLSAA Board of Directors. VLS, through its strategic plan, has looked at multiple ways to make law school more affordable through programs like the Accelerated JD, and increasing the number of credits available through Distance Learning. VLS has also sought to allow JD students more opportunities to work and learn at the same time, by developing the hybrid JD program - which has kicked off the discussion about the future model of legal education at the American Bar Association, our accrediting institution. VLS is also developing programs in cutting edge areas of the law, like the Energy Institute, the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems, and the new Restorative Justice program.

I want to continue to work with the entire VLS community - alumni, trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students -- to strengthen VLS's place as the premier independent law school in the US. That vision includes continued fiscal prudence, as well as modest growth. I envision an alumni body that is central to the strength and success of VLS. Alumni support of VLS can happen in many ways -- through philanthropy and direct support like mentoring and hiring students and alumni, but also through indirect support including networking and professional development through the regional groups and the affinity groups. The more ways alumni can connect with and support each other, the more ways that will ultimately benefit the law school. I envision VLS continuing to support alumni interconnections in as many different ways as possible and in as many different ways as our alumni want and need.

I also envision a VLS community which continues to grow its diversity, not just in the student body, but in the faculty, staff, administration, and on the board of trustees and the alumni association. Different views, ideas, perspectives, and backgrounds only make us stronger. While I have seen a marked improvement in diversity in the student body in the last 5+ years, those improvements need to be reflected in the rest of VLS.

What skills do you bring to the Board of Trustees to accomplish these priorities? First, I have the skills and abilities of a leader. My leadership style is outspoken but diplomatic, and persistent. I am also an organizer and a motivator, and I plan to continue to involve alumni in VLS as members of the Board of Trustees, as members of the VLSAA, or as members of a strong and supportive alumni body, ready to assist students, fellows alumni, and the school. As President of the VLSAA the board increased its visibility and effectiveness within the VLS community, and became an important voice in discussions concerning the future of VLS, from selection of a Dean, to governance of the Board of Trustees, to development of alumni programs and the regional groups network. As one of the two current Alumni Trustees, I have continued to lead. I am Chair of the Governance Committee, and participate as one of the leaders of the Board of Trustees. Second, I have the knowledge and experience of VLS and its history. I have been actively involved with VLS for many years, and have worked with the law school

through many administrations, with many staff, and faculty. I understand the history of the school and the background surrounding many operational decisions and priorities. With that knowledge base, I can help inform decision making for the future of VLS. I will continue to build upon that work, and continue to be a voice of and for the alumni.

List and describe your alumni service. In 2015 I was elected to the position of Alumni Trustee, the position for which I am now seeking re-election. As a member of the Board of Trustees, I have been Chair of the Governance Committee for the past two years, and serve as part of the Board's leadership. I also serve on (or have served on) the Nominating, Development, and Strategic Planning Committees. In my role as Alumni Trustee, I advocate for the support of the VLS alumni body, and help inform the decisions of the Board and the Administration by providing an alumni perspective on all board decisions.

My alumni service began immediately after graduation, when I moved to DC and became involved in the DCVLSAA. I attended events, met and networked with my fellow alumni, and participated in providing alumni feedback to the Board of Trustees on issues such as the hiring and retention of the VLS Dean. In 1999 I moved to Boston and started attending informal events with other VLS alums in the area. In 2004 and 2005 I got involved in establishing a recognized Boston VLSAA regional group, and have continued to help guide that group ever since. In 2006 I was elected to the VLSAA Board of Directors. I served from 2006-2010 as the chairperson of the Development committee, and was able to strategize and implement alumni giving campaigns that increased alumni participation in annual giving. In 2010 I was elected President of the VLSAA. As President, I worked hard to make the VLSAA more visible within the VLS community, to ensure that our alumni have a voice in the future of Vermont Law School and to ensure that the necessary changes within the school still stay true to the culture of VLS that brought us to the law school in the first place. I have also worked to continue to engage alumni throughout the country, and to help alumni connect and support each other. Informally, I am always available to VLS students and alumni for networking, mentoring, and advice, or just a cup of coffee and a chance to talk about the world.

List your activities as a VLS student. Women's Law Group, 1992-1995, Conference Co-Chair, 1994; Vermont Law Review, 1993-1995, Managing Editor, 1994-1995; Research assistant, Professor Linda Smiddy, 1992-1995.

List and describe any relevant professional and community activity. I am also engaged within my community in various volunteer leadership roles. I have just completed three terms as an elected Library Trustee, and I served as chair of the Board of Library Trustees from 2011-2014. I sit on the Board of Directors of the Straits Pond Watershed Association, a local advocacy group. I was also just appointed to be a Commissioner on the Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women. In my professional life, I am a municipal lawyer and litigator, with a practice in environmental, municipal, labor, and business law. I am Town Counsel to the towns of Burlington, MA and Natick, MA. All of these diverse experiences help give me a broad based understanding of the legal profession, the business world, and government, which will support the work I do as an Alumni Trustee.

Discuss whether you have the resources and ability to make the Board of Trustees a priority over the next three years. Yes, absolutely. I've made VLS my top service and philanthropic priority for the last 12 years and I've loved every minute of it. As Alumni Trustee I attend four board meetings a year in person. I participate in conference calls for committees I sit on and chair, and in Commencement activities, Reunion activities, as well as regional group activities. Because the Alumni Trustee position is

a joint appointment to the VLSAA Board of Directors as well as the VLS Board of Trustees, and I also attend meetings of the VLSAA Board either in person or on the phone. I will continue making VLS and the position of Alumni Trustee this top priority.