

Tuition Increase for Law School Needs

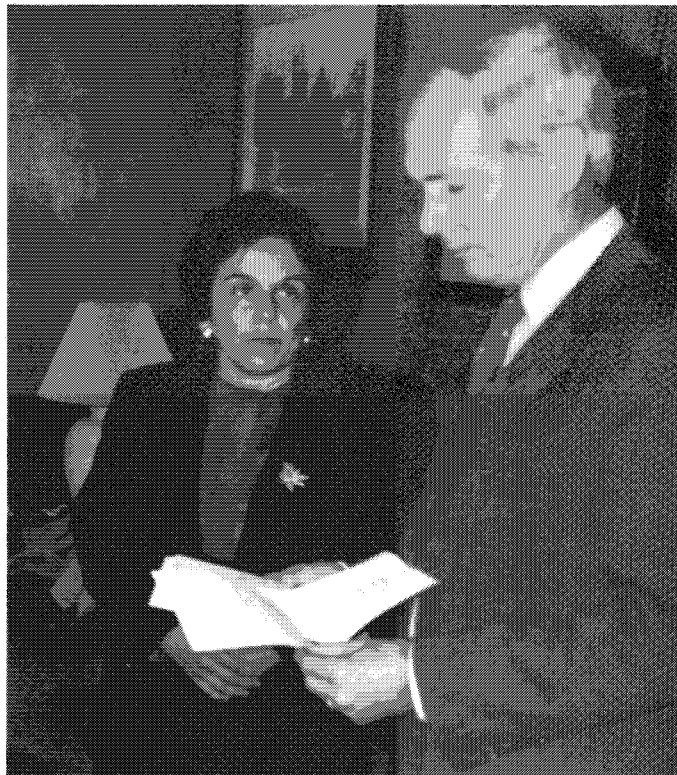
Dean Cliff Thompson

Chancellor Shalala is supporting a special tuition increase for law students which would be returned entirely to the law school for its needs. The increase would be \$400 yearly for residents and \$500 for non-residents, and 20% of the total amount would be used for student financial aid.

As distasteful as any tuition increase is, I believe the Chancellor's proposal is an important step in a series of recent developments aimed at keeping the University of Wisconsin an outstanding law school. The splendid setting and intellectual excitement of this university are powerful forces in attracting outstanding students and faculty. We do not need the top budget to be a top law school, but the deterioration in relative resources reached a dangerous stage, and remains a matter of concern.

The first major step in improving the resource problem was the special treatment by the campus administration for the law school in the catch-up pay raises provided by the state, which moved our average faculty salaries from far below the bottom of the Big Ten to nearer the middle. In the endowment campaign which ended last year, our alums and other friends gave private money which more than doubled the three million dollar goal. Over half of the money collected is dedicated to scholarships and loans. This year, under the Madison Plan, the Chancellor has funded four new faculty positions for us, which has brought to us first-class people and an improved student-faculty ratio.

In this sequence, the next need to be addressed is the Law Library, and the next source to be tapped is student tuition. Student tuition pays for about 30% of annual law school costs. Detailed information, which you can obtain by calling me or sending a note, indicates that the position of our library resources is far behind our peer schools, and the relative reasonableness of the proposed change in tuition. The annual increase available from the tuition increase for the library is being estimated at \$240,000, after the set-aside for law student financial aid. This increase would bring the library's budget into the bottom quartile of the Big Ten, and would greatly improve but not solve the library's needs, which are being carefully coordinated with other law libraries in the state. The resulting tuition would be at about the average cost in the Big Ten. Other professional schools on the Madison campus can demonstrate similar needs, but at this time only the Law School and the MBA program at the Business School are being allowed the possibility of a tuition increase which would be returned entirely to the school.



Chancellor Donna Shalala and Dean Cliff Thompson confer at Board of Visitors meeting.

The next state contribution in this significant sequence of resource changes is already in motion. This year, the building addition for the Law School made Madison's top priority list for the first time, so that our hope for desperately needed new space within the next two biennial capital budgets became realistic.

At the full-faculty meeting in September, the faculty, with one dissent, endorsed the Chancellor's tuition proposal, as did our Wisconsin Alumni Association Boards unanimously in October. Neither the faculty nor the alums were pleased to support a tuition increase, but they do believe that the Law School is gaining the significant momentum it needs by the series of developments summarized above. I have been meeting with officers of the Student Bar Association and with students generally at open meetings about the proposed tuition change. Although it would be natural to expect student opposition, their initial responses make me optimistic that we will have their understanding, and perhaps even their support.