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[RUDY HASL](#)

TJSL dean helps university gain prominence

By **SYDNIÉ MOORE**, Special to The Daily Transcript
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Rudy Hasl is bullish about the future of Thomas Jefferson School of Law (TJSL), and its increasingly important role in educating the next generation of legal practitioners.

In fact, says Hasl, who has served as dean of TJSL for the last six years, the completion of the gleaming new East Village facilities earlier this year marked a huge milestone in the history of the school, which was founded as a fledgling part-time program for working professionals in 1969.



With the state-of-the-art new \$90 million campus, the school is now poised to “increase its visibility and reputation as an educational community that produces successful lawyers and supports innovative scholarship by faculty and students,” Hasl says.

Hasl embarked on a quest for larger digs the minute he assumed the top post at TJSL, which had then outgrown its Old Town campus. The ultra modern, eight-story, 300,005-square-foot building was “carefully designed to be a supportive environment for our educational programs, as well as an urban oasis in the center of the city,” he says. Aesthetically attractive while environmentally sensitive, the facility is equipped with “smart classrooms,” outdoor terraces, a living green wall, two recording studios, a moot courtroom and more -- and has undoubtedly helped to “invigorate the East Village area,” he says.

In addition to establishing a cutting edge new facility, Hasl has helped the school gain prominence on the academic front. The school first received full approval/accreditation from the American Bar Association in 2001, and earlier this year emerged from a successful joint re-accreditation site visit from ABA and the Association of American Law Schools. Additionally, TJSL earned membership status in the Association of American Law Schools in 2008.

Under Hasl's direction, the school has bolstered academic support programs, developing innovative options such as summer study abroad programs in Hangzhou, China and Nice, France. Specializing in sports law, international trade, and international tax and financial services, TJSL will also soon be launching an incubator program to assist students who want to establish a solo law practice.

Despite the grim outlook for many recent grads, Hasl sees glimmers of hope. “While the current job market is difficult, there are already signs that the market is improving,” he said. “Clearly, there are unmet legal needs. The difficulty is getting the legal services to those clients in a cost-effective and convenient way.”

Hasl, who served in the U.S. Army in Germany and Vietnam, is currently the longest-serving law school dean in the nation. He has achieved a total of 30 consecutive years as dean at Thomas Jefferson School of Law and three other ABA law schools: Saint Louis University, St. John's University and Seattle University.

Despite decades in the business, his enthusiasm for educating tomorrow's legal professionals never wanes. “I am passionate about my work as dean, and excited that my efforts are producing individuals who are committed to helping other people with their legal needs,” he said.

“My work,” he says, “involves engaging with students intellectually, socially, morally, and spiritually to producing effective members of the legal profession. There can be no higher calling.”

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Moore is a San Diego-based freelance writer.

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