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THE PIPELINE TO THE LEGAL PROFESSION:  
PERSPECTIVES FROM MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW

*Abigail A. Rury\**

2012 MICH. ST. L. REV. 1717

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INTRODUCTION

Standing on the wreckage of the World Trade Center just four days after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush spoke to a group of rescue workers through a bullhorn.<sup>1</sup> One worker called out to the President to speak louder because he could not hear the President

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1. Lee Banville, *Candidates: George W. Bush, President*, ONLINE NEWSHOUR, [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/vote2004/candidates/can\\_bush-sept11.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/vote2004/candidates/can_bush-sept11.html) (last visited Feb. 11, 2013).

over the noise of the equipment; the President responded, "I can hear you."<sup>2</sup> Although the relationship between the forty-third president and women in law school is tangential at best, women law students' voices are also often not heard over the clamor of the mechanisms of law school. Men and women experience law school differently.<sup>3</sup> Women's experiences in law school and the legal profession can cause women to feel less visible, less integrated, and less engaged in their legal education.<sup>4</sup> Women suffer discrimination and alienation in law school that their men counterparts do not. Women participate less frequently in the classroom and are less likely to develop mentoring relationships.<sup>5</sup> As a result, women begin their law practices disadvantaged; they are handicapped by a legal education that does not address their needs. This paper is intended to let women at Michigan State University College of Law (MSU Law) know that their voices are heard, that "I can hear you."

Law school teaches its students the legal concepts of torts, contracts, and other basic tenets of the law, but it also influences law students' opinions of the legal profession.<sup>6</sup> Women's experiences in law school matter because they have a resounding impact on the legal profession.<sup>7</sup> Women students are taught by men professors, read cases written by men judges, and go on to work for men partners.<sup>8</sup> Often, women in the classroom graduate to become law firm associates that never make partner.<sup>9</sup> The competitive classroom becomes a hostile private law firm, and disillusioned women leave law firms for public service work where they earn a fraction of the salary of their men counterparts.<sup>10</sup> "The messages that a law school sends to its students about the law are perhaps the most enduring messages students receive about appropriate behavior within their chosen profession."<sup>11</sup>

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2. *Id.* (quoting President George W. Bush).

3. Catherine Weiss & Louise Melling, *The Legal Education of Twenty Women*, 40 STAN. L. REV. 1299, 1300, 1302 (1988).

4. Sari Bashi & Maryana Iskander, *Why Legal Education Is Failing Women*, 18 YALE J.L. & FEMINISM 389, 412 (2006).

5. *See infra* Section II.A.

6. Cheryl M. Herden, *Women in Legal Education: A Feminist Analysis of Law School*, 63 REV. JUR. U.P.R. 551, 568 (1994).

7. *Id.* at 551.

8. *See id.*

9. *See* DEBORAH L. RHODE, ABA COMM'N ON WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION, THE UNFINISHED AGENDA: WOMEN AND THE LEGAL PROFESSION 8 (2001).

10. *See* Sarah Green, *Investigating the Pay Gap*, HARV. BUS. REV., <http://hbr.org/web/slideshows/pay-gap/1-slide> (last visited May 3, 2013).

11. Herden, *supra* note 6, at 568 (citing Karen B. Czepanskiy & Jana B. Singer, *Women in Law School: It's Time for More Change*, 7 LAW & INEQ. 135, 136 (1988)).

A body of research from the last two decades finds that law school fails women.<sup>12</sup> The results of a school-wide survey that I conducted in spring 2010 as a second-year law student indicated that the women of MSU Law also faced challenges in their legal education.<sup>13</sup> Despite survey responses that suggested women students were generally positive about their MSU Law education,<sup>14</sup> the women respondents reported more apprehension about approaching professors than their men counterparts, and they were not developing mentoring relationships with MSU Law administrators, faculty, or staff.<sup>15</sup> The discrepancy in the results underscores how difficult a problem gender differences are to study. My goal in conducting this research was two-fold: first, to measure MSU Law students' perceptions of their academic experiences, that is, to add to the empirical research regarding gender disparity that has been conducted. Moreover, I hoped the survey results would begin a dialog between faculty and students to ensure that all students felt that their voices were being heard, regardless of gender.

It is especially important that women become aware of the ways in which law school socializes its students because students are being trained to think and behave like attorneys. Absorbing implicit and explicit biases and discrimination, students will model their conduct in the legal profession based upon learned behavior in law school.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it is vital that administrators, faculty, and students rethink the pedagogy and interactions with students so that law school experiences do not perpetuate the challenges women face when they become attorneys.

Part I of this paper will examine MSU Law's unique history and the demographics of its current students. Part II will discuss the methodology and the survey results, analyzing students' reactions to classroom teaching

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12. See, e.g., Bashi & Iskander, *supra* note 4; Celestial S.D. Cassman & Lisa R. Pruitt, *A Kinder, Gentler Law School? Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Legal Education at King Hall*, 38 U.C. DAVIS L. REV. 1209, 1213 (2005); Lani Guinier, Michelle Fine & Jane Balin, *Becoming Gentlemen: Women's Experiences at One Ivy League Law School*, 143 U. PA. L. REV. 1, 3-6 (1994); Herden, *supra* note 6, at 551 (stating that law school embodies the "male view of the legal system"); Suzanne Homer & Lois Schwartz, *Admitted but Not Accepted: Outsiders Take an Inside Look at Law School*, 5 BERKELEY WOMEN'S L.J. 1, 2 (1990); Weiss & Melling, *supra* note 3, at 1300, 1302.

13. See *infra* Part II.

14. 47.2% or 59/125 respondents stated they like MSU Law in response to the question: "On the whole, how do you feel about MSU Law?" Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Female Responses Report 5, Question No. 5 (Apr. 18, 2010) (on file with author) [hereinafter Female Responses Report]. 35.2% or 44/125 respondents stated they like it more than they dislike it. *Id.*

15. *Id.* at 24-26.

16. One woman respondent stated her failure to understand the impact of law school socialization this way: "Honestly, most of these issues [about gender inequality in education] never even occurred to me to wonder about." Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 77855748, identified as a 1L female of other (including mixed) race or ethnicity, 25-29 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

methods and faculty and student relationships. Part II will also study why men and women students are not developing mentoring relationships with MSU Law faculty, administrators, or staff. Finally, Part III will discuss the survey's implications on law practice, propose solutions to change classroom dynamics, and suggest ways to increase student engagement at MSU Law.

### I. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

MSU Law is one of only a few private independent law colleges and is the oldest continuously operating independent law school in the nation.<sup>17</sup> The law college was founded in 1891 as Detroit College of Law (DCL) by a group of young men who worked in Detroit at various law offices and who enrolled together to form part of DCL's first graduating class.<sup>18</sup> From its founding, DCL pledged to admit students "without regard to sex, color or citizenship."<sup>19</sup> True to its statement, the first graduating class of sixty-nine students included one woman, Lizzie J. McSweeney, and its second class included one African-American student.<sup>20</sup>

As a woman law school graduate, Lizzie McSweeney was a pioneer of her time. Law schools did not begin to accept women until the last quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Iowa were the first law schools to accept women in 1869.<sup>22</sup> Union College of Law (which later became Northwestern University) was the first law school to graduate a woman in 1870.<sup>23</sup> The University of Michigan be-

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17. *Affiliation with Michigan State University*, MICH. ST. U.C.L., <http://www.law.msu.edu/affiliation.html> (last visited Feb. 11, 2013).

18. THE HISTORY OF MICHIGAN LAW 260 (Paul Finkelman & Martin J. Hershock eds., 2006); GWENN BASHARA SAMUEL, THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS ARE THE HARDEST: A CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF THE DETROIT COLLEGE OF LAW 1-6 (1993).

19. THE HISTORY OF MICHIGAN LAW, *supra* note 18, at 260 (citing SAMUEL, *supra* note 18, at 9).

20. *Id.*; see also *History of Michigan State University College of Law*, MICH. ST. U.C.L., <http://www.law.msu.edu/history.html> (last visited Feb. 11, 2013). Despite DCL's stated commitment, one professor, the Honorable Alfred Russell, was quoted in the *Detroit Free Press* as saying that "[h]e did not believe in women lawyers. Some women are bright and intellectual enough, but there are physical reasons why they can never win a great measure of success. They were intended by nature for another sphere." SAMUEL, *supra* note 18, at 15 (quoting Alfred Russell).

21. VIRGINIA G. DRACHMAN, WOMEN LAWYERS AND THE ORIGINS OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN AMERICA: THE LETTERS OF THE EQUITY CLUB, 1887 to 1890, at 3-5 (1993). Formal legal education was not a requirement to practice law, and many aspiring lawyers, including women, trained as apprentices for several years before practicing on their own. *Id.* at 3. In 1880, there were seventy-five women practicing law; in 1890, there were 208 women attorneys. *Id.* at 2.

22. *Id.* at 4.

23. *Id.*

gan accepting women in 1870 and Boston University began accepting women in 1872, although Boston University did not graduate its first woman until 1881.<sup>24</sup> Women law school graduates were a rare class of lawyers when DCL was founded.

Over the next one hundred years, MSU Law continued to graduate increasing numbers of women and minorities. During the 2009–2010 academic year, MSU Law enrolled 955 students.<sup>25</sup> About 61% of the students were men, and 39% of the students were women.<sup>26</sup> Nationally, however, the numbers are more favorable for women. For the same academic year, 53% of law students nationally were men and 47% of law students were women.<sup>27</sup> Nearly half of the MSU Law student body identified as white males.<sup>28</sup> 16.5% of the student body self-identified as minorities or international students.<sup>29</sup> Nationally, 22.9% of law students identified as minorities during the 2009–2010 academic year.<sup>30</sup>

The class of 2012 (the 1L class) enrolled 275 students; 57% were men and 43% were women. 20% of the 1L students were minorities.<sup>31</sup> The class of 2011 (the 2L class) had 304 students; 63% were men and 37% were women.<sup>32</sup> 15% of the 2L students were minorities. The class of 2010 (the 3L class) had 329 students; 63% were men and 37% were women. 11% of the 3L students were minorities.<sup>33</sup>

### A. Survey Design

The survey was designed to measure students' perceptions of their academic and pedagogical experiences at MSU Law and to elicit information about the students' professional goals and motivations for attending law school. I expected the results to conform to previous research, which posits

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24. *Id.* at 4, 9.

25. LAW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS COUNCIL, OFFICIAL GUIDE TO ABA-APPROVED LAW SCHOOLS: MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW (2010) (on file with author) [hereinafter ABA REPORT].

26. *Id.*

27. AM. BAR ASS'N, ENROLLMENT AND DEGREES AWARDED: 1963-2011 ACADEMIC YEARS, [http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal\\_education\\_and\\_admissions\\_to\\_the\\_bar/statistics/enrollment\\_degrees\\_awarded.authcheckdam.pdf](http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/statistics/enrollment_degrees_awarded.authcheckdam.pdf) (last visited July 10, 2012).

28. ABA REPORT, *supra* note 25, at 468.

29. *Id.* Of the responding students, 10.4% did not identify a race or ethnicity. *Id.*

30. AM BAR ASS'N, FIRST YEAR J.D. AND TOTAL J.D. MINORITY ENROLLMENT FOR 1971-2011, [http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal\\_education\\_and\\_admissions\\_to\\_the\\_bar/statistics/jd\\_enrollment\\_1yr\\_total\\_minority.authcheckdam.pdf](http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/statistics/jd_enrollment_1yr_total_minority.authcheckdam.pdf) (last visited Feb. 11, 2013).

31. The Office of the Registrar provided the statistical breakdown of the classes. A copy is on file with the author.

32. *Id.*

33. *Id.*

that women experience law school differently than men.<sup>34</sup> I also wished to examine whether the inequalities of the legal profession begin in law school.<sup>35</sup>

Every MSU Law student who opted to make his or her email address public was asked to complete a forty-one question web-based survey. The survey was broken down into four sections: (1) MSU and Law Profession; (2) Classroom Dynamics and Perceptions; (3) Student and Faculty Relations; and (4) Background. The survey question responses were placed in alphabetical order to ensure as unbiased results as possible. Additionally, the survey results were completely anonymous; only the gender, age, ethnicity, and a randomly assigned eight-digit number were used to identify the respondents. The survey questions are reproduced in the Appendix.

## B. Survey Response Rates and Respondent Demographics

A link to the survey was emailed to students on March 30, 2010 from the Office of Student Affairs. Additionally, the leaders of all student organizations were asked to urge their members and fellow classmates to complete the survey, and several faculty members made announcements during their classes to encourage participation. Of the 955 MSU Law students, 271 students completed the survey, representing a 28.4% response rate.<sup>36</sup>

A portrait of the MSU Law student body, including its gender, class year, race, reasons for attending law school, and career goals, is painted below. The sample of students who responded correlated fairly generally by gender, class year, and race/ethnicity. Although participation in the survey was voluntary, the correlation suggests that the responses reflect the general perceptions of MSU Law students.

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34. See generally Bashi & Iskander, *supra* note 4; Cassman & Pruitt, *supra* note 12; Guinier, Fine & Balin, *supra* note 12; Herden, *supra* note 6; Homer & Schwartz, *supra* note 12; Weiss & Melling, *supra* note 3. See also *supra* text accompanying note 12.

35. Men are two to three times more likely to make partner in a private law firm than women, and minority women make up less than 1% of equity partnerships in law firms. RHODE, *supra* note 9, at 8. Rainmaking, the ability to bring business to firms, is critical to advancement in law firm ranks. NAT'L ASS'N OF WOMEN LAWYERS AND THE NAWL FOUND., REPORT OF THE FOURTH ANNUAL NATIONAL SURVEY ON RETENTION AND PROMOTION OF WOMEN IN LAW FIRMS 8 (2009). At the largest firms, women are not among any of the top ten rainmakers. *Id.* at 9. Women are confronted with the "double bind," for example women are criticized as being abrasive when a man is regarded as being assertive for identical behavior. RHODE, *supra* note 9, at 6.

36. See ABA REPORT, *supra* note 25, at 461; Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, All Responses Report 33 (May 12, 2010) (on file with author) [hereinafter All Responses Report].

### 1. *Response Rates*

Men students responded at higher rates than women students.<sup>37</sup> 54% of the respondents were men, and 47% of respondents were women.<sup>38</sup> The high response rate by men students was not unexpected because nearly 61% of the student body was men.<sup>39</sup> However, women students responded in rates much higher than their enrollment rates.<sup>40</sup> 39% of enrolled students are women, but 46% of respondents were women.<sup>41</sup>

The number of respondents correlated fairly well with class year.<sup>42</sup> 40% of respondents were 3Ls,<sup>43</sup> 33% of respondents were 2Ls,<sup>44</sup> and 27% of respondents were 1Ls.<sup>45</sup> The 3Ls represent 36% of the student body, the 2Ls represent 34%, and the 1Ls represent 30% of the student body.<sup>46</sup>

Minority students responded in numbers slightly less than is representative of total enrollment numbers. 16.5% of MSU Law students identified as minority or international students,<sup>47</sup> yet only about 11% of the respondents identified as being a minority student.<sup>48</sup> 84% of respondents identified as White.<sup>49</sup> 3% of respondents identified as Other (including mixed).<sup>50</sup> 3% identified as Hispanic/Latino/a.<sup>51</sup> 2% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander.<sup>52</sup> 1.5% identified as Black, and 1.5% identified as Native American.<sup>53</sup>

### 2. *MSU Law Students' Career Goals*

Men and women MSU Law students chose to attend law school for reasons that align with traditional gender values. More women than men

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37. See All Responses Report, *supra* note 36, at 33.

38. See *id.*

39. ABA REPORT, *supra* note 25, at 468.

40. See *id.*; All Responses Report, *supra* note 36, at 33.

41. See ABA REPORT, *supra* note 25, at 468; All Responses Report, *supra* note 36, at 33.

42. See ABA REPORT, *supra* note 25, at 468; All Responses Report, *supra* note 36, at 34.

43. Including students participating in the Ottawa Program. All Responses Report, *supra* note 36, at 34.

44. Including students participating in the Ottawa Program. *Id.*

45. See *id.* at 34.

46. ABA REPORT, *supra* note 25, at 468.

47. *Id.* 10.4% of students did not identify race or ethnicity. *Id.*

48. 5% of survey takers declined to state his or her race or ethnicity. All Responses Report, *supra* note 36, at 35.

49. See *id.*

50. *Id.*

51. *Id.*

52. *Id.*

53. *Id.*



chose to attend law school to “serve society/advance a cause” and for the “[i]ntellectual stimulation and training.”<sup>54</sup> The women respondents chose “[l]ike to argue and debate” as the third reason why they chose to attend law school.<sup>55</sup> The men were more motivated by “[p]restige of the legal profession” and desire to “earn a lot of money.”<sup>56</sup>

MSU Law students expected to work in the same top five fields upon graduation, but in considerably different percentages based upon gender.<sup>57</sup> The jobs students anticipated having upon graduation also reflects traditional gender roles; more men expected to work for law firms and women expected to work in government and public interest work.<sup>58</sup> Despite the large number of students expecting to work for a law firm upon graduation, nearly 74% of women and men MSU Law students stated that achieving a work–life balance was the most important factor when they considered their future career plans.<sup>59</sup>

## II. THE DATA: STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES AT MSU LAW

### A. Students and Class Participation

A student’s gender seems to influence how he or she perceives classroom behavior. Nearly half of the men responded that they did not think “cold calling” or using volunteers influenced how often men or women participated in class.<sup>60</sup> The women, however, disagreed. Many women respondents who provided open text explanations in response to this question stated that men dominated classroom discussions, and even some of the men agreed.<sup>61</sup> One male student stated, “Some people would never volunteer, and this group seems disproportionately female, while the group most likely to

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54. Compare Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 1, Question No. 1, with Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Male Responses Report 1, Question No. 1 (Apr. 18, 2010) (on file with author) [hereinafter Male Responses Report].

55. Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 1, Question No. 1.

56. *Id.*

57. *Id.*; Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 3, Question No. 3.

58. Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 3, Question No. 3; Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 3, Question No. 3.

59. Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 4, Question No. 4; Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 4, Question No. 4.

60. 46.1% or 65/141 of the male respondents. Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 19, Question No. 21.

61. Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 37; *see, e.g.*, Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 37.

volunteer discussion seems disproportionately male, so without random or structured ‘on-call’ policies, more men would participate.”<sup>62</sup>

The women relied on gender stereotypes to explain classroom behavior. One student stated:

I think women are much more afraid of being called on and not knowing the answer than men are—therefore women are more likely to speak when they can volunteer on questions they feel confident about. I think this relates back to the stereotype of women being inferior at law and thus women don’t want to answer a question wrong and further this prejudice.<sup>63</sup>

Another woman respondent also relied on stereotypes to explain classroom behavior:

First, women are less likely to talk unless called upon—this is cultural and these cultural stereotypes are reinforced strongly in the law school classroom. It is as if [m]en are allowed to think and have an opinion and women are expected to be passive and listen. After a few weeks of not being called on—women quit participating.<sup>64</sup>

Perhaps one explanation for these differences is the level of perceived competence of the men and women students; the men students reported feeling more competent than the women.<sup>65</sup> When asked if respondents agree with the statement, “I feel that I am a competent person, at least as much as others,” 92% of the men stated they felt as competent as others, compared with only 78% of the women.<sup>66</sup>

The size of the class also had a direct impact on students’ willingness to volunteer in class. 64% of women are “often” or “always” more likely to volunteer depending upon the size, compared with less than half of the men.<sup>67</sup> One women student stated, “I just perceive that women are more collaborative and would be more willing to participate in environments that are of that nature as well.”<sup>68</sup>

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62. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75693439, identified as a 2L male of other (including mixed) race or ethnicity, 25-29 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

63. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75700745, identified as a 1L white female, 22-24 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

64. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 77286289, identified as a 1L white female, 30-39 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

65. See Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 7; Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 7.

66. Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 7, Question No. 7; Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 7, Question No. 7.

67. Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 21, Question No. 24; Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 21, Question No. 24.

68. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 74634222, identified as a 2L white female, 25-29 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

The Socratic method has a long history in law school pedagogy and continues to be the primary tool used by law school professors.<sup>69</sup> The method also has a number of critics.<sup>70</sup> Men and women at MSU Law disagreed about whether the Socratic method was an effective teaching style. Over half of the male respondents liked the Socratic method,<sup>71</sup> while over half of the women respondents *disliked* the method as a teaching tool.<sup>72</sup> Only one woman student believed that the Socratic method allowed a free exchange of ideas with the professor, compared with twelve men students.<sup>73</sup>

One male respondent chastised me for the methodology of the survey:

Abby, I am disappointed because it appears you presuppose women are somehow disadvantaged in law school. . . . [A]s a man[,] I thought not enough answers allowed for the fact that maybe there was no discrimination, or that women were prefer[red] by [professors]. I did not notice any discrimination by my professors . . . .<sup>74</sup>

## B. The Approachability Factor: Faculty and Student Relationships

MSU Law men reported that they were much more comfortable approaching faculty members than were women. The men went directly to the professor if they had a question regarding the material; men either raised their hands during class or asked the professor about the material after class.<sup>75</sup> Men students felt more comfortable visiting faculty members during their posted office hours than the women students.<sup>76</sup> These results mirror the students' responses at University of California Davis, suggesting that student/faculty relationships favor men.<sup>77</sup>

69. Jennifer L. Rosato, *The Socratic Method and Women Law Students: Humanize, Don't Feminize*, 7 S. CAL. REV. L. & WOMEN'S STUD. 37, 37 (1997).

70. See generally sources cited *supra* note 12. See also *supra* text accompanying note 12.

71. 57.70% or 82/142 of the male respondents strongly agree or agree with the phrase: "I like the Socratic Method as a teaching style." Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 22, Question No. 25.

72. 60% or 74/124 of the female respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the phrase: "I like the Socratic Method as a teaching style." Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 22, Question No. 25.

73. *Id.*

74. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 76315387, identified as a 2L white male, 30-39 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

75. 42.66% or 61/143 of the male respondents. Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 11, Question No. 11.

76. Question 27 asked: "How comfortable do you feel visiting a professor during his/her posted office hours?" Students were presented a scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being "very comfortable" and 5 being "very uncomfortable." The men's responses began with "very comfortable" and descended in numerical order. *Id.* at 24, Question No. 27. The women, however, were much more ambivalent. About a third of the women were neutral about visiting a professor during her posted office hours. Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 24, Question No. 27.

77. Cassman & Pruitt, *supra* note 12, at 1263.

The survey response narratives illustrated that the men students seem to feel entitled to the professors' time. One student asserted, "I pay \$30K a year to come here. It's [the professor's] job to be responsive to me."<sup>78</sup> Another student stated that "[t]here is nothing that would make me uncomfortable—they are paid to [be] accessible and to instruct, approaching them [during office hours] is just an extension of the classroom."<sup>79</sup> Yet another student agreed that "[this] is my time not his or hers."<sup>80</sup>

The women were concerned that the professor would not think that they were smart. For instance, 66.67% of women *agree* with the statement "I feel unsure of myself when a professor disagrees with me."<sup>81</sup> Conversely, 60% of the men respondents *disagreed* with the exact same statement.<sup>82</sup> The women's lack of confidence led them not to seek faculty members' help to clarify the material covered in class. Over half of the women did not ask their professors if they had a question about the material; they instead relied on other students or reference materials.<sup>83</sup> The women's narrative responses illustrate their fears. "One on one, I would be embarrassed if I didn't know everything we were learning in class."<sup>84</sup> Another female student stated, "[I]f I go to office hours, I feel more put on the spot . . . [I] feel like I should have already figured out the answer myself, like going in is a cop-out."<sup>85</sup> More simply stated, a "fear of looking ignorant" about the material kept one woman student from visiting professors' office hours.<sup>86</sup>

Insecurity was not the only factor that kept women from interacting with professors. Women students reported encounters with faculty members whose behavior conveyed to the women that their questions were not worth interrupting the professors' "real work." "I have been told [before] that [the professor was] busy working on a project, even though that was their posted

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78. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75696527, identified as a 3L white male, 30-39 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

79. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75703688, identified as a 3L white male, 25-29 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

80. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75716590, identified as a 3L male Native American, Transfer/Ottawa Program student, 30-39 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

81. 82/123 female respondents. Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 12, Question No. 13.

82. 86/143 male respondents. Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 12, Question No. 13.

83. 50.4% or 63/125 female respondents. Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 11, Question No. 12.

84. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75694250, identified as a 3L white female, 25-29 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

85. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75818503, identified as a 3L white female, 30-39 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

86. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75697336, identified as a 1L white female, 22-24 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

time.”<sup>87</sup> Another woman student reported, “[e]ven though professors have office hours, some tend to ‘discourage’ the office hours,”<sup>88</sup> and “[s]ome professors seem irritated when you come to office hours.”<sup>89</sup> One male student reported a similar interaction, but had a very different response than the female students, stating: “I had one professor that was clearly annoyed at my presence in his office, which didn’t bother me because I figured it was his job to help me understand the material.”<sup>90</sup>

Two students’ responses contrast nicely the different interactions that men and women had with faculty members and highlight either a misperception or implicit bias that confronted the women. One man articulated this about his professors: “They are individuals who are concerned about the learning experience of their students[,] so they have always been helpful and courteous with any questions I’ve had . . . . [I]n turn, I’ve been comfortable approaching them when necessary.”<sup>91</sup> Conversely, one woman stated that she does not go to office hours, “[b]ecause I don’t feel prepared enough to ask them questions. I keep planning on sitting down and formulating strong questions, but I never feel confident.”<sup>92</sup>

### C. Students Are Not Developing Mentoring Relationships

Men and women at MSU Law are not developing mentoring relationships with professors. 61% of women respondents<sup>93</sup> and two-thirds of the men respondents<sup>94</sup> do not have faculty mentors. Of the MSU Law students that have formed mentoring relationships, men and women have formed the relationships in different manners. 31% of the women respondents developed a mentor relationship due to class participation,<sup>95</sup> 16% through involvement in a student organization,<sup>96</sup> 14% through writing papers,<sup>97</sup> 10%

87. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75693990, identified as a 2L white female, 22-24 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

88. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75700076, identified as a 3L white female, 22-24 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

89. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75702104, identified as a 3L white female, 25-29 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

90. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75730150, identified as a 3L white male, 30-39 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

91. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 77544448, identified as a 3L white male, 25-29 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

92. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 77020177, identified as a 1L white female, 22-24 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

93. 60.8% or 76/125 female respondents. Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 26, Question No. 30.

94. 66.67% or 96/144 male respondents. Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 26, Question No. 30.

95. Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 27, Question No. 31.

96. *Id.*

97. *Id.*

being a teaching assistant,<sup>98</sup> and 8% through clinical programs.<sup>99</sup> 26% of the men formed mentoring relationships through class participation,<sup>100</sup> 16% being a professor's research assistant,<sup>101</sup> 16% from writing papers,<sup>102</sup> 10% through clinical programs,<sup>103</sup> 10% through involvement in a student organization,<sup>104</sup> and 8% as a teaching assistant.<sup>105</sup>

Both men and women MSU Law students sought mentors of the same sex. 55% of the women students had mentors that were women,<sup>106</sup> and 76.5% of men students had mentors that were men.<sup>107</sup> According to statistics provided by the dean's office, 138 professors on faculty were men, and 62 professors were women.<sup>108</sup> If this trend continues, the women faculty would have significantly more mentees than the men faculty, simply as a result of the fewer numbers of women faculty on staff.

### III. IMPLICATIONS: THE ROAD TO EQUALITY BEGINS IN LAW SCHOOL

Law school often fails women because legal education ignores women's experiences and values.<sup>109</sup> Through classroom pedagogy, the Socratic method, classroom dynamics, and faculty and student relationships, law school students begin to develop legal minds.<sup>110</sup> Students react differently to

98. *Id.*

99. *Id.*

100. Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 27, Question No. 31.

101. *Id.*

102. *Id.*

103. *Id.*

104. *Id.*

105. *Id.*

106. Female Responses Report, *supra* note 14, at 28, Question No. 32.

107. Male Responses Report, *supra* note 54, at 28, Question No. 32.

108. A great deal of thanks goes to Lori Blankenship for compiling these statistics for me.

	Men	Women
Tenure	16	9
Tenure-Track	7	5
Visitors	5	0
Lecturer In Law/Professor in Residence	3	2
Fixed Term Faculty	2	8
Adjuncts – Fall Semester	55	20
Adjuncts – Spring Semester*	50	18

\*The number of adjunct faculty is broken down per semester; however, some faculty may teach both semesters, so there will be a little overlap.

109. Deborah L. Rhode, *Missing Questions: Feminist Perspectives on Legal Education*, 45 STAN. L. REV. 1547, 1554 (1993).

110. See Fiona Kay & Elizabeth Gorman, *Women in the Legal Profession*, 4 ANN. REV. L. & SOC. SCI. 299, 301 (2008).

this experience<sup>111</sup> and form lasting impressions of the legal profession.<sup>112</sup> As the survey results reveal, female and male MSU Law students experience law school differently.<sup>113</sup>

It is a common misconception that as more women graduate from law school, many of the issues that women face in the legal profession will resolve themselves automatically.<sup>114</sup> However, a greater number of women entering the legal profession is not sufficient to eliminate the barriers that women face.<sup>115</sup> In fact, based upon the current rates of women entering the legal profession, it will take many decades for women to become 50% of the partners in law firms.<sup>116</sup> These biases should be directly addressed, and law schools do not have to wait until after graduation to correct these misperceptions; they can begin now.

#### A. Ensure Dynamic, Active, and Engaged Faculty and Student Relations in the Classroom

The traditional law school format “assumes that learning is a rational, largely unidirectional process; the professor seeks to transmit knowledge about what law is and does through reasoned discourse.”<sup>117</sup> This format has significant costs beyond the classroom: it impacts workplace relationships between partners and associates, lawyers and clients, and professionals and support staff by replicating the dynamics of the law school classroom.<sup>118</sup> The “gunners” of the classroom continue their bad manners by interrupting and redirecting conversations, and attorneys do not form connections with their very human clients.<sup>119</sup> These authoritarian styles mimic the learned law school classroom behavior.<sup>120</sup> MSU Law is not immune from this behavior. As one woman respondent stated, “You always have the gunners who will raise their hands all the time no matter what method [of teaching the professor] uses.”<sup>121</sup>

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111. *See id.*

112. Bashi & Iskander, *supra* note 4, at 392.

113. *See supra* discussion Part II.

114. WOMEN’S BAR ASS’N. OF THE D.C., INITIATIVE ON ADVANCEMENT & RETENTION OF WOMEN, CREATING PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS: ADVANCING AND RETAINING WOMEN IN TODAY’S LAW FIRMS 6 (2006) [hereinafter CREATING PATHWAYS].

115. Herden, *supra* note 6, at 569.

116. CREATING PATHWAYS, *supra* note 114, at 6.

117. Rhode, *supra* note 109, at 1555; *see also* Susan H. Williams, *Legal Education, Feminist Epistemology, and the Socratic Method*, 45 STAN. L. REV. 1571, 1574 (1993).

118. Rhode, *supra* note 109, at 1556.

119. *Id.*

120. *Id.*

121. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75693594, identified as a 2L white female, 25-29 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

The Socratic method often leaves students feeling scared and isolated.<sup>122</sup> “The impersonal atmosphere and traditional manner of instruction in many law classes socializes law students to learn passively and to fail to question their professors and their education.”<sup>123</sup> One student agreed with this assessment:

We all know that our professors are brilliant. . . . By the time I’m in my second year of law school, I’m sick of the arrogance. Let your guard down and advise me. I promise you that I will learn far more when I’m not scared to death to be made to look like an ass in class.<sup>124</sup>

The traditional law school format has significant costs for its female students. Females do not respond to the Socratic method in the same numbers as men. Women are not as confident, and they do not feel as competent generally or in their ability to answer questions in class. Also, class size directly correlates to women’s willingness to participate in class discussions. These differences are significant because female law students carry these perceptions into the legal profession.

Just as MSU Law students’ perceptions of the Socratic method are generally drawn upon gender lines, the results of a number of other similar studies suggest that women also participate less in the classroom.<sup>125</sup> Fear and professor bias are often suggested as reasons for non-participation.<sup>126</sup> Additionally, rewarding the “gunners” in the classroom has an adverse impact on female students, and it is also a bad teaching practice.<sup>127</sup> Even when faculty members do not like certain students dominating classroom discussion, students perceive the professor’s inaction or failure to stop the students’ conduct as welcoming the behavior.<sup>128</sup>

The classroom is the first contact students have with faculty, and it is important that these are positive interactions. It is from these connections that students form their first perceptions of the legal profession.<sup>129</sup> Therefore, the classroom provides the threshold to law school success; students and faculty members “size each other up in the classroom and may seek one another out based on their interactions in class.”<sup>130</sup> This can be particularly

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122. Herden, *supra* note 6, at 557.

123. *Id.* at 556.

124. Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75765908, identified as a 2L white male, 25-29 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

125. See Bashi & Iskander, *supra* note 4, at 412; Cassman & Pruitt *supra* note 12, at 1220; Guinier, Fine & Balin, *supra* note 12, at 3-4; Homer & Schwartz, *supra* note 12, at 29; Weiss & Melling, *supra* note 2, at 1300.

126. Weiss & Melling, *supra* note 3, at 1333, 1338 (suggesting that fear is the result of non-participation).

127. Bashi & Iskander, *supra* note 4, at 414.

128. *Id.*

129. *Id.* at 403.

130. *Id.*



detrimental to female students who do not participate in class and do not avail themselves of these opportunities.

There is a pervasive theory in law school that some students have an innate legal talent.<sup>131</sup> This “myth of effortless genius” claims that either you have what it takes or you do not, and no amount of work will overcome this deficit.<sup>132</sup> When students stop participating in classroom discussions because they do not want to compete for classroom airtime, or because they have not measured up to their own expectations, they begin to disengage from their legal education.<sup>133</sup> Students that disengage perpetuate the myth of effortless genius. The very structure of law school also contributes to the myth: mandatory grading curves, student ranking, a single final exam determining a student’s entire grade, and exclusive membership in law review and moot court.<sup>134</sup> Students who remove themselves from competitive classroom discussions tend to disengage from other facets of law school life: course preparation, student life, and extracurricular activities, the removal from which leads to “self-undertraining.”<sup>135</sup>

Developing women’s potential in law school will have a significant impact on the legal field, and that change can begin today. First, faculty and administrators must understand the “gendered aspects of classroom dynamics.”<sup>136</sup> Classroom dynamics are crucial to eliminating barriers.<sup>137</sup> Administrators and faculty should promote teaching strategies that increase student participation. Student participation should be less competitive and more interactive.<sup>138</sup> Humanize the Socratic method; use it as an exchange of ideas.<sup>139</sup> And most importantly, faculty must ensure the mutual respect and tolerance of all participants’ contributions.<sup>140</sup>

In response to this survey, the Women’s Law Caucus, the student organization dedicated to fostering its members’ educational and professional growth, hosted a lunch with women professors and administrators called “Meet the Women of MSU Law.” The lunch was organized to confront the findings of the survey and allowed women law students an opportunity to meet MSU Law’s women faculty and administrators in an informal setting.

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131. Irene Segal Ayers, *The Undertraining of Lawyers and Its Effect on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in the Legal Profession* 117 (N.Y. Univ. Sch. of Law, Pub. Law & Legal Theory, Working Paper No. 09-31, 2009), available at [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1404663](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1404663).

132. *Id.* at 114.

133. *Id.*

134. *Id.*; see also Homer & Schwartz, *supra* note 12, at 40.

135. Ayers, *supra* note 131, at 117.

136. Bashi & Iskander, *supra* note 4, at 403.

137. See *id.*

138. RHODE, *supra* note 9, at 37.

139. Rosato, *supra* note 69, at 40-41.

140. RHODE, *supra* note 9, at 37.

This past academic year also marked the first year of the Women in Law Leadership Council, a group of twenty 2L and twenty 3L women student leaders who met monthly to address the particular needs of women law students and to foster women student leaders' development.

Additionally, MSU Law should celebrate MSU Law students' achievements, particularly its women's successes more explicitly.<sup>141</sup> For the fourth year in a row, the editor-in-chief of the MSU Law Review is a woman. Encouraging women's participation will keep them engaged and will promote more diverse classroom discussions, which will have a lasting effect on the legal profession.

## B. Mentoring

Mentoring is a powerful tool that extends the boundaries of the classroom. An effective mentor will offer guidance regarding which classes to take, write letters of recommendation, influence career choices, and guide students through the challenges of law school. Once in the legal profession, mentors contribute to greater job satisfaction, higher income, and promotions.<sup>142</sup> A mentor can protect against implicit and overt discrimination and can provide a source of validation to experiences.<sup>143</sup> Mentoring benefits not only the mentee, but also the legal profession as a whole. Lawyers who have mentors report greater job satisfaction, are more likely to make partner, and are less likely to leave their jobs.<sup>144</sup> Unfortunately, women and minorities are disproportionately affected by a lack of mentoring programs. High-level women executives often have highly-educated relatives and mothers of higher social and economic stature,<sup>145</sup> men and non-minority attorneys frequently have attorneys in the family, which allows them to learn about law

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141. One male respondent believes that women experience greater academic success at MSU Law. He stated that he expects to encounter gender discrimination when he enters law practice and believes that "[w]omen are preferred/accepted over men":

There was only one choice in the discrimination section for employment that allowed you to [choose] that you think women are selected more than men for jobs. I think that was somewhat unfair as it seemed kind of token and just kind of thrown in there. Women at MSU seem to be getting selected more for firm jobs and positions in many student organizations. I dislike thinking this way at all but I just want a job.

Abigail Rury, MSU & Law Profession, Respondent No. 75706760, identified as a 2L white male, 30-39 years old (July 19, 2012) (on file with author).

142. Cindy A. Schipani et al., *Pathways for Women to Obtain Positions of Organizational Leadership: The Significance of Mentoring and Networking*, 16 DUKE J. GENDER L. & POL'Y 89, 100 (2009).

143. *Id.*

144. Julie A. Oseid, *When Big Brother is Watching [Out for] You: Mentoring Lawyers, Choosing a Mentor, and Sharing Ten Virtues from My Mentor*, 59 S.C. L. REV. 393, 401 (2008).

145. Schipani et al., *supra* note 142, at 95.

firm culture informally.<sup>146</sup> Conversely, women of color are frequently the first in their families to go to college, and therefore they lack the built-in networking and support system of their colleagues.<sup>147</sup>

Mentoring teaches new attorneys the “stated and unstated practices and policies of the legal profession . . . . [T]hey receive better and more challenging work; they are included in social events that can lead to professional opportunities; and they acquire marketing skills.”<sup>148</sup> Therefore, attorneys who know the secret rules of the game are more likely to succeed. One study found that 52% of white men had learned that developing a client list impacted their compensation, but only 8% of women of color had learned the same lesson.<sup>149</sup> Women of color, who face greater obstacles because of their lack of family connections, desired more and better mentoring.<sup>150</sup> Teaching women of color the unspoken rules of the legal profession may remove barriers to discrimination by making women aware of the gender and social biases that play a role in job assignments.<sup>151</sup>

Despite the importance of mentoring, law professors are rewarded with pay and promotions based primarily upon their research and contributions to the academic field, and not because they have developed mentoring relationships with their students. In response to my study and in recognition of the importance of mentoring in the legal profession, the dean of MSU Law, Joan Howarth, amended faculty evaluations to include a section for faculty–student mentoring relationships, which incentivizes this crucial element of students’ success. However, mentoring is a skill that must be taught; faculty committees should host sessions on how to develop mentoring relationships with students. Part of the mentoring training should include approachability to ensure that faculty members truly have an open door policy. Mentoring relationships frequently begin with classroom participation, and women reported they were uncomfortable approaching their professors.<sup>152</sup> Ensuring that faculty members are approachable will also produce a positive classroom environment.

#### CONCLUSION

Law school does more than impart knowledge of the law; it socializes its students so that they learn to think and act like lawyers.<sup>153</sup> Training a generation of future lawyers requires preparing its students for the challeng-

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146. CREATING PATHWAYS, *supra* note 114, at 20.

147. *Id.* at 20 n.20.

148. Oseid, *supra* note 144, at 406.

149. CREATING PATHWAYS, *supra* note 114, at 21.

150. *Id.* at 20.

151. Schipani et al., *supra* note 142, at 97-98.

152. *See supra* Section II.B.

153. *See Herden, supra* note 6, at 560; Kay & Gorman, *supra* note 110, at 301.

es by giving them the tools they need to succeed. The experiences women law students confront affect not only all law students, but also the legal community. I hope this research and the Gender and the Legal Profession's Pipeline to Power Symposium encourage MSU Law students to pause and reflect on their legal education. To all the students whose voices have been stifled, "I can hear you."

## APPENDIX: THE SURVEY

## MSU &amp; LAW PROFESSION

1. Which of the following best describes your reasons for choosing to attend law school? Please select no more than two reasons.

- Desire to earn a lot of money
- Family tradition (family members are lawyers)
- Intellectual stimulation and training
- Like to argue and debate
- Prestige of the legal profession
- To serve society/advance a cause
- Unable to find a satisfactory job without a graduate degree
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

2. When selecting to attend MSU College of Law, which of the following factors most influenced your decision to attend: (Choose the BEST answer.)

- Availability of scholarships
- Big Ten School/Research Institution
- Career Opportunities
- Location in Michigan
- MSU sports success
- Part-time program
- Presence of minority faculty and/or minority students
- Programs MSU Law offers
- Reputation
- Rankings

3. Which of the following best describes the kind of job you expect to have immediately after law school?

- Academic
- In-house counsel for a corporation
- Government
- Job unrelated to law
- Law firm
- Military
- Public Interest/Non-profit organization
- Sole practitioner
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Of the following factors, which are the two most important considerations in your career plans?

- Advancing a cause you believe in/opportunity to serve society (making a difference)
- High salary or other financial considerations
- Power/prestige

Work/life balance

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

5. On the whole, how do you feel about MSU Law?

Like it

Like it more than I dislike it

Neutral

Dislike it more than I like it

Dislike it

6. Overall, how do you feel about your life since entering law school?

Delighted

Pleased

Mostly Satisfied

Mixed (about equally satisfied and dissatisfied)

Mostly dissatisfied

Unhappy

Terrible

7. Comparing yourself to others at MSU Law, would you agree that the statement, "I feel that I am a competent person, at least as much as others" is:

Always true

Often true

Sometimes true

Rarely true

Never true

8. Do you anticipate encountering discrimination based on gender, race/ethnicity, or sexual orientation when you seek employment following law school?

Yes

No (Proceed to Question # 11)

9. Which of the following reasons do you perceive as being the most likely reason for discrimination while seeking employment following law school?

Gender (Proceed to following Question #10)

Race/Ethnicity

Sexual Orientation

10. If you anticipate encountering some type of discrimination, which of the following best describe your concerns? (Please RANK the top THREE answers)

Employers think women will leave/have to interrupt their career for family reasons

Glass ceiling still in place

It's a man's world/the "old boy's club"

The field is dominated by males/white males/more men than women attend law school

- Women are always discriminated against; I expect discrimination because I'm a woman; it's always harder for women
- Women aren't perceived as tough/strong
- Women are preferred/accepted over men
- Women are still paid less than men
- Women are viewed as less intelligent than men

CLASSROOM DYNAMICS AND PERCEPTIONS

11. How often do you usually attempt to do the following in class?

	Never	About once every four weeks	About once every two weeks	Once a week or more
A. Ask questions in class				
B. Volunteer answers in class				
C. Ask professors questions after class				

12. When you have questions about the material presented in class, which one of the following options BEST describes what you do? Please check only one.

- I ask another student to explain it.
- I ask the professor about it after class.
- I don't do anything.
- I don't worry about it until I prepare for exams.
- I look up the answer in a reference source.
- I raise my hand and ask the professor for clarification.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please describe)

13. Overall, with respect to your classroom experiences, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
When I speak in class, I believe that my peers respect what I have to say.				

I feel unsure of myself when a professor disagrees with me.				
Speaking in class is vital in learning the law.				
I lose my confidence whenever I am in class.				

14. In class, do you think that the students of one gender ask more questions and/or volunteer more answers than students of the other gender?

No, men and women speak equally

Yes, women speak more

Yes, men speak more

15. Do you think students of one gender or another are called on more?

Yes

No

16. If yes, which gender of student is called on more?

Male

Female

17. Do you think the nature or content of classroom interactions between professors and students is affected by the gender of the student?

Yes

No

18. Do you think the nature or content of classroom interactions between professors and students is affected by the gender of the professor?

Yes

No

19. Do you notice a difference in the way your professors address men's versus women's comments or questions?

Yes

No

20. If yes, what differences do you notice?

Professors are more negative or critical of women's comments or questions.

Professors are more negative or critical of men's comments or questions.

Professors are less demanding/harsh of women's comments or questions

Professors are less demanding/harsh of men's comments or questions.

Professors are more respectful of women's comments or questions.



Professors are more respectful of men’s comments or questions.

Other:

21. Do you think the way a professor runs the classroom discussion (e.g., cold calling, using volunteers, assigning on-call panels, etc....) influences how much men and women participate in class?

Yes

No

Unsure

22. If yes, how so?

23. Do you think that men and women students at MSU College of Law experience equal academic success?

Yes

Neutral

No, I think men experience greater academic success

No, I think women experience greater academic success

24. Does the size of the class impact your willingness to volunteer in class?

Always true

Often true

Sometimes true

Rarely true

Never true

25. In general, in your classes at MSU Law that have use the Socratic Method, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I like the Socratic Method as a teaching style.				
When I am called on I am able to answer as well as most people.				
The Socratic Method allows me to exchange ideas freely with the professor.				
I would be embarrassed to pass when a professor calls on me.				

STUDENT/FACULTY RELATIONS

26. During the past fall semester, approximately how often did you go to see a professor during his or her office hours?

Never

Once or twice per semester

At least once a month

At least once every two weeks

At least once a week.

27. How comfortable do you feel visiting a professor during his/her posted office hours?

Very comfortable 1 2 3 4 5 Very uncomfortable

28. How comfortable do you feel approaching a professor after class or during breaks?

Very comfortable 1 2 3 4 5 Very uncomfortable

29. Why do you feel more or less comfortable approaching professors in these various ways?

30. Have you developed any mentoring relationships with a professor at MSU College of Law?

Yes

No (if no, proceed to question #33)

31. How have you formed your mentoring relationship at MSU College of Law? (Please selected the BEST answer)

Class Participation

Clinic

Involvement in Student Organization

Research Assistant

Small Group

Staff Member/Administrator

Teaching Assistant

Writing Papers (ULWR, etc.)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

32. What is the gender of your MSU College of Law mentor?

Male

Female

33. Have you ever requested a letter of recommendation from a professor?

Yes

No

34. Do you observe differences in the way men and women students interact with faculty outside of the classroom?

Yes

No

35. If yes, what differences do you notice and what do you think accounts for these differences?

36. Have you had any women professors at MSU College of Law?

Yes

No (proceed to question #38)

37. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Difference
I was more likely to speak in a class taught by a woman professor than one taught by a male professor.					
I felt more comfortable with my female professor's approach to legal thinking.					
I have chosen a particular course because it was taught by a woman.					

#### BACKGROUND

38. Are you:

Male

Female

39. In what year of law school are you:

1L

2L

2L Transfer/Ottawa Program

3L

3L Transfer/Ottawa Program

40. Do you identify yourself as:

Asian/Pacific Islander  
Black  
Hispanic/Latino/a  
Native American  
Other (including mixed)  
White  
Decline to state

41. How old are you:

Under 22 years  
22 - 24 years  
25 - 29 years  
30 - 39 years  
40+ years

Please feel free to use this space to provide any additional comments or details that have not been captured by this survey.

If you are interested in discussing any of these issues further, please contact me at [abbyrury@gmail.com](mailto:abbyrury@gmail.com).

**THIS IS THE END OF THE SURVEY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.**

