

EXTRA

EDITION

HARVARD LAW RECORD

VOL. 48 NO. 5A

MARCH 11, 1969

FREE

Committee Recommends J.D.

The Harvard Law School Faculty meets this afternoon to consider a recommendation from its Committee on the J.D. degree urging that the J.D. be adopted as the Law School's first professional law degree instead of the LL.B.

In a memorandum to the faculty, Professors James Chadbourn, John Mansfield, and Ernest Brown, Chairman, stated:

"The Committee appointed by Dean Bok to consider the matter of the J.D. degree recommends to the Faculty that it recommend to the President and Fellows:

1. That the degree of Juris Doctor (J.D.) (with honors as individually recommended) hereafter be awarded to graduates of the Harvard Law School as the first degree in law, in lieu of the degree of Bachelor of Laws heretofore awarded.
2. That the degree of Juris Doctor be made available retroactively to those graduates of the Harvard Law School now holding the degree of Bachelor of Laws who wish to have new certificates issued to them, upon the payment of whatever amount is determined to be appropriate to cover the costs involved."

The Committee report cites a resolution approved on April 10, 1902: "Voted that the Faculty recommend to the President and Fellows that the students who have a bachelor's degree in Arts, Science, Philosophy or Literature and who have fulfilled all the requirements for graduation in the Harvard Law School receive hereafter the degree of Juris Doctor instead of Legum Baccalaureus."

On October 19, 1909 the Faculty voted "that the degree of J.D. be given to persons who,

after completing the third year at a college whose degree admits the holder to the School, reside four years at the School and pass successfully the end of each year examinations upon a full year's work."

In today's sixteen-page memorandum, arguments for and against change were summarized. "Appropriateness of change" was not elaborated upon. With regard to uniformity, the factor "is of some weight, and (that) there is some value in having a single and standard styling for the first degree in law." "Sparse" evidence of "hardship or discrimination against holders of the LL.B." were summarized. With regard to "opinion," "it nevertheless exists...And some of it is as intense as it is unquestioning."

Against change: The doctoral degree is not necessarily a research degree. There will be some impact upon the graduate law program. As an "exercise in academic evaluation," this argument is not of "significant weight against change."

"Finally, we feel we should express regret for the necessity of imposing upon the Faculty a Report of these dimensions upon an issue that we must conclude is of minimal significance. But, if it was to be dealt with it seemed appropriate to canvass the principal arguments that have been advanced."

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Published Thursdays ten times each semester by The Harvard Law School Record Corporation, 23 Everett St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138. Telephone 868-7600, extension 4418. Subscription price: \$2.50 semester, \$5 year mailed; students, \$2.50 year distributed at the law school. Individual copies: 15 cents at the law school, 25 cents mailed. Second class postage paid at Boston, Mass.

