



Faculty Lunches with the Dean (No. 29) (Aimee Wall)

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Aimee Wall was the other faculty member at the most recent Faculty Lunches with the Dean. She talked about her work on important legislation during this last General Assembly, and how that work will continue in the coming months.

The work Aimee described involved legislation sponsored by [Senator Tamara Barringer](#) and [Representative Sarah Stevens](#) that would have abolished the 100 county departments of social



services and created a new regional system with no more than 30 regions. As with most complicated legislation, the bill went through a number of changes before it was passed. [The final version](#) requires the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a plan for regional offices charged with the supervision of county social services. The state's role will be increased, but county departments are not eliminated.

The law directs the School of Government to convene an 18-member working group with legislative co-chairs that will make two stages of recommendations to HHS. The first stage requires the committee to make recommendations about the nature of regional supervision, and the second stage focuses on inter-agency collaboration and regionalization.



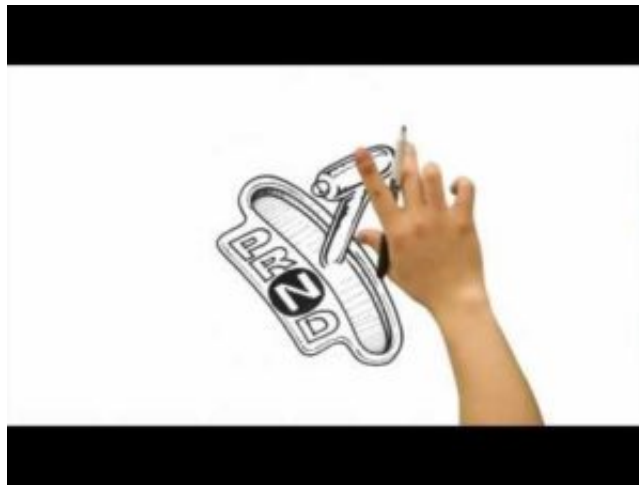
Aimee (along with Sara DePasquale) spent many hours working with legislators and others during the session, and now the School will continue supporting the working group at least into 2019. It is challenging, and it also gives Aimee the opportunity to be involved with legislation that will have a major impact in her field of social services. She is well prepared for this work partly because of her involvement in recent years with Jill Moore and Margaret Henderson on the organization and governance of human services. The upcoming work will include facilitating meetings with stakeholders before the first working group meeting, and it will include research on how regional supervision is managed in other kinds of programs. It also will include looking into how other states supervise local program administration. Margaret, Sara, and others are likely to be involved in the ongoing work.

Legislative work is challenging. It requires judgment, discretion, and a deep commitment to the project. The legislative process is fast-paced and legislators need and expect assistance



according to their schedule. At times it means having to drop everything else that you had planned to be doing. It can be stressful.

The work also requires special sensitivity. Lots of people were unhappy with the original bill, and many of them were Aimee's and the School's regular clients. In helping the legislators understand the concerns of stakeholders, for example, Aimee had to interact with social services directors and the NC Association of County Commissioners. It is a tribute to her skill that those folks were able to recognize that Aimee was facilitating the ideas of legislators and she was not putting forward her own policy ideas. I talked with people at NCACC and they had high praise for her professionalism in doing the work and interacting with them.



I am incredibly proud of the commitment by Aimee and others to the School's traditional values around non-partisanship and non-advocacy on policy issues. Legislators continue to rely on us because our faculty are knowledgeable and practical—and because they know that we will help them in advancing their policy interests rather than our own. They trust us. I hope that our conversations earlier this year on political neutrality will reinforce those values and make it possible for us to continue making important contributions at the General Assembly.

There are not many opportunities to have this kind of an impact by working on major legislation. Jessie Smith had a similar experience in working on the juvenile raise-the-age law. It is time-consuming and challenging, and it also is one of the ways in which the School throughout our history has made a major difference for North Carolina. I'm grateful that Aimee is doing this work, and I hope others will continue to take advantage of legislative opportunities when they present themselves.



Senator Barringer



Representative Stevens