

# Bringing the Law to Life

## Jerrold Long Starts Two-Year Term Dean Position at University of Idaho College of Law

Jerrold Long applied for only one job while finishing his doctorate – associate professor at the University of Idaho College of Law.

“Idaho was home,” Long said. “It was the only place I wanted to live.”

The move to Moscow has allowed Long to coalesce his professional and personal lives. Specializing in natural resources law, he wants to be at the center of conversations about the forest, wildlife and water management. And, after class, the job allows him to disappear down a fly-fishing stream or mountain biking trail. He can even cheer his sons — 12-year-old Kieran and 10-year-old Kelton — to victory on the soccer field alongside his wife Jessica, director of the college’s legal aid clinic since 2017.

Since starting at U of I in 2007, Long has mostly taught property, land use and environmental law courses. Now, as the term dean, he will helm the College of Law for the next two years.

### Laws of the Landscape

Born on the southern tip of Hawaii’s Big Island in 1973, Long moved to southeastern Idaho with his parents and siblings at age four. He grew up on Idaho’s mountains and rivers, camping, fishing and biking throughout his youth.

After earning a biology degree from Utah State University, Long entered the University of Colorado Boulder School of Law. There, one of his professors, Charles Wilkinson, pointed out laws cannot be separated from the landscape they govern. Instead, a region’s history influences which laws are created and which laws shape how people use and experience the land.

“The law shapes our relationships with each other and the natural world,” Long said. “I realized that by understanding the law, I could help create the world I wanted to live in.”

Long worked as a lawyer at Holland and Hart LLP in Cheyenne, Wyoming, for three years before attending the University of Wisconsin Madison. There, he earned his doctorate in environment and resources with a focus on how changing demographics in the American West influenced people’s perception and utilization of the land and available resources.

According to Long, the single greatest challenge facing the legal profession is finding stability while respecting the rule of law in a changing world. Whether it’s the shifting climate, rapidly expanding access to information, fluctuating migration patterns or redistribution of resources, he said attorneys will be an essential part of managing new relationships and legal systems.

“A large part of law is managing relationships among people,” Long said. “As the world continues to change, that is going to become more and more complicated and in ways that we have never had to deal with before.”

“”

“The law shapes our relationships with each other and the natural world. I realized that by understanding the law, I could help create the world I wanted to live in. ”

— Jerrold Long, term dean of the College of Law

## Teaching Philosophy

With chin-length hair and a full beard, Long may not come across as the typical law school dean. But his approachable attitude is reflected in his teaching style. To Long, a good law professor helps students envision the influences laws have on people and places.

“The law without context is just words,” Long said. “A professor needs to make the words on the page seem real so the students can imagine how the words change people’s behaviors.”

This concept is the basis of a field course for law students that Long developed in 2014. The class meets with people in Idaho who deal with natural resource laws on a daily basis. They may meet with ranchers in Idaho’s Lemhi Valley to discuss how salmon fisheries affect their operations or with the U.S. Forest Service to learn how to concurrently manage a forest for timber, forest health and lynx habitat.

“You might not think that law students would benefit from a field course, but I wanted students to see how law works on the ground and how it affects real people with real problems in real places,” he said.

As dean, Long hopes he can incorporate more experiential learning opportunities into College of Law classes.



“The law without context is just words,” Long said. “A professor needs to make the words on the page seem real so the students can imagine how the words change people’s behaviors.”

— Jerrold Long, term dean of the College of Law

## A 300-mile-long Hallway

Long said the greatest challenge for the College of Law is managing a building with a 300-mile-long hallway that connects Moscow to Boise.

As he sees it, the Boise and Moscow locations represent the two different spheres of law in Idaho. Moscow has strong links to communities heavily engaged in agriculture, natural resources and Native American rights – and houses experts in those fields. On the other hand, Boise is the state’s epicenter of economic development and home to the judiciary, the state bar and the Legislature.

“As a college within a land-grant university, we remain committed to fulfilling our mission of providing research, education and outreach to address Idaho’s needs, whether in our smallest towns or largest cities,” he said. “In Boise, we will continue to develop our relationships with the business and governing communities, and in Moscow we want to strengthen our relationships with the other university colleges, possibly expanding the number of concurrent degrees we have with the rest of the university.”

Long believes it is imperative for the College of Law to support the university’s land-grant mission and cultivate both private and public resources so the college can continue to provide an affordable legal education at both locations.

In his third month on the job, Long is off to a running start as he navigates the college’s long hallway and is excited to bring others along for the journey.

Article by [Leigh Cooper](#), *University Communications and Marketing*.

Published in the *November/December 2018 issue of [The Advocate](#)*.

## Related Links

Natural Resources Emphasis

The Advocate

### Jerrold Long

Dean



Menard Law Room 101

208-885-4977

[law-dean@uidaho.edu](mailto:law-dean@uidaho.edu)

---

Location: Statewide

Courses taught: Property, Public Lands and Resources Law, Natural Resources and Environmental Law  
Field Course, and Environmental Law

[View Jerrold Long's profile](#)