

Outline  
Choosing Balance: Alternate Approaches  
AALS Workshop: A Search for Balance in the Whirlwind of Law School  
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Theme: My remarks will focus on presenting an approach to achieving and maintaining balance that encourages students to control and inform their perspectives on law school success and that encourages schools to facilitate that process. I intend these remarks to complement the earlier presentations about the impact of Law School on student well being by suggesting a method for empowering students to control their well being through balance and planning.

1. Introductory Comments:

The underpinning of my plan recognizes that perception can often be the driving force behind action and attitude and that this is particularly true of law students. Law students are typically high achieving and success oriented students with highly competitive spirits. Most are accustomed to a history of academic and personal success and are highly motivated to achieve it. Because we have a culture centered around class rank and the resulting ability to command attention from high paying employers, many students are driven to competitive excesses. I believe that we must provide models of student success that encompass balance as an underpinning and that allow for alternative views on the definition of success and the amount of time and energy necessary to achieve it.

2. Elements of Choosing Balance

- a. Schools should engage students in defining success from the minute they arrive. This should include frank discussions between the differences in our pedagogical expectations for them and the culture of law firm hiring.
- b. Schools should provide methods of celebrating a wide variety of successes with students so that the endless pursuit of better grades does not dominate their thought.
- c. Schools should increase attention to the pedagogy of legal thinking during the first semester of law school and remove some of the “mystery” of the transition to legal thinking. In other words, we should spend more time teaching them to work smart and not long.
- d. Schools should also deal directly with the importance of balance and the impact discussed in the morning panel.

- e. Schools should engage alumni and employers in a true discussion of how to view student success beyond g.p.a.
- f. Student governance organizations can and should be allies in this endeavor, as they have tremendous potential to affect culture.