

## **Encouraging Colleagues to Implement New Teaching Ideas**

### **AALS Workshop on New Ideas for Law School Teachers: Teaching Intentionally**

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**Larry Dessem**

**University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law**

I. Conference brochure states:

Experienced teachers face challenges that new teachers do not. After years of deepening our expertise, creating materials and lectures, and working with students, we may find that we have stopped taking risks in our teaching—indeed, that we have stopped teaching intentionally, and now teach by habit.

II. “We have met the institution, and it is us!” (with apologies to Walt Kelly)

III. The Power of One.

- A. “My life is my message.” Gandhi
- B. “You can observe a lot just by watching.” Yogi Berra
- C. Why must teaching be such a solitary activity?

IV. Allies along the way.

- A. Your Colleagues.
- B. Your Students.
- C. Your Graduates, Judges, and Lawyers.
- D. Your University.
- E. Your Dean.
- F. The ABA Standards.
  - 1. ABA Standard 403(b) provides: “A law school shall seek to ensure effective teaching by all persons providing instruction to students.”
  - 2. Interpretation 403-2 further specifies:

Efforts to ensure teaching effectiveness may include: a faculty committee on effective teaching, class visitations, critiques of videotaped teaching, institutional review of student evaluation of teaching, colloquia on effective teaching, and recognition of creative scholarship in law school teaching methodology. A law school shall provide all new faculty members with orientation, guidance, mentoring, and periodic evaluation.

3. Standard 404 requires law schools to establish faculty policies that, *inter alia*, should address “Faculty teaching responsibilities, including carrying a fair share of the law school's course offerings, preparing for classes, being available for student consultation, participating in academic advising, and creating an atmosphere in which students and faculty may voice opinions and exchange ideas.”

- G. AALS Statement of Good Practices by Law Professors in the Discharge of Their Ethical and Professional Responsibilities states:

Law professors should aspire to excellence in teaching and to mastery of the doctrines and theories of their subjects. They should prepare conscientiously for class and employ teaching methods appropriate for the subject matters and objectives of their courses. The objectives and requirements of their courses, including applicable attendance and grading rules, should be clearly stated. Classes should meet as scheduled or, when this is impracticable, classes should be rescheduled at a time reasonably convenient for students, or alternative means of instruction should be provided.

- V. How are we doing?
  - A. ABA/AALS self study process.
  - B. University planning processes.
  - C. Consider an “institutional inventory.” See “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Legal Education,” 49 *J. Legal Ed.* 367-466 (1999).
  - D. “All We Really Need to Know About Teaching We Learned in Kindergarten,” 62 *Tenn. L. Rev.* 1073 (1995).