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CONCURRENT SESSION

## NOT IN MY BACKYARD (OR THE POOR NEXT DOOR): THE FUTURE OF THE POVERTY LAW CLINIC

As with many other facets of legal education, student consumerism is making itself felt in the clinic. In considering new clinical offerings, the faculty at large is highly conscious of student demand, as well as the public relations value of new and innovative programs – to be touted in the inevitable glossy brochure. At many law schools, the clinical education movement has succeeded beyond its wildest expectations: the faculty actually cares about the clinics and is involved in shaping the scope of the program. Even in programs that are largely autonomous, clinical teachers themselves feel the effect of student demand as evidenced by application volume.

But faculty involvement and student consumerism may raise conflicts with some of the original goals of clinical legal education: to serve underrepresented groups in the law school's community and to teach through role assumption. For example, many law schools now offer externships in private law firms that once paid for law student services. And these placements rarely involve the students in experiences beyond research and writing. To the extent that clinical faculty object, they are met with the arguments that students want credit for these placements; the placements are important for "resume building;" and most importantly, they may contribute to the overarching goal of job placement.

Similarly, it would be hard to imagine a proposal for a new in-house landlord-tenant or public assistance clinic garnering much support either from students or faculty today. Judging from the brochures and job opening notices, the hot new clinics are international, transactional, or technological. These offerings may appropriately reflect changes in the nature of law practice, as well as the interests of the student body. They undoubtedly will be well-subscribed. But do they move clinical education away from its underpinnings, both in terms of service values and student assumption of the lawyering role?

In this session, we hope to pose these questions in the format of snapshots from a faculty meeting in which the clinical curriculum, both externships and in house programs, is being considered. Among the players will be the curmudgeonly tenured clinical teacher, arguing for the "traditional" clinical values, the progressive newer faculty member, supporting a "broader" perspective on clinical education, and the dean concerned about responding to student interests.