

## AALS COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM

### SURVEY OF INNOVATIONS IN LAW SCHOOL CURRICULA

The AALS has decided to focus on the issue of curriculum reform in American Law Schools, and would like to set up a process that enables law schools to share information about what is being done, help each other develop new initiatives, and generally catalyze the effort to bring law teaching into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The first step in this process is a survey of current curriculum reform efforts. We understand that surveys come thick and fast these days, but we promise that this is not an effort to collect information that will then sit on someone's shelf, or in someone's hard drive. First, you'll receive information in return, information about new ideas and implementation strategies that other law schools have developed. Second, we'll use the results of the survey to design various settings where law school faculty and administrators can come together to share ideas and develop plans about reforming the law school curriculum.

The following questions are designed to be answered by brief statements, sometimes one or two words, sometimes one or two sentences. We would be delighted if you want to attach a longer description of any program or plan that you regard as particularly worth sharing. In addition, feel free to attach documents you've already prepared for other purposes.

#### I. First Year

##### 1. Do you have an elective in the first year? **Yes**

If so, what does it consist of?

##### **A limited number of courses specially designed for the first year**

A limited number of upper division courses

Any upper division course the student chooses to take

Something else (please describe)

**Designed for 1Ls, but not necessarily limited to 1Ls.**

2. Do you offer or require any skills courses or training in the first year other than legal writing and/or Legal Research? If so, please describe.

**1- Research Librarian skills/sections 2- There are LexisNexis and Westlaw training offerings, independent of the Research Librarian sections. 3- Foundation Year Moot Court**

If you offer or require legal writing, is it something other than a separate class taught by specially-hired, non-tenure track instructors? If so, please describe.

**Students need to take the Research Librarian sections for half a semester in the fall as well.**

3. Aside from the electives and skills courses described above, do you require any course other than Torts, Contracts, Civil Procedure, Criminal Law, Property and Constitutional Law?

**Yes**

If so, what is it?

**Legal Methods**

Regulatory Law

International Law

Evidence

Criminal Procedure

Theories of Law

Other, please describe

4. Do you offer a separate curriculum in the first year that students can choose, or to which they are assigned? If so, please describe.

**First-year Curriculum: Students are assigned to sections of Legal Methods, Legal Writing & Research, Civil Procedure, Contracts, Torts, Criminal Law, Constitutional Law, Property, and Foundation Moot Court. Students must take one First-year Elective out of several offered (eight different offerings in 2005-06).**

5. Have you made significant changes or innovations in your first year curriculum recently other than those described in response to the foregoing questions? If so please describe.

**(a) Addition of First-Year Elective to replace two mandatory courses (Foundations of the Regulatory State and Perspectives in Legal Thought). These two courses now are offered as electives, along with six other offerings (in 2005-06). (b) Property, previously taken in fall term of second year, now is taken in spring term of first year.**

## II. Second and Third Years

1. Do you offer a specialized track or concentration program in any of the following areas?

Business Law  
Public Law  
International Law  
Transnational Law  
Social Justice  
Criminal Law and Procedure  
Other, please describe

Requires courses that other students can take as well (please specify)  
Offers special courses (please describe)  
Requires special courses (please describe)  
Provides placements, internships or clinical program (please describe)  
Grants a certificate (please tell us for what)  
Other features (please describe)

2. Apart from the standard live client clinics, and the clinical programs described in your answer to the previous question, do you offer any other kinds of clinical programs? If so, please describe.

3. What joint degree or accelerated degree programs do you offer?

**(1) AILE (Accelerated Interdisciplinary Legal Education): students from small select group of undergraduate institutions are considered for admission to Columbia Law School after completing their junior year of college. These students complete remaining bachelor's degree requirements by taking graduate level courses in Columbia's Graduate Faculties while matriculated at Columbia Law School, and receive both JD and the bachelor's degree upon completion of their studies (normally three years). (2) Formal joint degree programs with Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and with various Columbia University graduate and professional schools. (3) Frequently approved ad hoc joint degree programs with Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Tuft's Fletcher School, and Johns Hopkins' Nitze School of Advanced International Studies.**

4. Other than the programs described above, do you have any other interdisciplinary programs of note?

**Other interdisciplinary programs: International double degree programs: JD/Master (formerly Maitrise) with University of Paris I (Sorbonne); JD/LLM with University of London; JD/LLB with University of London; JD/Master (formerly DESS) with Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Sciences Po and University of Paris I-Sorbonne); JD/LLM with Institute for Law and Finance (Johann Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt).**

5. Have you made significant changes or innovations in your second and third year curriculum recently other than those described in response to the foregoing questions? If so please describe.

**Property is now part of the first-year offering.**

### III. Curricular Reform Process

1. Did you gather data in connection with any of the curriculum reforms described earlier? If yes, and if you can share them, please attach a copy or describe their general findings.

2. How did the most significant curricular change in your school in the last 10 years come about - - who initiated the change and by what process?

### IV. Next Steps

1. What information would you like to receive about curricular reform?

2. Would you be interested in presenting any curricular reform(s) that you are undertaking in a special session at an AALS annual meeting? Which one(s)?

If so, would you be interested in doing so at the next (2007) meeting? It will be held in San Francisco, and spec