

## 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? **No**

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)

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.

**Legal Reasoning I is a two-credit course required for all second-semester, first-year students whose grade point average at the end of the first semester of law school is below 2.0. Legal Reasoning I is also open on a space-available basis to first-year students with grade point averages above 2.0 who desire to work on their legal reasoning skills. Legal Reasoning I emphasizes the process of 'thinking like a lawyer' through exercises in case briefing and analysis, issue spotting, rule articulation and synthesis of cases and forms of deductive and analogical reasoning. Legal Reasoning I coordinates the students' practice in building specific analytical skills with doctrinal issues drawn primarily from their first-year courses. The theory behind this approach is that learning is improved in the contemporaneous doctrinal subject, and the analytical and exam-taking skills are transferable to other first-year subjects.**

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.

**The Director of the Legal Writing Program is a full-time, tenure track faculty member; the instructors are part-time adjunct faculty.**

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?

**No**

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.

**No**

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.

**No**

## 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

### **Required Clinical Legal Education Program**

Requires courses that other students can take as well (please specify) **All students must complete 14 credit hours of clinic.**

Offers special courses (please describe)

Requires special courses (please describe)

Provides placements, internships or clinical program (please describe) **The clinics are Housing and Consumer Law, Juvenile and Special Education Law, HIV/AIDs Law, Community Development and Small Business, Low Income Tax, Government Accountability Project, and Legislation**

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.

**No**

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

**None**

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

**No**

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.

**Beginning with the Class of 2008, upper level students are required to choose three courses from a menu of core courses.**

### 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.

**The Curriculum Committee used the ABA Curriculum Survey as well as in-house expertise.**

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?

**There have been none in the last 10 years.**

### IV. Next Steps

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

**The results of this survey.**

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)?

**No**

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