

## 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)

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.

**Yes. We offer a course called Fundamentals of Law Practice. This is a simulation course especially designed to expose 1st year students to the realities of practice and the skills identified by the MacCrate Report. The course was designed by Professor Mitchell Simon and former Professor and Now Supreme Court Justice James Duggan. The course is taught in small sections by a mixture of tenured professors, clinical supervisors and the Director of Academic Support. TAs are used to play the clients and other parties.**

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.

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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.

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.

## 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

### **IP and Litigation**

#### **Social Justice**

Requires courses that other students can take as well (please specify)

**Fundamentals of Law Practice**

Offers special courses (please describe)

Requires special courses (please describe)

Provides placements, internships or clinical program (please describe)

**Extensive externship offerings and several live clinics**

Grants a certificate (please tell us for what)

Other features (please describe)

#### **IP**

Requires courses that other students can take as well (please specify)

Offers special courses (please describe) **Advanced Trial Advocacy**

Requires special courses (please describe)

Provides placements, internships or clinical program (please describe)

**Extensive Externships and criminal and civil practice clinics**

Grants a certificate (please tell us for what) **see answer under business**

**law**

Other features (please describe) **3 additional courses, Pass/Fail optin as**

**described under business law**

#### **Litigation**

Requires courses that other students can take as well (please specify)

Offers special courses (please describe) **Extensive menu of IP courses, including a summer program at Pierce as well as in China and Ireland**

Requires special courses (please describe)

Provides placements, internships or clinical program (please describe)

**Extensive Externships as well as an in-house IP Clinic**

Grants a certificate (please tell us for what) **Master of IP offered as well as joint JD/MIP and LLM**

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?

**Masters of Intellectual Property, LLM in IP**

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

**Joint Certificate in Health, Law and Ethics with University of NH.**

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.

**We have organized the curriculum by areas of practice to guide students and to help us see gaps in our program. The curriculum guide is now being reviewed by outside experts. We have also undertaken a full inventory of skills taught in each required course.**

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.

**We are currently gathering data on which skills are taught and which are also tested in our required curriculum. We would be happy to share this once it is done.**

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?

**Anything you compile would be helpful. The efforts of other schools is always helpful.**

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 the skills project yields important information (it is still too early to tell), we would be happy to present.**

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

**Yes**