

## 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.

No

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.

No

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.

**We have curricular reform in the works that will potentially alter the required courses. We have also introduced first-year reading groups bringing faculty members and first-year students together in small groups around shared interests**

## 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) **No (same for b, c, and e)**  
Provides placements, internships or clinical program (please describe) **yes (same for b, c and e)**  
Grants a certificate (please tell us for what) **No (same for b, c, and e)**  
Other features (please describe) **No required courses (same for b, c, and e)**

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.

**We offer a human rights advocacy clinic in which students have presented before the World Bank, the Intra-AMERICAN court and other international bodies. We offer a cyberlaw clinic that pursues law reform and dissemination of both technology and legal architecture promoting access to cyberspace. We have a child advocacy clinic in which students work on law reform and systems change in collaboration with other professionals and communities.**

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

**We have four joint programs, with the Harvard Business School, School of Public Health, Graduate School of Design, and Kennedy School of Government. We have a coordinated JD/PHD program with the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. We have a joint JD/LLM program with Cambridge University, England.**

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

**Our faculty includes people with PhDs or advanced degrees in economics, sociology, history, philosophy, english, political science, business, and government. They offer courses and research opportunities in these fields as part of the law school program.**

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 recently launched programs of study as described above. We have introduced a series of student/faculty collaborative workshops for academic credit including international law, public law, law & economics, legal history.**

### 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.

**Yes**

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?

**Changes have been initiated by the dean, the faculty, and students.**

### IV. Next Steps

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

**How other schools are changing required courses. How are schools addressing problem solving skills. How are schools are introducing 'concentrations' and joint degrees.**

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)?

**Sure. Any of them that might be of interest.**

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

**Yes**