

## 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.

**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?

**Yes**

If so, what is it?

Legal Methods

Regulatory Law

International Law

**Evidence**

Criminal Procedure

Theories of Law

Other, please describe

**A variety of Civil Law courses not offered in non-Louisiana law schools**

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.

**See infra for Law Center's bi-jural (J.D./BCL degrees) program for all students**

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

**See Bi-Jural Curriculum, infra.**

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.

**Externships with various Louisiana State Government agencies in which faculty members teaching in parallel areas contract with state agency officials to provide 40-hour programs of either live-client or agency-interactive in role performance**

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

**See bi-jural curriculum, infra**

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.

**Six years ago, LSU completely restructured its 3-year curriculum to provide a set of mandated courses and mandated 'basket areas' (civil law, common law, public law and global perspectives) leading to the award of two degrees: the normal J. D. degree and a Bachelor of Civil Laws Degree. This 'bi-jural' program was adopted in recognition of the training our students receive in both the Civil Law (which actually governs most Louisiana private law relationships) and the common law (defined broadly to include the usual range of courses found in non-Louisiana law schools). It also reflects the extraordinary scope of assets (faculty, library, the state's legal system, faculty direction of the Louisiana Law Institute and Louisiana Judicial College, etc.) that enable LSU to offer a truly global curriculum, that is, one that trains our students to practice in the world's two principal legal systems. Illustrative are our 12 civilian-comparativists, perhaps the nation's leading Civil Law collection, faculty legislative drafting obligations addressing the integration of Civil and Common Law both within Louisiana and in such larger arenas as the European Community. Along with McGill, we are the only Western Hemisphere**

**law school to offer this bi-jural program. It is extremely costly in faculty time and planning, law school funding, and student effort, a fact that explains why the other types of innovations to which your survey refers have not been pursued in depth at LSU.**

### 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 looked at McGill's program but found that the Quebec/Canada setting did not provide the parallels that we assumed we would find in the Louisiana/United States setting.**

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?

**The bi-jural curriculum and double-degree program. I proposed the initiative to my faculty during the second year of my term (1999). We invited McGill faculty to address the faculty on the McGill program. The proposal was then developed by the Law Center's Executive Committee (a faculty-elected body) and Curriculum Committee. The process, which was quite complicated, took about nine months from start to finish. Special courses had to be devised; time allocations for existing courses were modified; ABA 'acquiescence' in the BCL degree was required as was the approval both of the LSU Board of Supervisors and the State Board of Regents. All in all, it was quite a show.**

### IV. Next Steps

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

**I would appreciate receiving your summary report.**

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)?

**My sense is that the bi-jural program is so entwined with local and international Civil Law matters that it may not be of broad interest to the run of Common Law American law schools.**

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