

## 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.

**A seconds-semester 2-credit course called Lawyering, which investigates case theory and introduces interviewing and counseling skills. We also have a first-semester 2-credit course called Applied Analysis which offers students drilling in written analysis to better prepare exams.**

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.

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.

**Students who are in the bottom 40 of each first-semester section (measured by overall GPA) are required to take a second-term course called Principles of Legal Analysis, designed to drill in small groups written analytical skills that we suppose they did not absorb in the first semester.**

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, but we are considering some major changes.**

## 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

For each specialized program or concentration that you offer, could you tell us whether it:

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.

**The questions above do not quite capture where we are in tailoring the 2nd & 3rd year curriculum to concentrations. We do not offer a concentration or certificate in any technical sense, but we are beginning to group clusters of courses in Corporate and Business law; international law; state and local government law; intellectual property and information law; media law; professional values and practice; and public-interest. Honors students are affiliated with the School's research centers in these areas and are required to undertake a 'capstone' course in the third year that is closed to non-honors students; otherwise, all courses are open to all. Additionally, we offer a set of 'Seminar and Workshop' courses, in which students will be placed in an externship in a law office in a particular field (intellectual property; corporate law, etc.) and meet once a week at School with a professor in a seminar that discusses the practice of law in the area.**

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

**J.D./M.B.A.**

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

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.

### 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?

**The creation of the honors program and a program for students who do poorly was initiated by the Dean and two committees, who have worked for several years to build their respective programs. The faculty has been consulted (has and voted) at several points along the way.**

### IV. Next Steps

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

**Changes to first-year curriculum. Concentration, certificates, and tracking. Moves toward or away from required courses.**

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)?

**Premature for us.**

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