

## 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.

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 recently voted to cut Property and Torts from 6 to 4 units, and to move Con Law into the first year. This reform was undertaken primary because other schools do it.**

**Yes. Reduced Torts and Property from 6 to 4 units, increased Legal Research and Writing from 3 to 4 units, and added Constitutional Law (3 units)**

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

## High Tech/IP

### International Law

Requires courses that other students can take as well (please specify) **Yes. International Law, etc.**

Offers special courses (please describe) **Yes. E.g., International Criminal Law, the total number is quite large.**

Requires special courses (please describe) **Yes, public international law and IBT, etc. ; Requires three foundation courses in international law and business, completion of summer study abroad, completion of additional elective units, writing requirement**

Provides placements, internships or clinical program (please describe) **Yes. Our summer program, in particular, offer a wide variety of law office and ngo placements abroad. ; Yes, through summer programs abroad**

Grants a certificate (please tell us for what) **Yes. International Law ; Certificate of specialization**

Other features (please describe) Moot court competitions, opportunities for semester exchanges, classes offered by foreign visitors, etc.

### Social Justice

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

Offers special courses (please describe) **Yes. Social Justice seminar, Social Justice Workshop, Social Justice Practice, etc. ; Foundation courses in social justice, elective units, writing requirement, practicum, public interest volunteer hours**

Requires special courses (please describe) **at least one of the above plus**

### others

Provides placements, internships or clinical program (please describe) **Innocence Project, Community Law Center, criminal law placements, civil internship program**

Grants a certificate (please tell us for what) **Yes. Social Justice ; Certificate of specialization with emphasis in either consumer protection, criminal justice, or critical race theory**

Other features (please describe) **writing competition, grant awards**

## High Tech/IP

Requires courses that other students can take as well (please specify) **Yes. IP courses**

Offers special courses (please describe) **Yes. Telecommunications, privacy, etc. ; Required foundational courses, writing requirement, elective courses**

Requires special courses (please describe) **Yes. IP courses**

Provides placements, internships or clinical program (please describe) **Internship placements, particularly with high tech companies**

Grants a certificate (please tell us for what) **Yes. High Tech. ; Certificate of specialization**

Other features (please describe) **Journal, student association**

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.

**California Innocence Project, assisting prisoners in proving claims of innocence and securing release from custody.**

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

**Joint J.D./M.B.A. ; JD/MBA and JD/MST (Master of Science in Taxation)**

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

**Joint program in Tax with San Jose State**

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 changed the writing program three years ago. ; no**

### 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. We did a student survey (and ignored the results.) We did a faculty survey. We looked at other schools. ; Used ABA Survey of Curriculum Reform**

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 Academic Affairs Committee oversaw the process in response to long standing requests by some faculty members. ; First year curriculum reform: Faculty asked Academic Affairs Committee to study first year curriculum; Committee studied issues over two year period; Committee presented retreat to discuss issues; faculty approved changes.**

### IV. Next Steps

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

**I would be very interested in empirical studies that tie curriculum to student learning, engagement and satisfaction with law school or preparation for practice.**

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)?

**Professors at our school would be prepared to discuss the specialized curricula, particularly in social justice or international. We are in the process of revising our IP curriculum.**

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