

EQUIPOISE

n. (ek'wə poiz')

A state of balance, engagement and well-being in legal education

JUNE 2011

EQUIPOISE is the newsletter of the Association of American Law Schools Section on Balance in Legal Education

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Please Become a Member of the Section

Section membership is open to faculty and professional staff of AALS membership schools; others may join as associate members. If you have access to the AALS website, <http://www.aals.org/>, the easiest way to become a member of the Section is to register there. Otherwise, please contact the AALS National Office at (202) 296-8851 or aals@aals.org, and indicate your interest in joining the Section.

Welcome to Teaching Law!

The Section on Balance in Legal Education sponsors programs and other activities of interest to a broad range of law faculty and administrative staff. As you prepare to enter the legal academy, we'd like to alert you to the existence of the Section, and encourage you to take advantage of some of our resources and get involved in our work. The purpose of this special issue of our newsletter, *Equipoise*, is to introduce new law teachers to our Section, and to give you some basic information on the types of issues we explore.

In recent years, many involved in legal education have become concerned with evidence of problems such as depression, substance abuse, erosion of values, dissatisfaction and disengagement among law students and practicing lawyers. The Section on Balance in Legal Education and its members seek to investigate these problems, both intellectually and empirically, and to explore potential causes, contributing factors and solutions.

The Section on Balance in Legal Education is a relatively new addition to AALS. Law faculty and administrators interested in law student and lawyer well-being petitioned AALS for the formation of a new Section dedicated to exploration of these issues. AALS granted the Section

provisional status in June 2007, and the Section has since become a permanent feature of the AALS structure. During the life of the Section, we have sponsored innovative, scintillating and well-attended programs at the AALS Annual Meetings. We have sponsored a series of essays published in the *Journal of Legal Education*, and have developed a newsletter and a website. This year, we have initiated a series of topic conference calls, each hosted by a member of the Section and open to all interested participants. We have an active executive board and membership, and would welcome your participation.

If you have any questions about the Section or its work, or if you are seeking a way to get involved, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Section's executive board:

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Welcome to Teaching Law!

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Again, we extend our warmest welcome to you as you enter law teaching. We hope that as you choose among the many competing demands on your time during your academic career, you will consider including the Section on Balance in Legal Education in your plans.

Past Programs at AALS Annual Meetings

In 2006, prior to the formal organization of the Section, AALS conducted a full-day Workshop on Balance in Legal Education as part of its Annual Meeting. The Section has sponsored sessions at each of the successive AALS Annual Meetings:

- 2007 AALS Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.: *Balance in Legal Education One Year Later*
- 2008 AALS Annual Meeting in New York: *What Does "Balance in Legal Education" Mean?*
- 2009 AALS Annual Meeting in San Diego: *Educating Lawyers and Best Practices for Legal Education: A Mandate to Humanize the Law School Experience?*
- 2010 AALS Annual Meeting in New Orleans: *Who Am I? The Role of Legal Education in Shaping Professional Identities*
- 2011 AALS Annual Meeting in San Francisco, Joint Program with the Section on Academic Support, Co-Sponsored by the Section on Student Services: *Beyond Humanizing: Can – and Should – Law Schools Strive to Graduate Happy Students?*



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In many cases, podcasts and other materials from these programs are available on the AALS website, <http://www.aals.org/>.

Resources on Balance in Legal Education

If you would like to learn more about some of the issues the Section addresses, our new Section website might be a good place to begin. The Florida State University College of Law hosts the website at http://www.law.fsu.edu/academic_programs/humanizing_lawschool/. The website contains more information about the Section itself, including more extensive descriptions of its past programs at the

AALS Annual Meetings, copies of its past newsletters and information about some of its other activities. The website also gathers links and other resources useful to those concerned with law student and lawyer well-being. In particular, members of the Section have compiled an extensive bibliography of some of the literature related to these issues, and the bibliography resides on the website as well.

Mark Your Calendars

Friday, January 6, 2012

8:30-10:15 a.m., *Effective Faculty/Student Collaborations and Student Initiatives: Working Together to Enhance Students' Professional Identity and Personal Integrity*, Washington Marriott Wardman Park Hotel

PROGRAM OF THE SECTION ON BALANCE IN LEGAL EDUCATION, 2012 AALS ANNUAL MEETING IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Please Keep in Touch

Our Section newsletters only come out sporadically. The humanizing legal education listserv is available every day. If you do not yet subscribe to the listserv, we encourage you to do so. To subscribe, go to <https://lists.fsu.edu/mailman/listinfo/law-legal> and follow the instructions. If you do subscribe to the listserv, please post your thoughts, questions, insights and accomplishments on a regular basis. You will find you have an appreciative and responsive audience.

This newsletter is a forum for the exchange of points of view. Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the Section and do not necessarily represent the position of the Association of American Law Schools.