

From the Editors

This issue of the *Journal of Legal Education* begins with three articles that ought to challenge conventional wisdom in the law school world. Jerome Organ's article on student scholarship programs has already provoked a major discussion in the media prior to publication. He points out that, fueled by the competition for *U.S. News & World* rankings, many law schools award merit scholarships that are much more difficult to renew than the students who receive them likely suspect. In order to free up money to maximize the purchasing power for the next year's entering class, these law schools require very high first-year achievement to keep the scholarship. Professor Organ suggests that the practice is not only misleading for the entering students but also has an adverse impact on student culture. He suggests that if the practice is going to continue, at the very least it should be made more transparent so that students will know the actual expected value of what they are offered.

Shaheen Sardar Ali next provides a guide to the subject of Islamic law that will not only be of great help to those who now teach this subject, but it will also be eye-opening for many professors. Readers will see that conventional understandings of Islamic law are often erroneous.

The third article is written against the grain of most legal writing programs. John Lynch, Jr. takes issue with the labor intensive nature of "the new legal writing pedagogy," noting that, even if the intense reviewing of student drafts may help law students at least marginally, the time commitment virtually guarantees that legal writing faculty will not be able to meet the scholarly expectations that define law school faculties generally.

The next three articles focus directly on ideas for improving teaching for this generation of students. Paul Figley provides several ingenious exercises for teaching the difficult but crucial skill of rule synthesis—developing a legal rule out of a number of actual cases. Deborah Zalesne and David Nadvorney then develop the concept of academic intelligence as an unevenly distributed skill that puts a certain group of students at the margin as "others." The positive idea is for faculty to think explicitly about how to teach very basic tools, in particular case briefing and issue spotting, with the aim of addressing this problem and bringing the outsiders into the fold. Finally, the last article is the product of a group of faculty from Thomas Cooley Law School who got together to try to bolster student responsibility for learning. Their article outlines the process, how it worked, and how each professor sought to assess the results. It is a nice story of a genuine attempt, with at least some positive results, at a collective effort to take up the challenge of systematically improving student engagement.

Vincent Blasi then adds Harry Kalven, Jr., to our roster of “Legends of the Legal Academy.” As we reflect on how best to improve our teaching and instructional programs, it is fascinating that what Professor Blasi focuses on is not the classroom dazzle or Socratic brilliance of Professor Kalven. What really mattered was the staying power of the sustained intellectual inquiry that Professor Kalven brought to his teaching and scholarship.

Our “At the Lectern” series offers a primer authored by Mark Kende that seeks to ensure that constitutional law teachers will make their students aware that the U.S. Supreme Court operates within a world of other courts and approaches to topics in constitutional law. Indeed, we can add, reluctance to cite other courts does not mean even that the U.S. Supreme Court operates in a vacuum.

Finally, we have three outstanding book reviews. Peter Onuf analyzes Christopher Tomlins’s major reinterpretation of “freedom” and so-called U.S. exceptionalism from the founding of the British colonies to the Civil War. Kim Economides reviews and interrogates a book by Fiona Cownie and Raymond Cocks on the much understudied topic of law professors in Great Britain. And Jon Eddy, both as a scholar and as a practitioner in the field, explores an edited volume by Ronald Brand and D. Wes Rist that seeks to make the case for the export of U.S. legal education through those who come and study in the United States. Professor Eddy raises a few questions and asks for more study of the context into which the U.S. importers operate.

As always, we will be grateful for any comments on the Journal, and we encourage readers to consider adding legends and lectern tips for these special features of the Journal.

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