

From the Editors

We open this issue with two important addresses from the 2015 annual meeting of the Association of American Law Schools held this past January in Washington D.C.—Dean Blake Morant’s inaugural address as incoming AALS President and Dean Robert Post’s keynote speech at the AALS annual luncheon. As the official journal for the Association of American Law Schools, JLE is proud to begin a new tradition of publishing the AALS President’s remarks to the house of delegates and is doubly proud that Dean Post has agreed to share with us his timely and insightful remarks on the nature of academic freedom.

President Morant profitably highlights the 2015 conference theme “Legal Education at the Crossroads,” which serves as a compelling backdrop for Dean Post’s searching remarks on the nature of law as a discipline properly grounded in the university. Higher education, Dean Post reminds us, strives for both the transmission and the advancement of knowledge. Facing contemporary critics who assert that legal education is only professional “training” or that it is not “training” enough, Post eloquently defends the discipline, arguing that the study of law and legal institutions requires both an internal and external perspective that only law schools and their faculties can provide. His is an eloquent affirmation of our duties as law teachers and provides a much needed guide to our proper direction as we confront this “crossroads in legal education.”

We continue the volume with a collection of articles that grew out of presentations made at the Igniting Law Teaching conference on April 4, 2014 at American University Washington College of Law. Organized by Professor Michelle Pistone and LegalED, a new online platform and discussion community for legal education, the “Igniting Law Teaching” conference included talks by more than 35 legal academics on innovations in law teaching. The papers in this collection cover several of the principal topics addressed at the conference, ranging from how to “learn from failure” to teaching with online technologies and flipped classrooms, from collaborative teaching in transactional law courses to new takes on the Socratic method that place the attorney-client relationship, in addition to legal doctrine, front and center.

Styled like a TED conference, the Igniting Law Teaching conference gave each speaker 10 minutes for a talk about an aspect of law school pedagogy. The collection of TED-like talks was designed to inspire innovation and experimentation by law professors around the country, and to describe paths for bringing more active learning and practical skills training into the law school curriculum. Those of you interested in learning more after reading this issue’s articles may access the talks online at <http://legaledweb.com/>

teaching-pedagogy/. At a time when law schools are facing unprecedented financial pressures, our hope is that these articles will point the way forward for meaningful reforms.

An essay by contest winner Gurney Pearsall follows the collection of articles. Chosen from a student-writing competition organized by the Law School Admissions Council, Pearsall's essay speaks cogently on how to increase diversity in the law schools. Pearsall presents concrete suggestions that focus on the social environment that is so important to a student's comfort and ability to learn. These methods include formal mentors, law school moot courts for college students, hosting minority events, using social media to publicize events, and electronic sites to facilitate interaction between potential students such as addressing some basic legal concept or facts about the law school, videos of law school events, guided tours, sample lectures, and on-campus interviews. This student perspective is a refreshing look at how potential minority applicants are actually assessing law schools, apart from the U.S. News and World Report rankings.

At the Lectern features an excellent piece by Derek Webb, the 2014-2015 fellow at the U.S. Supreme Court, who argues for a complete reading of the Constitution. Pointing out how the Constitution is often taught piecemeal, with undue focus on less than ten percent of the document, Webb persuades us to spend time in reading and pondering the language of the Constitution in its entirety and as a holistic document. As such, our students and we will become better citizens as well as better lawyers.

Professor Shari Motro meanwhile takes a whimsical look at how to write a law review article in three acts, and thereby, demystifies the process of writing. Three book reviews complete this volume: Rodger Citron reviews Nicholas Carr, *The Glass Cage: Automation and Us* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014); Doug Williams reviews Mary Christina Wood, *Nature's Trust: Environmental Law for a New Ecological Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2014); and Deborah Zalesne and John Guyette review June Carbone and Naomi Cahn's *Marriage Markets: How Inequality Is Remaking the American Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). Enjoy.

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