

# Legal Education Digest

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who are the sole distributors for North America.

The *Legal Education Digest* is a quarterly digest of articles and other publications on legal education. Over 160 journals are kept under review.

A *List of Periodicals Digested* is available, free of charge from the Centre for Legal Education.

Cross-referenced subject headings are listed on pages 15-16.

## IN THIS ISSUE

Dominating this issue is the first book review which has appeared in the *Legal Education Digest*. The significance of Marlene Le Brun and Richard Johnstone's *The quiet (r)evolution: improving student learning in law* has been recognised by a comprehensive review, rather than the usual short digest entry. This new book represents a major contribution to our thinking about how law school teaching and student learning intersect and contains practical suggestions for improved teaching techniques. At least in Australia, it is the first book written specifically to assist law teachers in their work. Hopefully, the principles it embraces and the practical advice it imparts will become an invaluable guide to law teachers and in future years be reflected in a demonstrable enhancement of law teaching.

This issue also contains a short article by the same authors on 10 significant books on educational matters which they wish to draw to the attention of the "educationally-curious" law teacher.

The nature of the legal profession's expectations of the role to be played by the law schools in preparing lawyers to participate effectively in the profession is dealt with by MacCrate. This article is essentially a distillation of the principal recommendations derived from the ABA's task force report, *Legal education and professional development - an educational continuum*, chaired by the author. The same theme is also taken up by Maurer and Mischler in their interesting article describing a program they have developed aimed at assisting first year law students to think like professionals.

Three articles deal with timely issues about skills teaching in law schools. McCrimmon examines the place which a trial advocacy course should occupy in the undergraduate curriculum. Gildin reflects upon the profound impact that the sabbatical he served as a public defender had upon his prior conceptions of how advocacy skills should be taught. Finally, the article by Nathanson emphasises the need to develop effective problem-solving skills in law students. He suggests that legal problem-solving can be used as the driving force in curriculum design and identifies six teaching principles which should be followed.

Two aspects of how the traditional relationship between law teacher and student has been affected by developments in technology are discussed in this issue. Thomas deals with the emerging prospect of class-free law teaching through the use of e-mail facilities and concludes that, despite its clear benefits, e-mail cannot be construed as a panacea for all the administrative and social problems of the law school. Jones and Snell describe the trials and tribulations they encountered in developing computer assisted learning modules in a small law school.



Within the context of the role for law schools in enhancing the ethical integrity of their students through teaching the principles of professional responsibility, Millich's article makes sobering reading. It reports the results of an empirical study into the veracity of law students' employment resumes, which disclosed widespread evidence of falsification.

Dr John Nelson, Editor

### NEW EDITOR FOR LEGAL EDUCATION DIGEST

The Centre's *Legal Education Digest* is now in its third year. Its subscription list continues to grow. With over 160 journals under review, it is a major task to compile an issue every three months.

The Centre's Board has decided to appoint a part time editor for the *Digest*, in order to maintain and improve its quality. The editor will work with the research assistant, Tim Marshall, in ensuring the usefulness and quality of each issue, in contributing materials on significant issues and developments and also writing the quarterly editorial.

Dr John Nelson has been appointed as the part time editor. Dr Nelson brings to this task outstanding qualifications. He is a lawyer and holds a PhD in education. His thesis submitted for that degree has been published by the Centre as *A Study of the Continuing Legal Education Needs of Beginning Solicitors*. Dr Nelson is the National Education Manager of the Institute of Corporate Managers.

## ADMINISTRATION

**Law deanships: must they be nasty, brutish and short?**

V L Streib

44 *J Legal Educ* 1, March 1994, pp 116-125

In America in 1994, 42 of the 176 accredited law schools were searching for new deans. On average the positions lasted three years. In a typical cycle, deans spend their first year understanding the issues, limitations and potential of the law school. The new dean's major initiatives begin in the second year followed by the dean's resignation in the third year. A full scale dean search can last for at least one year and often two.

In response to the short term deanship cycle the Association of American Law Schools has published a manual on law deanships.

The manual is targeted at prospective or aspiring deans and those involved in dean searches. The manual describes the complex role of the modern law school dean, which is added to by the uniqueness of each individual law school. The dean is the head administrator and has a duty to ensure the smooth running of the law school, including being in charge of the law school's budget. The dean must be an advocate of the staff, students and faculty in regard to their relationship with the university. The dean has an ambassadorial role as the official representative of the law school. He/she must represent the concerns of the university to the faculty and those of the faculty to the university and also provide a strategic, comprehensive plan for the law school's future.

## ADMISSION TO PRACTICE

[no material in this edition]

## ASSESSMENT METHODS

**Assessment - some lessons from Hong Kong**

S Nield

28 *Law Teacher* 2, 1994, pp 144-157

The Postgraduate Certificate of Laws (PCLL) at the University of Hong Kong is a 30 week course which provides the instructional segment of vocational legal training and must be passed by law graduates intending to practise as barristers or solicitors.

As a vocational course, it must assess knowledge and skills - both interpersonal, intellectual and decision making skills. What is assessed must reflect both the stated aims of the course and the assessment criteria, which should be identified when formulating objectives.

The role of assessment is the development of knowledge and skills (formative) and the policing of the level of student competency (summative). Formative assessment tends to be frequent and focused on particular tasks or skills and can produce a heavy marking load for assessors. Students can also be involved through peer assessment and self-evaluation. Summative assessments are comprehensive and infrequent but do not provide feedback.

Teaching skills within vocational courses demand a more innovative approach to assessment than traditional modes for assessing knowledge. The Law Society of Hong Kong requires a range of