



Law School Curriculum Undergoes Faculty Scrutiny

In the spring semester of 1989, the Faculty elected an Ad Hoc Committee to Study the Curriculum. The Chair is Professor Jacob. The other members are Professors Agata, Bush, Colbert, Eric Freedman, Kessler, Neumann, Walker, and Vice Dean Adamski. During Professor Jacob's leave for the fall 1989 semester, Professor Kessler served as Acting Chair. The Committee is charged with reviewing the entire curriculum and recommending curricular changes to the full Faculty.

After some general discussion of curricular goals, the Committee has focused on the first year curriculum. The first year was the obvious starting point for curriculum analysis. The current, required first year, curriculum indicates what prior faculties have believed to be central to our curriculum. Moreover, it presently includes the major source of education in legal writing.

Once the Committee began to discuss the first year curriculum, several specific proposals emerged. As set forth below, these are: 1) a small section experience; 2) a required perspective course; and 3) a required public law course.

1) The small sections: The small section is being discussed as a means of creating a closer working relationship between the Faculty and the first year students. The concept is that if all students were given one semester of one of their first year classes in a group of 27 or fewer students, a better medium would exist to communicate case analysis skills, as well as to provide an exciting educational experience for both students and teachers.

There is also a proposal to make the small section the core unit for the teaching of legal writing. This idea needs further exploration to determine its feasibility and effectiveness.

The discussions have revealed that the small section would not, unfortunately, be a cost free addition to the curriculum. The cost would be the trans-

fer of substantial faculty resources (which means courses offered) from the second and third years to the first year. To reduce the impact of this program on the upper-class curriculum and to facilitate further expansions of the first year curriculum, the Committee has been considering a proposal that reduces the present year-long- five- and six-credit first year courses to one semester four-credit courses. Such a change would materially facilitate small section assignments without significantly altering the present level of faculty commitment to the upper-class program.

2) The perspective course: The perspective course—either a one-semester or a one-year program—would add an introductory educational experience for all of our students to the critical ideas behind the rules of law. The areas being discussed for inclusion in a perspective course are, among others, legal history, ethics, jurisprudence, and law and economics. The Committee has not yet reached a conclusion about the exact curriculum or the mode of teaching a perspective course; there is, however, considerable enthusiasm on the part of most committee members for some form of perspective course.

3) A public law course: Hofstra for many years had a required public law course in the first year. Both Constitutional Law and Administrative Law were required first year courses. At this time, there is no Public Law course in the first year. Several suggestions have been discussed that would return public law to the first year. One proposal is an elective of one of three public law offerings. Another is an overview course with components from various public law areas. The final proposal is the return of Constitutional Law to the first year. This topic will be discussed in greater depth during the next semester.

The Committee hopes to finish its study of the first year curriculum during this spring, and to make proposals to the Faculty during the 1990-1991 academic year. No first year proposal can be presented until a consensus is reached on all the above matters and until a first year writing program can be developed.

The Committee has developed interesting ideas, and has spent a profitable semester working on the curriculum. Much more effort will be needed, however, before a proposal can be forwarded to the full Faculty for its final judgment.

JUDGE HIGGINBOTHAM DELIVERS ANNUAL KAPLAN LECTURE

On October 18, 1989, Judge Patrick E. Higginbotham of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit delivered the Fifth Annual Howard Kaplan Memorial Lecture in the Moot Court Room at the Hofstra University School of Law. In his lecture, Judge Higginbotham proposed reforms for the current habeas corpus procedures, which allow state prisoners to petition for review by the federal court of constitutional defects in their convictions.

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CIRCUIT JUDGE PATRICKE. HIGGINBOTHAM



Admission Picture is Bright

Hofstra Law had 2,960 applications for 257 seats in the Class of 1992. The ratio of more than 11 applications for each place in the class meant that the competition for admissions was extremely keen. The result is a diverse and highly qualified entering class characterized by excellent academic achievement and a commitment to the highest ideals of the profession. This year, the prospects appear even brighter. At present, the preliminary data for the Class of 1993 indicates a 20% increase in the number of applications, as well as an apparent enhancement in their quality. We believe that our success in this area is in large measure attributable to the continued growth of our reputation as a school of academic excellence.

In an effort to finely tune the admissions

process, we have revised some of our internal procedures this year. We have increased the required credentials for the category of applicants who are admitted solely on the basis of LSAT scores and grade point average. Correspondingly, we have increased the number of applications that will be the subject of group decision by the Admissions Committee based upon considerations involving the totality of each file. We also have "slowed" the rolling admittance process to ensure adequate space for the most highly qualified applicants. These changes, together with increased recruitment efforts and the continued growth of the stature of the Law School, should ensure even more successful admissions experiences in the years ahead.

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tion will be expanded five-fold. The present library lounge will be converted into a research computer facility to accommodate an increased number of LEXIS and WESTLAW terminals as well as new CD ROM terminals. In addition, a new Computer Learning Center will be located on the lower level to provide a permanent facility to train students to use LEXIS and WESTLAW and to enable students to use wordprocessing.

The Law Library has been a designated United States Federal Depository Library

since March, 1979. As a result of space limitations, the collection currently is housed in an increasingly crowded stack area. The addition will include an expanded documents area, which will contain an office for the Documents Librarian and appropriate seating for library users. The new open stacks will provide direct access to the documents and will provide adequate space for future expansion.

Lastly, the microform collection will be shifted to the second floor. This non-book collection will contain over 500,000 pieces of roll film and the necessary microform reader and printers.

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This controversial procedure, which could take as long as ten years, has been criticized by jurists, legislators, and attorneys as too slow and subject to unfair outcomes. Judge Higginbotham's recommendations included rerouting the initial filing of the petition to the federal appellate level rather than beginning at the already clogged federal trial court level. Judge

Higginbotham's lecture added to the open debate that also has included reports to Congress by the "Powell Committee" appointed by Chief Justice Rehnquist to review the system and the ABA Task Force on Death Penalty Habeas Corpus. Judge Higginbotham's lecture will also be adapted and presented in the Summer, 1990 issue of the *Hofstra Law Review*.

We are pleased to acknowledge with our sincere appreciation, the generous and unsolicited recent contributions of the following graduates:

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BADER, William D. - Class of '79

CUMMINGS, Charles - Class of '73

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