

From the Editors

This issue of the *Journal of Legal Education* ranges from the crisis of law schools to the virtues of grade appeals to the lessons learned from the career of Clarence Darrow. It has history, personal narrative, and focused efforts to make social change a more important part of law school teaching. It is one of our more eclectic issues.

The first article, by Brian Tamanaha, asks, “Is Law School Worth the Cost?” and reiterates and updates his argument in his widely discussed book, *Failing Law Schools*. Prospective students contemplating extensive borrowing, he contends, should only attend a law school that ensures access to a first position in a high-paying corporate law firm. The articles that follow, in our opinion, provide perspectives on that debate that so far have not been considered sufficiently. The article by Luz Herrera makes the case for a greater focus on educating “Main Street” lawyers who will represent individuals—many of whom have unmet legal needs and are priced out of the legal system—and not corporations. The third article, by Ronit Dinovitzer and Joyce Sterling as well as one of the editors, Bryant Garth, seeks simply to ask what the best available data on lawyer careers, the After the J.D. project headquartered at the American Bar Foundation, shows about lawyer satisfaction and the presence—or lack thereof—of “buyers’ remorse” for those with high debt and the full range of lawyer careers. Finally, Sherman Clark argues for a greater recognition of the pure value of law school as a provider of a “liberal education” that yields positive results for those who receive it.

One of the arguments made against law schools by Tamanaha and others is that too many schools place too much emphasis on legal scholarship. In our opinion, the case for the value of a robust and extensive scholarly market that produces new understandings of the role of law in addressing social problems, new syntheses of law and ideas current in the rest of the university, and arguments about what national and transnational legal institutions need to do to establish and maintain their credibility and legitimacy, is strong but not yet well-articulated in the law school world. This is not the place to try to elaborate. But, interestingly, as observed by Bruce Kimball in his article on charity, philanthropy, and law school fundraising, which focuses on Harvard prior to 1930, it appears that the problem of articulating the value of legal scholarship has existed for some time. The early deans of Harvard Law School could not persuade their alumni of the value of scholarly support.

The next three relatively brief articles provide strong evidence that law schools today are invested in a broad range of social concerns and issues. Robert Levy writes of a fascinating project that brought together judges, professors, and students to confront and rethink “rational sentencing” in an

intense environment that actually changed views. Christine Gregory details a highly successful program at the University of Michigan Law School that responded innovatively to the challenge of less diverse classes by building “social justice leaders” emboldened to support each other as they ensure that issues of diversity and social justice are not lost in law school classrooms. The article by Roberto Corrada tells how he bravely teaches students how to learn from their exams by systematically granting grade appeals rather than hiding behind professorial authority. The final two articles help further make law professors human. Jacob Rooksby poignantly tells how a law school class responded to his sharing of medical adversity in his family. And finally, the last article, by James Elkins, argues that law professors should write—not so much for prestige, rankings, or the solution of particular problems—but because they have committed themselves to scholarly roles.

Our “At the Lectern” entry offers a way to bring life and engagement to the classroom by mimicking a game show—in this case with class-drafted questions, qualified contestants, and even lifelines—a long way from the days of the *Paper Chase*.

We also have three very different book reviews. David Burk reviews Brian Tamanaha’s *Failing Law Schools* from an economist’s perspective, raising the question of when competition is deemed to be working and when not in the market for legal education. Lawrence Friedman delves deeply into Sanford Levinson’s scholarly claims in his book on the relevance of the 51 non-federal constitutions for the crisis of the federal government. And, finally, Karla Mari McKanders reviews a biography of Clarence Darrow by John Ferrell for the fresh insights that it provides for today’s lawyers and law students.

The issue is diverse, and more packed than usual. As always, we invite comment on the major arguments and the smaller gems that, we think, illustrate the much-criticized but vibrant world of legal education.

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