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SALT - Society of American Law Teachers

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To: ABA Council on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar
From: Society of American Law Teachers ("SALT")
Date: November 11, 2014
RE: Update on SALT Activities

SALT appreciates the opportunity to share with the Council the important work it pursues on behalf of its members. Since submitting our last report, SALT continues to actively promote its three-part mission: making the legal profession more inclusive; enhancing legal education through innovative teaching methodologies and incorporation of social justice into curricula; and extending the power of law to underserved people.

MAKING THE LEGAL PROFESSION MORE INCLUSIVE

SALT co-sponsored the fifth "Promoting Diversity in Law School Leadership" conference in September this year, continuing in partnership with Seattle University School of Law and the University of Washington School of Law. In an effort to enhance racial, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnic diversity of faculty and administration, deans and administrators from around the country joined faculty attendees to discuss the benefits and challenges of holding leadership positions in the legal academy. The good turnout highlighted the continued demand for programming and networking opportunities of this kind. SALT is grateful to its partners for continuing to ensure engaging dialogue and a welcoming space year after year.

ENHANCING LEGAL EDUCATION

SALT held its biennial teaching conference October 10-11, 2014, hosted by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, William S. Boyd School of Law. The theme of the teaching conference was "Legal Education in a Time of Change: Challenges and Opportunities." In addition, the Twelfth Annual SALT-LatCrit Junior Faculty Development Workshop was held the day before the teaching conference. Workshops guided fellows, graduate students, and new faculty through the maze of rules and practices about hiring, job talks, teaching, scholarship, service, and tenure. Over the course of the weekend, more than 200 new, aspiring, and long-time members of the academy and legal profession gave dynamic presentations aimed at improving teaching and the profession. Plenary panels brought together leadership in sister organizations and members of the bench to discuss strengthening collaboration and exploring the future of legal education. SALT was especially proud to share this year's opening plenary with leaders from the ABA, Legal Writing Institute, LatCrit, Association of Legal Writing Directors, and Clinical Legal Education Association to highlight the conference theme of collaborative opportunities.

SALT expanded its support of three annual public interest and social justice retreats to include a fourth public interest law retreat in 2014. These retreats allow law students a critical opportunity to meet with public interest and social justice practitioners, law faculty, and students from other law schools. SALT supported the Rocky Mountain Public Interest and Social Justice Retreat, hosted by the University of Denver Sturm College of Law, September 20-21, 2014. The 2015 schedule is as follows: February 27 – March 1, Norman Amaker Retreat, Loyola University Chicago School of Law; February 27, Robert M. Cover Retreat, Sargent Center, NH; and March 20-21, Trina Grillo Public Interest/Social Justice Retreat, Santa Clara University School of Law.

Furthermore, SALT continues to submit comments on issues affecting legal education, including letters to the Standards Review Committee on process and transparency, as well as various proposed changes to the ABA accreditation standards, specifically those affecting security of position, faculty governance, academic freedom, admissions testing, and the bar exam. SALT also issued a statement on academic freedom concerning the University of Illinois's retraction of an employment offer extended to Steven Salaita. Finally, on November 1, SALT sent a letter to the New York Board of Law Examiners calling for study the possible racially disparate impact of adopting the Uniform Bar Exam.

EXTENDING THE POWER OF LAW TO UNDERSERVED INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES

This month, SALT will issue a statement calling on local officials to uphold the rule of law in relation to the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. SALT and its members are committed to ensuring that the system of justice in the United States operates effectively in a manner that affirms the principles of equality and justice. In keeping with our mission, and as a community of engaged law professors, we wrote to offer the support and expertise of our members to help address systemic inequities that erode faith in our justice system and to facilitate discussion, dialogue and concerted action to address the issues that Michael Brown and the Ferguson protests have raised at the local and national level.

This coming January, SALT will again host the Robert Cover Workshop addressing issues relevant to legal education. The workshop will be held January 3, 2015 in Washington DC, at Georgetown University Law Center, with the title "Focus on Ferguson: Racism, Policing and Communities of Color." This workshop is open to students as well as participants in the AALS Annual Meeting and will have broad appeal to public interest and social justice fields.

This past October, the SALT Board of Governors passed a resolution honoring the lifetime work of Professor Pamela Bridgewater. In honoring Professor Bridgewater, SALT recognized her long service to the profession, bringing public service and access to justice for under-represented and unrepresented people to the law school classroom.

LOOKING FORWARD

SALT welcomes five new and four reelected board members this fall and upcoming January. Dean Mary Lu Bilek and Professor Alexi Freeman, were appointed to the Board of Governors and began serving terms this fall. Both bring important perspectives to SALT in terms of dedicated leadership in the legal academy and specialty externship, public interest programming for students, respectively. This past month the membership elected Professors Davida Finger, Nareissa Smith, and James Wilets to three year terms, and reelected Emily Benfer, Benjamin Davis, Sara Rankin, and

SpearIt to second terms, all to begin in January 2015. SALT anticipates benefiting from their combined insight and gratefully acknowledges their service to SALT and the academy.

During the AALS Annual Meeting, SALT will bestow the Great Teacher and M. Shanara Gilbert Human Rights awards at the SALT Annual Dinner, taking place at the Georgetown University Hotel and Conference Center, on January 4, 2015. The 2015 dinner honors Professor Martha “Marnie” Mahoney of the University of Miami Law School as the 2015 SALT Great Teacher, and Professor Hope Lewis of Northeastern University School of Law as the M. Shanara Gilbert Human Rights award recipient. Professors Mahoney and Lewis have received tremendous support from colleagues nationally as well as their law schools as the dinner approaches, and we look forward to another wonderful gathering.

As this report suggests, we are busy pursuing creative and expansive avenues to advance our core values of teaching excellence, social justice and diversity. Our website continues to provide job opportunities, calls for papers, and conference posting for the legal academy. We appreciate the hard work of our members in supporting our programs and serving on SALT committees. We are also grateful to the Council for your invitation to submit comments to you. We appreciate the opportunity to update you on our efforts.

Submitted on behalf of the Society of American Law Teachers by,



Olympia Duhart
Co-President



Ruben Garcia
Co-President