

# SALT NEWSLETTER

## Society of American Law Teachers

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### From the President—

*This copy of the SALT Newsletter is going to far more nonmembers than members, for it is being mailed with the announcement of the National Conference on the Future of Legal Education. Still a relatively new organization, operating in areas of great public concern but without such luxuries as full-time paid staff or committee budgets, SALT is seeking to find ways in which law professors concerned with the social responsibility of the legal profession, the relevance of legal education to the quality of legal representation and to societal needs, and with equality of access to the profession, can work effectively. We want to do more than simply put out press releases on matters of momentary public notoriety. You will find in this newsletter reports on a series of projects which SALT is completing, has underway or is about to begin. Each one is a specific undertaking, which represents a relatively sustained effort over a period of time—often a year or two, and sometimes funded on an ad hoc basis—seeking a substantial objective which strikes an appropriate balance between the cosmic and the trivial. The book for those considering or entering law school; the Conference on Legal Education; the *amicus* briefs in several law suits raising questions of equal opportunity or academic freedom; the projected conference on the evolving shape of minority admissions programs; the plans to fund special projects on the preparation of a Bar exam which does not screen out minority lawyers and on proposed model standards of professional conduct; a project to examine, unify, and limit the intrusiveness of the questions asked on law school admissions applications—these represent a significant collection of mediate goals, ambitious yet accomplishable, limited yet significant, responsive to the ideals which animate the organization yet going well beyond mere political rhetoric.*

To many, the priorities we espouse are wrong or irrelevant; but to many others, we hope, they are just and proper. To a large extent, SALT is a collection of inputs from those who choose to be active in it. It is, so far as I know, the only organization of individual law teachers. Whatever your own views, we invite you to join us, to help us, to influence us, to become us, to displace us.

HOWARD LESNICK

### Supreme Court Restriction of Citizen Access to Federal Court

The Board of Governors authorized release of an extensive memorandum prepared for SALT by Professors Carole Goldberg (UCLA) and Herman Schwartz (SUNY at Buffalo) documenting the conclusion that there has been a significant shift in the pattern of Supreme Court decisions affecting the availability of federal court to citizens seeking to challenge official and private unlawful action. The Chief Justice asserted in Minneapolis last spring that there had been no significant change, and the Board believed it appropriate for an organization of law professors to address itself to the question of what the law was in process of becoming. Copies of the memorandum, which received significant press attention, are available by writing to the society's offices.

The subject of access to courts was also a focus of SALT activity at the AALS meeting; see another portion of this newsletter.

### What Should the Standards of Professional Conduct Be?

The public responsibility of the legal profession, the quality of legal representation, and productive student and lawyer concern with matters of professional responsibility: These are all central concerns of SALT. Issues of "professional ethics" lend themselves to hollow or rhetorical interchanges, and litigation attacking particular provisions of the Code of Professional Responsibility, while not unmeritorious, cannot serve the role of creating affirmative guidelines by which genuine ethical imperatives may be examined, debated and prescribed. The Board of Governors has authorized the seeking of foundation funding to undertake the preparation, over the course of several years, of model standards of professional conduct. We believe that law teachers can and should play a realistic and constructive role in this area, and hope that the model standards we will evolve will provoke thought, controversy and reform. The project will operate under the guidance of an Advisory Committee yet to be formed, with Dean Monroe Freed-