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## Foreword to the First Volume of the Journal

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## Foreword to the First Volume of the Journal

### **Cover Page Footnote**

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## FOREWORD TO THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE JOURNAL

The idea for this journal originally came from Tracy McGaugh of Touro Law Center, and then was hatched over steaming plates of egg foo yung at Ming's Dynasty Chinese Restaurant in Denver, Colorado on October 4, 2013. The dinner took place that night because it was the "on your own" night of the second annual three-day Educating Tomorrow's Lawyers (ETL) Conference, hosted by the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (IAALS) at the University of Denver. I had been associated with ETL and IAALS for several years prior, and I served on the conference committee. I asked to see the attendee list a week or so before the conference, and noticed that a number of attendees had the relatively new title of Associate Dean or Director of Experiential Learning, I thought I should host that group for dinner since I had recently received a similar assignment at my own law school. Joining me that night was Myra Berman (Touro), Josie Gough (Loyola-Chicago), Lisa Radtke Bliss (Georgia State), Christine Cerniglia Brown (Loyola-New Orleans), and Jean Whitney (UNLV). So here I get to admit that I really had a selfish purpose. I wanted to learn from these great colleagues - so I might know more about what I had gotten myself into, and to learn from their experience, successes, and failures. I selected the restaurant because it was near the conference and one of my favorites, and I figured, who doesn't like Chinese food?

As often happens when academics with similar interests from different schools get together, we had a lovely time, and hit it off. Myra brought Tracy's idea to us, and soon the brainstorming began.

Most law schools have had some form of experiential learning for dozens of years, although perhaps primarily in the form of clinics. But in recent years, robust externship programs have been added to the curriculum at many schools, and more attention has been paid to teaching through simulation models. Further, many schools have been trying to respond to the Carnegie report's call for more *integration* of doctrine, skills, and formation in more law school courses. Clinicians knew how to do this, as did the legal writing faculty, but bringing it all together in a cohesive plan was yet to be accomplished anywhere.

Those who hold a title such as "Associate Dean of Experiential Learning" are, to some extent, charged - to greater and lesser extents, depending on the school - with developing a cohesive plan for the

experiential learning opportunities at their law schools. And much work remains to be done before any school can say they have completed that work, despite what their marketing materials might from time to time suggest.

This journal was created to bring together and foster great scholarship on these subjects. What do we mean when we use the term experiential learning? What are those now various types of experiential learning, and what are the best ways to achieve the learning goals that we set for them? Which forms of experiential learning are ideal building blocks that should be placed in our curriculum before our students are exposed to other forms of experiential learning? What are the relative costs between the types of experiential learning, and how should that be balanced with our desire for students to have as many and as varied of these experiences as we can give them, given constraints of faculty time and resources? What cross-fertilization and hybridization can be achieved (or should be achieved) between the various types of experiential learning, and for what learning objectives?

These are the things we talked about that night over Chinese food. This first volume is the result of the hard work of many people, and we offer it to you with a fortune received at the end of the meal by one member of our group:

You need to work hard to be “lucky.”

Or perhaps just be smart enough to take some new friends out to dinner.

David I. C. Thomson  
Guest Editor, Volume 1  
Denver, Colorado  
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