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New Mexico Law Review, Annual Report 2009 - 2010

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NEW MEXICO LAW REVIEW

During the 2009-2010 academic year the NEW MEXICO LAW REVIEW (NMLR) oversaw the publication of its 40th Volume. The first two issues contain professional articles and the third is comprised of student articles. The law review editors selected themes for each issue, selected and solicited articles, edited professional articles, managed and oversaw sources and citation editing, managed student article writing, and worked to mentor the staff members generally. The staff members each wrote an original piece of scholarship on a legal topic of their choice, completed assignments checking professional authors' scholarly works' sources and citations, learned Bluebook legal citation style, and, at the end of the year, continued the editorial operations of the journal.

The year began with eleven board members from the Class of 2010 overseeing the selection of sixteen staff members from the Class of 2011. This year's staff was the largest in recent history. The larger staff was meant to allow the journal to (1) increase the competition for editorial board positions; (2) ensure a full editorial board the following year even if extenuating circumstances decreased the eligible members; (3) create a critical mass for a generally improved level of energy around journals' involvement; and (4) lighten other workload so that the future board could take on additional tasks such as online publication, community development, symposia, and business development.

This year's first issue is dedicated to retired New Mexico Supreme Court Justice Gene E. Franchini, who passed away this year. It includes a commemorative article written by Justice Richard Bosson of the New Mexico Supreme Court. Other articles in that issue include a look at trends in federal bankruptcy decisions, an instructive article regarding application of the Navajo Employment Preference Act, and an article critiquing the application of the National Stolen Property Act. In that one issue the journal covers local, regional, national, and international legal topics.

The second issue includes five short anniversary articles and two traditional professional articles. Four of the articles look back at previous articles and either update the law since the original article's publication or reflect on the original article's impact. A fifth anniversary article recounts the history of the Institute of Public Law, which also celebrates over forty years in operation this year. Board members solicited the five anniversary articles from a pool of previously published authors and articles. In particular, the board targeted articles covering enduring themes, or evolving subjects, that could be "revisited." One traditional article considers the possible effects intimacy has on sentencing in the military criminal justice system. The other

critiques the use of “self-incrimination” as an indicator of informant veracity in the context of finding probable cause and offers a framework for better application.

The student issue is filled with notes selected from student articles submitted for publication by staff members. The notes address topics as diverse as the professional articles. Two articles consider different aspects of immigration law. Other articles look at recent developments in New Mexico jurisprudence, specifically in criminal law, civil procedure, torts, and remedies. Others consider national healthcare legislation and a recent U.S. Supreme Court Case.

For the second year, all members of the NMLR received three credits per semester for successful completion of their assigned duties. The second-year classroom component continued for its third and fourth semesters. This year the syllabus was primarily coordinated by the editorial board and classes were taught by a variety of guest instructors including NMLR advisor, Professor Michael Browde; Professor Ted Occhialino; law librarian Eileen Cohen; Publications Director Lynne Arany; and others. Topics ranged from research methods to advanced word processing and editing, citation and source-checking to writing a background section to a law review article. After student articles were, for the most part, completed, the spring semester’s class was primarily used as a vehicle to transition the staff into its editorial duties and allowed the incoming board a time to meet as a group at the end of the semester.

New developments this year included the use of “Googledocs” for collaborative work. Professional Articles Editors used the Gdocs spreadsheet application to compile their reflections as they reviewed professional articles. All editors used a shared Gdocs spreadsheet to track scores during the write-on journals’ try-out process and were able to access applicants’ applications through shared PDF documents. Another development was the UNMSOL Library’s purchase of all HeinOnline PDF versions of NMLR (& NRJ) articles since the journals’ inception. The plan is to make individual articles available online.

Another development was the registration of the NMLR as a student chartered organization. This allowed the NMLR to have its own separate account, receive prorated benefits funds from the Graduate and Professional Students Association (GPSA), and improve connections with the rest of the university. GPSA funds were used this year for recruitment efforts for the purchase of journals’ recruiting t-shirts. Registration as a club allows for more communications with others on campus who are trying to reach student leaders and provides additional fora for the NMLR to make contacts at the University.

During the Spring 2010 semester, UNMSOL faculty voted to change the School’s writing requirement for the Class of 2013 in a way that this year’s NMLR board and staff were concerned could negatively impact the Journal. The new writing requirement calls for both an applied and seminar writing course to replace the existing, thesis-like requirement and the traditional student

note would only count towards a possible honors thesis. Currently students' articles are considered an integral component of their law school curriculum. Primary concerns regarding the change in curriculum were that additional constraints on NMLR members' abilities to take electives, given the already tight schedule journals' members face, would deplete the pool of interested applicants each year. On a related, but not directly, topic, there is some discussion about whether three credits per semester for staff and board members is appropriate because it is a significantly high number of credits as compared with many other schools' credit structures for journal members and precludes some students from taking additional classes.

Various staffing and changes occurred this year. Lynne Arany continued in her second year with the School of Law as the Director of Publications for the NMLR and the Natural Resource Journal (NRJ). Jessica Leary retired from her staff position as Business Manager for the journals.

Overall it was a good year, although challenging. In the spring the three UNMSOL journals held the fourth annual journals' recognition reception together at Scalo's restaurant. The year ended with recruitment events, primarily organized by the incoming editorial board, and including an appearance of the staff and board in coordinating t-shirts. The NMLR successfully nominated itself for Dean Kevin Washburn's "60 for 60" project. The 60 for 60 project will recognize the sixty most influential people, events, and things in the sixty year history of the University of New Mexico School of Law.