

WELCOME

On behalf of the Planning Committee, I welcome you to the AALS Workshop for Beginning Legal Writing Teachers. This workshop is the result of the hard work of a number of people, including all the presenters, the members of the Planning Committee for the Workshop for New Law Teachers, and the AALS staff.

Some of you will be teaching legal writing in addition to other subjects. Others of you will focus your teaching energies on legal writing. All of you will be teaching one of the most challenging subjects in the law school curriculum. We welcome the opportunity to help introduce you to this discipline.

As a teacher of legal writing, you will have to develop strategies for teaching something that comes intuitively to you. While that is probably true for teachers of most subjects, I would like to suggest that the pedagogy of legal writing is particularly challenging, in part because it requires the teacher to dispel students' preconceived notions about what is good writing and what a legal writing course teaches. Since good legal writing is at its base good legal thinking, your teaching must elicit the analytical thinking that is essential to effective legal problem solving as well as guide your students in learning how to present analysis or argument to a reader in a finished document. Although this task may seem daunting, we hope that this workshop will help you navigate the tough spots so that you can enjoy the rewards more quickly.

This workshop will introduce you to six important features of teaching legal writing: conducting individual conferences with students, classroom teaching, designing assignments, teaching research, completing scholarship, and conducting written critiques of student work. On Saturday night, you learn about conducting individual conferences and meet the presenters in small group sessions. The first morning session, on "Nuts and Bolts," will address the group learning aspect of the legal writing course and help new teachers decide how to use classroom time effectively. The second session, on designing assignments, will focus on the central vehicle we use to teach legal writing: the writing assignments we give to our students. The third morning session will address the teaching of research, and our luncheon speaker will address how legal writing faculty can contribute scholarship to this emerging field. The afternoon program is a workshop on written critique, perhaps the most important teaching modality for the legal writing faculty member. After a short panel on the topic, we will break into small groups for hands-on critique of a

student draft and discussion. Presenters will lead these groups.

Our goal for this workshop is to give you a grounding that will help you prepare with some confidence for your entry into the legal writing classroom. We hope that as you teach legal writing over the years you will bring your own ideas to enrich the on-going conversation about teaching legal writing.

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and Chair, 2007 Workshop
for New Law Teachers