

## **What are the goals and objectives of Law Schools in their primary role of educating students? What are we educating our students for?**

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The study of law is not like any other university discipline, due to the very nature of the object of study.

Law is not just a specific discipline that can be treated on its own. It is necessarily a multi-faceted topic requiring acquaintances with a variety of fields of knowledge: history, civilizations, sociology, politics, economics, morality and ethics, psychology, psychiatry, medicine, anthropology, religion, customs, and more...etc. Rarely does any other university syllabus present such a multitude of fields of human knowledge.

It is within this framework that the issue of the goals and objectives of law schools should be addressed. As with other disciplines educated in universities, some professional benefit is understandably envisaged. Educating law has, however, something peculiar: a variety of other indirect, sometimes undeclared objectives are no less important.

### **1- Direct Objectives: Preparing for a professional career.**

It is naturally a primary objective of educating law to prepare graduates for a living relating to a job in some legal field or other. Some new law students enroll while having a definite goal in mind: being a notorious lawyer or a judge for instance. Others do not set up any specific target; they just wait for any opportunity to come, others yet might find out that the legal issues are not quite appealing.

It is undoubted that achieving the purpose under discussion will entail further difficulties for those in charge of education and administration in law faculties. A first degree in law studies is always a pre-requisite for practicing in many fields of the legal profession in general. The traditional jobs relate everywhere to advocacy and judiciary, other careers are equally envisaged: preparing law students to be legal consultants and advisors, public prosecutors, member of the Conseil D'état (Administrative Judiciary), members of government's lawyers and legal departments in governmental and non-governmental bodies, members of the administrative prosecution authority, members of the authentication of documents authority, agents and dealers in real estate and financial markets, ...etc.

## **2- Indirect Objectives:**

Behind the overt objectives of educating our law students, some other unspoken of objectives should not be disregarded.

The problem with such objectives is that they might present themselves as being mere hopes or aspirations. Usually they do not come under scrutiny in assessing the standards of performance of law schools.

Here are some of the objectives that can be listed under the heading in question:

### ***a) Enhancing law-abiding in society***

Law students are necessarily doomed to be members of a community governed by some form of social control. The study of law increases the awareness of the importance of law as an essential instrument to achieve social control. The sense of the importance of being a law-abiding citizen can easily be conveyed to other members of society through law students.

### ***b) Enhancing human dignity and human rights***

Educating our students different disciplines of law entails coping with many issues relating to the dignity of man and the fundamental rights attached to him as a human being.

Here again, legal education is an efficient instrument in increasing the awareness of the concept of human rights as one of the rare ideas shared by human beings. Law-students are known to be proud of their legal formation and rarely show readiness to wave their basic rights as human beings. They will pave the way to others who will follow suit. The outcome will certainly be beneficial to society and the common values in the community.

### ***c) Promoting political rights and democracy***

Educating our law students is equally supposed to create active members in society, not only in advocating their personal rights as voters and candidates in public elections, but also as would-be political figures, party leaders, thinkers, philosophers, ...etc.

Propagating legal culture through the faculties of law is undoubtedly a valuable means in underlining the importance of the rule of law and consequently forms a good guarantee against political despotism.

### ***d) Preparing lawyers to serve as peace makers***

It is a fact that educating law is not limited to rules in force at the time of peace. War, with all the evils it brings, is equally governed by law, in the form of international treaties which attempt to alleviate its impact on people and belongings.

Law students will naturally get a feeling of the atrocities of war and the necessity of doing everything to avoid it. Negotiations might be conducted before, during and after the war. Lawyers are supposed to play a significant role in the process. Wise lawyers will be wise advisors to Heads of the States in their dramatic decisions on war and peace.

#### ***e) 5 – Preparing lawyers as “tools” for future changes***

It is commonplace that major changes in society, be they political, economic, social, cultural, etc... can only be made through law. Significant decisions in those fields are normally decided and phrased by lawyers involved in the process of law-making. Lawyers are praised on some occasions and are severely criticized on others. Their role can be easily be detected. Educating law should therefore emphasize the training and the preparation of law students for their prospective roles of being future decision-makers, social reformers, legislators, executive managers, etc....

Law students should be brought to understand that they are doomed in the future to lead their society and to be instrumental in developing every aspect of it. By their wide background in many fields of knowledge, law students should be educated to draw the maximum benefit of their legal formation for the good of their country, and for a more humane world.

Before concluding this modest paper on the objectives and goals of educating law, one final remark has to be added. Despite the idealistic nature of the goals sought or hoped for, a feeling of disenchantment usually haunts law professors. We are often blamed for being in an ivory tower while teaching law. We are frequently reminded that there exists a wide gap between law as it is taught, and law as applied in practice. Concepts of justice, equality, human dignity, fundamental human rights, can be ignored, impaired or only respected in a discriminatory form. We are often embarrassed by some questions of our students referring to internal problems in which the law we teach does not seem to apply due to factors which curtail the reliability of the rule of law.

Furthermore, we are very often faced with embarrassing questions on the utility of teaching international law and whether it is really law at all. The questions are understandably prompted by a deplorable state of the international community in which massacres on a large scale have been committed, in which international rules concede in many cases their place to the “law of the force”, in which human rights are routinely sacrificed, in which the same rule does not apply to similar cases, in which wars, terrorism, fanaticism and racism are daily headlines everywhere.

Nonetheless, the disenchantment referred to is per se another motive to enhance the importance of the rule of law on the national and international levels. If the law is not respected, ignored or discriminately applied, it is incumbent on the law faculties to educate students to fight for the proper application of law, to stand up for the aspirations they are asked to turn into reality. They should be trained to be

self-confident and capable of leading reforms and changes to a better life for all human beings.