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Symposium

Integrating Transnational Legal Perspectives Into the First Year Curriculum— Introduction

Mark Tushnet*

In introducing this session and the Workshop as a whole, I want to make two points about its structure, which might have some relevance as you support or develop curricular revisions in your own schools. The first is a substantive point. As the speakers will indicate over the course of the day, this material should be part of an entire legal education. It should not be segregated into specialized courses. One way of signaling, as well as accomplishing that, is by incorporating the material into the first year and thereafter. Ideally your programs will incorporate this material into the first year classes and into specialized subject matter courses in the second and third year. One reason to focus on the first year is that doing so signals the pervasive importance of this material.

The other point, perhaps a procedural one, is that everyone who attempts curricular revision eventually learns that the only place you can do it is in the first year. Perhaps, put more modestly, the first year is the easier of the possible targets for curricular revision. The second and third year curricula are already a smorgasbord, so it is difficult to think

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coherently about “revising” those curricula. What would you revise? We actually think systematically about what legal education should be while designing our first year curricula. One of the goals behind this program is to induce people to think about how curricular revisions under consideration at your own schools could incorporate this kind of material.

With that, I will now shift from introducing the program to moderating the first panel. The aim of this panel is to provide an overview of the why and how questions, which we will be exploring in more detail afterwards. I am not going to introduce the panelists by institutional affiliation. The panelists’ backgrounds are described in detail in the material for the session. We will begin our presentation with Jack Weiss, who is a practicing lawyer dealing with media law. Jack will tell us, from the practitioner’s point of view, why our students really need to know this stuff now.