From the Editors

Some issues of the *Journal of Legal Education* feature unified symposia or a number of articles on similar themes. This issue instead spans a wide range of topics—from law in China to cheating to student transfers to student debt. We begin with what we expect will be the definitive article on the recent federal legislation on loan repayment assistance, authored by Philip Schrag and Charles Pruett. The authors not only explain the very complex legislation that governs student loans and repayment programs but they also go the additional step of detailing how, in light of recent federal legislation, law schools can best organize their own loan repayment programs. There is considerable promise in the legislation, and the authors show how that promise might best be realized.

Jeffrey Rensberger then takes up the thorny issue of student transfers, too often discussed simply in terms of what it means for *U.S. News* statistics. He suggests that transfers represent in fact an example of the tragedy of the commons. Law schools generally (and students generally), he argues, are made worse off by individual decisions to transfer and to encourage those transfers in order to climb up some notches on the law school hierarchy, and, he further suggests, even the gain for individual students is not clear.

A very challenging teaching problem—how to get civil law students to understand the reasoning behind the common law, and especially the uncertainty of legal outcomes stemming from common law reasoning—is then taken up by Charles Calleros. Drawing on hypotheticals from daily life as well as doctrinal puzzles and evolutions, he presents a creative and useful set of ideas for the many teachers today who confront this challenge.

We next invite readers to join Sue D. Naim as she narrates her complex and emotional engagement with the issue of how to handle a cheating student. She leads us through her own turmoil and makes clear that professors are not given much help in dealing with the realities of what it means to take on a student who has cheated on a law school examination. There are no clear answers or well-marked path for the conscientious professor.

After experiencing Sue D. Naim's conflicted story, it is appropriate that we are urged by Harriet Katz in the next article to recognize that our ability to listen to the stories our students tell us is central to our ability to offer effective career advice. In another nicely personal article, Katz not only makes the case for helping students to "author" their professional lives but also shares some of the difficulties in listening carefully and embracing the story that is told rather than the narrative that the listener expects or prefers.

The Journal next adds a remarkable academic to its "Legends of the Legal Academy," with a profile of Jerome Cohen prepared by his student and prominent China scholar Alison Conner. The profile details the extraordinary—and ongoing—career of the man who literally founded the study of law in China in the 1960s and then built and maintained it: Cohen inspired, trained, mentored, and promoted the careers of those who to this day make up the field. Cohen has not only been a scholar of reknown, he has also been an effective voice for human rights and the rule of law.

We have two illuminating book reviews. First, we could not resist the opportunity of having our associate editor, Molly Selvin, a legal historian and for eighteen years a staff writer with the *Los Angeles Times*, review *A Good Quarrel. America's Top Legal Reporters Share Stories from Inside the Supreme Court*, edited by Timothy Johnson and Jerry Goldman. She effectively highlights the virtues of this well-written and insightful book written by outstanding journalists, and makes the point that focusing on the oral arguments in a number of recent cases—some legal landmarks, others not—might serve well as an antidote to the simplistic slogans that too often dominate public debates over the role of Supreme Court justices.

Finally, Douglas Lind reviews *Bitter Knowledge: Learning Socratic Lessons of Disillusion and Renewal*, by Thomas D. Eisele. The review is a tour de force explanation and defense—building on Eisele's thesis in the book—of the singular appropriateness of the Socratic Method as practiced by Socrates for legal education. Amid the constant contemporary questioning of the Socratic Method, while we race to innovate in curricular reform, this detailed essay will give pause to those who find it easy to forget the strengths of this bulwark of legal education.

This issue of the *Journal of Legal Education* is diverse but it is also especially rich. As always, we thank our readers for their attention and invite comments and suggestions for future issues.

A final note, in the February 2011 issue, we inadvertently misspelled the name of incoming Editorial Board member, Professor Jo Carrillo. We sincerely regret the error and are delighted to have Professor Carrillo on board.

Bryant G. Garth
Gowri Ramachandran
Molly Selvin