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Foreword

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FOREWORD

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Welcome to volume 28 of the *Legal Education Review*. We are again fortunate to publish a huge issue of high-quality research into legal education. This volume includes a special issue focusing on Indigenous cultural competencies in the teaching of law—and you will see a foreword to that special issue by our guest editor, Marcelle Burns. It has been a pleasure for Natalie Skead and I to collaborate with Marcelle in collating the works in the special issue. I am confident that this special issue represents an important addition to scholarship in this field and will remain a key resource for curriculum design into the future.

Our general edition contains a diverse array of contemporary topics, canvassing two key themes of student experience and technology.

The first year remains a crucial time in higher education, and Adam Webster et al analyse the pedagogical strategy at Adelaide Law School to meet the needs of a broad, contemporary law curriculum. The challenge was to build a foundation for students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes rapidly, in the earliest stages of their law studies amongst the necessary doctrine and legal method of the introductory subjects. The solution implemented is a boot camp, offering an intensive experience designed to achieve learning outcomes necessary to promote student success. The authors' analysis of the program indicates that it is a viable solution to meet the imperatives of transitional legal education.

In a similar vein, McWilliam, Yeung and Green explore the benefits for students participating in an experiential law and research program at UTS. They provide evidence of enhanced student learning through engaging in the program that involves student participation in a collaborative research project. The paper is an important addition to the literature on experiential learning in law.

McWilliam et al's study represents an aspect of a teaching research nexus. By contrast, in this volume, McKenzie et al seek to debunk the notion that such a nexus exists. They argue that teaching and research are inherently different, and that scholarship takes precedence over original research in the contemporary law school. Their perspective comes at the nexus from a different direction from the case study offered by McWilliam et al but it is interesting nonetheless to juxtapose the two to test the capacity of our institutions to promote teaching and research that complement each other.

The student experience is explored further by Cindy L James, who charts changes in law students' emotional intelligence using empirical

methods. By adopting recognized measures of EQ (emotional intelligence), James provides a compelling picture of what is now recognized as a key attribute for the lawyer of the future. Her findings include recommendations for an enhanced legal education that encompasses EQ attributes.

Also dealing with the student experience, Elphick presents a study of student engagement during lectures at the University of WA. In another empirical study, he argues that the contemporary classroom must transform to deliver on the promise of transformation through education. He uses a framework of the indicia of transformative education to analyse staff and students' experience in traditional lectures, concluding with recommendations for an enhanced lecture experience.

Learning settings in higher education are examined also in three technology-related articles in this volume. While Elphick focused on lectures, Corbin and Bugden analyse online teaching. Like Elphick though, they are concerned with student engagement albeit in the online environment. Their article emphasizes the need to focus on pedagogy and outlines several key pedagogical approaches and how they translate into the online environment. Additionally, they articulate the meaning and importance of place and presence online as a means of engaging our learners.

A similar theme runs through Mezzanotte's work on the benefits of a flipped lecture. It is always good to see works on non-law students studying law, and Mezzanotte's focus is on business students in a company law subject. This article adds to our growing literature on the flipped classroom, in this case revealing that lower performing students rate the flipped model significantly higher than other students.

In a third technology-themed article, Colbran, Beattie and Gilding question the legal education xMOOC—a massive open online course. Readers will recall the frisson of excitement about five or so years ago with the advent of MOOCs, about to take higher education by storm. Interestingly, this article deals with the challenges of introducing an xMOOC within the regulatory structure of the Australian law degree. It canvasses regulation of higher education and the law degree, and also the need for an effective business model to support such an innovation.

In the face of increasing use of online technologies in legal education and the advent of new and innovative forms of assessment, Sherry, Terrill and Laurens advocate for the reintroduction of a closed book law exam. In this study of a pilot in the UNSW Law Faculty, Sherry et al canvass student anxieties and successes in the face of the oft-dreaded closed book exam. The article is significant as we grapple with the need for efficient, effective, and valid forms of assessment that support student learning. It usefully summarises the literature on closed book exams and provides empirical evidence as to law students' experiences to provide a framework for consideration about the conditions of assessment.

I am grateful to the work of our editorial committee, especially Natalie Skead for her additional work on the special issue, and to our editorial assistant Doreen Taylor who so expertly keeps our publication process moving. In particular, Doreen has been instrumental in our adoption of a new and improved publication platform. Thanks also to Professor Nick James and the Bond University team for supporting the work of the journal.

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Editor in Chief

