

# A Tradition of Excellence: The *Iowa Law Review*'s Mission and Future

*Volume 100 Editorial Board*

Whether reflecting on the beginnings of the *Iowa Law Review* 100 years ago or looking to the journal's promising future, one thing has and will continue to hold true: its tradition of excellence. As the *Law Review* continues to celebrate its Centennial Volume, the Volume 100 Editorial Board wanted to expound upon this tradition and, perhaps more importantly, the ideals that make the tradition possible at all: the *Law Review*'s tripartite mission, to "[t]each essential analytical and writing skills to students", "[p]ublish legal research for the advancement of the law and society", and "[s]erve as a window on the quality of the Iowa Law School.<sup>1</sup> While the mission is rarely discussed aloud, *Law Review* members have always displayed its tenets, and it is a faith to this mission that promises another century of excellence.

## I. TEACHING ESSENTIAL ANALYTICAL AND WRITING SKILLS TO STUDENTS

For 100 years, the *Iowa Law Review* has been a valuable outlet for University of Iowa College of Law students to learn and teach editing, writing, and analytical skills beyond the scope of the traditional classroom setting. For decades, the *Law Review*'s deep commitment to publishing student-written work has not only advanced the mission of the *Law Review* and the broader College of Law, but has also advanced legal scholarship and thought. It is esteemed publications and organizations, like the *Law Review*, that shape the legal landscape and prepare future lawyers to thrive in the ever-changing practice of law.

The student writer program enhances writing, research, and analytical abilities through the note-writing process and projects that involve students in all stages of the publication system. As students develop their Notes and practice the legal research and writing necessary to complete that process, they also gain exposure to a broad array of stimulating ideas through their contributions to the *Law Review*'s publication process. Through the Note-writing process, Student Writers learn fundamental legal skills. From topic

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1. Willard L. Boyd & Randall P. Bezanson, *Iowa Law Review Centennial: Its Mission, History, and Future*, 100 IOWA L. REV. 455, 455 (2015).

selection to final draft submission, Student Writers must think critically, research fully, and write clearly.

Through extensive edits, repeated proofreading, and the selection of Notes and Articles for publication, Editors continue to hone the abilities they learned as student writers. Students in editorial board positions gain invaluable experiences working with reputable authors and editing exciting scholarship. These experiences undoubtedly improve students' legal and analytical skills thereby shaping them into more able lawyers. The hard work and dedication necessary to perform well on the *Law Review* prepares students for challenging legal careers.

Although few things we learn as members of the *Law Review* can be measured by any exam, our participation in legal scholarship—as both creators and curators—is immensely rewarding, and, as it has since its inception, the *Law Review* fosters an environment both of collaboration and of learning, paving the way to future success for its members.

## II. PUBLISHING LEGAL RESEARCH FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE LAW AND SOCIETY

The *Law Review* contributes to the advancement of the law and society by providing a forum for debates on the substantive value and desirability of developments in the law. Our pages uniquely provide a place for critical analysis of how the law affects the lives of the many individuals who interact with it. Within these pages, the law develops, for “[t]he ideal law review . . . is one that is designed not only to be referred to, but actually . . . to be read.”<sup>2</sup>

Our goal is not to publish work that reinforces or slowly modifies the status quo, for that is the role that precedent serves in the courts. Rather, our goal is to better the future by publishing scholarship that causes practitioners, lawmakers, and members of the academy to reconsider deeply held norms, question the validity of widely-accepted presumptions, and examine the ways in which existing law must and should adapt to emerging issues. For us, this means extending offers to publish only those pieces we believe are thought-provoking, impactful, and fresh—to print legal scholarship that advances justice for Iowans and Americans. “They may have no footnotes or dozens of them—all that are necessary to satisfy the curiosity of intelligent readers who are particularly interested in the topic, but no more.”<sup>3</sup> As Volume 100, we are proud to carry on the rich legal tradition the *Law Review* has developed in its first century.

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2. James C. Raymond, *Editing Law Reviews: Some Practical Suggestions and a Moderately Revolutionary Proposal*, 12 PEPP. L. REV. 371, 378 (1985).

3. *Id.* at 378–79.

### III. SERVING AS A WINDOW ON THE QUALITY OF IOWA LAW

One of the beauties of the law is that it is never stagnate. The goal of law schools and journals, therefore, must confront the necessity of adapting to the ever-changing field of law. Outsiders might not expect a Midwest institution, far away from the ivory towers of New York City or Boston, to be on the cutting edge of legal academic thought. But, as a window into the heart of the University of Iowa College of Law, the *Law Review's* ability to evolve as the law develops represents both institutions' power to change the way future lawyers are educated.

At the core of every law journal are two fundamental goals. First, to serve as a training ground for students who learn to analyze, communicate, and educate before they become the litigators, jurists, and scholars of tomorrow. Second, to provide the legal community with informative analyses of developing law and propositions as to the future of the law. Just this volume, the *Law Review* is on the vanguard of topics like synthetic biology and the freedom of speech on cyberspace, topics that will become increasingly significant as they emerge. The *Law Review* has separated itself from its peers, however, by going well beyond these foundational aims.

From print to Internet, the *Law Review* has consistently appeared at the forefront of legal thought. The *Law Review* was home to the first ever legal symposium; an event dedicated to furthering antitrust law. This volume's Centennial Symposium, in turn, continued to develop antitrust law, and was attended by a fantastic group of scholars to honor the work of Professor Herb Hovenkamp. In 2009, moreover, the *Law Review* was among the first law reviews to create an online companion publication, *The Bulletin*. Each year, *The Bulletin* has focused on extending the scholarly debate started in the *Law Review* by publishing response Essays to print edition Articles and providing authors with an alternative medium for expressing their ideas in a way that reflects society's technological achievements. *The Bulletin* illustrates the ILR's commitment to remaining on the frontier of legal scholarship, taking advantage of new scholarly markets and taking advantage of the flexibility of working in an online space. Our willingness to seize these new opportunities ensures our continued growth, and, most importantly, represents the University of Iowa College of Law's ability to flourish as well.

### IV. ADAPTING, GROWING, AND THRIVING IN THE FUTURE

When you think about the *Iowa Law Review* reaching its 100th anniversary, it is an exhilarating experience to reflect on the contributions that an amateur group of students have been able to accomplish together, consistently year after year. "[N]o law review anywhere . . . [has given] more

autonomy to students than . . . Iowa,”<sup>4</sup> and underlying the many great successes of the *Law Review* have always been a group of students. Students selected not by their grades, but by their desire to build, improve, and mold the *Law Review* into a first-class legal publication; students that are outnumbered nearly two to one in comparison to similarly ranked journals; and students who are fueled by intellectual curiosity, creative thinking, and the ability to respond to the changing times.

The mission of the *Law Review* has been left in the hands of students for a century, and it will be students who continue to make the *Iowa Law Review* what it is: a journal at the forefront of legal thought, willing to evolve and change with the profession, and devoted to representing the ideals of Iowa and the Midwest—anything but glamorous, but constantly working toward better days. Yet, one no longer doubts the *Law Review*'s stability and possibility to be an institution—that foundation has already been set. Nor should one question its ability to adapt and grow with the times. Instead of surviving, the concern now is thriving. While reaching a milestone as significant as a centennial is laudable in itself, it is essential now, more than ever, to recognize the pitfalls of complacency, and to remain ever diligent to our tripartite mission; a mission that will ensure that the tradition of excellence continues well into the future. It has been an honor to be even somewhat involved in this important tradition.

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4. Willard L. Boyd & Randall P. Bezanson, *Ninety Years of the Iowa Law Review: The Personalities, Policies, and Events that Shaped an Enduring Tradition in Iowa Legal Education*, 91 IOWA L. REV. 1, 12–13 (2005).