The Alliance for Experiential Learning in Law is a national initiative developed post-Carnegie Report to define curriculum objectives and develop assessment outcomes for legal education. Convened in 2011 at Northeastern University School of Law in Boston, the Alliance now includes legal educators affiliated with almost 100 ABA accredited law schools, as well as lawyers and judges, committed to improving legal education by enhancing and expanding all forms of experiential legal education, including clinical education.

The Alliance’s mission is to develop a new paradigm in legal education by engaging all stakeholders in the legal profession and promoting transformation in legal education to address the complex legal challenges of the 21st century. The ultimate goal of the Alliance is to foster curriculum and pedagogical reform to ensure that law graduates are ready to practice with a full complement of skills and ethical and social values necessary to serve clients and the public interest, now and in the future.

The Alliance hosted a major symposium in October 2012 that attracted 300 legal educators and others interested in improving legal education, the proceedings of which will be published shortly in the Northeastern University Law Journal. The Alliance has organized working groups to address various aspects of legal education reform. This effort will culminate with a second symposium at Elon University School of Law in 2014, which will focus on practical approaches for infusing experiential learning throughout the law school curriculum and developing stronger partnerships with practitioners.

The collaborative, inclusive approach to improving legal education that has been successfully adopted by the Alliance reflects a substantial movement within legal education that is both consistent with and more far-reaching than the existing ABA accreditation standards. The Alliance supports enhanced standards that provide for maximum opportunities for experiential legal education, consistent with the mission of legal education to prepare competent, ethical law graduates. To that end, we support the current proposal to increase the professional skills requirement to six credits as an initial effort, and urge the Council of the Section on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar to send out the proposal for public notice and comment. We encourage the Council to consider in the near future more substantial revisions that further increase the professional skills requirement that are consistent with the mission and values of the Alliance and thereby recognize the importance and demonstrated value of experiential education.

For more about the Alliance, its mission, its activities and its participants, please see http://www.northeastern.edu/law/experience/leadership/alliance.html

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