

## FROM THE BENCHES AND TRENCHES

### MINI-SYMPOSIUM ON COURT ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION

#### EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

This mini-symposium came about in part as a result of remarks made by Geoff Gallas and Gordon Griller when they engaged in a question-and-answer session about court management as a profession. Responding to a question, they talked about whether the profession was in decline and spoke of “the virtual disappearance of the three founding graduate degree programs in judicial administration and dwindling enrollments” in certain other programs (“The Court Management Profession: Questions and Issues,” *Court Manager* 19, no. 2 [2004]: 7).

For court administration to be a recognized occupation, much less a profession, it must have some means by which knowledge about the field is developed and transmitted. *Justice System Journal* serves as one such vehicle, as it transmits knowledge about the courts and their administration. A journal, or even several, is, however, only a small part of the picture, as there must be organized *programs* by which those who are either already engaged in the enterprise or wish to enter it can study the material under the guidance of expert instructors, that is, a system of education.

This mini-symposium provides a look at education in court administration. This collection of articles had its origin in a comment by Marvin Zalman about a court administration course he had taught, first at Michigan State University and then at Wayne State University; in Carl Baar's calling my attention to the Gallas-Griller comment; and in some results from a message posted on the “lawcourts” list-serve in an attempt to learn of existing programs and courses. Particularly when one eliminates programs and courses that deal with criminal justice administration instead of court administration more directly, the number was small. However, we did learn of a survey of existing programs and courses being undertaken by Bill Raftery, an MPA student concentrating in court administration, and his work became part of the symposium. Although our efforts to identify a significant number of programs and courses had been futile, by that point we decided that it would be worthwhile to follow up Griller and Gallas by presenting in one place a set of articles about key programs and exemplary courses.

The mini-symposium contains two broad-gauge articles and six that discuss specific courses or programs. We begin with the knowledge and wisdom that Carl Baar, one of the first ICM Fellows, has accumulated through his involvement in this field for over thirty years. Carl discusses developments over time and raises questions about aspects of both continuing and newer programs. (He wanted to put much more history here and to “name more names,” but we forcibly restrained him.) His article is worth reading first, to provide an overview, and then last, after one has read about particular programs and courses, to place them in context. Baar's broad overview is

followed by Raftery's report of the survey he conducted. That report not only reveals how small is the number of institutions through which would-be or current court administrators can obtain education but also allows the reader to situate most of the programs described in the subsequent articles.

For specifics, we begin with the Institute for Court Management, the dominant non-university provider of court administration education, and its multiphase Court Executive Development Program (CEDP) and more recent Court Management Program (CMP), which are described by Chuck Ericksen. ICM is important in terms of its clientele, those currently working in court systems. Following is Robert Yegge's description of the longest-standing of the programs affiliated with a university, the MSJA degree program at the University of Denver, along with its more recent master's and diplomate programs in legal administration. The next program presented is also of long-standing—that at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, which is discussed by Diane Hartmus; it is illustrative of the MPA program with a court administration concentration. Next, we move to the University of South Carolina for Jim Douglas's discussion of his course in court administration for graduate students in public administration and political science.

To conclude the mini-symposium, we turn back to multicourse programs, both of which are, or have components that are, newly developed. The program at Michigan State University, discussed by Terry Nafisi and Maureen Conner, includes degree and certificate components and is the first new program for continuing and potential court administrators in many years, and is based on the NACM Core Competencies. By contrast, the University of Nevada-Reno program, as described by Jim Richardson and his colleagues, is noteworthy in being attached to a university but not to one of the university's regular colleges or departments. It is also an example of a program with a clientele of both judges and court administrators, as it adds to its older Judicial Studies programs for judges a newer Justice Management program for those administering other aspects of the justice system. The latter gives the program some overlap with criminal justice administration programs.

We hope that the contributions by Baar and Raftery help set the stage and provide context readers will find useful in examining the assortment of articles about specific programs and courses, written by those directly involved in the programs about which they write. We also hope that, from those specific portrayals, the reader obtains a clearer picture of the range of types of programs in court administration education. We would, however, add that a number of the descriptions of particular programs are more self-congratulatory and less self-critical than we would have preferred, something we have told the authors. They may believe their programs are unique and the best thing since sliced bread, but the reader should cast a discerning eye on claims of excellence and uniqueness. Despite our concern, we present these materials because we feel it more important to provide these statements for the facts they provide and the history and information they gather in one place, even as we allow the reader to impose his or her own "discount" or suggest that supplying some grains of salt may be in order. **SLW**