

# Annual Report

2013-14

## The Centre for Professional Legal Education and Research



PROFESSIONAL LEGAL  
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

**BIRMINGHAM LAW SCHOOL**

Since its launch in November 2012, the Centre for Professional Legal Education and Research has been dedicated to enhancing opportunities for students to develop their employability; fostering world class research on legal practice and education; and developing innovative approaches to the curriculum.

We are grateful to all of our partners within the legal community who provide generous support and collaboration for our extra-curricular activities; to those practitioners who have committed their time to participating in our research projects; and to the members of the CEPLER Steering Group who have helped us to shape the growth and development of the Centre.

In particular, we would like to extend our thanks to our key partners No5 Chambers for their conceptualisation, investment and continued support.



# July 2014

We are delighted to present the 2013-14 CEPLER Annual Report. It has been an exciting year for CEPLER: one of growth; change and consolidation in equal measure.

As we reach the end of CEPLER's second year, we take great pleasure in looking back over the last 12 months and sharing our successes. We have also taken this opportunity to look forward and in doing so we have revisited CEPLER's objectives: redefining and clarifying them in order to ensure that they accurately reflect the scope of CEPLER's activities. We are confident that these objectives will allow staff, students and stakeholders to understand immediately what CEPLER is and what it seeks to achieve. They will also inform the shape of CEPLER's activities as we embrace the new challenges and opportunities that CEPLER will face in the year to come.



## The CEPLER Framework

*CEPLER is part of the Law School at the University of Birmingham. It encompasses those Law School activities which are linked to law in practice and to the legal profession.*

CEPLER's objectives are to:

- create opportunities for and facilitate world class research on the legal profession, law in practice and legal education;
- support and facilitate the impact of the Law School's research across all fields of law, and encourage public engagement;
- enhance the legal practice skills, commercial awareness and employability of Law School students;
- have instilled in Birmingham Law School Graduates a sense of civic duty and citizenship; and
- increase awareness of legal rights and responsibilities amongst the wider community,

each in collaboration with the legal profession, our students, the wider university, other academics, policy makers, regulators and others.

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## The CEPLER Team

The academic year 2013-14 has seen a number of changes to the CEPLER team. At the start of the year we made three new appointments:

### Professor Hilary Sommerlad



Hilary joined CEPLER as the Director of Research. She has been researching the relationship between the changing structure of the legal profession and law work and the participation of women and black and minority ethnic lawyers for over two decades. She is internationally recognised for her work on legal aid and access to justice, and has conducted funded projects for the Law Society, the Nuffield Foundation and the Ministry of Justice. Before joining Birmingham Law School, Hilary held Chairs at the University of Leicester and Leeds Metropolitan University, where she established and directed a Centre for Diversity in the Professions. Since January 2014 Hilary has been the Acting Director of CEPLER.

### Dr Steven Vaughan



Steven is CEPLER's Director of Education and Careers.

He researches the legal profession, corporate finance and environmental law. He spent almost a decade as a solicitor in the City of London advising multinational companies, governments, the UN and the World Bank.

Steven is a Future Research Leader for the Economic and Social Research Council, working on a funded 3-year project that explores the nature and extent of advice provided by corporate lawyers. Steven has previously held lectureships at Cardiff University, and the University of Bristol.

### Ms Linden Thomas



Linden is CEPLER's in-house solicitor. She qualified with SGH Martineau LLP in 2011 as a solicitor specialising in employment law. Linden's role with CEPLER includes overseeing and developing many of CEPLER's pro bono activities and its links with the legal profession.

She is also co-Director of Careers with Steven Vaughan and has particular responsibility for developing work experience opportunities for Birmingham law students.

In addition to working with CEPLER, Linden continues to practise law, working in the University's Legal Services team as the in-house employment solicitor. In April 2014 Linden took on the role of CEPLER Manager and from October 2014 she will join the CEPLER team full-time.

**Director of Research and Acting Director of CEPLER**  
Professor Hilary Sommerlad



**In-House Solicitor and CEPLER Manager**  
Ms Linden Thomas



**Director of Pro Bono**  
Dr Bharat Malkani



**Director of Education and Acting Director of Careers**  
Dr Steven Vaughan



**CEPLER Teaching Fellow and Director of Advocacy**  
Ms Theresa Lynch



**CEPLER Bar Liaison**  
Mr James Lee



**CEPLER Administrator**  
Ms Lesley Griffiths



**CEPLER Postgraduate Teaching Assistant**  
Ms Rehana Parveen

**Professor Sonia Harris-Short**  
A thank you

We would like to extend our warmest congratulations to Professor Sonia Harris-Short on her full-time appointment as a Judge on the Midlands Circuit of the District Court.

Sonia has been a leading and much valued member of Birmingham Law School for several years, as Professor of Family Law and Policy. Since 2010, she has combined her work at the Law School with a role as Deputy District Judge on the Northern Circuit.

Sonia has also served on the Family Committee of the Judicial Studies Board and as special academic advisor to the House of Lords Select Committee on Adoption and Family Legislation.

More recently, Sonia's leadership of CEPLER has overseen two successful international conferences, ambitious expansion of the pro bono and careers provision and collaborations with numerous representatives of the profession. Her inestimable contribution will be greatly missed.

Congratulations to District Judge Harris-Short and the very best of luck from your CEPLER colleagues.



# The year in numbers

**80** the approximate number of legal practitioners to have engaged with CEPLER in 2013-14

the number of hours of CEPLER public lectures in 2013-14

**15**

the number of CEPLER careers events for students in 2013-14

**36**

**141** the number of students involved in pro bono activities in 2013-14

**170**

the number of students recruited into next year's Pro Bono Group

the number of students involved in competitive advocacy and mooting in 2013-14

**112**

the number of first year students enrolled in CPD this year

**322**

**5,916** the total number of CPD credits earned by first year students in 2013-14

the number of students participating in new CEPLER modules this year

**76**

the number of speakers and delegates at the second CEPLER Conference in October

**94**

**45** the number of cases on which Pro Bono Group student volunteers have advised during 2013-14

## Pro Bono Group

CEPLER's pro bono programme continues to offer free legal services for the most vulnerable in the local community, and to provide an invaluable opportunity for our students to put the law they learn in the classroom into practice. In 2013-14, there has been an increasing number of students who wish to participate in pro bono work, and the Pro Bono Group has expanded because of a noticeable increase in client demand for our services in light of recent legislative cuts to legal aid.

The Birmingham Free Legal Advice Group (FLAG) in particular caters to those who need legal advice, but cannot afford the services of a solicitor. The volume of preliminary queries that the clinic received increased significantly in 2013-14 and our student coordinators did an excellent job of monitoring and responding to enquiries. Under supervision from solicitors from Mills & Reeve and barristers from No5 Chambers, Birmingham Law School students gave advice on a diverse range of areas of law, including: employment; family; data protection; health care; and consumer rights.

In November 2013, CEPLER launched a new pro bono project in conjunction with Shakespeares Solicitors and Birmingham-based homeless charity, SIFA Fireside. The initiative sees Birmingham Law School students give free legal advice, under the supervision of a qualified solicitor from Shakespeares, to SIFA Fireside's clients. Thanks to this new project, homeless people in the region have benefited from free, fortnightly legal advice surgeries to help them to tackle legal issues in areas such as debt, housing and insolvency.

This year has also seen the first group of Birmingham Law School students to volunteer with the Personal Support Unit (PSU) in the Birmingham Civil Justice Centre. As PSU volunteers, students have assisted litigants in person through Court processes by, for example, accompanying them into court, helping them to complete court forms and write witness statements and by explaining court procedures and documents.

For students interested in immigration law, CEPLER teamed up with the University's International Student Advisory Service (ISAS), which offers immigration advice to international students. A series of workshops were delivered by lawyers working in immigration law, following which a group of students were selected to volunteer in the ISAS office during the second semester.

CEPLER continues to take free legal information into the local community through its Street Law programme, in which students give presentations to schools and community groups on legal rights and responsibilities in areas such as Euthanasia and the Law; Parental Rights and Responsibilities; and Victims and the Law.

There are a number of exciting pro bono projects on the horizon for 2014-15. CEPLER continues to build links with organisations across the region and hopes to expand into the areas of criminal appeals and environmental law.

*Overall, an enjoyable and educational experience. I would highly recommend it to others and would love to take part again.*

Birmingham law student on volunteering with Birmingham FLAG.



MILLS & REEVE



*I thoroughly enjoyed this clinic and I am excited for my next rota slot. An invaluable experience.*

A third year undergraduate law student on volunteering at the SIFA Clinic

6 *The placement was fantastic. I can't emphasise that enough. The solicitors I worked with gave me real opportunities to do substantive case analysis... I wish I could have stayed longer.* 9

Birmingham Law Student on a work experience placement with a solicitor in Manchester

## Careers Events

Working closely with the student-run Holdsworth Club and the University's Careers Network, CEPLER has extended the range of its careers provision this year in order to help prepare law students for the diverse and challenging environment in which they will find themselves upon graduation. In addition to a series of traditional lectures on aspects of life and law in practice, CEPLER has also: hosted a speed networking event between students and local practitioners; introduced specialist panel events; offered soft skills sessions on topics such as 'Social Media and Networking' and 'Making a Personal Impact'; organised the Law School's first full day mock assessment centre and an Employment Tribunal Insight Day, along with repeating the successful Law in the City scheme; and has encouraged debates amongst practitioners on topical issues such as diversity.

For the first time this year, all final year and LLM students were offered the opportunity of a mock Bar Professional Training Course scholarship interview with Mr James Lee. Several students this year secured major scholarships from the Inns.

## Work Experience Opportunities

High quality work experience is key to improving student employability. CEPLER therefore seeks to create this opportunity for law students through its relationships with third party organisations and stakeholders.

This year Birmingham law students will undertake work experience facilitated through CEPLER with a range of organisations, including:

- Birmingham Personal Support Unit;
- British Pregnancy Advisory Service;
- CM Solicitors;
- Bailey Wright & Co;
- Birmingham Citizens' Advice Bureau; and
- Hill Hofstetter.

## CEPLER Professional Development

This academic year saw the launch of a brand new initiative – CEPLER Professional Development (CPD). Like its practitioner equivalent, CPD recognises and values our students' ongoing commitment to developing their skills, whilst also increasing their knowledge, confidence and employability, through participation in the extensive range of CEPLER activities.

The pilot scheme was introduced for the incoming first year cohort in October and credits were allocated to each individual activity according to its demands. These include: Careers events and lectures, Mooting and Debating, Pro Bono Group activities, and CEPLER work experience placements. Originally intended as an opt-in scheme, the number of registrations was so high that enrolment next year will be automatic.

CPD progress is cumulative over the life of the degree and high achievement is rewarded with Bronze, Silver and Gold CPD awards. Students can map their progress at intervals during the year through the Student Portal, where they can download their current statement to substantiate work experience applications.

CPD has been designed to be compatible with the University's existing Personal Skills Awards (PSA), provided by the Careers Network. CPD complements the PSA scheme by rewarding cumulative progress in a wide range of small activities which would not otherwise qualify for inclusion. The achievement of a CPD Bronze, Silver or Gold award can contribute up to a third of the value of a PSA certificate.

# Calendar of Careers Events

## October–December 2013

**Thurs 17<sup>th</sup> Oct, 6-7pm, EDUC-**  
**Vaughan Jeffreys**  
**Answering the Why? Questions**  
**on Law Firm Application Forms**  
Steven Vaughan

**Tues 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct, 6-7pm, LAW-LT2**  
**The Truth about Training**  
**Contracts: What the Glossy**  
**Brochures Don't Tell You**  
Linden Thomas

**Thurs 24<sup>th</sup> Oct, 6-7pm, LAW-LT1**  
**Commercial Awareness: The**  
**Financial Crisis for Lawyers**  
Steven Vaughan

**Tues 29<sup>th</sup> Oct, 6-7pm, LAW-LT2**  
**Social Media and Networking:**  
**Managing Your Online Presence**  
Linden Thomas

**Thurs 31<sup>st</sup> Oct, 6-7pm, LAW-LT1**  
**The US Legal System: How it**  
**Works and How to Work There**  
Adam Oyebanji  
Partner, Barack Ferrazzano,  
Kirschbaum & Nagelberg LLP

**Wed 6<sup>th</sup> Nov, 6-7pm LAW-LT1**  
**Perspectives in Public Law Series**  
**Law, Politics and Public Law**  
Professor David Lock QC

**Tues 12<sup>th</sup> Nov, 6-7pm, LAW-LT2**  
**Diversity and Legal Practice**  
Deborah Dalgleish  
Director, Diversity & Inclusion,  
Ashurst

**Thurs 14<sup>th</sup> Nov, 6-7pm, EDUC-**  
**Vaughan Jeffreys**  
**Commercial Awareness:**  
**What it Means to Be a**  
**Corporate Lawyer**  
Steven Vaughan

**Monday 18<sup>th</sup> Nov, 6-7pm LT2**  
**Making a Good Impression**  
Steven Vaughan, Linden Thomas  
& Joanne Rouse

**Wed 20<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1-3.30pm**  
**GREAT HALL**  
**Law Fair**  
An annual Careers Network  
event, gathering over 50 law  
firms to provide help,  
information and advice.

**Wed 20<sup>th</sup> Nov, 5pm LAW-LT2**  
**So you've been to the Law Fair,**  
**now how to apply**  
A Workshop by Norton Rose  
Fulbright on application forms  
and common mistakes.

**Tues 26<sup>th</sup> Nov, 6-7pm, LAW-LT2**  
**How I Got My Training Contract**  
Presented by newly qualified  
solicitors at Wragge & Co  
(former students of Birmingham  
Law School)

**Tues 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec, 6-7pm, LAW-LT1**  
**Law in Practice Lecture Series**  
**Criminal Law in Practice**  
Ben Henry, Partner, JRB Legal

**Wed 4<sup>th</sup> Dec, 6-7pm, LT1**  
**After My Law Degree**  
John Whaite, Law graduate and  
winner of Great British Bake-Off

**Fri 6<sup>th</sup> Dec, 6-7pm, LAW-LT2**  
**Legal Practice and Legal**  
**Journalism**  
David Allen Green  
Head of Media at Preiskel & Co  
LLP and Legal Commentator

**Thurs 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan, 6-7pm, MUIR-121**

**Speed Networking Event**

Find out about practice experiences in smaller firms through solicitors from: George Green LLP; Sydney Mitchell Solicitors; Bailey Wright & Co; Quality Solicitors Talbots; Christine Lee & Co; Schofield & Associates; The Wilkes Partnership LLP; Tuckers Solicitors LLP; and Higgs & Sons.

**Tues 28<sup>th</sup> Jan, 6-7pm, LAW-LT2**

**Student Membership of Birmingham Law Society**

Angela Henry and Luke Masih

**Wed 29<sup>th</sup> Jan, 6-7pm, LAW-LT1**

**Law in Practice Series**

**Medical Law in Practice**

Charlotte Cook, Lydia Arntzen & Laura Ralfe, Irwin Mitchell LLP

**Tues 4<sup>th</sup> Feb, 6-7pm, LAW-LT2**

**Presentation Skills for Law**

**Students:**

Help for Assessment Centres, Vacation Schemes etc.

Steven Vaughan

**Thurs 6<sup>th</sup> Feb, 6-7pm, LAW-LT3**

**Judging Your Future: Could a judicial career be for you?**

Employment Judge Katherine Tucker

**Tues 11<sup>th</sup> Feb, 6-7pm, ARTS-223**

**Aspects of Practice Panel Event**

**Life as an In-house Lawyer**

Panel includes: Thomas Cook, BT and the University of Birmingham.

**Tues 25<sup>th</sup> Feb, 6-7pm, LAW-LT1**

**Obscenity, Extreme Pornography and the Law**

Myles Jackman  
Hodge Jones and Allen LLP

**Tues 4<sup>th</sup> Mar, 6-7pm, LAW-LT2**

**Aspects of Practice Panel Event**

**Non-Law Jobs in Law**

Meet representatives from University of Birmingham; Eversheds and Shakespeares and find out more about alternative career opportunities in law.

**Tues 11<sup>th</sup> Mar, 12-1pm, ARTS LR4**

**Perfectly Personal Impact**

Steve Weiner, Ashurst  
Examining the role of 'perception' and 'hard-wired preferences' in your professional relationships.

**Wed 12<sup>th</sup> Mar, 5.30-7, MECHG31**

**Judicial College Lecture**

Lord Chief Justice

**Being a Judge in the Modern World**

**Thurs 13<sup>th</sup> Mar, 6-7pm, PHYS-117**

**Aspects of Practice Panel Event**

**Diversity in the Legal Profession**

Lively debate from our panel of distinguished speakers from: SGH Martineau LLP; Uprising; Aspiring Solicitors; and Birmingham Law Society.

**Fri 14<sup>th</sup> Mar, 10-11am, LAW-LT2**

**An insight into the career path of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants**

Professor Francois Crepeau  
UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants

**Mon 17<sup>th</sup> Mar, 6-7pm, LAW-LT2**

**Perspectives on Public Law**

**One Woman's Life in the Law: Private Practice, Senior Judiciary and Public Service**

Alexandra Marks  
Criminal Cases Review  
Commissioner

**Tues 18<sup>th</sup> Mar, 6-7pm, LAW-LT1**

**Law in Practice Series**

**Commercial Awareness**

Chris Rawstron, Birmingham Alumnus and Partner, Birmingham Head of Business Legal Services, Irwin Mitchell LLP

**Wed 19<sup>th</sup> Mar, 1-2pm, PHYS-117**

**Law in Practice Series**

**Family Law in Action:**

**The challenges and rewards of being a Family Law judge.**

HHJ Martin Cardinal

**Mon 24<sup>th</sup> Mar, 6-7pm, LAW-LT2**

**Aspects of Practice Panel Event**

**Want to be a Lawyer, but not a Solicitor or Barrister?**

Have you ever thought about being a Legal Executive or an academic? Hear from: Weightmans LLP; K&M Family Law Solutions LLP and University of Birmingham

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October**  
**6-7pm, Bramall Building**

Special Lecture Event

**Ray Krone**

*Death Row Exonerée*

On World Day Against the Death Penalty, Ray Krone, the 100<sup>th</sup> death row prisoner to be fully exonerated in the US, shares the compelling story of courage in the face of a spectacular miscarriage of justice.

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October**  
**6-7pm, Law Lecture Theatre 1**

Leaders in Law Lecture Series

**Nazir Afzal OBE**

Chief Crown Prosecutor, NW

*The Prosecutor Giving Voice to Victims*

A Birmingham alumnus, Nazir Afzal has been responsible for ground-breaking and precedent-forming prosecutions throughout an extraordinary 22-year career.

**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October**  
**9.30am-5pm, Lucas House, Conference Park**

**CEPLER Conference**

*The Futures of Legal Education and the Legal Profession*

For its second conference, CEPLER presents an esteemed group of experts – both academic and practitioner – speaking on a diverse range of challenging and transformational issues confronting the profession and legal education.

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November**  
**6-7pm, Law Lecture Theatre 1**

Leaders in Law Lecture Series

**Lord Justice Ward**

*To Die or Not to Die: Life and Death Decisions of the Judiciary*

Once voted 'the most human face of the judiciary', Sir Alan Hylton Ward describes the background to one of his most complex cases, the separation of conjoined twins Grace and Rosie Attard.

**Tues 21<sup>st</sup> Jan,**  
**6-7pm, Muirhead Tower G15**

Leaders in Law Lecture Series

**Lord Justice Rix**

*Problems of Judging*

Sir Bernard Rix reveals the challenge and fulfilment of the role of Judge and shares examples from his illustrious career, which culminated in his elevation to Lord Justice of Appeal in 2000 until his retirement in May 2013.

**Thurs 27<sup>th</sup> Feb,**  
**6-7pm, Muirhead Tower G15**

Leaders in Law Lecture Series

Jacqueline Minor, EU Head of Representation

**From Birmingham to Brussels and (almost) back again: A lawyer in the European Institutions**

Birmingham University was one of the first in the UK to commit to undergraduate teaching in European Law. An esteemed Birmingham alumna, Jacqueline Minor explains the growth and diversity of her challenging 30-year career in Luxembourg and Brussels.

**Wed 12<sup>th</sup> Mar,**  
**6-7, Law Lecture Theatre 2**

Leaders in Law Lecture Series

Professor Francois Crepeau

**Global Migration Governance after the High Level Dialogue**

UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants will be speaking about his recent report to the EU in terms of migration policies and detention facilities.

## Mooting

CEPLER continues to facilitate several mooting related activities. The mooting year begins with a series of non-competitive mooting skills workshops which are available to all students new to mooting at the Law School. After these skills sessions, three internal mooting competitions begin. These competitions seek to develop the legal research; public speaking and presentation skills of Birmingham Law School students.

The three internal competitions and this year's winners are:

**Alumni Cup:** participants are first year law students and the winner of this year's competition was **Lorna Kenyon**. The Alumni Cup is judged almost exclusively by our generous alumni and we are very grateful, as always, for their support.

**Camm Cup:** participants are second and third year law students and this year's Camm Cup was awarded to **Meredith Major**. It was a great privilege to welcome Lady Justice Hallett as chair of the Camm Cup judging panel.

**Postgraduate Cup:** LLM and LLB for graduate students participate in the Postgraduate Cup and this year's recipient was **Richard Murtagh**.

Both the Camm and Postgraduate Cups are sponsored by No5 Chambers. The competitions are judged mainly by barristers from No5 and CEPLER is grateful to them for their support.

CEPLER also facilitates student participation in several external mooting competitions and examples of these include: OUP/BPP National Competition and the UKLEA Moot Competition.

## Debating

A team of final year students: **Christopher Barratt; Claire Kellett and Rachel Pavey**; competed in the final of the Birmingham Law Society Debating Competition and were praised for their ability to convey complex arguments in a coherent and logical way and for their public speaking skills generally. They were challenged with debating topics such as the right to privacy and withdrawal of membership from the European Union.



The CEPLER Debate Team

*It has been a pleasure to work with Miss Lynch and the Mooting Committee. I have been privileged to gain further insight into advocacy and meet and speak to members of No5 Chambers. The role has provided me with valuable experience in a position of responsibility and working with a team on a busy project. I particularly enjoyed the skills sessions, as I could relay my experience to other students.*

Rachel Pavey  
Mistress of the Moots  
2013-14



Richard Murtagh, Winner of Postgraduate Cup, with Professor Andrew Sanders

## CEPLER Research

Led by the newly appointed Director of Research, Professor Hilary Sommerlad, CEPLER has been developing a research strategy grounded in the two aspects of the Centre: the legal profession and legal education.

The objective is to engage with policy makers and practitioners as well as with national and international communities. CEPLER is involved in the entire range of research activities: empirical research; theoretical writing; establishing links with other research centres and groups of policy makers; building its post-graduate student research community; and attendance at and hosting of workshops, seminars and conferences.

The starting point for the strategy has been to identify a variety of the key issues currently confronting the profession and legal education. These have included:

- access to justice;
- changes in the composition of the legal labour market and the conceptualisations of 'talent';
- diversity;
- employability and de-skilling;
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) LLB students;
- LETR and its impact on education and the profession;
- lawyer involvement in corporate scandals;
- client power and privilege;
- the ethics of large law firms.

### These issues have generated the following activities:

- empirical studies, designed as pilots for large scale funding applications, including a study of the impact of legal aid reforms on the family and criminal law practitioner communities;
- an ESRC funded grant to explore corporate lawyers' relationships with their clients;
- a bid to a small group of corporate law firms, supported by the LSB, to explore how 'talent' is conceptualised in corporate law firms;
- the establishment of a cross-university network on the professions;
- hosting a colloquium with two US Law Schools (Fordham, New York and Stanford, California) to be held in October 2014 in New York on 'The Challenge of Equity and Inclusion';
- a bid to the Legal Education Foundation for funding to develop a series of public, online, free-to-use skills guides for law students;
- running a panel at an international conference on diversity and equality in the profession;
- co-directing the 2014 W.G. Hart Workshop on Legal Education and Training and the Professions; and
- editing a book of the CEPLER Annual Conference (see p.13).



## Research highlights from 2013-14

Professor Hilary Sommerlad led a qualitative study of the impact of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 on family legal aid, with assistance from Linden Thomas and Lesley Griffiths. The study focuses on the Birmingham legal practitioner community but has included contributions from practitioners across the country. Hilary presented the findings in a paper entitled 'Access to Justice in Hard Times and the Deconstruction of Democratic Citizenship' at a conference on 'Delivering Family Justice in Late Modern Society' at Onati, Spain in May 2014. Further publications are in the pipeline, including a chapter in a forthcoming book edited by Mavis MacLean and Benoit Bastard.

Dr Steven Vaughan is in year one of his three year government funded project on corporate lawyers, looking at how corporate lawyers can, and do, shape the actions of their corporate clients. This year, he has been laying the groundwork for the 100 interviews and focus groups he will conduct in 2014-15, assisted by Emma Oakley, a new Law School Research Fellow.

On 17 June 2014 CEPLER and the Centre for Health Law, Science and Policy co-hosted a workshop entitled 'The Death of the Professions' which considered the impact of recent reforms, budgetary cuts and public criticism on the publicly funded sectors of the legal and medical professions. The leading presentation was given by Professor Mike Saks who has written extensively on the sociology of the professions; other presenters included Professor Andrew Francis (Keele Law School) who focused on the legal profession.

Another CEPLER related research project is an investigation into BME students' involvement in mooting by CEPLER Teaching Fellow, Theresa Lynch. The aim of this project is to investigate, in particular, how student involvement with the extra-curricular activity of mooting impacts on their experience at Law School. At a surface level it is perceived that mooting is readily available for all students at Birmingham Law School. However, this project will investigate whether student involvement in mooting is affected by: 1) their ethnicity; 2) their gender; and/or 3) a multiplicity of factors.

An important dimension of the CEPLER strategy is to make links between substantive law and the profession and legal education, and the Centre therefore acts as a resource for the wider Law School. One of the ways it does this is by participating in bids and supporting seminars; for instance, in June 2014 CEPLER supported a workshop by the Institute of European Law entitled 'Leaving Europe? The Legal, Political and Economic implications of a UK Exit from the EU' and in September 2014 CEPLER will host a one-day seminar on 'Re-imagining the Teaching of Criminal Law', led by Birmingham Law School's Dr Imogen Jones.

## Reproductive Justice and CEPLER

“

*An area of research and activism that I have been developing in Birmingham Law School is that of 'reproductive justice'. CEPLER has provided an invaluable infrastructure for engaging with third sector organisations working in this area.*

*This was especially the case when working with the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) to create an opportunity for a student to undertake a 4 week placement during the summer of 2014.*

*At first BPAS were reticent about this idea as they had problems with previous students on placement. It was therefore invaluable to me to be able to point out the clear structures that CEPLER has in place for recruiting students for placements.*

*The fact that such recruitment was treated extremely professionally within CEPLER meant that BPAS had considerable confidence that students would treat the placement seriously. I now hope that this placement will become an annual opportunity for undergraduates at Birmingham Law School.*

”

**Dr Sheelagh McGuinness**  
Birmingham Fellow

## Key Themes

### Legal Education

*Transforming Legal Education: Meeting the Needs of a Changing Profession?* Session One examined the landscape in the context of the LETR; considered flexible approaches to teaching; the practitioner's perspective on legal education; and lawyer ethics.

*Law Degrees and Law Students: At Home and Abroad.* In Session Two, Law as Engineering which examined fundamental and overlooked legal skills; the value of a law degree; classroom technology and flipped learning; and a comparative study of legal education in Europe.

*How Should the LETR Change over the Next Ten Years?* Session Three's panel discussion considered potential gaps and pressing issues in education; desired changes in the education structure; and the potential impact of the technological revolution.

### The Legal Profession

*Fragmentation, Globalisation and Change:* Session One focused on challenges to professionalism; the financialisation of large firms; and diversity in legal practice.

*The Changing Courtroom:* The Second Session examined the delivery of family justice, judicial diversity, and using foreign jurisprudence in the English Courts.

*Can Research Help Shape the Future of the Legal Profession:* In Session Three, a panel discussion considered the impact of research on policies or practices, identifying knowledge gaps and pressing issues, and the efficacy of various research types.

## The 2013 CEPLER Conference

Acting as a forum for debate for the legal community as a whole is fundamental to the CEPLER research strategy, and in October 2013 the second CEPLER Conference, held at the University of Birmingham, brought together representatives from the entire legal community including scholars, senior figures from professional practice, policy-makers, and representatives of the regulatory authorities. Entitled 'The Futures of Legal Education and the Legal Profession', and with presentations from leading scholars and professional figures, this diverse audience explored some of the key issues confronting the profession and legal education. These include the changing nature of professionalism and the Legal Education and Training Review, the largest review of education and training in the profession in over 40 years..

The aim of the conference was to bring together leading academic scholars, senior figures from professional practice, policy-makers, and representatives of the regulatory authorities, to reflect on the key issues arising from this transformative moment. As such, the conference covered diverse ground, from curriculum development to professional theory, enriched and enhanced by the range of backgrounds and perspectives of its contributors.

CEPLER colleagues assembled an exemplary group of experts in legal education and practice, led by our internationally renowned keynote speaker, Professor Rick Abel of UCLA. Following an opening session from CEPLER's Research Director, Professor Hilary Sommerlad, which provided an overview of current research and challenges ahead, the delegates divided into two pathways – Legal Education and the Legal Profession - each divided into three sessions.

The conference attracted a capacity audience of over 90 academic and professional delegates and the event concluded with a plenary given by leading legal scholar Rick Abel, Connell Distinguished Professor of Law Emeritus and Distinguished Research Professor at UCLA, in which he provided a fascinating perspective on research in both legal education and the profession. The conference papers are due for publication in late 2014 by Hart Publishers as an edited collection titled 'The Futures of Legal Education and the Legal Profession' and pre-orders can now be made on Hart's website at the following link:  
<http://www.hartpub.co.uk/BookDetails.aspx?ISBN=9781849466554>

## Education

### Education

CEPLER provides the opportunity for the Law School to develop its curriculum in new and innovative ways. In particular, CEPLER has extended and enhanced the vocational training elements available to its students so as to improve their employability and give them a concrete idea of 'law in the real world' in all its many forms. To date, we have developed two new, bespoke, credit bearing undergraduate modules which relate directly to CEPLER's objectives: (a) Regulation of the Legal Profession; and (b) Advocacy. These are discussed below. We have also continued our very popular 'Law in Practice' lecture series, which gives students the chance to hear from practitioners as to how the subjects they are studying translate in the real world. In 2013/2014, we had '...in Practice' talks on Criminal Law, Commercial Law, Family Law, Media Law and Medical Law by experts in the respective fields.

#### 'Regulation of the Legal Profession' Module

Led by Steven Vaughan, this module introduced final year LLB students to the regulation of the legal profession. Taught by Steven, Hilary Sommerlad and Dr Julian Lonbay, it looked at lawyers' duties and obligations, professionalism and codes of conduct, diversity, access to justice, legal education and the free movement of legal professionals within the EU. Our aim was to make students reflect on the ways in which lawyers are regulated and to question assumptions they had about lawyers and their role in society. To this end, we had guest lectures from the SRA's Risk Team and Professor Richard Moorhead of UCL. In their feedback, one student commented, *"The module was really interesting and it was nice to learn about something that was a little bit different, looking at the law from an outside perspective rather than from the inside."* This module was a popular choice for final year students and we are working towards greater practitioner involvement in it for the next academic year.

#### 'Advocacy' Module

The legal profession (be it as a barrister or as a solicitor) is an increasingly difficult one to enter. Application forms for legal professional courses, solicitors' firms and barristers' chambers often demand that a candidate has, and can provide evidence of, their advocacy experience whilst at university. With that in mind a new module was introduced in the Law School this year for final year law students entitled: Advocacy (Mooting), which is led by Theresa Lynch. The module provides students with the opportunity to engage with court room advocacy and there is an emphasis on mooting. A 'moot' or 'mooting' is the oral presentation of a legal issue or problem. It is perhaps the closest experience to appearing in court that a student can have whilst at university.

As part of their course students carry out court observations and are asked to reflect on their visit. This year HHJ David Worster oversaw the student visits at Birmingham Civil and Family Justice Centre. A further range of advocacy skills are introduced which include mediation and negotiation. The module is very practical in nature and aims to improve understanding and knowledge of a particular area of law (this year criminal law), and also enhance confidence in public speaking (voice coaching is offered), general research, and presentation skills. The experience gained on the module can benefit every student whether or not they plan to follow a traditional legal career path upon graduation.

## Next Steps

Looking forward, practitioner input into our teaching will be encouraged so that a practice and policy perspective pervades subjects where appropriate. This will enhance and complement the academic content of the course and provide new opportunities for diversifying our teaching and assessment methods.

As part of the Law School's 2014-2015 wider curriculum review, we are also considering the possibility for a dedicated 'Law with Legal Practice' programme for undergraduates, that would work towards making students 'practice ready'. We are also considering targeted postgraduate professional development courses for qualified practitioners and public legal education via MOOCs.

We are also very keen to create a community of doctoral scholars working towards PhDs that relate to the CEPLER objectives.

## Looking Ahead to 2014-15:

### New additions to the CEPLER Team

**Birmingham Law School is delighted to announce the appointment of three new members of the CEPLER team joining in September 2014:**



#### **Director of CEPLER - Professor Robert Lee**

Bob joins the Law School as Director of CEPLER from the University of Exeter. He is a specialist in regulation, particularly in the areas of health, environmental and food regulation, and has substantial links with the legal profession. Bob has worked in two of the largest law firms in the UK and has been a member of the Law Society Training Committee, the QAA Benchmarking Panel for Law, the Lord Chancellor's Standing Conference for Legal Education, and the Society for Legal Scholars Legal Education Sub-Committee. He is a honorary Life Member of the UK Environmental Law Association and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine.



#### **CEPLER Teaching Fellow and Director of Careers - Ms Emily Carroll**

Emily joins as a CEPLER Teaching Fellow and Director of Careers. Emily qualified as a solicitor with Irwin Mitchell and on qualification joined Walker Morris in 2005. Emily has practised as a commercial property lawyer with Shoosmiths for the past six years. Her experience in practice will be invaluable in developing the scope of our careers provision.

#### **CEPLER Research Fellow – Ms Emma Oakley**

Emma is CEPLER's new Research Fellow, working with Steven Vaughan on his ESRC 'Future Leaders' project. Emma submitted her PhD at the University of Bristol in March 2014, and holds a MSc in Socio Legal Studies as well as the LPC and a 1<sup>st</sup> class MA (Hons) in Sociology from the University of Edinburgh. Her research interests lie in the area of situated decision-making by organisational actors. These include how regulatory frameworks intended to govern field-level decision-making operate in practice and why. Emma has previously taught Law at Bristol University and worked as a volunteer trainer and adviser with Bristol Citizens Advice Bureau..

## **New Pro Bono projects for 2014-15**

We are delighted to introduce two new projects to the Pro Bono Group's range:

### ***Environmental Law Foundation (ELF)***

This is a sister-project to FLAG, providing a free advice service by appointment in the specialist areas of Planning and Environmental Law. ELF was established as a national network to provide expert advice and referral to individuals and communities through university law clinics.

Enquiries are processed through Irwin Mitchell LLP and appointments are supervised by barristers from No5 Chambers.



### ***Birmingham Community Law Centre***

A new project for 2014-15, students assist solicitors from the local law centre as they advise clients on matters of immigration and employment law. Student volunteers interview clients and assist solicitors with case work as they help some of the most vulnerable people in the region.

Working from the BCLC offices provides students with hands-on experience of the work and impact of a busy law centre.



Other projects in the pipeline include working with a local social welfare advice service and a supporting a national agency criminal appeals agency.