TIPS FOR PUBLISHING A STUDENT NOTE

Many of the student comments *CLR* publishes are adapted from papers originally written for seminars. By following a few suggestions before and during the writing process, students can greatly simplify the process of adapting these papers for publication as notes.

What does a student note look like?

CLR publishes roughly 12 student notes every year, all of which are written by Berkeley Law students or recent Berkeley Law graduates. There is no set formula for crafting a publishable student note. *CLR* publishes work on a wide array of legal topics and has chosen to set loose parameters for which topics qualify as sufficiently "legal." The most successful submissions are those that best showcase the originality and intellect of the author. Check out our website for a wide selection of recent student pieces: http://www.californialawreview.org/print-archive/.

What Does *CLR* Look For?

- **Length**. While *CLR* has no formal length guidelines for notes, the typical note is between 40 and 60 pages long. There is a maximum page limit of 80 pages.
- **Depth**. In general, a successful note may require more research and analytical depth than is practically possible in a one-semester seminar.
- **Originality**. A key feature of a successful note or comment is its original contribution to scholarship. *CLR* seeks to publish pieces that provide new insights into and/or solutions to legal issues, debates, and problems.
- **Citations**. While *CLR* does not expect the citations in submissions to be flawless, a successful submission should provide source support whenever necessary.

How can I turn my seminar paper into note?

- **Choose a topic that interests you!**
- **Conduct a preemption check.** A piece is considered preempted when an author has already written a piece with a substantially similar thesis. Conducting research before settling on a specific thesis will help you to craft a paper that makes original contributions to scholarship. Consult the research librarians for guidance.
- **Ask if your thesis still be relevant when you submit your note:** Remember that it can take upwards of a year to publish a submitted note once it is accepted for publication, in addition to the time you invest in the writing process before submission. For this reason, it is important to consider whether your thesis will still be relevant two years from now. Is a pending case likely to render your insights moot in the interim? Is there pending legislation affecting your thesis? These considerations, while not always relevant when selecting a topic for a seminar paper, are very important when crafting a note.
- **Be attentive to the limits of a seminar**. It may not be feasible to craft a publishable comment in one semester. It may make sense to identify elements of your piece that can be most easily added after you finish your paper. For instance, a detailed discussion of existing approaches to a legal issue may constitute an exemplary seminar paper. Such a discussion might also provide a platform for a comment that engages in a detailed critique of these approaches and/or proposes a new solution to the issue.
- **Keep detailed notes and citations**. It may help to develop a system for keeping track of the sources you have read. A number of citation management tools are available online, including Zotero (available for free download at www.zotero.org).
- **Revise**. Solicit feedback from your fellow students, your professors, and anyone else whose opinion you value. Considering diverse viewpoints during the revision process may help you to address unforeseen weaknesses in your writing and your argument.