

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE FROM THE DEAN'S DESK

Congratulations to every student who submitted an article for the 2013 edition of the *Pretoria Student Law Review* and, of course, a special word of congratulations to those whose contributions were accepted for publication. Not all submitted work is accepted, but it is important that aspiring writers learn from the feedback given during the editing process. As you may know by now, the *PSLR* operates on exactly the same principles as any other law journal. Therefore, every contribution is subjected to peer review, which entails a critical analysis of the content, as well as the grammar and style, of the contribution.

Some law students may find strange the notion of putting their fingers on a keyboard to write notes or articles with a view to publication, and yet others may never have given it any thought. The fact of the matter is that lawyers are expected to write. The development of this skill starts with the skill of reading – specifically the development of critical reading skills.

As the law is largely practised by means of the written or spoken word, lawyers must be able to express themselves clearly and concisely. It is therefore important that all law students use their studies to improve their language skills. One day you will be expected to draft legal documents of various kinds – each type calling for a particular format and approach, or you may be required to give a legal opinion on a particular issue. You may even have to compile a contribution to a law journal.

Since the *PSLR* is in the first place a law journal – largely run by students for students – the opportunities offered by the *PSLR* will stand you in good stead to improve your writing skills. The knowledge and skills gained through participation in the *PSLR* will be useful, not only for legal practice, but also if you plan to embark on postgraduate studies, or should you consider pursuing an academic career.

The Faculty of Law at the University of Pretoria ranks amongst the top law faculties in South Africa and on the African continent. Whilst we believe in equipping students for life after the LLB, we also deem postgraduate studies to be part and parcel of such an after-life. In line with the new strategic plan of the University of Pretoria, the Faculty of Law has introduced an inquiry-lead LLB curriculum which emphasises the need to develop critical reading and writing skills amongst law students. Because of this, publications are foremost on the Faculty's agenda, and consequently, much time is invested in improving students' writing skills.

It is understandable that novice student-writers will ask where they should start. Where will you find something to write about? Just a few words of advice on this: First, lecturers should stimulate

thought amongst students by highlighting and discussing topical issues in the various law subjects, giving you an idea of what to write about. Second, you should read a lot – law-related material as well as topics that have a bearing on the law and its development, such as social, political and economic theory. Third, you should discuss interesting issues with other students and with your lecturers, in that way initiating discussion groups in the various subjects.

Most importantly, once you have identified an issue that would call for an argument and ultimately a sensible conclusion, you should be mindful that your writing is not merely descriptive. Rather, discuss the problem you identified, provide a logical answer to the problem and follow this with a clear conclusion.

From the Faculty's side, lecturers are encouraged to teach and assist students to improve their writing skills – every assignment and even test or exam you write should be viewed as part of this process. Ultimately you will be expected to write a dissertation in the final year of your LLB studies. Use this opportunity, do your best and at least aim at reworking your dissertation for submission to the *PSRL*. Supporting the *PSLR* will be time wisely spent during your years of study.

To the outgoing editorial board: a word of sincere appreciation for the hard work that you have done. I wish the incoming 2014 board members all the best!

**André Boraine**  
Dean: Faculty of Law