INTRODUCTION

Transforming the Future of Public Health Law Education through a Faculty Fellowship Program

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Introduction

This special supplement issue of the Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics is devoted to a unique faculty fellowship program that promoted educational innovations in public health law during the 2014-2015 academic year. Through a competitive national application process, ten faculty fellows were selected to design and implement innovative curricular projects (clinics, externships, and experiential-learning courses) in public health law at their home institutions.

The fellowship program was made possible by a grant that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (“RWJF”), the country’s largest philanthropy dedicated solely to health,1 made to Georgia State University College of Law and its Center for Law, Health & Society, which I directed at the time. I served as the overall project director and lead faculty for the fellowship program, which was designed to enhance the teaching of public health law at schools of law, public health, and other health-related professions.

This article provides an overview of the fellowship program.2 It highlights the program’s goals, some of the underlying philosophies that shaped it, and the key activities that supported the fellows during their fellowship year as they implemented their innovations. It also provides a roadmap for understanding common themes as you read about the fellows’ curricular projects, which are presented in their individual essays that follow in this Journal issue.

Goals and Underlying Philosophies

During the past decade, RWJF has devoted considerable resources to developing new initiatives in public health law and furthering law’s role in promoting the public’s health. Its twin pillars of its investment in this area are the Network for Public Health Law (“Network”)3 and the Public Health Law Research program.4 RWJF has also recently funded several smaller pilot projects to test effective ways to engage lawyers and legal academics in the public health field. This faculty fellowship program is one of those pilot projects.

RWJF had two overarching goals in desiring to establish the fellowship program: (1) to promote the innovative teaching of public health law nationally by creating new curricular offerings in schools of law and public health (which was later expanded to include schools of medicine and social work), and (2) to build and share resources beyond the fellows’ home institutions through online libraries that would foster model approaches and best practices for teaching public health law.5 When I was brought in to lead the program, I created another goal for the program: (3) to create a dynamic and supportive “community of practice” in public health law that would foster the fellows’ personal growth and professional development. As explained by one of the scholars, Etienne Wenger, who coined the phrase in the 1990s:6

Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they
interact regularly.... A community of practice is not merely a club of friends or a network of connections between people. It has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people.... In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other; they care about their standing with each other.... They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems — in short a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction.7

We wanted to create a fellowship program that would foster this robust sense of a “community of practice” among its participants.

New Curricular Offerings
When RWJF first conceived of the fellowship program, few law schools offered courses in public health law. If health law courses were offered, the emphasis was typically on laws related to health care providers and hospitals, bioethics, and medical malpractice. In schools of public health, a law-related course was taught, if it was taught at all, often by non-tenure-track faculty. RWJF sought to enhance the teaching of public health law by offering to full-time, tenure-track or tenured faculty the opportunity through the fellowship program to create new courses, clinics, externships, or other curricular offerings in public health law.

RWJF was particularly interested in promoting courses that would emphasize experiential and practice-oriented learning and would foster student engagement with public health practice organizations, including public health government agencies and non-profit community organizations concerned with public health. RWJF was also committed from the outset to seeing that the new curricular offerings would be sustained at the fellows’ home institutions after the fellowship year ended. To this end, the fellows’ deans were required take part in both the application process and the intensive summer institute that served as the kick-off to the year-long fellowship program.8

In line with RWJF’s goals, I have long supported the creation of experiential and community-engaged learning environments.9 Engagement with community partners — whether through a clinic or externship or as part of a doctrinal course — offers students insights into the real world of professional practice that simply cannot be experienced in any classroom alone. RWJF’s support for practice-oriented education was also consistent with recent calls for reform in legal education generally.10

We also saw the fellowship program as an opportunity to advance interdisciplinary learning. Interdisciplinary education offers benefits, whatever the subject matter.11 At the level of graduate or professional education, students can become so immersed in their own disciplinary fields that they forget how specialized their knowledge, vocabulary, and ways of thinking have become. When they work with students from other disciplines, they are like travelers to foreign cultures who discover that there is a lot they do not understand or know or cannot do as well as they thought they could, and they may be intimidated by language barriers. When they return to their home countries, they often look at them through new eyes.

Like foreign travel, interdisciplinary education sparks curiosity, expands horizons, and offers the pleasures of new discoveries, surprising perspectives, and different beliefs and approaches to problems. RWJF and I saw the fellowship program as a perfect opportunity to introduce more faculty and thus more students across the country to the benefits of interdisciplinary and community-engaged learning through the field of public health law.

With these goals and educational perspectives providing the overall philosophical backdrop to the fellowship program, we gathered a multi-talented program team together to help design and implement it.12

Professional Development
Early on in the design of the fellowship program, the program team developed a set of core competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes or values) that we hoped the fellows would enhance during the fellowship year. We anticipated that the fellows would enter the program with some, albeit varying, degree of competency in the knowledge realm (e.g., knowledge of key public health laws, ethics, and policy issues). Because the fellows would be experienced faculty, we also knew we could largely rely on them teach themselves what they needed to know at this doctrinal level to implement their projects.

Spending less time on developing the fellows’ subject-matter expertise would allow us the freedom to experiment with supporting the skills and values of good teaching, as well as the skills and attitudes for success in navigating academic change. The fellowship program, and particularly the intensive ten-day summer institute that launched the fellowship year, would thus focus on developing those core competencies that faculty rarely get systematically exposed
to and yet are central to personal and professional growth as faculty members: best practices in teaching (including adult learning theory and effective experiential learning), leadership, conflict management, collaboration, and self-reflective practice. Emphasizing the attendees’ professional development rather than focusing on improving their expertise in a particular subject matter is unusual for an academic conference, and offering this unfamiliar agenda was initially thought by some on the program team to be a bit risky. It proved to be a critical component in the success of the fellowship program.

“IT’s all about the relationship” became a watchword of the fellowship program. We knew that the cohort of fellows could learn as much from each other and their mentors as from outside experts, and the program was designed to foster those relationships. It also aimed to offer a network of connections for them with practitioners and other faculty in public health law who could provide support and guidance both in their projects and in their careers after the fellowship year. Building a strong community of practice within public health law was thus central to promoting the fellows’ professional development.

Selection of Fellows
To be eligible to apply, candidates had to have a full-time faculty appointment, a J.D. degree, and at least three years of teaching experience and had to demonstrate interest in teaching innovations, building new educational programs in public health law, and leading academic change. In line with the program’s goals, preference was given to candidates with an interest in interdisciplinary, experiential, and practice-oriented learning and a capacity for developing collaborations with public health agencies or organizations and interdisciplinary relationships across campus.

Six of the finalists selected as fellows had primary appointments in law schools; two had primary appointments in public health schools; one had a primary appointment in a medical school; and one had a primary appointment in a school of social work. All four of the candidates without primary appointments in a law school had strong affiliations with the law school on their campus or with a law school in the state. All of the projects proposed to incorporate experiential learning, and many sought to establish connections between the fellow’s school and community partners in public health law (either as part of the new course or through externships). Most of the projects had interdisciplinary dimensions with law, public health, medicine, social work, or other professional or graduate students. Two fellows’ proposals embraced distance learning through innovative online technology.

Mentors
Five distinguished senior faculty with expertise in public health law and academic program development were invited to be mentors to the fellows in the fellowship program. The mentors were selected for their diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, and academic settings in which they worked. They graciously agreed to join the fellowship program before they knew who the fellows would be, as they would be part of the application-review panel that included other public health law attorneys and faculty. Each mentor was paired with two fellows for the duration of the fellowship year, although mentors freely assisted other fellows who were not assigned to them as the opportunities arose to offer supporting advice or assistance.

The mentors were integral to the development of every facet of the fellowship program: helping to design the agenda for the summer institute, attending and leading sessions at it, and engaging with their fellows throughout the year and providing ongoing support, guidance, and encouragement. They were central in helping the newly-developing community of practice to cohere at the summer institute, and to strengthening it throughout the fellowship year. They will doubt-
less remain as valuable future sources of support for the fellows’ teaching, scholarship, and career connections as the community grows. Two of them provide thoughtful reflections on their experiences as mentors in this supplement issue of the Journal.\textsuperscript{20}

**Summer Institute**

A major component of the fellowship program was the summer institute, held from July 16-26, 2014 in Park City, Utah, which served as the kick-off to the fellowship year. Among the goals of summer institute was to foster the fellows’ capacity for innovative teaching using interdisciplinary relationships, reflective practice, and collaborative approaches to learning. Another goal was to foster their capacity for leading change in academic settings, navigating resistance, and building sustainable public health law programs.

**Pre-Institute Preparation**

In order to use the ten days of the summer institute to best advantage, the fellows were given a number of assignments during their orientation to the program to be completed before the institute. Fellows completed a self-assessment of core competencies in public health law education, which had been developed in conjunction with RWJF’s assessment processes for other pilot projects and were tailored to this fellowship program. (The fellows updated this self-assessment of competencies after the institute and at the end of the fellowship year to measure progress.) They also took a self-assessment of personal strengths,\textsuperscript{21} which would serve as a starting point for self-reflection on professional development during the fellowship program and would be discussed during the institute.

In addition, the fellows were given a professional development journal, tailored to the fellowship program, to allow them to determine their own learning goals and to track their progress throughout the fellowship year. They were also given a project plan template to track progress on the implementation of their projects. The fellows updated their journals and project plans both at the summer institute and periodically during the fellowship year. They also shared them periodically with their mentors and program team as a springboard for mentoring, help with navigating challenges, and ongoing advice, support, and encouragement.

**Participants**

As noted earlier, building a strong community of practice and cohesion among all the attendees was central to achieving the program’s goals. The fellows, their mentors, and the program team attended all ten days of the summer institute. The first two-and-a half days of the summer institute included the fellows’ deans and distinguished academic leaders and leading public health professionals and attorneys from federal, state, and local government and the private sector. In a variety of formal and informal settings, the participants began to build a strong network of connections in academia and professional practice that the fellows could call on during their fellowship year. Being a relatively small group with abundant opportunities for conversation, everyone quickly gained new insights into the others’ realms of professional life.

**Teaching Formats**

The summer institute was designed to model a wide range of teaching approaches and learning activities.\textsuperscript{22} Reflecting the phrase that “the medium is the message,” each format chosen for different institute sessions over the ten days offered an example of a different method, tool, activity, or practice for teaching and learning. The institute was deliberately structured to demonstrate how to experiment creatively with different teaching formats. In the context of good teaching, the institute applied the principle of good literary or film composition: “show, don’t tell.”

During the first few days when deans and others were in attendance, formats began with the more traditional power-point presentations by the fellows.
of their projects, panel discussions, and small-group breakouts. The sessions also incorporated less conventional formats, such as “speed-dating”-like roundtable discussions (rotating all attendees among the public health and law practitioners) to explore career opportunities in public health law. After the mentors and a few program team members presented their own teaching innovations through posters or video, the participants were invited to a “program academy” where they could walk around the gallery of posters for more informal and in-depth conversations with the presenters. A semi-circle of all the deans at a conversational “deans’ forum” allowed them to offer their thoughts about the challenges that their fellows might face and how the deans could help to overcome them.23

After the deans and others departed, the formats became increasingly varied and provocative. The first day was an immersion day in experiential learning, and was perhaps the most powerful day of the summer institute. The fellows, mentors, and program team spent it at the National Ability Center in Park City, which is a leader in adaptive sports and recreation for people of all abilities.24 The morning was spent in a service-learning project to help rebuild disability-accessible trails across the Center’s grounds. There was also time to debrief the experience and the fellows’ service-learning opportunities in their own communities and to explore the results and significance of their pre-institute self-assessments of their personal strengths.

In the afternoon, the fellows, mentors, and program team undertook a demanding ropes-course challenge, which required them to climb tall poles and, working in teams of two high off the ground, to navigate their ways across uneven sets of ropes. This activity — a memorable one for the fear, anxiety, and, for some, thrill it engendered — represented what it is like to get out of one’s comfort zone, as we ask our students to do all the time. The group also experienced equine-facilitated learning: working with horses, they had to get horses to move from one place to another in the ring. Since they could not push or speak to the horses, this activity revealed insights into how non-verbal communication works and can impact one’s effectiveness as a leader and teacher.

Other games and problem-solving activities during the day drew on experiential intuitions more than rational thought and appealed to different learning styles. The day ended with dinner-in-the-dark, during which all participants were blindfolded and guided in their exploration of their meal by a blind man. A sometimes uncomfortable experience, it served to foster empathy for those who are differently abled, as many of our students are.

The rest of the week incorporated intensive, highly interactive workshops on ethics in public health policy and practice, master teaching strategies and methods, and managing conflict and navigating change. One of the authors of “What the Best Law Teachers Do” and his faculty colleague25 conducted two days of workshops on developing course objectives, designing a new course and an assessment plan for it, and incorporating a variety of experiential teaching methods, including cooperative learning, storytelling, cognitive think-aloud, discovery sequence instruction, and classroom assessment techniques. A workshop on navigating organizational change began with the participants’ self-assessments of their own personal styles for handling conflict, followed by discussion about managing change and dealing with resistance.

Field trips were also featured at the institute. There were field trips to the local medical center (whose executive chef was a remarkable model for making the hospital a local gathering spot for healthy, inexpensive, and delicious food) and the Summit County Health Department (whose director and legal counsel discussed the challenges and opportunities facing a local health department trying to promote the health of a community with wide income disparities). Field
trips also included a visit to the local water treatment facility and a couple of restaurant inspections. Such excursions illustrated the real world of public health in the local Park City community, which could model for the fellows various options for engaging their students with public health agencies or organizations in their own communities.

Toward the end of the ten days, “open space” sessions allowed the fellows and mentors themselves to define the agenda for the morning and offer to lead sessions on topics of particular interest that had not been covered in the previous days. While it is virtually unheard of at an academic conference to not have a predetermined agenda, this self-organizing method of setting an agenda on the spot is an intriguing and effective way to allow participants to define what they want to learn about and to gather in small groups to share their respective expertise, perspectives, and questions about focused topics of common interest. The open-space format reflects one of the central principles of adult learning theory, which is for the learners themselves to identify their learning needs and priorities.

In addition, the fellows had the opportunity for targeted one-on-one coaching and counseling sessions. A professional coach and conflict-engagement specialist offered personal and confidential coaching sessions. Most fellows had never experienced professional coaching before, which provided them both an opportunity for addressing concerns about their own professional development (e.g., tenure, scholarship, and work-life balance) and a teaching model for coaching their own students. Three highly influential leaders in public health law, who had come for the last two days of the institute and participated in the open-space sessions with substantive workshops in public health law and policy, also formed an impromptu expert panel to give individual sessions with any of the fellows who desired these leaders’ personalized feedback on their projects. In addition to offering the fellows an opportunity to get expert advice on their projects, such one-on-one feedback reinforced the pedagogical value of the fellows’ providing individualized feedback to their own students on exams, papers, and other coursework.

**Intangible Rewards**

Finally, there was down time for recreation and relaxation, taking advantage of the beautiful Park City setting, as well as scheduled time for mentoring conversations and individual work on projects. Many who had come to the institute mildly apprehensive about spending ten days with strangers and fearing it would be too long to be productive found that its length was barely enough time to take it all in and be able to process all that the institute and the locality had to offer. It was simultaneously thought-provoking, energizing, overwhelming, exhausting, and a lot of fun.

While it might not have been sufficiently mind-expanding or culture-changing to qualify as the “Woodstock of Legal Education,” the summer institute came close (albeit without the drugs and free love) and reflected a seminal moment in the fellows’ and mentors’ professional lives. The group bonded in a way that academics rarely have the chance to savor beyond their home institutions, and the friendships that began there have endured through the fellowship year and beyond.

**Fellowship Year**

After the summer institute came the fellows’ hard work of refining and implementing their projects at their home institutions over the course of the fellowship year. The mentors provided ongoing support through monthly calls with their respective fellows, and the fellows held their own periodic calls among themselves, offering support, advice, encouragement, and the opportunity to engage in collaborative work resulting in class materials, scholarship ideas, and invitations to present at each other’s campuses. I also held periodic individual calls with the fellows and group calls with the mentors, received interim written reports from the fellows and mentors, and helped the fellows to organize presentations at national professional conferences during the year.

A two-day conference held in Atlanta in May 2015 to close the fellowship year was both celebratory and bittersweet. It afforded an opportunity for the fellows, mentors, and program team to reconnect in person, to hear the final outcomes of all the fellows’ projects, and to honor one another for their perseverance, educational successes, and personal and professional growth. A tour of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gave an opportunity to explore up-close this signature federal agency’s current and historical work to protect the public’s health. A meet-and-greet gathering of attorneys from across the CDC campus, including the general counsel’s office and the public health law program, continued the strengthening of professional connections and contributed to sustaining the program’s community of practice. Utilizing the open-space format they had learned at the summer institute, the fellows and mentors set their own agenda on the final afternoon to explore ways they might further cement their relationships and engage in future collaborations after the fellowship year. Even as they regretted that the fellowship year was ending, they rejoiced in their achievements and shared experiences and how far they all had travelled professionally and personally during the year.
Online Resources

To meet the program’s goal to build and share resources that foster model approaches and best practices for teaching public health law as well as to support the fellows and help sustain their innovations, the program created two new online libraries of extensive resources related to public health law and best practices in teaching. Stacie Kershner, associate director of the Center for Law, Health & Society and co-project director for the fellowship program, developed an initial set of materials that were available as a resource at the summer institute. The fellows and mentors contributed additional materials during the fellowship year, often resulting from work on their projects.

One online library is available to the public and hosts a set of up-to-date resources on substantive public health law content, including links to key public health law information generally (e.g., cases, books, articles, videos, government agencies and organizations related to public health) as well as resources on specific topic categories in public health law. The second library offers a range of teaching resources, including public health law course syllabi, case studies and class exercises, video clips and other audiovisual resources, Power Point slides, and bibliographies of materials on teaching and learning, adult learning principles and practices, leadership development, organizational change, interdisciplinary education, and skills development. This library is available to faculty nationwide (password accessible) and is hosted on the Network’s website.

These libraries contribute to creating a wider community of practice, not just among the fellowship program participants, but also with faculty and practitioners elsewhere who are interested in developing teaching reforms generally or public health law expertise specifically. The libraries are designed to be widely disseminated and utilized, and ongoing contributions to them are welcomed.

Common Themes

From the fellows’ reports, conversational exchanges, and reflections over the course of the fellowship year, common themes have emerged which provide both background and context for appreciating their projects. All of the fellows were creating something entirely new and virtually out of whole cloth, intrinsically motivated by an entrepreneurial spirit and purpose-driven enthusiasm and supported by the fellowship program, and yet without a trodden path or even a roadmap at their school or elsewhere to guide them. Here are some common themes from their experiences, challenges, and surprises, many of which are reflected in their individual essays that follow in this volume.

Project Management

Some fellows were surprised (and dismayed) by how much time and effort was required to get their new course up and running at their schools, particularly where interdisciplinary enrollment was sought. When cross-registration logistics were coupled with coordination efforts with new community partners and start-up preparation of new experiential activities and other class materials, many fellows experienced work overload, especially if they had not been given a release from a course or committee assignments to undertake the fellowship. Without the ongoing support and encouragement of their mentors, program team, and each other, many might have experienced serious burnout (none did).

The fellows found it helpful to manage their projects by creating clear structures. Particularly when working with students from different disciplines, they found it important to define and express clearly at the outset of the course what their learning objectives, expectations, and grading rubrics were. With respect to community partners, it was equally important to agree upon a set of mutual expectations and work products in advance and to choose course projects that met the course objectives. Some potential community agencies or organizations may not be good candidates for collaboration if their mission, needs, or interests do not align with the faculty member’s educational goals, or if they do not have personnel who can commit to providing adequate supervision of and feedback to the students during the semester. Fellows quickly realized that any temptation either to oversell what the students could offer a community partner or to avoid confronting the partner’s potentially unrealistic expectations had to be quelled, as it could only lead to headaches and disappointment on all sides down the road.

The fellows also benefitted from remaining flexible when inevitable curve balls were thrown their way. These surprises could come, for example, in the form of unanticipated bureaucratic or political obstacles across campus or lack of timely resources or staffing on which the project was dependent. Many had to rethink, revise, or reschedule at least some components of their project because of what they either learned at the summer institute or came to realize during the year. These mid-course corrections reinforced learning to accept and take advantage of the unexpected.
Personal and Professional Development

One of the enduring themes of the fellowship year, beginning with the ropes-course challenge at the summer institute, was the importance of risk-taking and getting out of one’s comfort zone. All of the fellows were highly successful faculty in their own rights before the fellowship year began. The program challenged them to enlarge their personal boundaries and take on new challenges.

In some cases, challenging the fellows’ limits meant their becoming as much learners as teachers as they introduced new material not previously in their wheelhouse of expertise or as they collaborated with faculty or professionals outside their disciplines. This caused an unexpected but welcomed benefit of creating a team feeling for collaborative learning among the professor and students in the class as they co-created the learning environment.

In other cases, taking risks meant giving up control and the orderliness of a doctrinal classroom in favor of the unexpected turns and twists of student-led class projects or the changing needs or capacities of community partners. For successful type-A faculty, it can be hard to give up control and let the students take the lead in at least some aspects of the course’s evolution. Yet doing so led to the insight that when students take charge of their learning and help to design the course and their work product, the learning experience can be even deeper, more engaging, and more fun for all involved, including the professor. One fellow recounted that creating a new course with a local public health agency “forced me to let students take control of the course’s development while I played the role of advisor, mentor and guide….I guided. I gave opinion, I made suggestions. But I restrained myself from re-working the students’ deliverables” to the agency.

The fellows have expressed how the fellowship experience has made them better teachers, and that the lessons they learned from developing their projects have had striking ripple effects of improvement in their teaching of their other courses as well. Personally, they developed resilience they may not have realized they had in themselves, which allowed them to persevere to accomplish their goals. Professionally, their successes boosted their self-confidence and heightened their visibility as leaders within their schools. Taking big risks resulted in big rewards for the fellows. Reflecting on the surprises that arose during the program, one fellow recalled:

the frequency with which, during a typical week this year, I remembered being literally on a wire with a fellow fellow [on the ropes-course challenge] petrified but willing to take the risk.

Repeatedly, the theme of risk-taking has resonated with me throughout my fellowship year. I have been rewarded for every risk I have taken this year, which means I should be taking more risks.... [The image of the ropes-course challenge] embodies what will be the lasting lesson for me from this year, and I am grateful for it.

Challenges

The challenges the fellows faced in the course of implementing their projects fell into three general categories: administrative, political, and practical. The administrative challenges typically related to the logistics of gaining course approval through lengthy and different curriculum review processes for interdisciplinary courses; registering and scheduling students from different disciplines; and advertising the new courses to ensure adequate enrollment numbers. In some cases, the reality that tuition dollars may follow the various schools in which their students are enrolled, yet the faculty member may be paid out of the budget only of the school that offers the course, can be an obstacle to creating or continuing interdisciplinary courses.

The political challenges included faculty resistance at some fellows’ schools in the form of skepticism about the value of their projects in the face of declining student-body enrollments and increasingly limited resources. Particularly at law schools, there could be outside pressures (like bar-passage rates and employment rates of graduates) to maintain traditional doctrinal courses rather than support what may be perceived as niche electives benefitting fewer students or as not teaching “the law.” While the health-related professions have increasingly welcomed opportunities for interdisciplinary education, law schools have historically been more hesitant to embrace interdisciplinary subjects or skills, often believing them to be outside the scope of what lawyers need to know. Some fellows had to navigate their colleagues’ covert concerns that they were getting special treatment or status at the school because they were RWJF fellows. To meet these challenges, the understanding and support of the fellows’ deans for their projects proved critical.

Some practical challenges related to the fellows’ concerns about the impact that undertaking the fellowship year might have on their scholarly productivity, and hence on their prospects for tenure. Others grappled with the challenges that having students with different disciplinary backgrounds and uneven abilities created, such as how to grade them fairly, how to manage their group dynamics, and how to balance content coverage with time for more process-oriented
goals to learn the skills of team work and meeting real organizations’ real needs. All of these challenges were ameliorated by the constant support and feedback from the diverse members of the community of practice that began at the summer institute.

**Benefits**

Enthusiasm is contagious, and the fellows’ enthusiasm for their new courses infected their students, who were thoroughly engaged in the new learning opportunities they offered. The fellows said that one of the biggest benefits of the program was the renewed motivation they felt for fresh teaching experiences, which resulted in reciprocated enthusiasm and engagement in learning among their students. The fellows also conveyed their enthusiasm to colleagues at their schools, for they were required as part of the program to hold an informal presentation of their project in the spring semester of their fellowship year to their faculty and administration. This in turn could open up new lines of communication among their colleagues interested in innovative teaching and curricular reforms.

Some fellows discovered that their projects aligned well with strategic planning and other educational initiatives at their universities. Even if some colleagues at their own school did not fully understand their project’s educational value, a number of fellows found that at the university level there was a lot of interest and support for interdisciplinary and community-engaged learning opportunities. When a president or a provost stresses that a core part of the university’s mission is to serve its community or to foster interdisciplinary education, deans tend to take notice, and they could point to the fellows’ projects as demonstrations of their school’s commitment to that mission. Also, many of the fellows’ projects fit squarely within recent calls for legal education reform and trends in ABA accreditation standards.35

Fellows who taught interdisciplinary classes expressed how gratifying were the many “ah-ha” moments that their students had. Not only had students learned to appreciate the perspectives of other disciplines, they also had begun to understand how the different disciplinary skills and knowledge bases contributed to better problem-solving for their community organizations than could have been achieved with those of a single discipline.

Just as developing the capacity for self-reflection is a core dimension of developing professional skills and identity,36 developing this capacity was a key goal of the fellowship experience. Ultimately, it was the fellows who had to teach themselves what they needed to know and do to implement their projects successfully, just as their students will have to learn to become their own best teachers as they develop as professionals. Taking the time and opportunities to reflect on their experiences during the fellowship year through their professional development journals, conversations with peers and mentors, and professional coaching all contributed in varying degrees to their personal growth.

A number of fellows replicated this reflective experience in their courses, giving their students similar structured opportunities to reflect on their own learning, their own goals, and their own styles of coping, meeting challenges, and solving problems. For courses that include a community-based project and team work, one fellow recommended incorporating:

multiple opportunities for individual and team reflection and “check-ins” during class. The semester goes by very fast. These check-ins help to keep students on task and to avert problems in the group process. One way to do this is to have students complete a “Team Charter” which they can review periodically to determine if they are meeting their goals and expectations for the group. As I told my students, “teams are like marriages; leaving things unsaid does not make for a healthy team!”

**Community of Practice**

Some fellows had expressed, before their fellowship year, a sense of isolation at their schools as either the lone faculty member teaching health law or the lone faculty member with their particular research interests. The summer institute gave them a longed-for feeling of a community with professionals who understood their field and their challenges, had similar interests, and could offer the expertise and resources to further their professional work. It would be hard to overstate the value and importance of having such interpersonal relationships to sustain professional energy, motivation, and engagement. A consensus among the fellows was that the summer institute was one of the best features of the fellowship program.

Out of these relationships, the fellows developed a constellation of professional opportunities during the fellowship year. They invited each other and experts they had met at the summer institute to give presentations (either in person or remotely) at a class, workshop, or symposium. They collaborated on developing new course materials, such as case studies and assessment tools. They shared resources and model practices, and they explored their common research interests and ideas. In one case, two fellows and a mentor collaborated on an issue brief for the CDC. Another fellow, who previously had been unfamiliar with the medical-legal partnership (MLP) concept,
began working with four other fellows, faculty at other schools, and the National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership to design metrics for evaluating the impact of MLPs on patients’ health.

The fellows had found a community who could encourage, commiserate with, and support them and celebrate their achievements. As one fellow observed, “It feels like I have been finally able to connect with a larger community with tremendous expertise that would like to see my teaching and research improve, and will actively help me to improve it.”

Conclusion
The fellowship program was successful in meeting its goals to inspire enthusiasm and motivation to become engaged and self-reflective teachers and leaders in public health law education, and to leverage professional networks to promote the long-term sustainability of the fellows’ curricular innovations and begin to effect culture change in higher education. This essay has described the steps in creating the fellowship program, explored common themes among the fellows’ projects, and discussed many of components that contributed to the success of the program. It offers perspectives for anyone considering undertaking a similar fellowship program in other disciplinary fields in the future.

The fellows have created ten innovative curricular projects that represent best teaching practices in higher education and models for enhancing experiential, interdisciplinary, and community-engaged learning. Their challenges, surprises, and lessons learned find elaboration in the articles that follow, as do the observations and perspectives of the deans’ consultant, the professional coach and conflict specialist, and two of the program’s mentors. Finally, a companion article written by myself and the consultant who was engaged by RWJF to participate in strategic visioning, planning, and program evaluation closes this volume with some overall conclusions drawn from both the processes and outcomes of the fellowship program and recommendations for future consideration.

Acknowledgments
I am indebted to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for funding this faculty fellowship program and selecting me to lead it. I have been honored to work with an incredibly talented, creative, thoughtful, hardworking, and collegial community of practice of fellows, mentors, and program team members. Everyone has contributed to making this one-year program a successful model for genuine innovation and best practices in higher education through interdisciplinary and community-engaged learning opportunities.

References
12. The program team consisted of Charity Scott; Stacie Kershner, associate director of the Center for Law, Health & Society at Georgia State University College of Law and co-project director for the fellowship program; Cassie Hayasaka, then administrative specialist (now program manager) at the Center for Law, Health & Society; Angela McGowan, the RWJF senior program officer until the end of summer institute; Nancy Kaufman, RWJF consultant and program evaluator and president, The Strategic Vision Group; Diane Hoffmann, deans’ consultant for the program and Professor of Law and Director, Law and Health Care Program, Francis King Carey School of Law; and Debra Gerardi, consultant and coach for navigating conflict and for professional and leadership development, and chief creative officer of EHCCO. One of the mentors, Leslie E. Wolf, law professor at Georgia State University College of Law, also served as a program team member in the initial planning and fellow-selection phases before the summer institute.
13. N. J. Kaufman and C. Scott, “Innovation in Higher Education: Lessons Learned from Creating a Faculty Fellowship Program,”


18. See essays by Boies and Davis, supra note 14, in this supplement issue of *JLME*.

19. The mentors were: Mary Crossley, Professor of Law and former Dean, University of Pittsburgh School of Law; James G. Hodge, Jr., Lincoln Professor of Health Law and Ethics and Director, Public Health Law and Policy Program, Sandra Day O'Conner College of Law, Arizona State University; Kathleen Hoke, Law School Professor and Director, Legal Resource Center for Public Health Policy, Francis King Carey School of Law, University of Maryland; Ross D. Silverman, Professor of Health Law and Management, Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health, Indiana University; and Leslie E. Wolf, Professor of Law and Director, Center for Law, Health & Society, Georgia State University College of Law.


22. The detailed agenda for the summer institute is available at <http://chls.law.gsu.edu/files/2014/03/agenda-detailed-final-7-7-14.pdf> (last visited January 6, 2016).

23. For the deans' perspectives on the fellowship program and their roles in it, see Hoffmann, supra note 8.


25. They were Michael Hunter Schwartz, Dean and Professor of Law, and Kelly Terry, Associate Professor of Law and Director of the Public Service Externship Program and Pro Bono Opportunities, William H. Bowen School of Law, University of Arkansas at Little Rock. See, generally, M. H. Schwartz, G. F. Hess, and S. M. Sparrow, *What the Best Law Teachers Do* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

26. See H. Owen, "A Brief User's Guide to Open Space Technology," available at <http://www.openspaceworld.com/users_guide.html> (last visited January 6, 2016) ("Open Space Technology requires very few tools and elements. There must be a clear and compelling theme, an interested and committed group, time and a place, and a leader. Detailed advance agendas, plans, and materials are not only un-needed, they are usually counterproductive.").

27. See Kaufman and Scott, supra note 13.


29. These invited public health law experts were: Scott Burris, J.D., Professor of Law at Temple Law School, where he directs the Center for Health Law, Policy and Practice and RWJF's Research on Policy and Law program, and Professor, Temple's School of Public Health; Gene Matthews, Senior Investigator, North Carolina Institute for Public Health, Gillings School of Global Public Health, University of North Carolina, and Director, Southeast Region, Network for Public Health Law; and Wendy Parmet, Matthews Distinguished University Professor of Law, Professor of Public Policy and Urban Affairs, Director of the Program on Health Policy and Law, and Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Education and Research, Northeastern University School of Law.

30. See Kershner, supra note 5.


32. Network for Public Health Law, "Public Health Law Faculty Teaching Resources," available at <https://www.networkforphil.org/faculty_teaching_resources/> (last visited January 6, 2016) (this site is password protected; faculty may request a password from the Network on the site).

33. New teaching resources may be submitted by filling out the form through Network for Public Health Law, "Submit a Resource," available at <https://www.networkforphil.org/faculty_teaching_resources/submit_a_resource/> (last visited January 6, 2016) (this site is password protected; faculty may request a password from the Network on the site).

34. The quotations in this article are taken from the quoted fellows' final reports, which are on file with the author. Permission has been granted to include their quotes in this essay.

35. See supra note 10. The ABA's most recent accreditation standards now require one or more experiential course(s) totaling at least six credit hours (up from three). American Bar


37. See Hoffmann, supra note 8.
38. See Gerardi, supra note 28.
40. See Kaufman and Scott, supra note 13.