



## Journal Stimulates Debate Before and After Grutter

[by Mike Murphy]

This past year, a Supreme Court decision about affirmative action in the admissions policies of higher education institutions put the University of Michigan Law School at the forefront of contemporary racial issues. But even before the decision, the Michigan Journal of Race & Law, an academic journal at the law school, had been manning that forefront for a while.

This past year, a Supreme Court decision about affirmative action in the admissions policies of higher- education institutions put the University of Michigan Law School at the forefront of contemporary racial issues. But even before the decision, the Michigan Journal of Race & Law, an academic journal at the law school, had been manning that forefront for a while.

"We [at the Journal] are committed to publishing cutting-edge scholarship on issues of race and law and look for non-traditional and interdisciplinary works," said Megan Whyte, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal and a Michigan. "We publish the work of legal academics, social scientists, scholars in other fields, students, and practitioners. We require only that the focus be on issues of race and the law."

The Journal publishes two, or occasionally three, issues per year, with a press run of 325. It has foreign and domestic subscribers, including law schools, libraries, courts, judges, academics, and practitioners. "So far this year we've had 125 submissions; of those, four have been accepted, two of which are notes," Whyte said. "Last year, by comparison, there were 131 submissions for the entire year; eight articles were accepted, and two of those eight were notes."

The Journal began as a reading group at Michigan Law, where students read and discussed critical race scholarship and contemporary issues at the intersection of race and the law. Eventually the participants decided that these discussions were not enough. They decided to form a new journal that

adequately recognized the voices of people of color and that was dedicated unequivocally to discussing issues of racial inequality in the law.

At a law school whose affirmative action policy was recently upheld as constitutional by the Supreme Court in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U. S. 306 (2003), the Michigan Journal of Race & Law has had a lot of attention. "The Journal receives numerous submissions covering the topics of affirmative action and Grutter," Whyte said. Many authors want to publish their affirmative action pieces with us not only because we are a specialty journal dealing with race issues, but also because we are the institution at issue in Grutter. Over the last 10 years, the Journal has earned a reputation as a source for high-quality and cutting-edge scholarship on race and the law, but Grutter has likely helped to focus more attention on the school as a whole."

Whyte continued, "The large increase in the number of submissions also suggests that people are increasingly interested, on and off campus, in the issues and topics we cover. We received many more Associate Editor applications this year than ever before. Some people in the current 2L class chose Michigan because of the affirmative action cases, so I think we also have a population that understands and cares about the importance of issues of race within the law."

"The Journal is integrated into the community in a lot of ways other organizations aren't," said Pamela Grewal, a 2L at Michigan and a new Associate Editor at the Journal. "I'm involved, clearly, because it's an academic

journal, but also because it supports other ways for students to learn more about race and the law, through film series, and speakers. It seems more interdisciplinary, to some degree."

"I think it does a great job of creating an interesting, diverse social network, as well as a forum for discussing race and the law."

"I actually came to Michigan because of the Journal," Whyte said. "I knew that I wanted to work on a journal, and I also wanted to focus my legal education (and eventually my career) on issues of racial equality. The Journal convinced me that Michigan would be the best place to do it, and that there would be a community of people wanting to work on the same topics."

"Being a part of the publication process--selecting what we publish and helping authors to strengthen their works--is an amazing experience," Whyte continued. "I am able to influence legal scholarship that matters, and I am excited that our journal focuses on publishing works that otherwise might not be published, whether because they are from non-traditional perspectives, voices of color, or less-well-known authors, or because they are too cutting-edge or discuss topics that other journals do not want to cover."

Whyte adds, "And I am able to be a part of something that matters."

For more information, please visit: <http://students.law.umich.edu/mjrl/index.htm>