

## Dean William Byrnes' Presentation at AALS 2013

At Saturday's breakfast Working Group on Distance Learning for Legal Education, Associate Dean William Byrnes introduced Dean Rudy Hasl to open the proceedings, and thereafter explained the significance of Twelfth Night to the opening of Carnival Season as well as the serving selection of grits & grillades. The Working Group presented its report on the best practices for distance learning, the culmination of a two year process involving a score of institutions and Lexis. Dean Byrnes noted "Three years of decreasing US domestic applicant pool has forced schools to consider more efficient use of resources, because staffs will not be increasing in the next several years, and more income sources, because first year class sizes are shrinking" Distance education is a tool to address both these new realities. This Best Practices report will help law schools navigate the establishment of quality distance education programs in light of institutional economic pressures." Dean Byrnes continued "now that Harvard Law School has instituted mega open-enrollment distance courses, the first being an IP course with 500 to be enrolled, other schools will be seeking to play catch-up. Of course, the Thomas Jefferson distance program was the first in this space and its experiences with its evolution over the years provided many practical examples for the discussions that led to the Report." More than 80 institutions picked up copies of the report.

At Monday's half day session on International Legal Exchange, Associate Dean Byrnes was a commentator for the second panel on assessing the outcomes of exchange programs. He started off quoting the conclusion of meta studies: *"Diverse groups of problems solvers – groups of people with diverse tools – consistently outperform groups of the best & the brightest"*. Dean Byrnes discussed outcomes of deep learning from international educational experiences as requiring contextualization, especially regarding cultural linguistics and semiotics, a field of study that Thomas Jefferson's Professor Susan Tiefenbrun is a renowned expert and author, including the area of socio-economics, economics, and history. When polled, many of the attendees raised hands when asked if their institutions were starting or expanding international exchange, especially dual degree programs.