

FROM THE EDITORS

The last year has seen major changes at *Legal Theory*. Two of the journal's editors—David Brink (Professor of Philosophy, University of California, San Diego) and Matthew Adler (Professor of Law, Duke Law School)—stepped down after years of outstanding editorial work. We gratefully acknowledge their invaluable contributions in sustaining and improving the journal. As each editor stepped down, a new editor stepped in. Connie Rosati (Professor of Philosophy, University of Arizona) began work as an editor in the fall of 2016. In the spring of 2017, Mitchell Berman (Professor of Law, University of Pennsylvania Law School) joined the journal.

The most important changes at *Legal Theory* were the hiring of a new managing editor, Ginger Clausen, who received the Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Arizona, and the implementation of an online submission system via ScholarOne. The previous managing editor had been ill for extended periods of time, during which the journal accumulated a backlog of manuscripts at various stages in the review process. Over a year of painstaking work, Professor Clausen cleared the backlog. We are pleased to report that as a result of her efforts, the editorial process is now fully on track, and as of the publication of this issue, the journal is back on schedule. We deeply regret the confusion and delay that authors experienced, and we hope that, going forward, authors will find the review process much improved.

Part of our efforts to improve the system have involved Professor Clausen's mastery of the online system and increased order in the screening and tracking of articles. In the most recent three-month period, from October 2017 to December 2017, the average number of days from submission to acceptance was less than 120 (or just under four months); the average number of days from submission to rejection with external review was under 200 (or under 7 months); and the average number of days from submission to rejection without external review was less than 80 days (or about two and a half months).

These numbers indicate that, at present, delays in the review process are occurring at three key junctures. The first is the initial screening by the editors. Two and a half months is an unacceptably long time for authors to wait for an initial decision on their submissions. We are taking steps to reduce the screening time by implementing changes to the online system that will enable the editors to better manage work flow, with the aim of reaching an initial decision within about two weeks' time.

Second, like other academic journals, we frequently find it difficult to find two external reviewers for a manuscript. In some cases, Professor Clausen has had to contact as many as twenty prospective reviewers before finding two who will agree to review a manuscript. This slows the review process considerably. As a consequence of the difficulty in securing reviewers, we find ourselves having to turn repeatedly to certain particularly conscientious reviewers. We are enormously grateful to them, but we obviously do not want to continue to overburden them. We are implementing a number of strategies to address the problem of finding reviewers, including expanding the pool and more quickly turning to a new prospective reviewer when an invited reviewer fails to timely respond to a reviewing request.

Finally, reviewers sometimes simply fail to submit their reviews on time. We are undertaking to improve reviewer completion time by the use of automatic reminders and, where necessary, replacement of reviewers who delay unreasonably. Ideally, the various changes we are making will reduce the review period to closer to four months from submission to final decision.

Despite the rough patch *Legal Theory* has gone through, our readership has remained strong, and we have continued to receive many excellent submissions. We thus believe that even if authors have, regrettably, suffered during this period, the quality of the journal has not. We look forward to reading more of your work and welcome your comments and suggestions.

Larry Alexander
Mitchell Berman
Connie Rosati
Scott Shapiro