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## Opening Remarks from the SALT Teaching Conference

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## OPENING REMARKS FROM THE SALT TEACHING CONFERENCE

*Karen Czapanskiy\**

Good morning, and welcome. I had the privilege of being one of the co-chairs of the SALT organizing committee. The members of the committee appreciate how much the faculty and staff of Loyola Law School have put into this conference. Their generosity has been wonderful and we are very grateful to them.

The members of the committee also want to welcome you and thank you for joining us to discuss and commit to progressive teaching and lawyering. My job is to orient you to the structure of the conference and to help you anticipate and integrate the experiences of the next couple of days, which we have made extremely long and, we hope, inspiring and intense.

Our objective is to help you develop a structure that brings together progressive lawyering, advocacy, and theory building. This is tricky work, so the conference is complicated. One way to imagine the process of the conference is as a bunch of building blocks precariously situated upon each other. A second way to think of it is in computer-eze, as a threaded e-mail conversation. A third way to think of it is as a braid, where we are braiding together many different ideas, segments, and types of thinking. Whatever image helps you to integrate the ideas, please keep it in mind, use it and share it.

Our goal is to be progressive in law—both inside and outside the classroom—for we are a community of progressives. We hope this conference will help build a broader and deeper community, to connect with each other and with our many other communities in stronger and deeper ways. How will we do this? We open with a plenary about the challenges and opportunities that progressives face

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in today's depressing political climate. But you will not be able to simply sit still and listen and be depressed or inspired.

During the first plenary we will put you into buzz groups and keep you working together throughout the conference. First, you will work on the SALT Action Campaign projects. The Action Campaign is SALT's way of responding to the many attacks on diversity in the law. We are active and intentional in this campaign, and have made it one of the ways that we in SALT connect with our communities.

The second plenary will consider experiences of weaving progressive action into classroom activities. We will hear from four people. The first two are a teacher and a student from the University of Maryland, a law school that has been trying to integrate some of this progressive agenda into a part of the curriculum. Third, we will hear from a teacher from the University of Texas, which I believe can charitably be described as an inhospitable climate for progressive work. The fourth speaker is a community activist and academic who will talk about service learning and orient us to literature and ideas on that subject. Following that plenary, you will attend one of several demonstrations by teachers who are thinking through integrative possibilities.

To help you think through and integrate what you will learn, you will participate in small group discussions, organized by subject areas. In these groups you will develop an activist project that can be done with students in one of your courses. You will also figure out how that activist project fits into the structure of your course over the semester or the year. The groups meet for three sessions. The first two meetings involve small groups organized by subject area. In the third meeting, each group will present a brief description of its project as if it were being presented to students. The other group in the room will take on the role of students and try to provide some feedback on whether they understand *why* this project is being done as well as *how* it is being done. In the presentations we want you to talk about both the *why*—what your goals are—and the *how*—how the project will be done.

The second day will start early and be a hard-working one. We will begin with a videotape of the "No Seat, No Fare Campaign." Then our keynote speaker, Eric Mann, will take the floor to describe

the campaign in greater depth. The rest of the morning will be devoted to small group discussions and demonstrations.

In the afternoon we will have media training to learn from and with a professional about how to get progressive messages out to people in our communities. We will come together at the close of the day to reflect on where to go from here; inside *and* outside of SALT, inside *and* outside of classrooms, inside *and* outside of our law schools, and inside *and* outside of our progressive communities.

