The Future of Legal Education in the United Kingdom: The Next British Invasion?

By:

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Vanessa Davies has been the Director (= chief executive) of the Bar Standards Board, the regulator of barristers in England and Wales, since December 2010. She is a non-practising barrister, and joined the BSB after three years running a large legal aid charity in the UK which specialised in refugee, asylum and immigration law. Her earlier career was, however, as an academic linguist at King’s College London, and then as a senior civil servant at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. She was recruited to her current role under the rubric "modernising the Bar" - and has started but not yet finished.

Antony Townsend  
Solicitors Regulation Authority  
Birmingham, England

Antony took up his post as the first Chief Executive of the SRA in 2006, having been Chief Executive at the General Dental Council (GDC) from 2001. During the last seven years, he has led the establishment of the SRA as an independent public interest regulator, developing an outcomes focused and risk-based approach, and introducing the licensing of new kinds of law firms with external ownership. At the GDC he led a large reform programme to modernise dental regulation involving legislative, structural and operational change and including the extension of regulation to new groups of dental professionals.

Before this, Antony held a number of senior roles at the General Medical Council, including Director of Standards and Education, and Head of Conduct. In all these roles, he worked extensively with the regulators of other professions, consumer organisations, professional representatives and Government. His earlier career was with the Home Office, where he worked primarily on criminal justice issues. In May 2013, Antony announced his intention to step down as SRA Chief Executive.

Paul F. Wood  
Legal Education Society of Alberta  
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Paul Wood is Executive Director, Legal Education Society of Alberta. He joined the Legal Education Society of Alberta in 1990. In 2008 Paul was named Executive Director. The Legal Education Society of Alberta provides bar admission training and continuing professional development to students, lawyers and law firm staff in the province of Alberta, Canada.

A member of the international Association for Continuing Legal Education throughout his career with LESA, Paul is a Past-President of ACLEA having served on the ACLEA Executive Committee from 2000 to 2006. He served as a member of the Editorial Board of the CLE Journal. Paul helped establish and participated in the ALIABA-ACLEA CLE Summit in October, 2009. In 2011 Paul spoke to the National Conference of Bar Examiners in San Francisco, to the Continuing Legal Education Association of Australasia in Hobart, Australia, and to Australasian Professional Legal Education Council in Sydney, Australia, on competency based training and assessment. He was invited to, and participated in, the Legal Education & Training Review Symposium in Manchester, UK in 2012. Paul is a member of the Technical Advisory Committee, National Admission Standards Project, Federation of Law Societies of Canada.
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