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Extemporaneous Comment

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EXTEMPORANEOUS COMMENT

BY MICHEAL BARAM

WELL, I think today we have heard two ideas which are intuitive to the emerging role of the law school. One is Arthur Miller's idea of creating centers of policy analysis and the other is what several other speakers have suggested about interdisciplinary and clinical interdisciplinary programs. I would like to speak against the former and for the latter.

The academic landscape is littered with too many centers of policy analysis already; science and public policy programs in particular, which have not really served the educational needs of students or the needs of society and have tended to serve the professional staff or the interests of the researchers. I condition my remarks by saying that the policy program activities at George Washington University have been excellent. And I think that this is partly because of the milieu in which they are involved, which is Washington; their access to decision makers makes policy analysis work there, and the program has the excellent guidance of Dr. Mayo and others, several of whom are here today; make it a vital process at Washington. I do not think policy programs or centers can be such a vital process in Boston, or Denver, or anywhere else where we are all essentially relegated to reading the regulations and policy statements of others. And policy analysis at these other places tends to be a very sterile occupation for the researchers, with very little benefit to the students.

If we are really in the business of education, we cannot sit down and build centers of policy analysis. We have to establish interdisciplinary or clinical programs, such as Dr. Gilmore has suggested, which would eventually contain a policy function as a byproduct.