In mid-December [2004], the Harvard Law Review conducted a nationwide survey of law faculty regarding the state of legal scholarship. Nearly 800 professors completed the survey and submitted their feedback. Complete tabulations of the survey will soon be available on the web. Importantly, the survey documented one particularly unambiguous view shared by faculty and law review editors alike: the length of articles has become excessive. In fact, nearly 90% of faculty agreed that articles are too long. In addition, dozens of respondents submitted specific comments, identifying the dangers of this trend and calling for action. Survey respondents suggested that shorter articles would enhance the quality of legal scholarship, shorten and improve the editing process, and render articles more effective and easier to read.

The law reviews [that join this statement] are very grateful for the constructive feedback and wish to acknowledge a role in contributing to this unfortunate trend in legal scholarship. To the extent that the article selection or editing process encourages the submission and publication of lengthier articles, each of the law reviews listed above is committed to rethinking and modifying its policies as necessary. Indeed, some have already done so. The vast majority of law review articles can effectively convey their arguments within the range of 40-70 pages, and any impression that law reviews only publish or strongly prefer lengthier articles should be dispelled. Ultimately, individual law reviews will have to decide for themselves how best to resolve these concerns. Please know, however, that editors across the country are cognizant of the troubling trend toward longer articles and are actively exploring how to address it.