

**Call for Participation in a Discussion Group on**  
***FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURIAL LAWYERING IN CURRICULAR DESIGN***

**Due: August 24, 2015**

The Annual Meeting Program Committee introduced a new program format to facilitate scholarly discussion and engagement at the 2016 Annual Meeting. Discussion Groups will provide a small group of faculty an opportunity to engage in a sustained conversation about a topic of interest. The Discussion Group sessions do not feature formal presentations. The objective is to facilitate a lively and engaging real-time discussion among participants. The following is a Call for Participation in a Discussion Group on *Fostering Entrepreneurial Lawyering in Curricular Design* to be held at the AALS Annual Meeting, Saturday, January 9, 2016, from 3:30-4:45, in New York City.

**Description**

There is a reality commonly ignored by the curriculum in most law schools: the largest segment of law graduates will eventually be solo or small firm practitioners. Even before the Great Recession, nearly two thirds of lawyers in the United States practiced solo or in small firms. Since 2008, trends show an increase in the number of recent law graduates that “hang a shingle.” According to a 2012 report of the American Bar Association, about three-quarters of lawyers in the United States work in private practice.<sup>1</sup> Of those attorneys, about seventy percent practice solo or in small firms. Many find themselves in this practice setting soon after graduation. The National Association for Law Placement (“NALP”) statistics for the class of 2013 show that 42% of graduates in private practice are working in firms with 2-10 lawyers; about 5% are already operating solo practices.

In short, more than half of the attorneys in the United States are small business owners – they are operating, managing and growing a law practice. As framed by Professor Luz Herrera, they must be “lawyer-entrepreneurs.”<sup>2</sup> The law curriculum rarely presents students with opportunities to build the competencies necessary to operate a practice. As William Hornsby, staff counsel at the American Bar Association (“ABA”), has written: “Simply put, law school graduates are ill-prepared for the future they are most likely to pursue.”<sup>3</sup>

There is a small but growing chorus urging law schools to do more to prepare graduates who will operate their own practices. There have not yet been comprehensive or concrete proposals for the law school curriculum, however, this discussion will, therefore, have two goals: (1) to address whether law schools should design a developed suite of curricular offerings for students

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<sup>1</sup> ABA PRESS RELEASE, *ABA Serves Solo and Small-Firm Lawyers with New Online Resource Center* (1/19/2012), <http://www.abanow.org/2012/01/aba-serves-solo-and-small-firm-lawyers-with-new-online-resource-center/>. Small firms were defined as having 20 or fewer members. *Id.*

<sup>2</sup> Luz E. Herrera, *Training Lawyer-Entrepreneurs*, 89 DENVER UNIV. L. REV. 887, 891 (2012).

<sup>3</sup> William Hornsby, *Challenging the Legal Academy to a Dual (Perspective): The Need to Embrace Lawyering for Personal Legal Services*, 70 MD L. REV. 420, 435 (2011) (defining small firms as five or fewer attorneys); see also Richard S. Garant & Stephanie Kimbro, *The Teaching of Law Practice Management and Technology in Law Schools: a New Paradigm*, 88 CHI-KENT L. REV. 757 (2013).

who intend to operate their own practices at some point after graduation and, (2) if yes, what should those course offerings entail?

### **Call for Abstracts**

The Annual Meeting Program Committee invites faculty and administrators who would like to join this Discussion Group to submit a three page abstract that addresses why you care about *Fostering Entrepreneurial Lawyering in Curricular Design* and some of your relevant experiences to **by August 24**. The organizer for this discussion group is Meredith R. Miller of Touro Law Center.

Space in this Discussion Group is limited, so the Committee, along with the faculty member who proposed this discussion, will select the remaining discussion participants from the abstracts. At the AALS Conference in January, selected participants will make a one-two minute presentation to the Discussion Group. The remaining time will be devoted to group discussion. Participants are also strongly encouraged to commit to publication of the papers summarized at the Meeting. The organizers of the Discussion Group are currently seeking publication opportunities in appropriate journals.

Each submission for this Discussion Group should include:

- The title of the submitted presentation/paper;
- The name and contact information of the applying participant;
- A detailed three-page, double-spaced abstract that addresses entrepreneurial lawyering in curricular design, the author's experiences, and recommendations for change; and
- The curriculum vitae of the applying participant.

In reviewing the submitted abstracts, the selection committee will consider the following:

- The fit and overall quality of the program for the Discussion Group;
- The diversity that the applying participant may bring in terms of a variety of factors, including institutional affiliation and status (tenure-track, non-tenure track, tenured); and
- The applying participant's willingness to publish his or her paper along with other Discussion Group papers.

Abstracts are due by **August 24, 2015** and should be submitted using the online submission form [here](#).