

Call for Participation in a Discussion Group on
Introducing Professional Identity Development into the Law School Curriculum

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 *Introducing Professional Identity Development into the Law School Curriculum*, to be held at the AALS Annual Meeting, Thursday, January 7, 2016, from 3:30 – 4:45 pm in New York City.

Description

Law schools have excelled for generations at teaching developing lawyers the doctrinal foundations, analytical skills and practical skills they will need to provide effective counsel to clients. Despite their excellence in imparting these crucial skills, however, law schools have been remiss in helping students to develop the self-awareness, character and perspective necessary to be excellent counselors. Recognizing this failing, many law schools have taken steps to introduce programs in their curricula to help students develop their professional identity. This discussion group will include a diverse group of legal educators from around the U.S. and other professionals who have made strides at their respective institutions to introduce programs that assist students in developing their own personal sense of professional identity as lawyers.

The specific questions that this discussion group will address include:

- What do we mean by “professional identity” and what are the qualities of an excellent professional identity?
- What have law schools done to identify clear outcomes related to the development of professional identity?
- What activities, readings, exercises and assessments are most effective in helping students to develop a professional identity?
- How has professional identity development been introduced in doctrinal courses?
- What more can and should law schools do to help students develop their professional identity?
- Who should teach professional identity development in a law school?

- How have law schools negotiated the mechanics of administering a course on professional identity development, including grading (pass/fail v. graded), required v. elective units, number of units, and adapting the course to a grading curve?

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 programs that help students develop their professional identity to by **August 24, 2015**. Current organizers and discussion participants include Michael T. Colatrella (Pacific McGeorge School of Law), Jeffrey E. Proske (Pacific McGeorge School of Law), Neil W. Hamilton (University of St. Thomas School of Law), Jerry Organ (University of St. Thomas School of Law), Timothy Floyd (Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law), Janet K. Levit (The University of Tulsa College of Law), William Henderson (Indiana University Maurer School of Law), Nancy Levit (UMKC School of Law), Rob Durr (Northwestern University School of Law),

Space in this discussion group is limited; the Committee, along with the faculty who proposed this discussion, will select the remaining discussion participants from the abstracts submitted. At the AALS Conference in January, selected participants will make a five-minute presentation during the Discussion Group. The remaining time will be devoted to group discussion. Participants are 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 names and contact information of the applying participant;
- A detailed three-page, double-spaced abstract that addresses the questions posted about programs that help students develop their professional identity; 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 factors such as 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](#).