

Call for Participation in a Discussion Group on

Access to Justice in the Age of Technology, Television & Trump

Abstracts due: August 25, 2017

The Annual Meeting Program Committee for 2016 introduced a new program format, Discussion Groups, to facilitate scholarly discussion and engagement. Discussion Groups provide a small group of faculty with the opportunity to engage in a sustained conversation about a topic of interest. Discussion Group participants are expected to write and share a short presentation abstract (3 pages) as part of their participation. The Discussion Group sessions, however, will not feature formal presentations. Instead, the abstracts are intended to facilitate a lively and engaging real-time discussion among the participants. Participants in this Discussion Group will consist of a mix of the people identified in the original proposal submitted to the Program Committee along with additional individuals selected on the basis of this call for participation. There will be limited audience seating for those not selected in advance to be discussion participants.

The following is a Call for Participation in a Discussion Group on **Access to Justice in the Age of Technology, Television & Trump** to be held at the AALS Annual Meeting, Wednesday, January 3, 2018 from 3:30 - 5:15 pm in San Diego.

Description

In these days of increasing inequality and changing federal funding priorities, the wellbeing of the nation's most vulnerable population is particularly at risk. Numerous studies have confirmed what everyone knows – that people living in poverty have unmet legal needs. We in the academy and legal profession are not alone in this realization. Thanks to media interest in legal issues (think 13th, Serial, Making of a Murderer) many students enter law school with a sense of where justice is lacking and with images of what it means to “do” justice. Students have witnessed protests at airports, streamed videos of police brutality, and retweeted the latest news of the Black Lives Matter movement; these students want to go to law school to engage swiftly and passionately -- to use the law to resist and effect change.

Meanwhile, in March, 2017, President Donald Trump announced his budget blueprint, which slashes funding to a range of social service and education programs, including the elimination of all funding to the Legal Service Corporation (“LSC”). The LSC is considered the backbone of the civil justice system in the United States, funding lawyers to represent moderate and low-income civil litigants and its funding supports legal services

offices across the country. Threats to LSC's funding have been an issue for the last twenty years, with notable Congressional budget cuts during several administrations. Whatever happens to Trump's current budget proposal, cuts to legal services are very much on the horizon and must be addressed.

This Discussion Group will draw from a diverse group of clinical and doctrinal faculty and administrative deans who represent different areas of expertise, practice, levels of seniority, and geography. Additional speakers will be selected from a call for participants. This Discussion Group, will use short presentations and a moderated discussion to consider how technology, television, and Trump impact our understanding of, and response to, the access to justice crisis.

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 **by August 25** that considers one or more of the following questions:

1. Our students are inundated with inspiring media narratives about law. What impressions are they left with about what it means to be a lawyer? Are these impressions accurate? If not, do they set our students up for disillusionment with the day-to-day practice of law representing individual clients? Do they translate to the work necessary to address the access to justice problem?
2. Are larger caseloads in law school clinics one way to provide access to justice and give students the fast-paced experience they seem to crave? If so, what are the tradeoffs between caseloads and pedagogical goals? How can clinical professors balance their obligations to their caseloads, scholarship, and faculty service requirements?
3. How do we listen to, and respond to, students' interest in narrative, client-centered discussions, and systems critique? Can doctrinal classes use a narrative, client-centered focus to motivate discussions regarding issues relating to access to justice? If so, where and how? And if so, how do doctrinal professors manage the potential tension with this and the goal to produce bar and practice ready students?
4. When we talk about access to justice and budget cuts that offend or worry us, how do we talk to people who may not share our point of view? Many of us in the law school academy are railing against the Trump budget cuts and assume everyone else is too. How does this assumption impact our teaching? How should it?
5. How do ethics and professional responsibility map onto the issue of issues of access to justice? What ethical mandates are there? Should law school curricula be

encouraging law students to think of the provision of access to justice as part of the lawyer's role or professional identity? If so, how does that occur? How do emerging technologies complicate consideration of ethics?

6. Should a critique of issues concerning access to justice generally, and the current system of providing individual representation in civil and criminal litigation in particular, be a part of the law school curriculum? If so, where should this critique take place?

Current organizers and confirmed discussion participants include:

I. Organizers:

1. Bradford Colbert, Resident Adjunct Professor of Law, Mitchell Hamline School of Law, 651-290-8651, <http://mitchellhamline.edu/biographies/person/bradford-colbert/>
2. Claire Donohue, Practitioner-in-Residence, Washington College of Law, cdonohue@wcl.american.edu; 202-274-4303, <https://www.wcl.american.edu/faculty/cv/donohue.pdf>
3. Laurie S. Kohn, Associate Professor, GW Law School, lkohn@law.gwu.edu; 202-994-5784, <https://www.law.gwu.edu/laurie-s-kohn>

II. Participants:

1. Bryan Adamson, Associate Professor of Law, Seattle University School of Law, <http://www.law.seattleu.edu/faculty/profiles/bryan-adamson>
2. Ann Cammett, Professor of Law, CUNY Law School, <http://www.law.cuny.edu/faculty/directory/cammett.html>
3. Kate Elengold, Clinical Associate Professor of Law, UNC School of Law, <https://www.wcl.american.edu/faculty/elengold/>
4. L. Song Richardson, Professor of Law & Sr. Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, University of California, Irvine, <http://www.law.uci.edu/faculty/full-time/richardson/>
5. Laurent Sacharoff, Associate Professor of Law, University of Arkansas, <https://law.uark.edu/directory/directory-faculty/uid/lsacharo/name/Laurent-Sacharoff/>
6. David Santacroce, Clinical Professor of Law, Michigan University Law School, <https://www.law.umich.edu/FacultyBio/Pages/FacultyBio.aspx?FacID=dasanta>
7. Drew Simshaw, Georgetown University Law Center, <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/academic-programs/clinical-programs/our-clinics/IPR/staff-contact-us.cfm>
8. Jane Stoevers, Assistant Clinical Professor of Law, University of California, Irvine, <http://www.law.uci.edu/faculty/full-time/stoevers/stoeversCV.pdf>

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 Annual Meeting in January, selected participants will make a two to three minute presentation during the Discussion Group. The remaining time will be devoted to a moderated, roundtable group discussion.

Each submission for this Discussion Group should include:

- The title of the submitted presentation/paper;
- The name, school and email of the applying participant;
- A three-page, double-spaced abstract that addresses [any of the questions presented above](#); and
- The curriculum vitae of the applying participant.

In reviewing the submitted abstracts, the Discussion Group organizers and selection committee will consider the following:

- The fit and overall quality of the abstract for the Discussion Group; and
- The diversity that the applying participant may bring in terms of a variety of factors including viewpoint diversity, institutional affiliation and status (tenure-track, non-tenure track, tenured).

Abstracts are due by **August 25, 2017** and should be submitted using the [online submission form](#).