PERSPECTIVES ON LAW TEACHING-COMMENTS TO NEW LAW PROFESSORS
By: Natalie Nanasi
Assistant Professor and Director of the Judge Elmo B. Hunter Legal Center for Victims of Crimes Against Women at the SMU Dedman School of Law

Thank you for inviting me to speak with you this morning; I truly appreciate the AALS as well as Professors Stone and Dark for having me here today.

Let me begin by congratulating you all. As I’m sure you’ve already heard many times at this Workshop, you have found one of the best jobs in the world. There aren’t many people who can say that every workday leaves them inspired, energized and challenged—and that is something for which I am extremely grateful.

If you are sitting here, it means you have already figured a lot out—issues relating to (the ever-elusive) work-life balance as well as academic and scholarly success. But that is not to say that this work is without its challenges, especially as a woman, so I am here to share whatever wisdom I have managed to accumulate, largely from listening to others (more on that later), over the last 5 years.

My goal is to briefly address each of the three pillars of legal academia—scholarship, teaching, and service—saving most of my time for the oft-neglected service component.

First, scholarship. Two pieces of advice—write about something you are passionate about. The writing process can sometimes be a slog, and you’ll need that passion to keep you going on those tough days. Second, feel free to ignore the (likely conflicting) advice you have received about process. Some people write for 20 minutes each day, some people only write on weekends and evenings, and some people don’t write at all during the academic year. Find what works for you and go with it (a piece of advice I think works well here as well as in many other areas of personal and professional life).
Next, to teaching, which will be quick, because it’s effectively the same advice that I just gave. Early in your career, it’s a good idea to observe other teachers – particularly those that are known as being particularly effective in the classroom – and to take advantage of the many resources that can help you learn and grow as an educator as well as understand the culture of your institution. But eventually, find the level of formality, the books and readings, and pedagogical approaches that work for you. Students can spot lack of authenticity from a mile away, which will show on your evaluations. You will also always be happier being yourself both in and out of the classroom.

Lastly, but importantly, service, which sometimes feels like an afterthought. Many of you have likely heard that it “matters less” for purposes of tenure and promotion. But you ignore service at your peril. A recent study revealed that female professors outperform men in the area of service (specifically, internal service), which can lead to professional detriment. The issue is particularly apt here, at the Women in Legal Education breakfast, because of the parallels to other gendered imbalances; much as women may take on more housekeeping – both literally and figuratively – at home, they may also find themselves “taking care of their academic family” more so than their male counterparts. Distinctions between formal service, such as work on prestigious or career-advancing committees, as opposed to informal service (e.g., advising the countless students who drop into your office), play a role as well. These issues are more pronounced when there are fewer women on a faculty, and women of color often find themselves unduly impacted due to students’ needs as well as institutions’ desires to demonstrate diversity on certain committees or in particular positions.

The push and pull factors towards service are significant because disproportionate time spent on service activities impacts productivity in other areas, namely, scholarship and teaching. Additionally, and perhaps less obviously, service work doesn’t translate as neatly to things that “matter” in terms of promotion and tenure (and therefore salary). For example, it’s more difficult to use internal service work as the basis for a law review article or new course. It also doesn’t carry comparable respect and reputational benefits. Of course, this is not to say that we should not be engaging in service. Such work is both important and personally satisfying, especially for those of us that entered this profession because we care about students and our communities. It is just a word of caution to be mindful of maintaining appropriate balance and to think strategically about the service in which you engage.

I’ll conclude by saying a little more about the topic I referenced at the beginning of my talk – mentorship. For a long time, the phrase “find a mentor” elicited the same reaction from me as the advice to “network” – a combination of confusion and dread. But I’ve come to realize that just like networking is basically talking, the mentorship process is essentially listening. I have benefited immensely from letting go of my ego, admitting when I do not know something, and reaching out to trusted advisors for guidance. Your presence here is an indication that you too are open to listening and learning, so I hope you will find your own trusted advisors who will help you navigate this wonderful path of law teaching for many years to come.
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Many volunteers work to offer candidates and new law professors the guidance, mentoring, and support that they may not even realize they are going to need. We are very grateful, as always, to Professor Okianer Christian Dark (Howard) for her wonderful work on the New Law Teachers Breakfast; and Professor Natalie Nanasi (SMU) for graciously greeting the new teachers as our ambassador to the program. A huge debt of gratitude is also owed to Professor Debra Cohen (University of the District of Columbia) and Professor Rona Kaufman (Duquesne) for organizing the Faculty Recruitment Conference Hospitality Suite, to Professor Billie Jo Kaufman (American) and Professor Marcy Karin (University of the District of Columbia) for helping to anchor the Suite, and to Dean Danielle Holley-Walker (Howard) and Dean Darby Dickerson (John Marshall) for generously donating their time to participate in the WILE Hospitality Suite’s Deans Roundtable discussion.

Additionally, WILE has, under the direction of Professor Marie Failinger (Hamline), been the home and the host of the year-round Women in Legal Education Oral History Project. This project has drawn in many members who have worked at the AALS Annual Conference and elsewhere year round to volunteer to take oral histories of some of the most senior and accomplished female law professors nationwide. These histories are being preserved for posterity, and the process of obtaining them has connected our membership to the legacy of women in legal education. Professor

Blog

→ Professor Tracy A. Thomas invites submissions from section members on new scholarship, events, and blogging about women, law, and gender for her Gender and Law Prof Blog: http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/gender_law/.

Books


Failinger is currently recruiting volunteers to continue our tradition of interviews at this year’s Annual Meeting. We remain indebted to Judy Areen, Executive Director of AALS, for extending institutional support to our Oral History Project.

The Section’s leadership is hoping to see everyone at the AALS Annual Meeting, which will take place in January 3rd-January 6th, 2018 in San Diego, California. WILE’s programming will largely occur on Saturday, January 6, 2018, and we are excited to announce that this year’s large program, “Whispered Conversations Amplified,” (Jan. 6th from 9-noon) will carry on the Section’s tradition of facilitating discourse, relationships, and mentoring. For too long, important issues unique to women in the legal academy have been discussed almost strictly among women who call one another after meetings, drop by one another's offices, and pull one another aside in the hallways. This program seeks to de-stigmatize and include others in the discussion of these issues. A panel of distinguished senior professors, administrative leaders, and scholars who have thought or written about these issues will recount experiences, provide insight, and inform a more public discussion. Please note that WILE’s Annual Business Meeting will occur immediately following the program, and please show up if you are interested in participating in the Section’s leadership next year.

The WILE luncheon, also occurring on January 6, 2018, will honor Professor Tamar Frankel (Boston University) as the 2018 Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. Luncheon tickets may be purchased through the AALS website. WILE’s honoring of great teachers through a protracted and deliberative process fosters reflection on and celebration of what makes a great professor great--inside the classroom and out. We have continually paid homage to trailblazing and pioneering teachers, mentors, and colleagues who have epitomized excellence in teaching students, advocating for women's equality in the academy, and, through their scholarship and speaking, served as public intellectuals, role models, and promoters of social justice. Our now-famous (and fun) speed mentoring programming will be held after lunch on January 6th.

It has been an absolute privilege to Chair the Section on Women in Legal Education this year. I would like to thank the Section’s Officers and for all of their hard work on these and so many other projects this year: Chair-Elect Cynthia L. Fountaine, (Southern Illinois), Secretary Rona Kaufman (Duquesne), and Treasurer Tamara F. Lawson (St. Thomas). I would also like to thank our very engaged and talented Executive Committee Members for all of their hard work: Susan Bisom-Rapp, (Thomas Jefferson), Naomi R. Cahn, (George Washington), Barbara A. Glesner Fines, (Missouri-Kansas City), Browne C. Lewis, (Cleveland-Marshall), Carol A. Needham, (Saint Louis), Lori Ringhand, (Georgia), and Past Chair Rebecca E. Zietlow, (Toledo). A very special thanks to Professor Rona Kaufman for putting this wonderful newsletter together!

I am very much looking forward to seeing many of you in San Diego in January. Have a great end of the semester!

Sincerely,

Kerri Stone (Florida International)
Conference Announcements and Mentorship Opportunity

Women and the Law Conference and Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lecture

Thomas Jefferson School of Law will hold its annual Women and the Law Conference and Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lecture on Friday, February 3, 2017. Registration is required. The deadline is Friday, January 27, 2017.

This year's all-day conference, Pursuing Inclusion: Diversity in the Workplace, brings together leading experts and practitioners to examine the challenges to and strategies for achieving workplace diversity and inclusion. At a time of polarized public discourse on matters involving race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, and socio-economic status, this event will highlight a number of critically important topics, including: developing cultural competency; the strengths and weaknesses in employment and civil rights law; identifying and overcoming unconscious bias; how strategic efforts can inform public policy; and how other countries confront diversity at a time when work is changing rapidly.

Thomas Jefferson School of Law’s 15th Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lecture, the conference keynote, will be delivered by UC Davis Professor Leticia Saucedo.

Registration and information is available at https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.tjsl.edu_conferences_wlc_2017&d=AwIFaQ&c=1QsCMERiq7jOmEnKpsSyjg&r=Z_IOmF1F11YVwODjBrJoBw&m=9k8SjK73lRXwIU1DUGCROjbish7Ru0BLwlONYRy-zKU&s=ipf80GyqBC1-77cPl4AdM4e4SgR5hu15jYxa31dU-U0&c=

Society of American Law Teachers Teaching Conference

Penn State Law will be hosting the Society of American Law Teachers (SALT) teaching conference in University Park, Pennsylvania on Thursday, October 4 to Sunday, October 7, 2018. Call for papers is coming this spring.

Mentorship

Hari M. Osofsky, recently appointed Dean of Penn State Law and the School of International Affairs, has offered to mentor women interested in academic leadership. She has been thinking about gender and leadership throughout her experience on a dean search committee, as a finalist in six dean searches, and through her involvement in a women’s leadership institute at the University of Minnesota.
YOUR WOMEN AND THE LAW
ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE
(See the Annual Meeting Schedule for Rooms)

AALS Annual Meeting Section on Women in Legal Education Programs
Saturday, January 6th, 9:00 am-12:00 pm
“Whispered Conversations Amplified” (business meeting immediately following)

Saturday, January 6th, 12:15-1:30 pm
Section on Women in Legal Education Luncheon

Saturday, January 6th, 1:30-3:00 pm
"WILE Speed Mentoring"

OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Executive Committee

Member          Susan       Bisom-Rapp       Thomas Jefferson
Member          Naomi R.  Cahn            George Washington
Member          Barbara A. Glesner Fines U of Missouri-Kansas City
Member          Browne C.  Lewis          Cleveland-Marshall
Member          Carol A.   Needham        St. Louis University
Member          Lori        Ringhand       U of Georgia
Member          Rebecca E. Zietlow        U of Toledo

RECENT NEWS

• Professor Anne Choike recently completed her three-year fellowship at the University of Michigan Law School and joined the permanent faculty of Wayne State University Law School as an Assistant Professor (Clinical) and the Director of the Business and Community Law Clinic.

• Professor Martha Grace Duncan of Emory University presented “Morbid Laughter, Proper Tears: The Demand for ‘Correct’ Emotions in Criminal Law,” at the Law and Society Annual Meeting in Mexico City in June of 2017. She also presented on the Amanda Knox case in October of 2017 at Harvard Law School.

• Professor Tamar Frankel of Boston University has been named this year’s recipient of the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lifetime Achievement Award. She will be honored at the Women in Legal Education Luncheon on Saturday, January 6, 2018.

• Lolita Buckner Inniss joined the faculty of Southern Methodist University School of Law in the Fall of 2017 where she will teach Property Law and
Critical Race Theory. This move comes after nineteen years at Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, Cleveland State University.

- Professor Myrisha S. Lewis moved from Chicago-Kent to Howard Law School to begin a tenure-track position.
- Professor Hari M. Osofsky became Dean of Penn State Law and the School of International Affairs.
- Professor Connie de la Vega was named the Madison Chair at the University of San Francisco School of Law in August 2017.
- Professor Gina S. Warren accepted a position at the University of Houston Law Center teaching Energy Law and Policy, International Energy Law, Oil and Gas, and Property.
- Professor Stephanie M. Wildman of Santa Clara University School of Law became a Professor Emerita. She is planning to continue writing and spending time with her grandchildren.

CITATIONS


Joan MacLeod Heminway, *(Not) Holding Firms Criminally Responsible for the Reckless Insider Trading of their Employees*, 46 STETSON L. REV. 127 (2016).


Lynne Marie Kohm, Can a Dead Hand from the Grave Protect the Kids from Darling Daddy or Mommie Dearest?, 31 QUINNIPIAC PROB. L.J. 1 (2017).


Angela Mae Kupenda, Equality Lost in Time and Space: Examining the Race/Class Quandary through the Lens of a Course, a Film, a Book, a Case and an Unfinished Movement, 15 SEATTLE J. SOC. JUST. 391 (2016).

Angela Mae Kupenda, Doing the Hokey Pokey: Essay and Rubric Drafting as a Key to Student Success (Essay), 23 THE LAW TEACHER 4-6 (Institute for Law Teaching and Learning) (Spring 2017).

Angela Mae Kupenda, What do diverse college academics do? Maybe make quilts ... (Guest Blog), ACADEME BLOG (American Association of University Professors) (January 5, 2017), https://academeblog.org/2017/01/05/what-do-diverse-college-academics-do-maybe-make-quilts/


Hari M. Osofsky, *Polycentrism and Climate Change* in ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW (Daniel Farber & Marjan Peeters, eds., 2016),


Erin Ryan, *Breathing Air with Heft: An Experiential Report on Environmental Regulation and Public Health in Urban China*, 42 U.C. DAVIS ENVIRONS __ 2018 (article reporting on the intersections of daily life and environmental law in China, a nation still struggling to reconcile economic opportunity with breathable air, clean water, and safe food, even as it reemerges as a dominant world power).


Wildman, Stephanie M. *Gender In/sight: Examining Culture and Constructions of Gender* (with co-author Adam Chang) in 18 Geo. J. of Gender & L. 43 (2017). Podcast for the project available at

THIS NEWSLETTER IS A FORUM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND IDEAS. OPINIONS EXPRESSED HERE DO NOT REPRESENT THE POSITION OF THE SECTION OR OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN LAW SCHOOLS.