

Learning from the COVID-19 Crisis  
Legal Education Pivot: Opportunities  
for Innovation

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# Welcome & Introductions

April Dawson

Professor, North Carolina  
Central University School  
of Law

Chair, Webinar Committee,  
AALS Section on  
Technology, Law & Legal  
Education



# Logistics

- Format
- How to ask questions
- Webinar will be recorded and available for on-demand viewing

# *AALS Technology Section Webinar Series*

## **Hari Osofsky**

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The Pennsylvania State University

# Learning from the COVID-19 Crisis Legal Education Pivot

## *Opportunities for Innovation*

### **1. COVID-19 Legal Education Pivot**

- Changes in How We Teach and Work
- Changes in How We Communicate and Collaborate
- Changes in How We Make Decisions
- Human Impact and Inequality

### **2. National Transitions in Legal Practice and Education**

- Rise of Legal-Tech and Need for Cross-Cutting Knowledge
- Access to Justice Gap
- Inequality and Access to Technology

### **3. Opportunities for Legal Education to Innovate**

- Learning and Incorporating from Legal Education Pivot
- Embracing Opportunities Created by Evolving Technology and Markets
- Using Technology to Address Societal Challenges
- Establishing Interdisciplinary and Cross-Institutional Partnerships

# COVID-19 Legal Education Pivot

## Changes in How We Teach and Work

### Key Spring 2020 Changes

- Remote Instruction and Exams
- Telecommuting
- Grading Policies
- Virtual Commencements and Other Virtual Events
- Online remotely proctored LSAT
- Disrupted Bar Examinations (including exploration of remote bar examinations)



COVID-19 has caused legal education to incorporate technology far more extensively and explore what is possible remotely.

# COVID-19 Legal Education Pivot

## Changes in How We Communicate and Collaborate

### Key Spring 2020 Changes

Increased communication and collaboration among:

- Deans, Associate Deans, and Faculty (national, regional, state, and other affinity)
- Law Schools with Key Legal Professional Organizations (ABA, AALS, NALP, LSAC, NCBE, state and federal courts, state bar examiners, employers, public interest organizations)
- University Leaders
- Deans, Faculty, Staff, Students, Alumni



**COVID-19 has increased communication and collaboration among those involved in legal education.**

# COVID-19 Legal Education Pivot

## Changes in How We Make Decisions

### Key Spring 2020 Changes

- Crisis created need for rapid decisionmaking on numerous important issues.
- Law schools worked closely with universities to align approaches and adapt them for legal education.
- Many decisions affected a broad set of stakeholders, and shared governance and inclusive governance approaches were crucial to effective crisis decisionmaking.



**COVID-19 has created the need for law school crisis decisionmaking that is aligned with universities, inclusive, and effective.**



# COVID-19 Legal Education Pivot

## Human Impact and Inequality

### Key Spring 2020 Changes

- Broad impacts across faculty, staff, students, alumni, and society.
- Unequal distribution of impacts, with some very severe.
- Need to support those in distress, including financial, health, mental health, and more.
- Need for grading policy changes to protect those most severely impacted.
- Need to be empathic about challenges to work and study, such as lack of childcare and home remote schooling.



**COVID-19 has massive and unequal impacts, including in our law school communities, and responses have needed to address those impacts.**

# National Transitions in Legal Practice and Education

## Rise of Legal-Tech and Need for Cross-Cutting Knowledge

- Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning
  - E-discovery
  - Legal Research
  - Contract Analysis
- Non-Lawyer Legal Services
  - Document Preparation
- Changing Practice Models
  - Fixed Fee and Unbundled Billing
  - Increasing Focus on ability to analyze and respond to new situations
- Cross-Cutting Knowledge
  - Law-STEM (IP, Cyber, Energy, Health)
  - Business Skills (Accounting, Management, Leadership)



<https://www.law.com/sites/almstaff/2017/04/10/whats-next-in-legal-tech-a-podcast-from-stanfords-futurelaw/?sreturn=20180321071540>

**COVID-19 has accelerated technology transitions in practice and made legal education for a changing society more crucial.**

# National Transitions in Legal Practice and Education

## Access to Justice Gap

### Legal Service Corporation 2017 Justice Gap Report

- “In the past year, 86% of the civil legal problems reported by low-income Americans received inadequate or no legal help.”
- “71% of low-income households experienced at least one civil legal problem in the last year, including problems with health care, housing conditions, disability access, veterans’ benefits, and domestic violence.”
- “In 2017, low-income Americans will approach LSC-funded legal aid organizations for support with an estimated 1.7 million problems. They will receive only limited or no legal help for more than half of these problems due to a lack of resources.”



<https://barbkueber.wordpress.com/2016/10/01/access-to-justice-v-the-rules/>

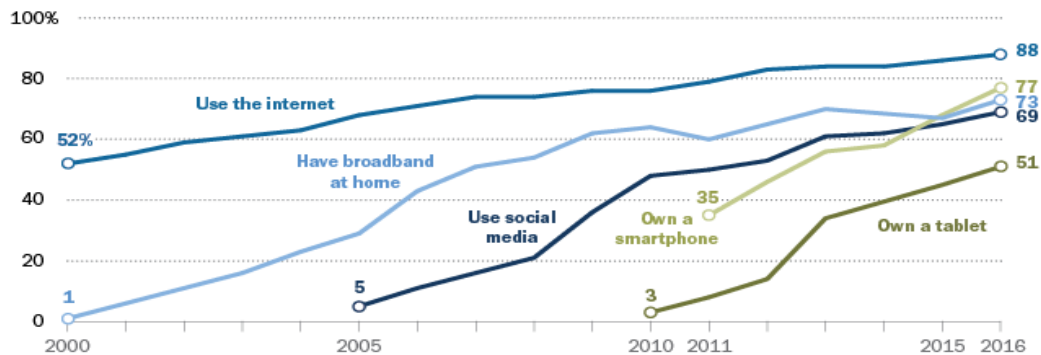
**COVID-19 has highlighted inequality in our society and legal system and law schools have an important role in bridging the access to justice gap.**

# National Transitions in Legal Practice and Education

## Inequality and Access to Technology

### The evolution of technology adoption and usage

% of U.S. adults who ...



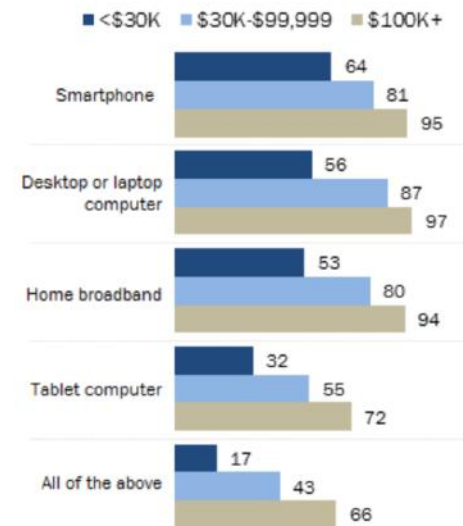
Source: Surveys conducted 2000–2016. Internet use figures based on pooled analysis of all surveys conducted during each calendar year.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/12/evolution-of-technology/>

### Lower-income Americans continue to lag behind in technology adoption

% of U.S. adults who have the following ...



Source: Survey conducted Sept. 29–Nov. 6, 2016.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/22/digital-divide-persists-even-as-lower-income-americans-make-gains-in-tech-adoption/>

Pew Research Center: Growing technology usage **but** inequality based on income

**COVID-19 has highlighted technology inequality and technology innovation and access to justice efforts must address this gap.**

# Opportunities for Legal Education to Innovate

## Learning and Incorporating from Legal Education Pivot

- Create institutional structures – at multiple levels and across organizations – to assess changes in how we teach, learn, work, and administer tests and develop additional innovation
- Build upon energized collaborations and communication
- Partner to address impacts and inequality



Virtual Conferencing



High-Tech Courtroom

We need to assess: (1) which changes should be permanent, (2) what additional innovation is possible, and (3) how we can work together to advance legal education and serve society.

# Opportunities for Legal Education to Innovate

## Embracing Opportunities Created by Evolving Technology and Markets

### Technology Innovation

- Associate Dean for Technology and Innovation
- Legal-Tech Virtual Lab
- Synchronous Online Education, Asynchronous Online Education, and Hybrid Education
- Technology and Innovation Deans Group and Technology Leaders Group
- Collaboration with Southern University and NetApp – with support from Wolters Kluwer -- to expand free summer resource for law students.
- Teaching Opportunities and Work Opportunities Teams



Virtual Conferencing



High-Tech Courtroom

**Technology has assisted Penn State Law's COVID-19 response, and COVID-19 creates opportunities for technology initiatives to evolve.**

# Opportunities for Legal Education to Innovate

## Using Technology to Address Societal Challenges

### Bridging Geography and Social Distancing

- Externships Everywhere and Exploring Remote Externships
- Internet-Based Remote Videoconferencing in Clinics (crucial to serving clients in places without relevant legal expertise)
- Virtual Conferences and Events (piloted with major conferences pre-COVID and opportunities to expand; technology allowed inclusion of more people in Commencement activities this year)
- Testing and developing emerging legal-tech in Legal-Tech Virtual Lab (COVID-19 opportunity to think creatively about innovation in remote technology tools, such as remote immersive technology or remote collaboratory spaces)



**Virtual Conferencing**



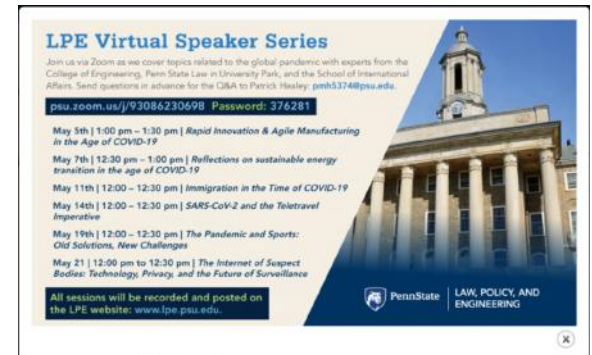
**High-Tech Courtroom**

**COVID-19 reinforced the importance of continuing to expand our use of technology to serve clients, create student opportunities, and collaborate.**

# Opportunities for Legal Education to Innovate

## Establishing Interdisciplinary and Cross-Institutional Partnerships

- Solving Problems with Legal and Engineering Dimensions (PILOT Lab and LPE Virtual Speaker Series)
- Embedded Entrepreneurship Assistance and IP Clinics (pivot to help struggling businesses)
- Immigration Clinic's Role in Campus and Community Education, including COVID-19 legal changes
- Law-Nursing Partnership to Serve Veterans and Medical-Legal Partnership
- Launching Interdisciplinary Initiative on COVID-19 Equity Issues that Will Collaborate with Efforts at Other Universities and Organizations.
- Legal-Tech and Innovation Deans Group and Tech Leaders Group



**Immigration Town Hall**

**COVID-19 reinforced that addressing major societal challenges requires partnerships across disciplines and institutions.**



## Questions & Answers



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# Upcoming Webinars

- The Paperless Law Prof (*May 27*)
- Top 5 Tips for Teaching Law Online (*June 3*)
- What Law Professors Should Know About Cybersecurity (*June 10*)

For full list: [www.aals.org/sections/list/technology-law-and-legal-education/](http://www.aals.org/sections/list/technology-law-and-legal-education/)

# Wrap Up

Survey – Your Feedback is Important!

Please consider joining the Section on  
Technology, Law and Legal Education

Thank you for your attendance!