

AALS Discussion Group Call for Participants

Post Covid-19 Online & Hybrid Learning Pedagogy Best Practices and Standards Development

Abstracts due: Friday, October 9, 2020

Submit using the [online submission form here](#).

Introduction

The following is a Call for Participation in a Discussion Group on *Post Covid-19 Online & Hybrid Learning Pedagogy Best Practices and Standards Development* to be held Tuesday, January 5, 2021 from 1:15 pm – 2:30 pm Eastern during the AALS Annual Meeting from January 5-9, 2021.

Discussion groups allow a small group of faculty to engage in a sustained conversation about a topic of interest. This discussion group's participants are expected to write and share a short abstract (3 pages, double-spaced) to begin their participation in the discussion. The rest of the session will feature a lively and engaging discussion among the small group of participants. The participants in this discussion group will be the people identified in the original proposal submitted to the Annual Meeting Program Committee, plus additional individuals selected from this call for participation.

Description

The panel discussants will hold a conversation to discuss since the publication of the 2015 best practices and model recommendations, what have we learned? What should the community be considering now?" Our goal for this discussion is to test whether there is an appetite for an updated set of best practice standards and model rules. Example discussion points: How should the ABA and regional accreditors review online law classes? How should the accreditation consider non-JD online offerings? Some law schools report status differences between faculty who teach online and residential classes. How should this status difference be approached? Some law schools heavily use adjuncts to teach online law classes. Is this a problem? If so, what steps should be taken?

Potential participants are invited to submit via the AALS Call for Participants their proposals for revisions to the standards or best practices.

Overview: From 2012 through 2014 Rebecca Purdom and William Byrnes moderated a series of bi-annual workshops, with input from over 50 ABA law schools representing all four tiers and the T14 that led to the 2015 CALI published best practices and recommended standards for online legal education. At 2019 AALS, Rebecca Purdom and William Byrnes

held a AALS Discussion Group of thought leaders drawn from deans and law professors, about spending the five-year anniversary (2020) revising the best practice and recommended standards guide in consideration of five years of experience of wholly or partially online graduate and JD courses and programs. Then COVID. With most ABA accredited law schools offering wholly online legal education from March of 2020 through potentially Spring of 2021, and the others offering hyflex and hybrid education experiences, the need for reexamining the best practices and recommended standards, and identifying the best path forward to produce a useful document in 2021 is ever more acute.

The discussion group continued at the SEALS conference wherein the panel reconvened, joined by the Managing Director, ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, to address several questions, including:

- (a) What is the role of a “best practice” guide in the time of COVID? How would law schools be using best practice guides?
- (b) To revisit an age-old proposition by online teaching enthusiasts: The techniques espoused by online teachers (backward design, interactivity, frequent formative assessment) improves all education, not just online education. Does this moment suggest a sea change in all legal education?
- (c) We often view best practices as way to bring out the best in our faculty, and evaluate best practices based on the faculty experience. For the first time, faculty have not self-selected into online teaching. How does that affect our understanding of best practice?
- (d) JD students have not self-selected into online legal education either. How does that affect the way we think about “best” practice? Does it shift?
- (e) We’ve often envisioned a best practice guide as one protection against imposed regulation. Instead of an industry-agreed best practice guide, is it time for the ABA or other regulator to set minimum standards. If so, what would those need to address?

Other important issues that have been raised include:

- Intellectual Property rights in course development and material
- Design and refresh process and standards
- Interactivity, particularly in asynchronous assignments
- Seat-time calculation in asynchronous work

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 these questions **by Friday, October 9, 2020**. Current organizers and confirmed discussion participants include:

I. Organizers:

Professor William Byrnes, Texas A&M University School of Law
Professor Rebecca Purdom, Emory University School of Law

II. Participants:

Dean April Barton, Duquesne University School of Law
Dean Megan Carpenter, University of New Hampshire School of Law
Dean Jon Garon, Nova Southeastern University Shepard Broad College of Law
Mr. William Adams, Managing Director, ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar

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 one-two 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; and
- The curriculum vitae of the applying participant.

In reviewing the submitted abstracts, the discussion group organizer and selection committee will consider the following:

- The fit and overall quality of the abstract for the Discussion Group;
- 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); and if applicable
- The applying participant's willingness to publish his or her paper along with other Discussion Group papers.

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