

**Call for Participation in a Discussion Group on**  
*How the Pandemic Made Me a Better Teacher: Lessons Learned and  
Plans for Change*

**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 **How the Pandemic Made Me a Better Teacher: Lessons Learned and Plans for Change** to be held *Thursday, January 7, 2021, 2:45 pm – 4 pm Eastern* during the AALS virtual 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 COVID-19 Pandemic has brought its share of destruction, death, and economic devastation, but during this Discussion Group, we want to focus on the lessons we HGAEV Learned about ourselves as professors and how those insights can help us be better teachers for future generations of law students. We hope our discussion can be reflective and intentional about our teaching to inspire positive action from the hard lessons the pandemic has forced upon us.

Almost overnight – literally – we moved from the classroom to Zoom, from small group working groups to virtual “break out rooms,” and from our offices to our living rooms. While our students used to be distracted in class by their cell phones, they – and we – were now distracted by our children and pets. The challenges multiplied exponentially as we, and our students, struggled with access to technology, obligations to our families, fear, illness, and depression.

All of these changes have forced us to a reckoning with our own capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses as teachers, mentors, and supervisors. In this Discussion Group, we hope to have an honest conversation about what lessons we have learned from all of these changes

and challenges and consider how those lessons can serve to make us better at our jobs in a concrete way.

For this Discussion Group, we are assembling a diverse panel of faculty teaching clinical, legal research and writing, doctrinal, and interdisciplinary courses. The format will include both short presentations and moderated discussion.

### **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 **the questions raised above as well as any thoughts on any of the following issues:**

1. What has emerged as an unexpected challenge? Have we identified it for ourselves and our students or hoped we would muddle through? How did we cope with it when it happened?
2. What did we anticipate our students' biggest challenge would be? Has it been the biggest challenge? Did we identify it for ourselves and our students or hope they would muddle through? How did they cope with it when it happened? Have we been able to help and how?
3. What has been a source of joy for us during these challenging months of teaching? Have we shared it with others?
4. Through Zoom we have been invited into the homes of our students and they into ours. What has this view – literal and figurative – taught us all about each other? As we have brainstormed process norms around “cameras on/mics off” and listened to students concerns about these policies, what reflections have we had about classrooms where, for all of us the “mics” and “cameras” are always on? How has this greater intimacy influenced our relationships and our perspectives?
5. As we use different modes of discussion and small groups – i.e. break out rooms or discussion boards – have we noticed a different type of participation? Have certain students shined in a way they previously had not with our use (over use?) of on-call or cold-call policies? What has all of this told us about creating diverse and inclusive learning spaces?
6. Are there aspects of remote teaching that have been more effective than traditional live teaching? If so, how would you or could you incorporate those aspects into your live classes?

Current organizers and confirmed discussion participants include:

## **I. Organizers:**

1. Bradford Colbert, Distinguished Professor in Residence, Mitchell Hamline School of Law, brad.colbert@mitchellhamline.edu, 651-290-8651, <http://mitchellhamline.edu/biographies/person/bradford-colbert/>
2. Claire Donohue, Assistant Clinical Professor, Boston College Law School, donohucl@bc.edu, 617-552-0257, <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/law/academics-faculty/faculty-directory/claire-donohue.html>
3. Laurie S. Kohn, Associate Professor, The George Washington Law School, lkohn@law.gwu.edu, 202-994-5784, <https://www.law.gwu.edu/laurie-s-kohn>

## **II. Participants:**

1. Bryan Adamson, Professor of Law and Associate Dean of Diversity, [Case Western Law School](http://www.law.seattleu.edu/faculty/profiles/bryan-adamson), <http://www.law.seattleu.edu/faculty/profiles/bryan-adamson>
2. Sherley Cruz, Assistant Professor, the University of Tennessee College of Law, <https://law.utk.edu/directory/sherley-cruz/>
3. Russell Gabriel, Professor, University of Georgia, <http://www.law.uga.edu/profile/russell-c-gabriel>
4. Iselin Gambert, Professor of Legal Research and Writing, The George Washington University Law School, <https://www.law.gwu.edu/iselin-magdalene-gambert>
5. Vanessa Hernandez, Clinical Fellow and Supervising Attorney, Suffolk University Law School, <http://www.suffolk.edu/law/faculty/66641.php>
7. David Santacrose, Clinical Professor of Law, Michigan University Law School, <https://www.law.umich.edu/FacultyBio/Pages/FacultyBio.aspx?FacID=dasanta>
8. Rodger D. Citron, Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship & Professor of Law Touro College, <https://www.tourolaw.edu/AboutTouroLaw/Bio/7>
9. Christine E. Cerniglia, Assistant Professor of Law, Director of Clinical and Experiential Education, Stetson University College of Law, <https://www.stetson.edu/law/faculty/cerniglia-christine/index.php>

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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