

# **Call for Participation in a Discussion Group on**

## ***WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DIFFERENCE MAKES:***

### ***EMPOWERING STUDENTS***

### ***THROUGH SELF DETERMINATION THEORY***

**Abstracts due: September 19, 2022**

#### **Introduction**

The following is a Call for Participation in a Discussion Group on *WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DIFFERENCE MAKES: EMPOWERING STUDENTS THROUGH SELF DETERMINATION THEORY* to be held during the in-person AALS Annual Meeting from January 4-7, 2023 in San Diego, California.

Discussion groups allow a small group of faculty to engage in a sustained conversation about a topic of interest. This discussion group will begin with short individual presentations by all the participants followed by a (hopefully) lively and engaging discussion among the participants and interested audience members. The participants in this discussion group will be the individuals identified in the original proposal submitted to the Program Committee, plus additional individuals selected from this “call for participation.” There will be limited audience seating for those not selected in advance to be discussion participants.

#### **Description of the Program**

Law students arrive at law school excited to make a difference in the world. Through a combination of (mostly unintended) factors, law schools manage to extinguish that excitement. In this session, we will discuss how to rekindle that excitement and create a long-burning passion for making a difference. This requires us to take our students aspirations to make a difference seriously and then help them develop the capacity to do so.

For each student, making a difference will mean something different. Part of what we do as educators is to expose students to material that inspires their commitment to engage or informs their notions of what it means to make a difference. But this is not enough; we must educate students in a way that allows them to see their potential to influence the legal system, make a difference in the lives of others, and to heal our world. We need to help them feel empowered enough to do so. This Discussion Group takes up the task of doing this challenging but exciting work.

Social scientists have developed theoretical frameworks that can be helpful to us. One such framework is self-determination theory. According to self-determination theory, adults learn best when they are aware of their connections to others, their own autonomy, and a sense of competence. This approach can infuse all aspects of our students' law school experiences – from the doctrinal curriculum to clinical education and every place in between, including career development, professional identity formation, and student life programming.

In this Discussion Group, we will consider the potential of this framework in the legal academy. We will discuss how much we are doing to foster these principles in all areas of our law school education and how much more we could do. We will discuss how intentional consideration of these values might influence choices we are making, our pedagogy, and our messaging to students.

This Discussion Group 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 issues raised by the program description **by September 19, 2022**. Current organizers and confirmed discussion participants include:

#### **Organizers:**

1. Bradford Colbert, Professor of Law, 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, Jacob Burns Foundation Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, Associate Professor, the George Washington Law School, lkohn@law.gwu.edu, 202-994-5784, <https://www.law.gwu.edu/laurie-s-kohn>

#### **Participants:**

1. Sherley Cruz, Assistant Professor, the University of Tennessee College of Law, <https://law.utk.edu/directory/sherley-cruz/>
2. Iselin Gambert, Professor of Legal Research and Writing, The George Washington University Law School, <https://www.law.gwu.edu/iselin-magdalene-gambert>

3. Vanessa Hernandez, Clinical Fellow and Supervising Attorney, Suffolk University Law School, <http://www.suffolk.edu/law/faculty/66641.php>
4. David Santacroce, Clinical Professor of Law, Michigan University Law School, <https://www.law.umich.edu/FacultyBio/Pages/FacultyBio.aspx?FacID=dasanta>
5. Rodger D. Citron, Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship & Professor of Law Touro Law School, <https://www.tourolaw.edu/AboutTouroLaw/Bio/7>
6. 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>
7. Angela Mae Kupenda, Professor of Law, Mississippi of Law, <https://law.mc.edu/faculty/directory/akupenda>
8. Kia H. Vernon, Associate Dean of Academic Success & Professor of Law, North Carolina Central University, <https://law.nccu.edu/school-of-law-directory/kia-vernon>
9. Natalie Netzel, Assistant Professor Law, Education and Advocacy Director, Institute to Transform Child Protection, Mitchell Hamline Law School, <https://mitchellhamline.edu/biographies/person/natalie-netzel/>

Space in this Discussion Group is limited; the Committee, along with the faculty organizers who proposed this discussion, will select the remaining discussion participants from the abstracts submitted.

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 the program and what the applying participating would like to add to the program; 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; 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 **September 19, 2022** and should be submitted using the online submission form: <https://aalsweb.wufoo.com/forms/s5wv2s81nr1kyv/>