

Call for Participation in a Discussion Group on The Parenting Professor Penalty: The Costs to being a Parent in Legal Academia

Abstracts due: Wednesday, August 28, 2024

Introduction

This is a Call for Participation in the Discussion Group “**The Parenting Professor Penalty: The Costs to Being a Parent in Legal Academia**,” to be held during the in-person AALS Annual Meeting from January 7-11, 2025, in San Francisco.

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 reflection/narrative (3-5 minute reflection) 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 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

This discussion group explores the idea of a “parenting professor penalty,” the panoply of barriers, harms, and challenges that pregnant and parenting people, as well as those who are presumed to be probable to be pregnant or parenting in the future, face in entering and being successful within the legal academy. We define parenting as all aspects of becoming a parent--conceiving, pregnancy, pregnancy loss, kinship care, guardianship, and adoption--as well as the range of childrearing phases. The penalties can occur along a spectrum of time from securing an initial appointment, retention, promotion, lateraling and appointment to leadership roles. Challenges may include being less likely to be hired, retained or promoted, wage gaps, discrimination, hostility or non-accommodation to parenting needs, loss of professional opportunities, and inequitable allocation of teaching and service loads. These challenges are particularly heightened in the aftermath of the *Dobbs* decision and the barrage of state laws implicating reproductive rights.

The “parenting professor penalty” builds upon the work of scholars who have established how the race, gender, and caretaking responsibilities of legal academics impact not only their individual and collective experience, but also legal education more broadly. This group will also engage with social science and legal literature which have studied the

motherhood penalty, maternal wall, the fatherhood premium or bonus, and how these concepts apply within the structure of legal academia. This session engages participants to raise and highlight the contours of the parenting professor penalty at least partially through narrative and self-ethnography. Ultimately, participants and facilitators will co-generate ideas and mechanisms to address these challenges.

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 reflection/narrative that addresses their own experiences and perspectives on the parenting professor penalty by **Wednesday, August 28, 2024.**

Current organizers and confirmed discussion participants include Jane Aiken (Wake Forest University School of Law); Matthew Boaz (University of Kentucky Rosenberg School of Law); Norrinda Brown Hayat, (Fordham Law School); Sherley Cruz (University of Tennessee College of Law); Meera Deo (Southwestern Law School); Llezlie Green (Georgetown Law); Lindsay M. Harris (*organizer*) (University of San Francisco School of Law); Laila Hlass (*organizer*); (Tulane University Law School); Sarah Sherman Stokes, (Boston University School of Law).

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. 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;
- The name, school and email of the applying participant;
- A three to five minute reflectio /narrative that addresses their own experiences and perspectives on the parenting professor penalty; and
- The curriculum vitae of the applying participant.

In reviewing the submitted reflections/narratives, 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, gender, institutional affiliation, teaching responsibilities (doctrinal, experiential, legal writing) and status (tenure-track, non-tenure track, tenured).

Abstracts are due by **Wednesday, August 28, 2024** and should be submitted at <https://aalsweb.wufoo.com/forms/wb2dffk1xw6pbv/>.