

Panel Discussion: How to Become a Full-Time Law Professor – A Workshop for Aspirants

Moderator
Alfreda Robinson

Panelists
Larry Catá Backer
Craig Konnoth
Melinda Molina
Anita Sinha

Introduction by Associate Dean Alfreda Robinson (George Washington University) and President of the National Bar Association

Notwithstanding demonstrable and laudable progress, our law schools require much greater faculty diversity and inclusion in all terms - race, gender, orientation, economic background, wealth and income, professional experience, nationality, community involvement, religion, viewpoint, teaching approach, and research interest. Today's practice of law is a global practice. Therefore, it is essential that the law school graduate is competent, comfortable and effective representing any client in the world, whether in person or via the worldwide internet.

Hence, law schools must directly and indirectly expose today's law student to faculty who hail from a variety of backgrounds in terms of race, gender, sexual preference and orientation, age, education, professional and personal background, culture, scholarship, interests, and intellectual perspectives.

This panel continues the NPOC's strong decades old, commitment to diversity and inclusion from the Dean's Suite to the Classrooms. We sought to strongly encourage and provide step-by-step guidance to those seeking to enter the Legal Academy. This was achieved. The enthusiasm was electric, and the discussion continued long after the panel was over. As the President of the National Bar Association (the oldest and largest bar association of African American and minority lawyers, judges, law students, and legal professionals in the United States and worldwide), I was honored to moderate and participate

in one of the most significant panels at the Fourth National People of Color Conference. Thank you, the outstanding panelists!

Alfreda Robinson: Good afternoon, and welcome to this panel, “How to Become a Full-Time Law Professor.” I see at least one of my former students, who is actually an adjunct at GW, and she’s been talking about going to full time teaching for a while. So, how many people here want to be wonderful law professors? Oh, that’s wonderful, we’re so glad.

One of the core missions of the POCs, and you’ll hear that a lot, is that we have always stood for helping our numbers grow, our diversity numbers grow. The POCs started out as one group, very small group in Chicago in 1999. They wanted to grow the group so the second national was at GW in 2004. Then we did the third one at Seton Hall, and we had the same mission. And each time, at each five of the regionals, plus we have Lat Crit and Asian Pacific, we have always spent time making sure that those who want to come into full time teaching have an opportunity to do so and we try here to help you. So we have a panel that’s made up of great scholars and great teachers, and those who have been coming in different ways into the academy, and we just want to impart with you some of the basics and encourage you to follow the POC regionals so that you can also get better and better and get more opportunities.

So I’m going to say quickly, I’m Alfreda Robinson. I’m an associate dean at GW Law School. So I teach and I’m an administrator, and also, I have the honor of serving as the president-elect of the National Bar. So, I have 100,000 members, 88 affiliates world-wide. Somehow, I get that done. But being at the law school has allowed me to have my non-profit activities that enhance what I do.

Sitting next to me, Larry, who’s helped me, and others, and everyone. He’s been in law teaching longer than all of us and is at Penn State Law. He’s a tremendous scholar, international law, and just very good at nurturing and helping, and mentoring young lawyers who want to become law teachers. As well as someone I have not really engaged with, and you are?

Melinda Molina: Melinda Molina. I am the associate dean for academic affairs and associate professor of law at Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio.

Robinson: Melinda. And she’s come in into academia a different way. She’s going to talk about her background, and how there’s a number of pathways to academia. Also then we have someone else, who is?

Anita Sinha: Anita.

Robinson: And she also has the clinics, which are very important to law schools and law teaching and training of lawyers. We thank you so much for being with us here.

And then we have Craig. He also has come into the academy in one of the relatively new ways of coming into the academy. They're all going to take up different parts of our discussion, and then in the end we're going to all have open discussion, so there's no question that you should not ask. This is a safe space. That's our commitment to ourselves. So it's safe, you can say it, you can ask, and we will answer. And so with that, Larry, why don't we start with you to do sort of an overview.

Larry Catá Backer: Okay, that's right, my task is actually an easy one, and a typical one for law faculty. I will give you a general picture and a framework, and then my colleagues here will hopefully critique me and pick it apart. And I will offer you some choices. I will start with the description of the traditional gateways to full time law teaching, and then move from the idea of wanting to join our ranks to the sorts of actions necessary to optimize your chances of success. I will then describe what I call "the gauntlet," the trials that face the candidate for law teaching positions. I will end with what may be both a necessary and few people's favorite experience—the AALS recruiting conference, sometimes fondly nicknamed the "Meat (I call it the meet) Market. And then at the end of all this, I hope you will come to some truth about the process and identify those of its aspects that might be somewhat problematic; but you'll get closer to a reality than you were before we started. So, with that in mind, we can begin. Oh, and by the way, my PowerPoints¹ are littered with pictures. They serve several objectives. One is that it is late or you may be sleepy and so some of you might need visual diversion while I am babbling; but also if you like visual signaling, you might try to figure out how the pictures I put on my slides are related to the subject of the discussion and maybe why I included them. For example, the opening picture is, of course, from the Duomo in Florence. This is Moses and Peter, old law, new law. They speak to two distinct but related traditions of getting to a similar place. The reason I used that image is because we are in a time of transition, and there are a lot of old rules and old expectations and old ways of thinking about how this is done that you will get from old faculty members that may no longer actually apply in the era of the new covenant, that is the new way of looking at how to get you from where you are, to where we are, to where you want to get to. And with that I want to start.

So this is basically a description of the traditional gateway to full-time law teaching, and, as you can tell, from the next PowerPoint slide, the underlying theme of my discussion here, which is that we find ourselves at a?

[Male Audience Member]: Fork in the road.

Catá Backer: Oh my god, you're going to go far. Right, this is the point where we're facing a fork in the road. And, really that means one of the first things that, and this follows you all the way through the process, you've got

1 The PowerPoints may be accessed at <https://lcbpsusenate.blogspot.com/2019/03/how-to-become-full-time-law-professor.html> or downloaded here: http://www.backerinlaw.com/Site/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Backer_How-To-Succeed-NEPOC4.pptx

an initial decision to make, alright? And the initial decision touches on the fundamental approach you will take in getting from the idea of law teaching to its realization. And that decision, that fork in the road, can be described as two related but distinct paths. It really is one decision—are you going to follow the herd, or are you going to heed the voices in your own head? That is, are you going to conform to the expectations of those around you or are you going to be true to yourself? That is not a simple or one-off choice but involves a set of decisions that you have to take at every stage in the process of becoming a law teacher and eventually as a producer and disseminator of knowledge. Eventually, you are “gonna wanna” get, whichever way you go, you’re “gonna wanna” get to the point where you’re heeding the voices in your head. From my point of view that may be sad if the only voices in your head are what you hear from the herd, but that’s okay too. There are a lot of people who built successful careers that way. Following the herd is the conventional and safe way. It minimizes risk, but it sometimes may require some dissonance between these voices in your head and the stuff that you wind up saying and writing, and much of what I’m going to be talking about is going to be about following the herd. The reason for that is simple—the herd is powerful together and everyone knows what is expected and conforms to expectations and the path to success is well marked—and policed.

So now I’m moving you from the fork in the road to the decision to follow the herd. Law faculty in this respect may be like a bunch of antelope on the savanna, and there’s this herd you wanna join, and you’re sitting out here, your task is to come and join them, and that may mean that you’re going to have to do what it takes to do that. You are going to have to be an antelope—but what if you are a zebra? Or a rhino? Or more problematically (for the herd), a jaguar? And that takes us back to the other choice—the voices in your head. So, on the other hand, the reason you’re here, and what we wanna cultivate, is precisely the voices in your head, which may be voices that will annoy, irritate, and eventually, perhaps, transform those who have come before you as well as the wider public. We want you to be a jaguar, or a rhino, but if the field is only full of antelope, and that is who you must join, choosing to be something else right off the bat may require you to pay a price, and sometimes too great a price. That is, the voices in your head may well frighten the antelope. Maybe save them for after tenure. Yet even then to follow the voices in your head may mean that you will be in the company of one, perhaps for a long time. Does a tree falling in the woods make a sound if there is no one there to hear it? Does it matter to the tree? That may mean compromise, but it is better if you make those consciously in pursuit of your goals. At the same time, legal academia has a growing number of herds. So just keep that in mind as we’re going through this.

We understand this and we acknowledge it, and so we move from idea to action. And that takes us to the next slide—“From Idea to Action.” Here I want to spend just a little time speaking about, as our panel description says, “how to most effectively prepare to be a candidate for full-time law teaching—

especially as a person of color.” To get us going, note the picture I posted. This is from a manga series that I really like. It shows a kid (you) getting kicked in the head on one side and getting punched with a ball on the other. This is your initiation. You are the guys in the middle. We’re kind of on the sides. It looks like it hurts, and yet it is really not as bleak as it looks. As in all of these stories, you wind up surviving, but this is sort of where we’re at. And the trick is to survive but in a way that then prepares you to thrive in the legal academic environment.

So, we answer the first question—how does one most effectively prepare to be a candidate for full-time law teaching, especially as a person of color? First thing up is actually the most important thing, and the rest of it can slip away, and that first thing is *mentoring*. Your ability to find, use, and leverage your mentors will make a tremendous amount of difference. Who are these potential mentors? There are a tremendous number of us here in this room and at this conference; there are any number of organizations, from bar organizations, universities, the people of color organizations. We are the ones who can help transmit, translate, and help you in making the choices, at least by giving you the sense of what the risk, reward, and consequences are. Mentoring is critically important in preparing for law hiring, but it is even more important once you join our ranks. You can’t do this by yourself. You used to be able to, back in the old days, which seem like a thousand years ago to me now, that was rough but possible. It’s no longer really possible.

Second thing, you need is to *know your communities*, and this goes back to another fork in the road. You need to know your community, and sometimes that means that you have to be careful, and again, this is a blunt session, so I’m going to be blunt, and hope you all tear this apart if you disagree. You need to know the community, and that means you need to know what kind of political choices you can express, what kind of political choices you can express discreetly, and what kind of political choices may burn you at any kind of stake, hot pot, or some other device of someone’s choosing. What community you’re joining, that is what makes or breaks you. You have to be very aware. Careful is the wrong word, you have to be very aware about the choices you make, and how you want to go about doing that (here mentors can be quite useful).

The third thing is *writing*. And we’ve already mentioned this, you’ve heard this, all day, you are, in this community, what you write. It used to be, that you were assessed on what we think you’re going to be capable of writing in the future, and that we’re going to make a judgment about your capabilities for that. But that day has come and gone, alright? So you are what you write, you are your portfolio of written work, and a lot of what you need to be thinking about is what you are now working on so that you produce the sort of writing that those who you want to get excited about hiring you might read. In a sense, it’s the ultimate performance that you have, and your ultimate presentation, is what you put on paper. Again, the expectation isn’t that you’re going to be something that we expect 20 years from now, but rather the expectation is that

you can demonstrate what you are now, and to do that in your writing. That is what is going to be used as the touchstone of assessment, and that forms the presumptions about you and your professional trajectory.

The fourth thing is related to writing, and that is the *choice of a field of law* in which you believe you want to work. Choosing a field becomes important, for all of you, in that, of course, it produces the stereotypes and presumptions against which things like your writing and suitability for a job can be measured. We had the wonderful talk at lunch about stereotyping and implicit bias. Sometimes implicit biases are bad when we're using it to place people and react, with respect to gender, race, ethnicity and the like, but these implicit biases, stereotypes, and assumptions will also come from out of what you choose to write, and what you choose to say. And so, as you write, understand that implicitly you are choosing a field. If you start writing something about tax, and then you go into a meeting and say, "yeah, yeah, you know, I really love the idea of doing work in family law," people are going to hear a dissonance, unless you can, because you understand this, you're able to talk about the connection. You can't just fail to make that connection without some cost to you, the randomness becomes a problem. Worse, of course, is if your work does not nicely fit within a particular conventional field—you then become a member of the so-called "hard to place" set and that can be a powerful disincentive to hire you—though not always. Do you have to choose a field? No, the more you sound like you understand what you're doing, which involves a passion for a particular aspect of what it is you want to get into, the more solid you're likely to sound, especially for people who don't know you and who're relying on maybe one or half an article. This is again going to, who you are.

That brings me more generally to the fifth point—*stereotyping*, or *typecasting*, or presumptions based on what others expect you to be doing or acting. Stereotyping is especially a problem for faculty of color. It's been a problem for women, but a problem for faculty of color as well, and you'll see this through the process. This is where the implicit bias actually becomes quite explicit when you have enough interviews, or you have enough conversations. Be aware of it, and it comes out in a variety of ways. It comes out with respect to teaching. It comes out with respect to scholarship. It comes out, most perniciously, with respect to character, black males in particular. There can be a bumpy road for a while. And the expectations, what you're going to do, who you're going to be, be aware that, and one of the things you use your mentor for is to learn how to deal with these things in ways that avoid the stereotypical horror scenario: you becoming physical, and then having you got to jail, because you just punched someone out. And that's not cool, and it shows bad character, so you can't do that. But there are ways of dealing, and, believe me, they may be hard, but they can work anyway. There are ways of dealing with this stuff, but you have to be aware, you're always aware, no matter what, from the beginning through the end, you're always aware, it's always there, and you have to be prepared to deal with it in context, especially as you're coming up.

The last couple thoughts on this point. The value of these kinds of things have shifted, and sometimes, shifted dramatically, over the course of the years. So the sixth thing to think about is *the value of an LLM*. The LLM used to be the royal road. You go to these factories, schools that I won't name, you get your LLM, and now you can go on the "Meat Market" and you're cool, now everyone's got an LLM, no one cares as much anymore. The flavor of the month now is PhDs. You go, you get a PhD, and now you become more interesting to hiring committees. The value of the PhD is not just those three letters, but also now you got yourself a writing, and if you're lucky, you got yourself a big writing, and then a couple of little writings. So you're just a little writing machine, and you got yourself a field, so that's all cool and people love you. That is the flavor of the month, especially, probably, the decade, especially if you're going into the normative teaching. Yet there is a long-term consequence that troubles me, the way this flavor of the month problematizes, for me anyway, problematizes the value of practice. The old road used to be, you graduate, you spend a year or so going into a law firm, or into government, you eke out something that looks like a paper, or something you think may someday be a paper (we don't, but it's close enough), and then, off you go to the races, and then you start writing. Increasingly, what I'd been noticing, is that *tremendous focus on practice and practice experiences produces functional stratification*. Increasingly the old path is now rerouted into a pipeline from practice to clinics, rather than to traditional tenure line slots. And that is something that troubles me tremendously, but you begin to see it all over the place, and to the extent what you're offering is practice experience, you have to understand that and then mold yourself to be able to meet that explicit bias when they see a substantial practice portfolio. First thing they're going to talk about is, "oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, let's reroute you to clinics, you can deal with the lawyers, blah blah blah. But we got no space for you in the normative stuff because we have PhD candidate over here, who's written a thesis." And that's, for me, that's not cool, but that's where it is. This is not to put down clinical and other aspects of teaching in law schools, but it is to put down the tendency to create ghettos of privilege and manufactured status silos based on dubious characteristics. So that is perfectly okay if clinical teaching and research is your thing, but the assumption for the moment here is that you are looking for entry into the traditional and conventional substantive slots.

The seventh point touches on *the value of VAPs*, as a means of entry to the profession. Someone really ought to do a statistical study on the value of VAPs. The universities that run VAP programs will tell you their success rate is a 1000 percent. The universities that don't will tell you that the rate of success is closer to 0. Sometimes, to the extent you use it smart, it can be very useful. To the extent that you use it only so that you could put the V, A, and P on your resume, maybe less so. But still VAPS and of course other pipeline programs may in the right cases prove quite powerful ways of getting your foot in the door.

That gets us to the next PowerPoint slide that I use to talk about what I call the “gauntlet.” The picture on this slide makes the point quite well I think. One of my favorite early cartoons is Betty Boop, especially when the action in the cartoon is set to the music of Cab Calloway. This one is from the 1920s. This, of course, is Betty Boop as the red-hot lady, a lady who knows what is up, and surrounded by an annoying group of demons sent to try her patience. But she has to get through them to get where she needs to go. And that takes us to the question: how to apply for full-time positions? And again, we go back to the big bang point from the last slide—how’s your writing? To be able to come to an interview position without any writing is a death sentence. No one will say anything, everyone’s going to be very nice, they’re going to be very encouraging, but you’ll never get a job. Your writing is key. So, when do you apply for a job? When you feel that you have a portfolio, by a portfolio I don’t mean a 150 articles, I mean one, maybe, and one on the way, minimum, that you can use to provide the evidence they need for the key things hiring people (and your future colleagues) consider: “Can you write, are you committed? Are you enthusiastic, is this something that really motivates you? What can I tell about how you write? What can I tell about how you teach from how you write?” That’s what you’re looking at. Equally important, is the research plan extending through tenure. Everyone is going to ask you this. It will go something like this: “Right, okay, this is very nice, you wrote this article, so what are you going to do five years from now? How is this connected to what you’re going to do?” You have to follow through, no one’s going to check up on you five years from now, but you’re going to have to come up with something that, again, goes to enthusiasm, you thought about this, you’re committed, this is like the truth and on earth for you guys, and you have a plan. And then people will spend time talking to you about that. A little teaching doesn’t hurt, but it’s not necessary. To the extent that some of you are adjuncts, adjuncting is good. You can talk about teaching theory, which is sometimes useful. To the extent you don’t it is not interview death, but increasingly it doesn’t hurt and at some point, it will hurt when you don’t. And again, the trajectories in field expectations are going to be different, depending on where you’re going to go and what you are interested in doing. Some schools emphasize teaching more than others. Take your cue from that.

I also mention two additional points. *One is the issue of staleness.* How long can you be out of the academy before you’re viewed as stale? I went on the teaching market eight years after I graduated, and I can tell you that everyone thought that I could never write, I could not teach, and that the only reason I wanted to do this was to retire from practice because I was a lazy, or fill in the blank, or because I was incapable of doing anything else, and that I viewed the academy as a kind of glorified welfare program. So, the staleness issue counts, and again, now it’s a combination of staleness and shunting off to the “practice-clinical” area because of a presumption, unearned, that this is all you are good for. So if you’re out for eight years in practice, the word clinical is going to be stamped on your forehead, and you’re going to have to do a lot

of work to disabuse some people of that stubborn stereotyping, depending on what you're doing. *The second is the issue of mobility.* How bad do you want this job? If you all are New York City people, for example, are you willing to spend 4, 5, or 6 or more years in North Dakota? The snow is really pretty, and if you like the cold, it's really cold, but that's the question. Are you not willing to do that, then how much are you willing not to get a teaching job and do this round of applications two, or three, or four times, because you cannot bring yourself to leave the tri-state area? That becomes a critical issue, because, for a lot of folks, that makes all the difference in the world. For me, I was in Southern California and loving it. I wound up in Tulsa, Oklahoma. I never regretted it, great town and environment, lovely people, but that required a bit of time to wrap my head around. Never regretted, but you're going to have to face these issues. True enough; for some people, it's impossible to move—you got to respect that. You may have family or other compelling situations, we all understand. But where it is merely a vanity thing, again, you really got to think about it.

That bring me to my last PowerPoint slide—"There's No Business Like Show Business" and working toward success in the AALS "Meat/(Meet) Market." Here you have a bunch of smiling people dressed up in costume trying to entertain us with a display of their talents. One of my favorite horrible movies, every once in a while, I watch these so I can throw it up against our living reality. But in this movie the singing is actually not bad, and like us here now, there's no business like show business. Like the PowerPoint slide, this last bit is my big showstopper, shows you how things have changed over the course of the last thousand years. So, success in the "Meat/Meet Market."

First, *appearances matter.* We've all been raised with the idea that, appearances don't matter, we'll see through character, and all of that. Worry about what you wear—everything sends a signal and you want to signal that you are worth hiring. I find most people, even those on search committees, need to have their eyes examined—they sometimes can't see so well, especially when looking at (or through) people of color (the stereotype and expectations-presumption thing again). So help them see the "you" worth hiring. Don't be offended about this, from red carpet dress reviews to all kinds of other events, our culture places a high value on what you wear to signal who you seem to be—so be proactive about that. Most people require help in seeing character, and so, since you're looking for something, you might as well be as helpful as you can. There are choices to be made here, which means you're going to be talking to your mentors. A lot.

Second, in selling yourself *enthusiasm matters.* I cannot tell you how many interviews I've done where people are scared to death and they sit and they don't want to make a mistake, and then they leave and everyone says, "oh my god, that person is just mousey, or sad, or unprepared," or something else that is not positive. They'll think (and sometimes say) something like "that person will never be able to survive a class of 70 people," and then say "next" and you are forgotten. You got to be able to show yourself, your inner self, even if you have to practice. You have to be able to show enthusiasm, you have to be able to

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sell yourself, but not sell yourself in obnoxious way. Try to avoid the “oooooh my god, here I am, I’ve just spent six months with the gods of Olympus or some other name droppable figures, and now I’ve come back down and I just, you know, am doing you a favor by sitting in this room with you all” thing. There are variations and people have actually, in some interviews I’ve been in, have come very close to that. It doesn’t sell well to people listening (unless of course they are that type). But you have to be enthusiastic, you have to be able to sell yourself.

The third point is that you should be careful about what you say. *People can tell when you’re talking about something you don’t know anything about.* And for faculty members, that is honey to a pooh bear. That is just honey to a big fat and hungry pooh bear. And some people have no self-control on these committees, and you know what happens? You come out unhappy because they just have a field day, and usually the chair of the committee is going to kick back for five minutes or so, and watch you just get yourself...

[Male Audience Member]: Roasted.

Catá Backer: So be careful. If you don’t know something, say, “wow, this is really cool,” and the best way with dealing with it is saying something like “I don’t know much about this. Can you tell me what motivates you to ask this question, maybe we can talk about it and see what there is here.” Turn these things around if you can, right? Make it as positive as you can, and it is okay to admit that there are a lot of things you don’t know. And of course, as you get older, it really is true, the more you know, the less you know, and now I can tell you sometimes I wake up and think I know nothing. But I’m more willing to say I know nothing in a very up front and matter of fact way than I was before when I was just starting and I thought it was a complete mark of failure. But be assured—it ain’t.

The fourth point does not need much explaining—*be honest but ambiguous.* Don’t fall into the temptation of telling the hiring committee what you think they want to hear—especially if you are going to have to walk that back at the on-campus interview or more awkwardly in negotiating discussions with the dean of the school that may be interested in hiring you. But that does not mean you have to be brutally honest or commit to particular things right off the bat. Try to avoid things like “I despise faculty meetings; the thought of interdisciplinary research makes me physically ill,” and the like. It is okay to say something like “I am really interested in teaching tax, but of course I would consider contracts”—if that is true. It is also okay to say something like “property law is fascinating but I could not really do it justice and the effort would detract from my concentration of my research that point to teaching business law for better synergy.” You get the idea.

The fifth point needs a little emphasis: *be flexible, but don’t appear clueless.* No one likes you to come into an interview, saying, “I have no idea.” Oh, what do you want to teach? “I have no idea.” They ask—what do you want to ultimately research? And you say something like “Well, I wrote this, but I really have

no idea, and I'm really flexible." Yeah, you can be flexible, but if you're too flexible, you're a flake. And no one likes flakes. I mean, they do like flakes, but not to pay them.

The sixth point is important but underemphasized: *make connections*. At the last meeting, some of you went to the law review panel discussion and many have attended a number of other panels. Did you talk to the folks there? Each is a great venue for making connections. Use every opportunity, whether you get a job or not, to make friends. You never know when that will pay off and I can tell you that from experience. I've just opened myself to being nice, I made friends with people who thought I was just forgettable, and with others I had no real connection other than having a nice talk and three or four years later, I get a call, and the connection blossoms; "things change, and I'd misjudged, I had you in mind, and blah blah blah," and vice versa. And all of a sudden you find yourself with both a conscious and unconscious network. Use every one of these opportunities to make friends. This is especially true of committees, even those where you do not progress beyond the AALS interview. You have no of knowing the politics of the committee; you don't know what went on behind closed doors, and it is foolish to make a likely wrong assumption. You have no idea how many friends you've managed to make on that committee. You have no idea how many people will remember you. And they will remember you, two, three, or four years from now, and then may reach out, either after you get your job or before. So make connections.

The seventh point looks to the issue of the offer you may get: *serious versus look see*. Be careful about that. Sometimes there is what from the outside might be something like bait and switch moves. You interview for a tenure slot and you get a call, "we ran out or there is some funding problem, can you come temporarily and maybe we can switch you to a tenure position." Or the other variant, "you can come for a year and then we will decide whether we will keep you and in what type of slot." Sometimes institutions bank on the desperation of candidates. Just be careful and use your mentors and connections to work through this.

And the eighth and last thing, because I've talked way too much, is the problem of *padding in interview schedules*. Especially for people of color, you've got to be careful. We live in an age of statistics, and frankly, all of us are statistical fodder. The temptation, conscious or not to pad their interview schedule with black, brown, female, et cetera, faces so that they can tick off their statistics to their EEOC office can be strong, but if you are caught in it they're really just wasting your time. We all have an idea of who some of the bad actors may be, and some of the other actors, you just have to be careful. So a lot of times, especially for the "Meat Market," you think, oh my god, I got 28 interviews. Talk to the people who call you to make sure that the thing is real. Because if you get 28 at the top 30s, you say, "ah, I'm just going to all these people, because I'm bound to get one of those," but if 90 percent of them are padding and you blew off the folks at universities in the middle or lower tiers because you said, "oh, no, I got 28 interviews in the top 30 school, it's gonna

be all cool,” and then it turns out you got nothing, *you got played*. And I’m being very honest, sorry, and of course, no school does this, right, no school does this, this is horrible, and I know I will be told (and it is no doubt true. . .). I’m having this fever dream of insanity, which is just not correct, and so I apologize for anyone who’s hearing this who’s offended because I know I’m just not seeing things clearly or from their point of view (and lots of irony here folks). Still, so just, think about that, be very careful with your interview schedule. There are good people out there; but institutions run on statistics, on metrics, and you want to avoid being reduced to a data point. Talk to your mentors. . .and listen. I’ve seen more than one person of color just tank the interviews because they weren’t strategic about what interviews they accepted and which interviews they did. So just be careful with that. With that, I’m done, and now, you’re going to get real knowledge.

Craig Konnoth: So, question, how many of you here are already in teaching fellowships?

[Male Student]: Do VAPs count?

Konnoth: Yeah, VAPs do count, absolutely.

So, I’m going to speak on three things. The first is, in some detail, VAPs and teaching fellowships. The second, I’m going to talk about writing, and the third is managing mentors.

So the first, in terms of VAPs. I’m currently a professor at the University of Colorado Law School in my second year. Before that, I was a practicing attorney. I practiced for a couple of years. I was a Deputy Solicitor General for the State of California, under Kamala Harris. And things were going well, except for my living situation. I lived in San Francisco, and I couldn’t get a lease by myself because I didn’t earn enough money unless I wanted to live really, really far away. And so I decided that I was going to leave San Francisco and go into teaching. I applied to various teaching fellowships, and I ended up taking the Sharswood Fellowship at Penn Law school. I also got a fellowship at NYU Medical School, in bioethics. And so, I disclosed it to both of them, they made an arrangement, but, alas, only paid me one salary, instead of two fellowship salaries. [Laughter.]

Now, the reason I mention all of that is because there are various other teaching fellowships out there. The well-known ones: the Bigelow at Chicago, which is the OG if you like? And then you have the Climenko at Harvard, the associates of law at Columbia, the acting professors of law at NYU, and then the Grey fellowships at Stanford. Those are the big ones. Northwestern has its VAPs, Duke has VAPs, right, but there are various other ones out there.

One thing to think about is the teaching obligation. For example, Penn has something called a regulation fellowship, where, my understanding is that a substantial part of your time is spent as a research fellow for a faculty member. In those fellowships it’s actually quite hard to get much writing done because of that research. So unless you’re a co-author, or it’s really your area, you’ve got to think very carefully about those even though they may sound quite

attractive. Obviously that faculty member is going to be your mentor—at least in theory—and he’s going to back you on the market. Some faculty members are better than others at doing that, so think about who the faculty member is, think about what you’re going to gain from that mentorship situation, think about what you’re going to lose in terms of your own writing, because your own writing is more important frankly than even a really good mentor. So, obviously, it’s a matter of degree.

In terms of teaching, the reason I picked the Sharswood was because of its approach to teaching. With most of the fellowships, the NYU ones, the Columbia ones, the Harvard and Chicago ones, you’re going to teach legal writing. There are certain exceptions to these, but for the most part, that is the norm. Now, I did not know how to teach legal writing because I’d never taken a class in legal writing. So I thought it probably better not to try to go in that direction. But also, the other thing is that, teaching legal writing, while you can make it somewhat substantive, I suspect it has its limits because you aren’t teaching a class in your area. The way the Sharswood does it is, you teach a seminar in your area, then you teach a lecture course in your area, and then you can teach a seminar again in your area. Then you have a syllabus, when you start up as a professor. Now, there are fellowships at Chicago, Columbia, a couple other places, where you have no teaching requirements at all. I think there’s one in Columbia and Chicago geared towards minority applicants. So keep an eye out for those. But I would still suggest teaching: you don’t have to teach, but the great thing is you have the option of teaching what you want to teach. And so, you can say, “hey I would like to teach this course,” because then you have a syllabus, you have teaching reviews, you have things that are useful, and it’s a way to get up to speed.

Now the other thing to think about with the fellowships are, do you have to leave after two years? So, as Larry mentioned, sometimes people go on the market once, nothing happens, or they’ve got to move to, did you say North Dakota?

Catá Backer: North Dakota.

Konnoth: North Dakota. And then you go on the market again, and you go on the market yet again. I know someone who’s been on the market, over the course of four years (though they didn’t go on every year), and now will be joining a fantastic school. And so, there’s really no predicting how it’s all going to pan out. But sometimes you’ve got to go on several times. So you’ve got to think about, well, is this fellowship going to say, look, you’ve got one year to write and then you got to go to the market immediately. Because, if that’s the case, then you start in September, by May you’ve got to have your article. And then you’re on the market. You’ve got to do, is it the June FAR distribution? And so, and you’re off. And starting in June people might say show me your paper. That means, by June, at least five people, five professors in your field, have looked at your article and writing and have given you feedback, which means you have to have a draft by February. Why February, you might ask? A couple of reasons. Professors do not, shockingly, look at a draft within the

week that you send it to them. Chances also are you aren't going to have five people look at multiple drafts, so you're going to send it one person, you're going to get comments from them, then you send it to the next person, you're going to get comments from them, and that's going to happen over a period of three months. So you need your draft in February.

Now, the thing is some schools say that's what you're going to do, and that's fine if you're a PhD. How many of you have, or will have PhDs? Or will be, okay, so, there are a few folks. So that fine if you're in a PhD, but I don't have a PhD. I came in from practice, you know, still marveling over the fact that I was living in a place with more than two rooms. And suddenly I was expected to have this article, which I didn't have.

But luckily, because I had funding from two sources, they were willing to give me an extra year, so I did three years in the fellowship. A lot of people do three years of fellowships, and now most of these programs allow three years. But some of them don't, and I don't know if the Sharswood would have given me more than two years had I not received the NYU funding: indeed, most of the Sharswoods, in fact all the Sharswoods I know, have PhDs. They came in with a body of writing already, whereas I just came in with briefs.

So that's what I'm going to say about VAPs and fellowships. It gives you a sense for that sort of thing. It's almost essential to have them. If you don't have a fellowship, and you want to go on the market, you should apply to teaching fellowships, because that's the way, unless you've got a PhD, then, that might be a way to get around it. They actually do have stats on PhDs, and in terms of VAPs getting jobs, there are numbers out there. You got to do a little bit of digging on PrawfsBlawg where there is a spreadsheet, that tells you how many people had self-reported landing a teaching job. You can see where they came from, what fellowships they have. I think it's Sasha Volokh that puts together the spreadsheet.

The next is writing. The things to think about, in terms of writing, is as you see the PhD-ification of legal academia, more and more decision makers are PhD holders. As a result, they're looking for clearer, more disciplined, academic profiles. So, there used to be a time where you could go on the market and you could have an article in family law, and another an article on tax law, and another article on corporations, and people would say, oh, what a renaissance person, so worldly and knowledgeable. That is not the case right now. We aren't quite in a situation where you've got to go and study the farming patterns of Britain between 1300 and 1305. Not quite. But the idea is, you've got to be able to talk about some kind of consistent methodology, you've got to talk about a specific area. The more focused you are the better.

If you go in and say, well, I teach health law, the health law people will say, okay, well, what kind of health law? And so you've got to be able to tell a story of how you fit in, even within a specific field. And so, I do health data stuff, I also do health and civil rights, and I can talk more specifically about what I do in that subfield. You've got to be able to do that. I don't know anything about

something like tax or corporations, and I say that for the benefit of one of my friends over there who is a tax person, but even within those subfields, you really got to talk about your methodology, and your area, and really be able to tell a story, a narrative arc. So in other words, your research agenda cannot be a series of papers. Your research agenda, by itself, could be a stand-alone paper. With each paragraph being a paper in its own right. At the same time, each paragraph should not be so trivial, so people are like, well, is that going to be a paper? So it's a hard balancing.

The third thing I want to talk about, managing mentors. There are three types of mentors in the world, and you want the goldilocks mentor. The first type are the mentors who say, you've got to do it exactly this way. If you don't do it this way, you are excommunicated out into exile. Those could be dangerous mentors. If you see eye to eye with them totally, if you trust them implicitly, great. Do what they say. Chances are you aren't. You're not going to agree with anyone 100 percent. Then you've got mentors who are just lovely, benign people, who're like: we'll totally help you, but we have no idea what's happening with the market, we have no directions to give you. Do what you want. That's at the other extreme. Another kind of benign mentor is someone who tells you what you're doing is great, perfect. Those folks are dangerous because then you don't realize you weren't getting feedback. The trick is to find mentors somewhere in between. So the goldilocks mentor, who's like, look, this is my advice, this is my sincere advice—but you're your own person and should follow what you think is right. The idea is to have a good panel of mentors. As I said, five people, who you don't necessarily need to know super well, but five people who you can rely on as sounding boards. Some of them might insist on you doing it their way, and you may need to keep the right amount of distance from them, so they aren't overbearing. Some of them will be extremely nice, and then maybe a couple of them will be somewhere in the middle and will be giving you advice. Then you may keep going back to them, sending them application packets, text messages, et cetera, et cetera. I'll stop there, but I might jump back in later, and talk about the “Meat Market.”

Robinson: Melinda, I think that hearing from you will be great because you're an associate dean. Associate dean really plays an important role in the hiring of faculty, new faculty. And so, not only talk about how you got to where you are, but talk about that piece of interacting with those who want to come into your particular school, or any other school, and also what they should watch out for when they first get there.

Molina: Good afternoon everyone. I will first describe my path to the academy. As I am listening to the panelists' comments, I should not be sitting here today. I graduated from Rutgers Law School in 2002. Before joining the academy, I practiced law for eight years. I started with a judicial state clerkship. It was wonderful way to bridge the gap of the theory learned in law school and the reality of practicing law. I then joined a mid-sized law firm for two years. I later joined the New York office of Sullivan & Cromwell LLP. My practice at Sullivan focused primarily on the representation of institutions and their

senior executives in a wide variety of criminal and regulatory investigations involving allegations of accounting fraud, securities fraud, foreign bribery, and obstruction of justice. I then decided that I wanted to teach.

I am passionate about teaching and that passion lead me to the academy. I had several years under my belt as a practitioner. As soon as I believed I could manage more I went right into teaching. I participated in a street law program, where I taught at a high school for two years, for an hour, every Friday. Then I became an adjunct at a John Jay College for Criminal Justice and Hunter College. I did not teach law courses. I taught an ethnic studies course, Latinos in the United States.

While teaching at those colleges, I networked and developed several mentoring relationships. One of my mentors asked me to speak to a group of students who were participating in a pipeline program. I gave a talk to those students about the value of mentoring in the legal profession. What I did not realize at that moment was that I was being informally vetted for a fellowship position. Several weeks later, I formally interviewed and was offered the position as the Research Professor and Fellow of the Ronald H. Brown Center for Civil Rights at St. John's University.

There in a nutshell is my non-traditional path. I joined Capital and earned tenure in 2015. I teach across the law school curriculum including Torts I & II, White Collar Crime Seminar, White Collar Crime Legal Drafting Practicum, and Professional Responsibility. I also directed the Academic Support Program. My experience as a director managing a budget and individuals is what eventually lead to my new role as an associate dean. I've been at that position for a year and a half. I will tell you, I am the first Latina professor at the law school, the only professor of color at, and the most recently tenured professor. So everything I've done has been outside of the norm.

So what I want to talk to you about are non-traditional pathways to the academy. It first depends on your interests. Are you interested in becoming a doctrinal professor and have a research agenda with several publications, fantastic. Are you passionate about clinical work, and the important things that clinics do for students while they are in law school, and the way those programs impact underserved communities with access to justice gaps. Maybe you are passionate about legal writing and teaching practice-ready skills. Law schools are looking for many things and you should try your best to align them with your interests.

So, depending on your interests there are subject-matter listservs that will post hiring opportunities. Sometimes, the need to hire falls outside of the AALS schedule. So subscribing to several listservs allows you to cast a wide net. You may learn about an opportunity outside of the AALS. For example, I might have an unplanned retirement or sudden illness, or faculty member may decide to move on. The first thing I do, once I get approval to hire, is to post on my university website and on the relevant listservs. If you want to be a legal writing professor, if you want to be a clinician, if you want to be a doctrinal

professor, join those listservs because the content is interesting and you may find employment opportunities.

You should start to network in nearby law schools. Especially if you want to stay close to home, which I imagine that many people do. Begin to make yourself known at that law school by attending and participating events, by introducing yourself to faculty. When a position opens, you will be made aware of it sooner than others. When you submit your resume, you have some type of connection or relationship with the members of the committee or other faculty members. If you're interested in a particular city or a particular law school, begin to make those in roads now. Go onto these listservs, see about job opportunities, and then submit your resume. That's my very pragmatic, practical advice.

Robinson: What about the role of the academic dean? You can have wonderful interviews at the "Meat Market," and then you go on campus and it falls apart. And one way it could fall apart is your interaction with the academic dean.

Molina: I'll tell you what the associate dean is looking for. It's my immediate and long-term needs. I need to know what courses you will teach and those that you could. Pay attention to the job posting, what positions the law school is looking to fill, and to see, first of all, if there is a match. Or whether you can make it work, that you would teach within those subjects. I'm looking for someone that would be able to help the law school meet its curricular needs. It is fundamental to the running of the law school. For example, I had a white-collar criminal background. If I went and said that I could teach health law no problem, I'm a liar. Can I teach criminal law? Yes, of course I can. Had I practiced that type of criminal law? No, I did not. I could make it work.

So when you get to the point, after you've met with faculty, after you've done the job talk, and are meeting with the associate dean, keep in mind that they are assessing how it will be to work with you and being able to negotiate and at times compromise.

Catá Backer: Can I, just, ask a quick question? Have you ever had a situation where someone will come in and say, "I will only teach small classes, I'm not going to teach large classes"? Because sometimes I've come up and associate deans will just go absolutely through the roof where someone comes in with these lists of demands, "so I'm only going to do this, I want to do a seminar, and I only want to do small classes, no, I'm not going to teach any of the big classes."

Molina: I think it all largely depends upon the institution. Again, if you are teaching at a large and well-funded research institution that might work. Good luck. What I suggest is that you find the answers to a few questions. What is the vision for the law school? What types of students are attending the law school? What are their needs? Because from that, everything else will flow. As far as from an administrative perspective.

Here comes the compromise. We may need you to teach a large podium class. If there is a day and an evening program, you're going to have to teach in the evenings, you're going to have to teach in the summer, most evening programs have a summer component as part of the curriculum for evening students. So know the type of law school you are interviewing with, because that's going to set their needs. Then if you have this list of demands, first of all, it may be such a mismatch it will not work. Or, you could negotiate your option a, b, and c.

Robinson: Anita, if we can, you've had to come through the clinical pathway and you teach. You direct the clinical program still?

Sinha: I direct the International Human Rights Law Clinic here at WCL. Luckily, we are among the exception in clinical appointments in terms of tenure and compensation at WCL. But first, welcome to our school and our wonderful campus. During the plenary sessions, you were able to hear from our amazing dean and the women leadership, from the university president onwards, and we're excited to host this conference. I'm Anita Sinha. I have been at WCL since 2012, although I started my tenure track position in 2016. So, like Craig, I'm going to talk about a type of clinical fellowship, namely the Practitioner-in-Residence program, which is what we call it here, as one pathway to becoming a full-time law professor.

How many of you, so I know how to better tailor my advice, how many of you are interested in clinical teaching? Okay, so it would be helpful for me to talk about pathways to full-time clinical teaching, Schools around the country have clinical fellowship programs. They are not all the same. And so I wanted to follow on what Craig said in terms of knowing the differences between programs and what you'll get out of it and what is expected of you.

I am not only a non-traditional member of the academy, I'm unlikely. I hated law school. I vowed to never go back. I did do law review, which helped in entering academia, but I did turn down a federal clerkship because I was eager to go into practice. I was the first person in my family to go to law school and become a lawyer. I was the eldest of immigrants from India who moved to New York City just before I was born, and I just never thought I'd be here on this side of the table today. And I am in love, I love my job. I feel very fortunate. I did, however, take the unconventional route of first practicing for 12 years before taking an academic appointment.

I was lucky to join the Practitioner-in-Residence program here at WCL, which is a program to pluck people out of practice so that they can try academia. The program is geared toward more senior candidates than typically other fellowship programs are. For example, Georgetown Law School's clinical fellowships are directed to candidates about three to five years out. WCL's practitioner program's minimum years of practice is typically five, and many like myself come into the program with more than five years of experience. The program's appointments are designed to be annual renewable contractual appointments up to three years. I agree with Craig that these fellowship/

practitioner programs are best for candidates if they are minimum three years—there is a lot to learn and a lot to get your writing wheels going and your scholarship in the place it needs to get published. I'm in full agreement with that, for sure. The practitioner program I participated in helped me crack a world by giving me a code that I otherwise would not have known. For example, before going on the market for a tenure-track appointment, I would not have known how to do a job talk. I would not have known how strategically develop scholarship. I also wouldn't know what a scholarship agenda or teaching statement was.

My advice, therefore, is that you have to look into whether the program you're contemplating, whether it's doctrinal or clinical, provides mentorship and guidance in these and other areas, as well as the time for you to benefit fully from the mentorship and guidance. I should say that the candidates that participate in the practitioner program at WCL's clinical program do not have to go into clinical teaching. We have graduates who went into doctrinal teaching positions. The reason, in part, is that practitioners in the WCL program are set up and engaged in serious scholarship, including by getting student research assistance funding during the academic year and over the summer. With regard to the time you will have to research and write, if you looking at a clinic teaching fellowship, ask about what the plan is for summer coverage, because it would be helpful to identify earlier rather than later if you will need to balance research and writing with managing a clinic case docket over the summer. There may be ways to get assistance if you need to protect more of your time over the summer to write, especially if it's the summer before you are going on the market. It is also important to know your privileges as related to library resources. The practitioner program at WCL treats practitioners with relation to the library like full time faculty, including having access to a designated library liaison. On the service side, a WCL practitioner is also expected to serve on law-school wide committees. This at first could be seen as an unhelpful distraction because you are thinking "I'm just trying to learn what it is to be an academic." But in practice it proves to be a useful service requirement because it gives you access to faculty outside your program, which provides you with opportunities to forge friendships and alliances with colleagues who you otherwise wouldn't have gotten to know, and who would definitely have not gotten to know you. Which is why I think school-wide committee service even when you are in a term fellowship position is a good thing. It can also help show that you are a team player interested and capable of contributing to institution building, which can be good of course if you are an internal candidate down the road, and for references from your institution if you are on the market generally.

For clinical teaching fellowships, and I imagine for fellowships generally, teaching outside the clinic or generally a variety of teaching experiences—meaning seminar and podium, and/or a variety of classes taught—tends to be very helpful for being on the market for full-time teaching positions. WCL practitioner are required to teach outside of clinic. I taught a seminar I

designed on the intersection of immigration status and civil and human rights in the U.S., which was a paper-based seminar and was fun for me and helped me hone what I was writing at the time. I also taught a podium, survey class on immigration law, which gave me a leg up when I went on the market because it showed I can teach a big class. To the extent that you can diversify your teaching portfolio as a fellow, that will help you be more versatile in terms of what you can offer as a candidate.

I want to say a word about how to best be aware of the quality of your teaching evaluations. Your teaching evaluations will be evaluated carefully when you go on the market for full-time professor positions. But if you are teaching as a fellow, VAP, or practitioner, you are going to be seen by some students as quasi faculty, and your evaluations may be tainted by student perceptions that you are too young or less qualified to teach them. The students may be frustrated because they did not get into a popular tenured professor's class and they are in your class instead, and they are grumpy. You cannot of course control your teaching evaluations. But you can be mindful of students' perceptions and biases and can try to plan ways to mitigate negative evaluations. One great piece of advice I got when I taught my first big podium class was to do an informal midterm evaluation. It helped me gauge the room in a way I otherwise can do without evaluations in my seminars or clinical teaching. In my bigger class, I felt unsure about the level of student satisfaction with my teaching, or what they thought about the classroom setting overall. When I shared my uncertainty with a colleague, they made the great recommendation of an informal (not recorded by the school) evaluation to gauge the sentiments of the students. Just a few open-ended questions, but you can incorporate the feedback you receive and can adjust accordingly before the end-of-the-semester evaluations. This is an example of how you can regard your teaching evaluations as a conveyor of data that you cannot control but that you can be intentional about.

Speaking of intentionality, when you are on the market for a full-time law professor appointment, it is increasingly important to be able to articulate intentionality around teaching. There is more and more of a push to create learning goals and metrics, and clear measures of assessment, which represent good habits for strong teaching. The training that is core to the practitioner program at WCL includes very intentional training around clinical pedagogy. If you do not have access to pedagogical methods and metrics in your fellowship, you can otherwise learn about and how to talk about it. Learning about learning goals, summative versus formative assessment, and other elements of pedagogy are the subject of many thoughtful academics, which makes this accessible and knowable.

The last things I would like to share relate to details of being on the full-time law professor job market. The AALS "Meat Market" each October in Washington D.C. is a big affair to orchestrate—it is in a big hotel, it can be hard to get from one interview suite to another, particularly because of the sprawling layout of the hotel and details such as the elevators can take forever.

You have to plan accordingly, for example it is not advisable to schedule your interviews back to back. If the law school from which you graduated has a hospitality suite, or if you fit into a specialized hospitality suite such as the one designated for women candidates, those spaces are good for recharging between interviews.

As for preparation, reach out to colleagues who have recently gone on the market to get practice questions. Practice answering these questions with your colleagues. If you are an internal candidate at an institution, you should of course practice only with trusted colleagues, or colleagues outside your institution if you can. And then when you get to the callbacks, practice answering small group questions and take the job talk aspect of the callback very seriously. As I mentioned, there is a structure and certain conventions of the job talk that you should apply and practice. Again, moot with trusted people, colleagues both familiar and not familiar with your subject area. If you can get information from your appointment's committee liaison beforehand as to expectations, that can be critical. For example, institutions sometimes look for a job talk for a clinical position that is a combination of your scholarship and your ideas on clinic design.

Once you are asked by the appointments committee for a callback, those committee members are you allies—they want you to look good, because they brought you back to their institution. At the dinner the night before your callback, they may give you some pointers, and even warnings. My callback experiences taught me to get as much information as you can from your appointments committee liaison and members because they want to see you succeed. I'm going to stop there.

Robinson: This is great. Here is how I came into the academy. I was active in the alumni association at GW, and a new dean was hired and they were looking for a dean of students. And they said, "why don't you ask her whether she wants it?" I was in practice at a firm. And I said, "dean of students, what does that person do?" Because when I went to law school, we didn't have a dean of students. We had an academic dean. And the rule was that every dean, someone who had that title, had to teach. There was no exception. So when I was offered the job I didn't know that. He said, "now what do you want to teach?" And I said, "teach? I want to learn how to be a dean of students." I've changed my administrative roles every time I get tired of doing some particular thing, but I have always continued to teach. Because that was the rule at GW. Most places don't have that because administrative roles are very time consuming. And so it's an all-day job, and then to try and write an article you have to be extraordinarily disciplined. When I was writing about reparations, I was sort of a noob. Now it's back in the news, so I have all these candidates calling me about my reparations articles. But it really is such a serious thing that you have to sit down and just say, "I'm going to write for three hours. Or I'm going to get up at three every day, and I'm going to write until I have to get dressed to go to work." So those are the things you need to do and think about.

But we want to take time to get questions from you. This is what I want to emphasize, two things. For every minute that you're at the "Meat Market," for every minute that you're at that campus on the job talk, you are on. You better in the zone, you better stay in the zone. They want to see you as that professional teacher who can handle a class with folks who really don't want you sitting there. There's a great article, *When Sapphire Meets Socrates*. And that is about the black woman experience or the Latina experience in a law school. Cause what they expect is what they saw in *Paper Chase*. And you get in there and they just want to test you, and with the black male faculty as well. Number two, get into the POC community in your region. And you can take your paper around five, six, seven times, and that paper is going to be tight, because you'll get commentators. So those are the two things we can say more about. Okay, we're open for questions, aren't we?

Konnoth: Just one thing, actually, on that. So, there are various methods to connect to quite formalized POC emerging scholars programs. Talk to your mentors about some of those.

Robinson: The LUDI is for the women.

Konnoth: And then Langston is for the men.

[Male Audience Member]: I have a quick question. I never heard of the June FAR distribution. I thought it was only an August distribution. How does that work?

Konnoth: I might be wrong about that.

Robinson: It's August. Well, what it is, is that your law review articles, usually, you have to have them done and they get accepted in the spring, right? So that's really what the three months or four months are. You need to have the thing ready by the fall so you can then have five people look at it, and then you can get an offer. You usually get more than one offer for your article.

Konnoth: Just one thing I want to mention about the FAR form. Be very careful about the courses you pick because, back to your teaching choices, as that can determine whether and how many interviews you get.

Robinson: They need torts, maybe criminal law.

Molina: Yeah, with the FAR form, sort of be strategic with that. Align it with your interests and your background, but always list a bread and butter course. And what I mean by that is required courses. First year curriculum, second year curriculum, because that will always need to be taught. And then you list your interests. But think about that strategically usually your teaching package will be two courses a semester. So you want the bread and butter course that will keep you readily employed, and then you can teach those seminars or other things that you are very interested in.

Robinson: I think somebody's sitting in the way back, yeah?

[Female Audience Member]: Thank you so much for the insight. It was a really detailed explanation. The question I really want to ask is, for an immigrant who came in through the embassy, who also desires becoming a

professor in the United States, does this pathway also apply to them? Or does the fact that they're an immigrant and didn't pass through the JD system, does this impede their chances of becoming a law professor in the United States?

Robinson: Craig, you want to take that?

Konnoth: Well I did go through the JD system. But from what I've seen, then you really should get JSD. Do a JSD, certainly an LLM, but an LLM in my opinion isn't enough. You've got to get a JSD, and then do some kind of fellowship as well.

[Female Audience Member]: From a Common Law Jurisdiction.

Robinson: I think you really need that LLM.

Catá Backer: Or a JSD.

[Female Audience Member]: Thank you so much for this panel and sharing your experience and knowledge about that. For someone who has been a judge, legal advisor even, a law professor in a civil law system, what kind of advice would you give me just to enter in the field of teaching law?

Sinha: I would agree with the advice that was given for the previous question, those would apply to your question as well.

[Female Audience Member]: It's a language barrier, because I come from French system.

Konnoth: I think that getting a JSD will help with that because you sound completely fluent to me. But the thing is that, even if it's a matter of confidence, just doing a JSD will help with that and help you get interactions with American faculty. Because people come from very illustrious backgrounds, but the fact is, the faculty has to be sold. In fact, as Larry mentioned earlier, too much experience can count against you, because they're like, well, this person was a judge, right? Can we trust this person to become a first-year tenure track professor? Because even at the top schools, first year tenure track professors have to teach bread and butter courses. So they've got to be convinced that you are able. Going to a JSD program, having that will help you.

Catá Backer: But work to your strengths. You've got a lot to offer. So you are an expert in Civil Law. One thing that's going to be your bread and butter is comparative. The other thing you can do, because you're a judge, you're going to be looking at procedure. You're going to be looking at courts. And so, take the opportunity, when you're doing that degree, to take what you have and then translate it in a comparative way, so now you're really useful. Because you can do the comparative stuff but now you can translate it to the analog to what you were doing, and that will make life easier. You're not starting from scratch, you're merely adding.

Robinson: We had a hand up over here, on this side.

[Female Audience Member]: I have a question about fellowships. So, I know we talked about how you almost need three years at this point, so my personal plan is to stack fellowships. I'm currently at Villanova. I'm teaching

two courses this semester and they're big, 90 and 40. Do I want to then backtrack and go do a Climenko or something for notoriety?

Robinson: It's the writing. Have you been able to write? No.

[Female Audience Member]: But isn't that the same, if you're doing the Climenko, there's a lot of grading, right?

Sinha: We see more and more people that have not placed the first time they are on the market, and so they go back to do another fellowship or a similarly termed, temporary position. We see a lot of this, and for good reason—the market is very competitive and balancing scholarship with teaching and other service is hard. So my answer would be, yes, it is definitely okay to stack fellowships.

Konnoth: There's no harm in stacking. It's not easy necessarily, though, to get a second fellowship. So don't assume you're going to get it, because they sort of, want....

Sinha: Something fresh, yeah.

[Female Audience Member]: I think that, is it more like, going to do legal writing after you've been doing doctrinal, is that harmful to me?

Panelists: No. Thank you very much, thank you guys.