

## **Fostering Wholehearted Lawyers in Clinical Legal Education**

**Susan L. Brooks**

### **Description-**

This interactive session will explore how clinical legal educators can foster wholeheartedness in their work, for themselves as well as their students. Wholehearted lawyering means bringing our full selves into our work using relational practices and habits of mind situated in three overlapping and interconnected dimensions: the *personal* (eg., character strengths and values; self-awareness; reflection) the *interpersonal* (eg., deep listening; storytelling; empathy; cross-cultural communication) and the *systemic* (eg., racial justice and equity; bias, power, and privilege; transformative approaches to law and lawyering). We and our students can pursue wholeheartedness through mindful engagement, which means harnessing our emotions and body wisdom as well as our analytical minds. Wholehearted lawyering contributes to law students' positive professional identity formation and wellbeing and enhances their ability to work effectively across differences to bring about positive social change. Clinical legal education offers unique opportunities to cultivate these competencies on many levels, in part by placing students in the role of a lawyer with meaningful opportunities for feedback and reflection. The session will illustrate these points using stories and examples from the Stern Community Lawyering Clinic at the Drexel University Kline School of Law. Participants will be invited to consider ways their work already supports wholehearted lawyering or might be adapted to incorporate some of these ideas.

### **Goal-**

Session participants will come away with concrete ideas and teaching tools they can apply in their own legal education settings.

### **Learning Objectives-**

Participants will be able to:

- Explore how to develop an ethos of humility and compassion in legal practice and education
- Learn teaching methods that help law students understand themselves and their own relational habits better
- Consider changes to clinic design that can help us to foster “whole-hearted lawyering” in our students and ourselves
- Explore how to harness a range of empathic emotions, including empathic anger, and cultivate resilience in students

### **Session Plan and Methods-**

The session will focus mainly on engaging participants in interactive exercises they can bring back to their own clinical and classroom settings, including:

- Creating a team mission statement through a collaborative process
- Using specific visual and kinesthetic learning tools to increase self- (and other) awareness
- Using reflection and feedback (in pairs and small groups) to developing strategies for building resilience and improving wellbeing

We will happily share all of the teaching tools and exercises we use with the participants, and will also offer to collect and distribute other exercises any of the participants may want to contribute.

### **Conference Themes-**

This session will touch upon all five conference themes:

- Collaboration
- Foundational and Emerging Lawyering Skills
- Mindfulness, Self-Care, and Resilience
- Professional Development
- Clinics and the Community

### **Presenter-**

**Susan Brooks** (contact person) is the Associate Dean for Experiential learning and a Professor of Law at the Drexel University Kline School of Law. In 2019, she presented as part of a concurrent session on “Anti-Bias Teaching and Supervision: Practices That

Foster Respect and Belonging for Students in Clinics and Externships (Part I).” She also co-led a morning mindfulness session at that conference. The previous year, she presented as part of a concurrent session on engaging students with diverse perspectives, and also was a discussant for a work-in-progress.