



Tulane University

Sponsored by

The Murphy Institute

Presents

**The 2nd Annual
Political Economy and Access to Justice
Judicial Education Seminar**

January 11-13, 2024

**Hilton Garden Inn
New Orleans Convention Center
1001 S. Peters Street
New Orleans, LA 70130**

SUMMATIVE REPORT

SUBMITTED BY:

NGHANA LEWIS, JD, PHD
MARCH 19, 2024

PEAJJES GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goals

Deepen knowledgebase at the crosscurrents of political economy and all areas of law governed by the justice system in Louisiana, for Louisiana appellate, district, traffic, family, juvenile, criminal, and civil court judges.

Objectives:

- 1. Organized panel presentations that defined political economy and exemplified its operations in relation to issues of confinement and reentry, access to housing, sentencing, and artificial intelligence/automation.
- 2. Considered past and current structural barriers to access to justice for persons living in poverty.

Facilitate practical application of knowledge gained to day-to-day court operations.

Objectives:

- 1. Used lunch breaks, and post-session dinner discussions among seminar participants to identify specific ways in which knowledge gained both holistically and from individual sessions can be taken back and applied.
- 2. Sustained listserv as tool for seminar participants to continue dialogue post-seminar, share resources, and sustain and expand networking.
- *3. Developed plan for using social media as a messaging tool to sustain communication and advertise PEAJJES.
- *4 Identified potential PEAJJES partners within existing judicial networks, including National Bar Association/Louisiana Judicial Council and Louisiana Supreme Court through ad hoc committee organized to address financing courts and eliminating fines, fees, and court costs as primary revenue stream.

Method: The seminar featured eight (8) sessions with 1 presenter for each session., except the “Cost of Poverty” experience, which featured eighteen (18) facilitators. Presenters included a state senator and researchers in the areas of political economy, economics, constitutional law, immigration policy, geography/geomapping, and legal ethics. QR codes were provided at the end of each session for participants to scan and evaluate the session, by completing survey questions.

EVALUATIONS: INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS

EVALUATIONS: SEMINAR

Method: Participants were asked to evaluate the seminar, by responding to eight (8) questions. QR Codes were placed in high-traffic areas of the seminar. Student workers reminded participants to complete evaluations for each session. The summative evaluation sought insight into participants' ideas for strengthening future sessions. Rather than complete the formal seminar assessment, which maintained respondents' anonymity, three (3) participants emailed or text messaged unsolicited comments about the seminar and their experience. These responses are attached to this evaluation and marked as Appendix 1.

DISCUSSION

Seventeen (17) judges, representing seven (7) judicial districts and two (2) appellate courts in the State of Louisiana, registered to attend the seminar. Of the seventeen registered participants, two (2) did not attend any sessions (one, because her mother passed away the morning of January 11, 2024, the other for reasons unreported). Of the fifteen who attended, five (5) attended PEAJJES in 2023. (Note: two (2) participants from 2023 expressed regrets that their dockets did not permit them to register for and participate in PEAJJES 2024.)

The seminar location was Hilton Garden Inn New Orleans Convention Center, located at 1001 S. Peter Street. This location was required, due to space on campus not being available, despite diligent efforts to secure on campus space.

DISCUSSION

Response rates for individual session evaluations averaged 60%. Overall, participants found presenters well-informed and responsive to participant questions. Participants also generally responded that they found the panel content applicable to their judicial functions. Two sessions stand out as particularly engaging to participants: Session 2 and Session 6. Session 2 addressed the justice reinvestment act in relation to prison populations; and Session 6 was the “cost of poverty” experience, which some participants, in offering written feedback, in addition to completing the survey, described as “excellent” and an “excellent presentation” and commented that presenters had done a “good job.”

Fifty-three percent of seminar participants responded to requests for seminar evaluations, disseminated via email post-seminar.

DISCUSSION

Asked whether they would recommend the seminar to their colleagues, 100% of participants who responded said that they would. Asked whether the subject matter covered in the seminar is covered in other judicial seminars, 100% of responding participants said that PEAJES content is not covered in other judicial seminars. Asked if they are likely to attend PEAJES in the future, 100% of responding participants said they would attend PEAJES in the future.

CHALLENGES

Space presented a challenge in 2023, due to the small size of rooms available on campus. Space, again, presented a challenge in 2024, this time, due to lectures and working lunches taking place in different rooms. One participant opined that “having to go between rooms” was “unsatisfactory.”

Moving between rooms disrupted the seamless flow/rhythm from lectures to working lunch discussions, which was consistently maintained in 2023.

More than one participant expressed a desire to see the seminar move back to Tulane’s campus. It can reasonably be inferred that this sentiment, expressed in seminar evaluations, came from participants who attended PEAJJES in 2023 and 2024, because of the expressed preference between the only two sites that PEAJJES has taken place. This sentiment, thus, counsels heavily in favor of the seminar annually taking place at Tulane and efforts organizing early-on to secure space on campus.

The likely barrier to campus space availability is the fact that PEAJJES takes place the weekend before MLK holiday, which also marks the beginning of the Spring semester. Consideration may need to be given to moving the dates of the seminar to avoid the scheduling conflict.

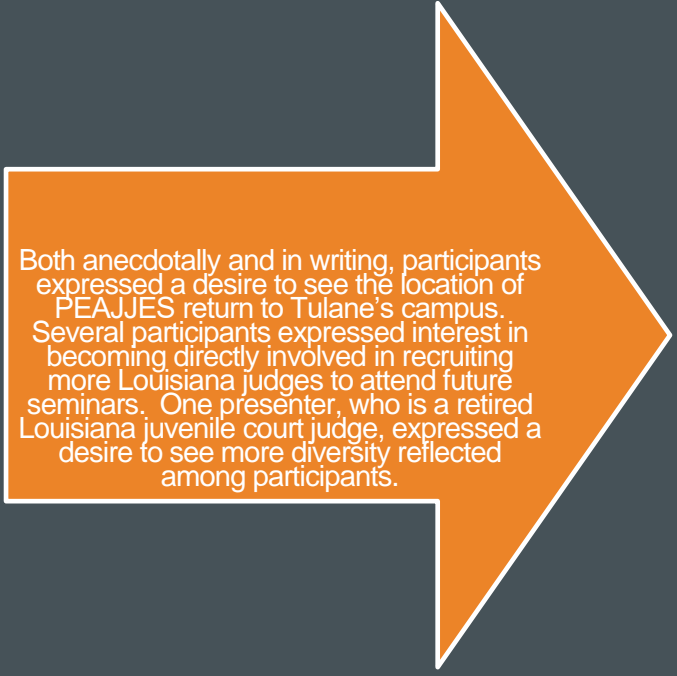
CHALLENGES

Political Economy is the conceptual anchor of the seminar. While more panels featured scholars with political economy interests in their wheelhouse, only one expert in political economy was a featured speaker. During working lunches and dinner debriefings, participants continued to pursue insight into how the concept of political economy specifically interacted with lecture content. These invocations point to a clear desire among participants to continue to deepen their knowledge of the concept of political economy, how the concept applied to seminar content, and how the concept informs their decision-making from the bench, in accordance with the law. In fact, in his/her summative evaluation, one participant specifically indicated a desire to “learn more about good policy choices for Louisiana judges.”

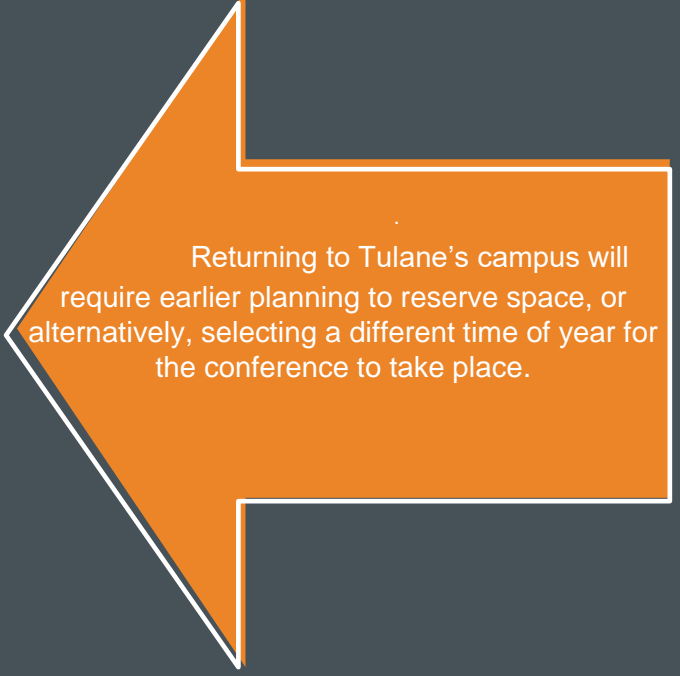
Evaluations point to a continuing need for the Political Economy & Access to Justice Judicial Education Seminar. Participants found the seminar content applicable to their day-to-day work, indicated that they do not have access to PEAJJES information through other judicial conferences, and expressed a desire to attend future seminars.

FUTURE SEMINARS

FUTURE PLANNING



Both anecdotally and in writing, participants expressed a desire to see the location of PEAJJES return to Tulane's campus. Several participants expressed interest in becoming directly involved in recruiting more Louisiana judges to attend future seminars. One presenter, who is a retired Louisiana juvenile court judge, expressed a desire to see more diversity reflected among participants.



Returning to Tulane's campus will require earlier planning to reserve space, or alternatively, selecting a different time of year for the conference to take place.

FUTURE PLANNING

With respect to increasing participation among Louisiana judges, it should be duly noted that an invitation to partner with PEAJES was directed to the Louisiana Judicial College in November 2023. The Louisiana Judicial College (LJC) is the Judicial College MCLE accrediting arm of the state. Annually, Louisiana judges must obtain 12.5 credit hours of continuing legal education. Five (5) of these hours must be received through courses that the LJC approves.

On December 12, 2023, the Executive Director of the LJC responded that the Judicial College Board of Governors declined the invitation to partner (see Appendix 2). Noteworthy, the Board's decision was not based on PEAJES content, but turned, rather, on an alleged lack of direct involvement of the LJC and/or Louisiana Supreme Court staff in seminar planning. Significantly, the LJC also invited PEAJES to submit a proposal to present at one of the LJC's annually sponsored conferences, or alternatively, to submit recorded PEAJES sessions for on-demand CLE credit.

It should be duly noted that attendance at most LJC sponsored conferences is not free for Louisiana judges. On average registration fees for LJC-sponsored CLE events are \$400-500.

FUTURE PLANNING

Each panel must include the voice and experience of a political economist. Integrating panels to include political economists will better tool participants to understand the theory behind the praxis that PEAJJES endeavors to support.

FUTURE PLANNING

The seminar will continue to take place annually the weekend before the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. Advertising will commence in April and will continue to target Louisiana appellate, district, family, juvenile, civil, traffic, municipal, and criminal court judges. Registration will remain open only to Louisiana judges. Advertising will be virtual and in person. Student workers will sustain and update PEAJJES's virtual presence through Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

PEAJJES will build networks with political economists who will be recruited to lecture at future seminars. Working lunches and debriefing dinners will continue to provide mechanisms for collaboratively extracting the practical applications of theory for judicial decision-making.

PEAJJES will utilize the network of judges who participated in the 1st and 2nd seminars to build interest among other Louisiana judges, to recruit, and to increase registration. PEAJJES will use social networking to sustain a year-round presence.

FUTURE PLANNING

PEAJJES will follow the recommendation of the LJC and submit a proposal to present at one of the regularly sponsored LJC conferences. PEAJJES participants from years 1 and 2 will be invited to serve as co-presenters/co-panelists.

The desired outcome of this strategic planning is to increase PEAJJES' visibility and increase seminar registration.

8:06



Judge Sandra >

Great sessions today.

Have fun tonight!!!

Saturday 11:18 AM

Pardon the interruption, but...the information we have received over last 2 days should be heard by every **Judge** state/nation wide....

For now I will lobby for LJC/NBA 😊 ... when it's New Orleans turn to sponsor LJC/NBA annual meeting please consider (1) Murphy Institute partnering with LJC/NBA; (2) moving conference to our traditional annual meeting date (Thursday to Sunday following Mardi Gras)

New Orleans will either be 2025 or

2026. We will know in Monroe next month when we are in Monroe.

Finally, I suggest you start lobbying Kern Reese (incoming chair) now and offer to be the CLE chair for New Orleans Annual Meeting. I'll help you !!!



Sent from my iPhone

2nd Annual Political Economy Jud Ed Seminar 2024

Judge Paul Bonin-AdHoc <PBonin@LASC.ORG>

Tue 1/16/2024 5:17 PM

To:judgelewis@stjohnclerk.org <judgelewis@stjohnclerk.org>

Cc:Political Economy and Access to Justice Judicial Education Seminar <peajjes@tulane.edu>

External Sender. Be aware of links, attachments and requests.

Judge, again I want to thank you for inviting me to attend the Seminar last week. As I mentioned to you, I had some other commitments that prevented me from fully engaging, but for those sessions that I was able to attend, they were awesome! And I hope that I am invited back next year.

I am having trouble submitting my survey but will continue to try to get it before the end of the week. In the meantime, I found the speakers/presenters well-informed and articulate and engaging! The other attendees also were very engaged in the subject matter and were outstanding in sharing their own insights and experiences. I especially appreciated the times when there were informal but scheduled feedback and sharing sessions.

The Seminar was also timely for me as I seek to address at the Supreme Court's request issues around funding sources for the courts because of the manner in which these issues can disproportionately impact identifiable groups in our communities and State. I look forward to your collaboration with me on some particularly important aspects of my assignment and intend to call upon you in the coming weeks.

Again, thanks for all that you are doing. JUDGE PAUL A BONIN (ret) (504) 915-5377

Judicial College Credit for Political Economy and ATJ Seminar

Appendix 2



From Michael W. Schachtman <MSchachtman@LASC.ORG>
To <judgelewis@stjohnclerk.org>
Cc Janell McFarland-Forges <JMForges@LASC.ORG>
Date 2023-12-12 20:10

Judge Lewis,

In follow up to our conversation regarding the authorization of Judicial College MCLE credit for the "Political Economy and Access to Justice Seminar," the Judicial College Board of Governors has declined the request.

This was not based on the content of the program, but rather a policy that a Judicial College Board member and/or Supreme Court staff be involved in the planning of any given program. They also noted that the Court has recently directed the College to feature certain topics, and want to maximize judicial attendance at these sessions.

Looking ahead, the College invites you to submit a session proposal, even if redundant to the January event, for a future Judicial College seminar. (*In particular, the Spring Judges Conference will be held in April in Lafayette, Summer School is in June (though this agenda is tentatively filled), and then the City, Family, and Juvenile Judges Seminar is in August in New Orleans.*) We can also add a course to our online/on-demand library.

I know this is not the news you hoped for, but I am hopeful we can work together in the future.

Michael

Michael Schachtman
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Louisiana Judicial College
Louisiana Supreme Court
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LAJudicialCollege.org



Five hours of Louisiana Judicial College CLE are required for judges each year by Louisiana Supreme Court Rules Part H, Rule XXX, Rule 3(f).

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