

# Invitation: The Second Roundtable on Law's Futures

Friday, September 27, 2019

Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law, Chicago, IL, USA

Convenors:

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We write with an invitation to participate in continuing an effort, launched a year ago, to imagine and implement a critical institution of law in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: legal education. In 2018, we wrote that we believe that the time is right to ask and begin to answer *foundational and fundamental questions* of institutional design, and that our efforts may be important complements to related investigations by the ABA, AALS, and other well-formed professional organizations. If anything, in 2019 we think that our venture is more urgent than ever.

## Background

The inaugural “Law’s Futures” roundtable, held at Claremont McKenna College in September 2018 ([link below](#)), featured a group of roughly 30 law faculty and deans, technologists, and other higher education innovators in a wide-ranging conversation about needs, goals, and strategies. In part, the 2019 roundtable aims to carry forward and sharpen that conversation. Everyone who attended in 2018 is invited to return.

The initial roundtable built on the contributions to the March 2018 Prawfsblawg symposium on *Legal Education’s Futures* ([links below](#)). The 2019 roundtable will continue that trajectory but will take its initial framing from the results of the 2018 event – which we will share with you, via separate correspondence. Other developments over the last 12 months, both in the area of movement-building and in the area of education reform, will shape the agenda. The goal is to move those conversations forward, in person, to the point where this group and allies and partners can take a more specific and concrete form.

## Who is invited?

This invitation is going out not only to the 2018 roundtable attendees but also to additional law faculty, law deans (current, former, and possibly future), college and university administrators, and active and interested participants in the ecologies of the legal profession. All of the invitees have identified themselves to us in one respect or another as having a broad, imaginative take on law and education; a willingness to step forward to share their ideas and proposed actions; the

ability to step outside their role and responsibility to their “home” institution or company; and some enthusiasm for inherently open-ended and speculative ventures such as this one.

To keep the momentum of the conversation going, we are also trying to expand the universe of invitees, by including additional visionary academics, practitioners, technologists, and innovators from a broad spectrum of higher education, industry, and the nonprofit sector, as well as law. We expect and hope that the 2019 roundtable will feature new energy relative to participation and content, as well as continuity.

So far as we can tell, this remains a compelling group of thinkers and shakers and movers. But it is not exclusive or select other than in the sense that one of us (and in many cases, more than one of us) have explored at least some of this topic with each of you.

We’re eager to expand the group, so you are welcome to share this invitation with colleagues who have a talent for thinking broadly and imaginatively about higher education and the law. Have them contact us, if they’re interested in being included. Or, suggest their names to us, and we will follow up.

The target attendance remains around 30 people in total.

### **Logistics**

The plan is to gather in Chicago for dinner and introductions on the evening of **Thursday, September 26, 2019** and then convene for a day of structured conversation on **Friday, September 27, 2019** from 9 am to 3 pm. Following the example set in 2018 by Hiram Chodosh, the President of Claremont McKenna College, Dan Rodriguez and Northwestern Law have offered to host the group and sponsor the dinner. Each participant will be expected to pay their own travel expenses. There are no honoraria or other travel reimbursements.

### **Why attend?**

What we wrote a year ago remains true today: There is no speaking gig, no publication, no well-defined agenda, and no well-specified set of expected outcomes. There is no timeline. There is no assurance that our efforts will be accepted and implemented or accommodated with existing professional institutions. There is no assurance of anything, except challenging and provocative conversations that are not focused solely on the needs of the day, the month, or the year.

In other words, there is the promise of being part of an entrepreneurial cohort with the ambition of making critical and fundamental changes that will change the world. It is a startup.

### **What if I can’t come to Chicago in September?**

We are optimistic that late September in Chicago offers an attractive time and venue for those of who can fit this into their schedule as well as for those of you who would consider adding this day to a weekend visit built around other goals. Perhaps some development or family opportunities for Saturday, following our roundtable on Friday?

If the idea tempts you but September doesn’t suit your schedule, be assured that we will schedule more roundtables and will spread them geographically across the US and perhaps beyond.

## What's next?

If you have questions, feel free to contact any of us.

If you are able to attend, please confirm to Mike Madison at [madison@pitt.edu](mailto:madison@pitt.edu) by July 31. There will be some homework and some meeting details forthcoming.

## Links:

The agenda, reading list, and attendance list from the 2018 Law's Futures Roundtable:

<http://madisonian.net/lawsfutures/>

The Prawfsblawg symposium from March 2018 is most readily accessed beginning at the links below:

- <http://madisonian.net/2018/03/12/law-legal-education-and-imagining-the-future-the-project-continues/>
- <http://madisonian.net/2018/04/25/law-legal-education-and-imagining-the-future-the-project-continues-part-2/>
- <http://madisonian.net/2018/04/25/law-legal-education-and-imagining-the-future-the-project-continues-part-3/>
- <http://madisonian.net/2018/04/25/law-legal-education-and-imagining-the-future-the-project-continues-part-4/>
- <http://madisonian.net/2018/04/25/law-legal-education-and-imagining-the-future-the-project-continues-part-5/>
- <http://madisonian.net/2018/04/25/law-legal-education-and-imagining-the-future-the-project-continues-part-6-and-end/>

With our best wishes,

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