Collaborative Research Network (CRN) Handbook

CRN Coordinating Committee of the Law & Society Association

April 2017

Introduction

The President of the Law and Society Association (LSA), Valerie P. Hans, asked the Collaborative Research Networks (CRN) Coordinating Committee to develop a handbook to explain CRNs to members of LSA. We hope this handbook will be an aid to members of LSA who want to organize a CRN, as well as to CRN organizers and members who want to learn more about how other CRNs have grown so that they can try some of the ideas that have worked well in other CRNs. Our goal is to reach two audiences at different stages of developing a CRN.

We view this handbook as a starting-point for sharing information about CRNs. It contains information that will help answer some of the basic questions that potential CRN organizers often have. This handbook provides nuts-and-bolts information about how to start a CRN and how to renew one three years later (if the CRN is still active). This handbook also contains ideas that some CRNs have experimented with over time. We hope that by describing several CRNs' projects and collecting them in one place, other CRNs will be able to make use of them.

The handbook is organized according to a series of questions, in the order that these questions are likely to occur. Thus, we begin with what is a CRN and how does a potential organizer go about creating one. We then move on to questions about the role of a CRN at the LSA Annual Meeting and the steps that different CRN organizers have taken to try to grow their CRN. The concept is that other CRN organizers can pick and choose ideas that seem appropriate for their CRN. Finally, we explain the renewal process and the role of the CRN Coordinating Committee. Our hope is that this committee will continue to serve as a resource for the CRNs and as a liaison among CRN organizers and between CRNs and LSA.

Our goal is to provide a basic blueprint for organizers who want to start a CRN and for organizers who want to help their CRN to grow. Although we have tried to codify the process of forming a CRN and the practice of running one, we realize that there is much we have left out. We hope that CRN organizers and members will continue to share their experiences with us. Toward that end, we will hold two service panels at the LSA Annual Meeting in Mexico City in 2017. The feedback we receive from CRN organizers and members will lead to further revision of this handbook. We will also post this version on the LSA website and hope that we will get additional feedback from readers. We want to create a tool that will be useful for CRN organizing and believe that we can do so if we work from the ground up and incorporate the experiences of CRN organizers and members. We look forward to comments and suggestions.

CRN Coordinating Committee (2016-2017)
Nancy Marder, Chair
Vanessa Barker
Marie Comiskey
Ruben Garcia
Terry Halliday
Chulwoo Lee Greg
Shaffer

1. What Is a CRN and What Is its Purpose?

A collaborative research network (CRN) is a vehicle for scholars with common interests to connect with each other, share their work, and pursue socio-legal research in common as part of the Law and Society Association (LSA). CRNs organize theme sessions for the LSA Annual Meetings and develop cross-disciplinary/cross-national research projects. The subject matter of a CRN can be broad in scope or narrowly focused. The CRN can focus on a particular subject area or a particular socio-legal methodology. Examples of CRNs, as listed on the LSA website, at www.lawandsociety.org, include research on specific subject areas (e.g., Biotechnology, Bioethics and the Law, Citizenship and Immigration, Labor Rights, Regulatory Governance), the study of law in a particular region (e.g., African Law and Society, East Asian Law and Society, South Asia), and the use of particular research methodologies (e.g., Critical Research on Race and the Law, Feminist Legal Theory, Realist and Empirical Legal Methods). More broadly, CRNs bring together scholars at the LSA Annual Meeting by organizing panels. At times, panels present work on a collaborative research project that will be forthcoming in a publication, such as a book or a journal issue. At other times, collective research projects, begun through a CRN, result in publications. At a minimum, CRNs bring together scholars who study a particular field or who use a particular methodology and they can comment on and learn from each other's work.

2. What Are the Steps to Create a CRN?

To create a new CRN, a potential organizer needs to complete the "Collaborative Research Network (CRN) Application Form," found at http://lawandsociety.org/crn.html, and submit it to the Chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee. Before taking that step, however, it is useful to consider the following:

(1) Think about the motivation for creating a new CRN: Does the new CRN fill a gap in the field? Is it a way to shift or develop a new field? How does it relate to current CRNs? Make sure it is not duplicative of a CRN that already exists.
(2) What are the short-term and long-term goals of the new CRN? A way to organize panels at the LSA Annual Meeting? Professional networking? Publications? The development of a new field? A way to renew interest in existing fields? Professional development and support?
(3) Develop a name for the CRN that describes the field but is broad enough to attract new members.
(4) Confirm interest for the new CRN among peers and interested parties through informal discussion and by finding other potential members at LSA Annual Meetings, panels, and workshops.
(5) Create a social media platform to facilitate communication through a blog, website, or email list. This step is not necessary, but it can be very useful.
(6) Promote the new CRN at LSA Annual Meetings and other venues to generate support and interest in it.

There are several technical steps that those who are considering forming a CRN could take. First, though, one might consider whether the benefits of a CRN are already being achieved in other ways. Often, the potential isolating nature of departments leads scholars to seek connections in other institutions. LSA is a "big tent" organization that leads many scholars to seek connections beyond their departmental walls and to find like-minded colleagues. Many of

these benefits can be obtained through informal gatherings without elected leadership structures. But the benefits of a CRN include a meeting time at the LSA Annual Meeting, and also a place on the website to facilitate new members finding you.

The first step in organizing a CRN is going to the LSA website to look at the existing list of CRNs: http://lawandsociety.org/crn.html.   As of February 2017, there were 51 CRNs.

Look at the past programs of the LSA to find scholars who are doing similar work and add them to your email list.   Then look at the list of CRNs to see if there is another CRN that is close enough to your interest. If there is, you might wish to join that CRN rather than starting a new one.

You might also be part of a listserv that already matches your interdisciplinary interests. You might send a message to that listserv forwarding the LSA Annual Meeting Call for Papers to see if anyone is planning to attend or form panels.

The LSA Annual Meeting is a good place to collect email addresses and perhaps thereafter begin a listserv. Names and email addresses of interested participants will be needed to complete the CRN application form.

Once you have decided that a new LSA CRN is needed, go to the LSA website and download the CRN Application Form http://lawandsociety.org/crn.html.   You will see that it requires some basic information about the proposed CRN:

> Question 1 requires you to name the CRN. The name should describe your CRN, but it should be broad enough to attract other members to it.

> Question 2 asks for the contact information for the organizers of the proposed CRN. The organizers need to be members of LSA (and you should indicate this in your response to this question). Remember that going to a previous LSA Annual Meeting does not make one a member of LSA. Annual payment of member dues occurs at the end of each calendar year. In addition, one of the organizers must be a faculty member. If a graduate student is organizing the proposed CRN, he or she must find a faculty member who is willing to be added as a CRN organizer.

> Question 3 requires a brief description of the scholarly focus of the CRN. The first paragraph will be posted on the LSA website. The goal is to attract people from different disciplines to join the CRN, and therefore, it is important to avoid jargon that might be familiar to someone in your discipline, but will be unfamiliar to those outside of that discipline.

> Question 4 asks you to describe the kinds of activities you envision for the CRN. Most applicants seek the opportunity to organize panels at the LSA Annual Meeting. If you

have additional projects that you envision, such as organizing a separate conference or publishing papers in a symposium, you can highlight those activities.

Question 5 requires you to consider how new leaders will be selected for the CRN over time. CRNs typically hold business meetings at the Annual Meeting, so this will give you an opportunity to discuss the leadership structure of your CRN with the members of the CRN.

Question 6 requires that you provide a list of those who have agreed to join the CRN as well as those you will invite to join once your CRN has been approved. At least 5 people on the list of people to be invited should be members of LSA. You should indicate on your list of invited people which ones are members of LSA. In addition, both lists—those who have agreed to be members of the proposed CRN and those who will be invited to become members of the proposed CRN—should include email addresses for every name that appears.

Organizers should send the completed New Application form to the Chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee. There may be additional questions from the Chair, especially if information is missing. For organizers who have questions, you can email the Chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee at any point in the application process—at the beginning when you are considering whether to form a new CRN or while you are completing your application form.

3. What Are the CRN Organizer's Responsibilities?

The CRN organizer's responsibilities can be divided into three primary areas, as follows:

1)   Maintain an up-to-date list of members' email addresses and keep in contact with members whether through a direct email, a listserv, or a Facebook page;
2)   Encourage participation at the LSA Annual Meeting through panels, attendance at a CRN business meeting, and/or hosting a CRN social gathering, such as a group dinner; and
3)   Encourage the production of scholarship that arises from the interaction among CRN members at the LSA Annual Meeting.

   • *Maintain a Roster of Members and Keep in Contact*

While it may initially appear mundane, the vital task of a CRN organizer is to maintain an up-to-date list of members' email addresses and academic (or court or other) affiliations. The member list is the essential means through which you will keep in contact with your membership. It allows you to reach out to your members, to remind them of upcoming deadlines and conference events, and to inform them of new developments in the subject area of the CRN. Most of your list will consist of LSA members, but you may also include non-LSA members who occasionally attend the LSA Annual Meeting. There is no one prescribed means of keeping in touch with your members. Many CRN organizers communicate through email. However, you can also choose to communicate through a listserv, a Facebook page, or some other way.

• *Encourage Participation at the LSA Annual Meeting*

One of the primary responsibilities of a CRN organizer is to remind the CRN members of the annual submission deadline about a month in advance and to encourage the formation of panels (with paper presenters, an organizer, and a discussant) on topics that fall within the subject interest of the CRN. In the early stages of the life of a CRN, the organizer might be the one reaching out to see who is planning to attend that year's upcoming LSA Annual Meeting and trying to organize panels. Later on, however, this is a task that you might encourage seasoned members of the CRN to take on to assist you.   There is generally a maximum of four panels per CRN that are guaranteed not to conflict with each other at the Annual Meeting, but this number is subject to change, particularly if there is a significant increase in the number of new CRNs. A CRN can have as many as six panels guaranteed not to conflict with each other by co-sponsoring two panels with other CRNs (in addition to its four non-concurrent CRN panels). As a CRN organizer, you will also be approached by the LSA Executive Office to see if any of the unassigned papers can be included on your panels. You will then assess whether the theme of the unassigned paper could fit within your prearranged panels and if there is space on your panels to add an additional paper. Generally, organizers should aim for four to five papers per panel, plus a chair and a discussant.

As the LSA Annual Meeting approaches, the CRN organizer frequently lets the CRN members know about the panel presentations it is hosting and about panels with a topic that falls within the subject-interest of the CRN. Reviewing the vast array of panels scheduled at the LSA Annual Meeting can be overwhelming for attendees, particularly attendees who are new to the event. Receiving a short list of the dates and times of panels within the CRN's area of interest can be of immense help to the members in organizing their schedules and in not feeling overwhelmed by the size of the LSA Annual Meeting.

CRNs also have the opportunity to have a one-hour business meeting scheduled during the LSA's Annual Meeting. This can be an opportunity for the CRN members to meet face to face in a relaxed environment, where there is no rush to get through panelists' papers. The CRN organizer can have members introduce themselves and then inform the members of any relevant business. For example, there might be a member who is seeking papers on a particular theme for a special journal issue or another member who would like submissions for an edited book. Some CRNs also schedule a dinner out at a local restaurant to follow the CRN meeting or to follow one of the LSA receptions. Assuming that the CRN is not too large to make this unwieldy, a dinner at a nearby restaurant can be a welcome opportunity for the members to catch up, meet new members, discuss common scholarly interests, and build long-lasting friendships.

• *Encourage Production of Scholarship*

As many members of the LSA are academics who write and publish in their area of scholarly interest, a CRN organizer's role is also to encourage the publication of papers presented at the LSA Annual Meeting. A CRN organizer can also facilitate collaboration among members on

new projects whether in writing journal articles, books or blogs posts or in giving feedback to one another during the drafting process.

  • *Communicate with LSA*

LSA's Executive Office provides organizational support to CRNs, including updating contact information, maintaining a CRN's information on the LSA website, and answering questions regarding the Annual Meeting and submissions.

Melissa King (melissak@umass.edu), Program Manager, maintains a database with the contact information of the CRN organizers. Whenever CRN organizers need to be reached as a group, Melissa undertakes that communication. She also makes sure that a new CRN's information is added to the LSA website and she works with the CRN Coordinating Committee to ensure that CRNs renew their status every three years. As part of the renewal process, a CRN organizer can expect to be asked to demonstrate that the CRN remains active by organizing panels at the LSA and by organizing scholarly projects as a result of CRN involvement. There is a form that the CRN organizer must complete (which can be found at www.lawandsociety.org) that shows that the CRN is still active and contributing to the intellectual life of the LSA.

Melissa King is also the liaison with the Program Committee and is responsible for planning all logistical aspects of the Annual Meeting. This includes the submission process through scheduling of sessions and preparation of the online and printed program, and then the onsite management of the event.

4. What Is the Role of CRNs at LSA Annual Meetings?

  • *Background of CRNs: The Increasing Number of Participants and Panels at Annual Meetings*

One of the main functions of CRNs is to facilitate and systematize the organization of sessions at the LSA Annual Meetings. In the 1990s, Annual Meeting registrations rarely exceeded 1,000 people. Only in meetings organized jointly with the Research Committee on the Sociology of Law (RCSL) of the International Sociological Association (ISA) were there more than 1,000 registered participants (e.g., Amsterdam 1991 and Glasgow 1996). During the years 2000 - 2013, the participation of over 1,000 scholars has become typical at LSA Annual Meetings, and over 2,000 participants has become the norm in joint meetings with other associations. The development of CRNs has paralleled the expansion of the size of the LSA Annual Meeting. The first two CRNs, Labor Rights and Citizenship and Migration, were formed in 1999. The organization of CRNs was officially encouraged at the Annual Meeting in 2000 in Miami Beach, Florida, with the assistance of a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NSF grant was to help expand the international research collaboration for the LSA Annual Meeting held in Budapest, Hungary in 2001. Since then, CRNs have developed into a key structure within the LSA with a devolved function of organizing sessions at the Annual Meetings. In a survey

conducted in 2014, the majority of CRN organizers rejected the idea that their CRNs were "short-term projects/alliances."

• *The Main Function of CRNs at Annual Meetings*

Without the assistance of CRNs, the Program Committee would not be able to handle so many paper proposals. Thanks to CRNs, CRN members can more readily find others with similar interests and can submit complete panel proposals more easily. Even when a person submits an individual paper for the LSA Annual Meeting, the existence of CRNs lessens the danger that these individuals will find themselves on a panel where there is little connection between their paper and the other papers. This is because CRN organizers also review individual submissions to see if any would be a good fit on a particular CRN panel. Thus, CRN organizers assist the Program Committee to make sure that individual papers have a panel "home" that is appropriate. In short, CRNs make it easier to organize panels at the LSA Annual Meeting and help to ensure that the panels that are organized are focused.

• *CRNs and IRCs*

The Annual Meeting in 2007 in Berlin, Germany was a significant turning-point in the development of research networks. Both the number of registered participants and the number of panels doubled so that there were almost 2,500 registered participants and over 570 panels. In the buildup to the LSA Annual Meeting in Berlin, which was organized jointly with the RCSL and several national associations, another network was launched to operate in tandem with the CRNs and RCSL Working Groups (WGs). That research network, named International Research Collaboratives (IRCs), was designed to promote diversity among the participants and to support the participation of scholars from low- and middle-income countries. The formation and operation of IRCs was propelled by a grant awarded by the NSF. This meant that the LSA could award travel grants to some participants from low- and middle-income countries so that they could attend the LSA Annual Meeting. Their participation meant that they could share their perspectives at panels and could make connections with scholars from other countries. The IRCs differed from CRNs in that they were intended to be a temporary network for a particular LSA Annual Meeting. They had the additional objective of encouraging IRC members to produce a publication drawn from the papers presented at the LSA Annual Meeting.

Supported by another NSF award and funding by the LSA itself, IRCs were again organized for the Annual Meeting in 2012 in Hawaii, which was sponsored jointly by the LSA and the RCSL, the Canadian Law and Society Association (CLSA), the Japanese Association for Sociology of Law (JASL), and the Socio-Legal Studies Association (SLSA). IRCs created a total of 65 sessions, including joint sessions with CRNs. Organizing IRCs for an LSA/RCSL joint conference has become a tradition. In 2015, the LSA opened a window for applications to form IRCs for the 2017 Annual Meeting in Mexico City, Mexico. CRNs may also form IRCs, and IRCs may transform into CRNs if they intend to continue on a more permanent basis.

• *CRN Activities in Annual Meetings*

As Table 1 shows, CRN-sponsored sessions have increased greatly over the past few years and particularly in 2015-2016.[1] In 2010, CRN-sponsored sessions made up only a little over 20% of all sessions, and only two sessions were co-sponsored by multiple CRNs. CRN-sponsored sessions exceeded 50% in 2015 and reached 56% in 2016, when 32 sessions were co-sponsored by multiple CRNs and IRCs.

[Table 1] Overview of CRN-Sponsored Sessions in Annual Meetings 2010-2016

YEAR	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total number of sessions	402	413	498	509	442	481	507
Single CRN sessions	86	87	84	147	102	232	253
Joint sessions (incl. IRCs)	2	20	33	31	15	10	32
IRC only sessions	0	27	42	10	4	0	0

The number of CRN-sponsored sessions varies widely across CRNs, as Table 2 shows. As of November 2016, five CRNs had retired and four of them had been replaced by new CRNs, three of which have not yet had a chance to participate in an Annual Meeting (though these numbers have been in flux throughout 2017). CRN 2 (Citizenship and Immigration), CRN 7 (Feminist Legal Theory), CRN 31 (Law, Society and Taxation), and CRN 33 (East Asian Law and Society) have been the most active, with an average of over 10 sessions per Annual Meeting. At the Annual Meeting in 2016 in New Orleans, four CRNs sponsored 20 sessions or more: CRN 2 (Citizenship and Immigration), CRN 23 (International Law and Politics), CRN 27 (Punishment and Society), and CRN 33 (East Asian Law and Society). One possible explanation is that the larger the CRN, the greater the number of sessions it organizes at the Annual Meetings; however, we would need to know the size of each CRN in any given year in order to establish that claim.

[Table 2] CRN-Sponsored Sessions in Annual Meetings 2010-2016
Total number of sessions sponsored by each CRN each year (co-sponsored sessions in brackets)

CRN No.	CRN Name | Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
1(-12/14)	Sociolegal Justice Project				1				1
1(10/15-)	Comp. Const. L & L. Cult.							4	4
2	Citizenship & Immigration	8(1)	13(3)	10(3)	14(2)	12(2)	19(1)	21(1)	97(13)
3	Ethnography, L & Soc'y		1				8	8(4)	17(4)
4	Lay Participation	1	5(5)		4(2)	2(2)	5(1)	9(6)	26(16)

---

[1] We thank Megan Warren for the information she provided in this section.

5	Regulatory Governance	12(1)	12(4)	10(5)	17(1)	5(1)	9	4	69(12)
6(-10/15)	Pub. Opinion & Courts				3	1(1)	5(2)		9(3)
6(08/16-)	Sex, Work, L & Soc'y								0
7	Feminist Legal Theory		6	10(2)	12(4)	13(2)	14(1)	16(1)	71(10)
8	Labor Rights	8(1)	5	5(4)	13(1)	7(2)	7	9(3)	54(11)
9	Law & Health				9(2)	6	6(1)	6(1)	27(4)
10	Civ. Just. & Disp. Behavior	3	5	4		1	6	8(3)	27(3)
11(-10/15)	Cultural Lives of Cap. Pun.								0
11(08/16-)	Displaced Peoples								0
12	Crit. Res. on Race & Law			6(1)	7(2)	2	7	10(2)	32(5)

13	African Law & Society	5(1)	1		2(1)	2(2)	5	5(1)	20(5)
14	Culture, Soc'y, & IP		2	5	3		8	3	21
15	British Colonial Legalities		3(1)	3(2)	2(2)	4(3)	7(2)	3(2)	22(12)
16	Language & Law							2	2
17	Gender, Sexuality & Law		5	3(1)	6(2)	3(1)	4	2	23(4)
18	Public-Private Dichotomy				1(1)	1			2(1)
19	Teaching in L & Soc'y								0
20	C.E. Europe, Russia, etc.	2					2	3	7
21	Law & Social Movements	5	4	3	9(2)	1	11	8(1)	41(3)
22	South Asia	3	3(1)	1(1)	4(1)	3(3)	4(2)	6(3)	24(11)
23	Int'l Law & Politics						5	20(2)	25(2)
24	Jurisprudence of Disasters	1	2(1)		1			1	5(1)
25	Household Finance						5	4	9
26(-03/15)	Legal Semiotics			1					1

26(09/16-)	Law & the Food System								0
27	Punishment & Society		1		3	13(1)	13(2)	29(6)	59(9)
28	Realist & Emp. L. Methods	2	1	1(1)	2(1)		1	4	11(2)
29	Biotech., Bioethics & Law		2	1(1)			7(1)	5	15(2)
30	Islamic Law & Society				2	2	1	2	7
31	Law, Society & Taxation	12	12(1)	12	15	12	15(2)	9	87(3)
32	Gender and Judging	5	2	6(4)	3			3(2)	19(6)
33	East Asian L. & Soc'y	9	11(3)	14(5)	9(1)	8(3)	10(1)	22(4)	83(17)
34	Law & Indigeneity			3(2)	1	2	1	2	9(2)
35	Legal Geography				3(1)		8(2)	4	15(3)
36	Transn. & Global L. Ord.	4	7(5)	7(7)	5(1)	3	10(1)	9	45(14)
37	Technology, L. & Soc'y	9	9	4	3	1	3	8(1)	37(1)
38	Int'l Socio-Legal Fem.		1	7	4	2(1)	2	5	21(1)
39	Colonization & Law			4(3)	1			2	7(3)
40	Disability Legal Studies				6(3)	2	3	5	16(3)
41	Aging, Law & Society				5	5(1)	8	5	23(1)
42(-15)	Post-Abyssal Coll. Thou't				4	1(1)			5(1)
43	Innovations in Judging					3	4	9(6)	16(6)
44	Law & History					6(3)	11(2)	15(5)	32(10)
45	Law & the Media						3	3	6
46	Corporate & Securities					6	6	6	18
47	Econ. & Social Rights					1	8	11(5)	20(5)
48	Legal Pluralism					3(2)	2	3(1)	8(3)

• *The Regulation and Coordination of CRN Sessions at the Annual Meetings*

At the LSA Annual Meeting, each CRN is able to schedule up to four panels that do not conflict with each other. This arrangement means that CRN members and others can attend all four of those sessions without having to pick and choose among them. A CRN can create up to six nonconcurrent panels by having four non-concurrent panels as a CRN and co-sponsoring two additional panels with other CRNs. Of course, a CRN can sponsor more than four panels, but it is only guaranteed four panels that will not conflict.

Many CRNs make an effort to collaborate with other CRNs, e.g., in joint sessions, and to include panelists who are not members of the CRN. Co-sponsoring sessions with other CRNs has been encouraged and is regarded as particularly useful or even necessary for regional CRNs, whose research interests overlap with those of thematic CRNs.

The LSA has tried to strengthen the CRNs by building a one-hour session into the Annual Meeting schedule so that CRNs can hold a business meeting. The business meeting allows the CRN members to discuss future projects, choose new CRN organizers, and share CRN news.

5. What Are Steps to Take to Develop and Grow Your CRN?

The large number and diversity of CRNs has offered proving grounds for creative ways to grow CRNs. When CRNs take root and develop, they provide their members with scholarly, collegial, and social benefits. Although different CRNs have experimented with different activities and projects, below are some of the typical ways that CRNs have grown and flourished in the LSA.

• *Make Use of the LSA Annual Meeting*

CRNS can organize sessions, such as paper sessions and roundtables, at the LSA Annual Meeting. They can also organize book sessions, using a single notable book in an author-meetsreader format, or a cluster of recent books on a topic of interest to the CRN members or written by CRN members. CRNs can also set up a research symposium comprised mainly of CRN members for a future LSA Annual Meeting.

CRNs can also organize pre- or post- LSA Annual Meeting mini-conferences. They can organize a "conference within a conference" for ongoing book or research projects. This can be done without additional cost in the conference hotel. The goal is to workshop papers in small groups consisting of two or three people, who either want more extensive feedback than the panels permit and/or who have exceeded participation limits for the Annual Meeting.

• *Organize Joint Activities or Projects*

CRNs can organize joint activities with other scholarly societies (e.g., Research Committee on Sociology of Law). They can reinforce CRN networks by participating together in other

scholarly societies as if it were another LSA meeting (e.g., International Association of Forensic Linguists (IAFL)). They can create smaller workshops of CRN members at other sites in North America and Europe between LSA Annual Meetings (such as CRN04: Lay Participation in Legal Systems' involvement with the Justice John Paul Stevens Jury Center at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law to hold a conference on lay participation worldwide at the Oñati International Institute for the Sociology of Law in Oñati, Spain followed by a conference on the American jury at Chicago-Kent). CRN members can also participate in international NGO meetings and other events related to CRN concerns in communities outside academia.

• *Organize Publications*

There are a number of ways that a CRN can be the impetus for publications. For example, some CRNs publish edited books of papers or symposia in law reviews that originated from CRN panels and collaborations that began at the LSA Annual Meeting. Other CRNs use panels as a way to press ahead with a project that has its sponsorship outside of the LSA but the LSA Annual Meeting offers a convenient way to present first or second draft versions of the papers to CRN members and to larger audiences (cf. CRN36: Transnational and Global Legal Ordering). A CRN can create a special issue of a journal of papers nurtured within a CRN project or even create and launch a new journal that had its origins, and strong continuing support, within a CRN, as CRN 33: East Asian Law and Society did with its creation of the *Asian Journal of Law and Society* and CRN2: Citizenship and Immigration did with its Special Issue on Crimmigration in Europe, in the *European Journal of Criminology*.

• *Network and Share Information*

CRNs have many ways to reach out to their members. The organizers can create an active email list that members use to notify each other of conferences, publications, and new developments of interest to the membership. Organizers can set up a joint blog and/or webpage to communicate about projects and conferences that also might be of interest to its members. These links can lead to small-scale joint scholarly activity such as co-authoring articles, organizing conferences, or asking each other for guest lectures (cf. CRN 28: Realist and Empirical Legal Methods) with related publications. For examples, see http://www.newlegalrealism.org/events/CRN.html and http://www.newlegalrealism.org/events.html /. In the age of social media, CRNs can also communicate with their members through blogs, such as CRN 27: Punishment and Society has done at http://punishment-society.blogspot.se/p/about.html or on social media accounts on Twitter or Facebook.

• *Organize Research and Training*

CRNs can initiate research proposals together (cf. international network on gender and taxation) or organize a large research project together that may include faculty, graduate and undergraduate students. CRNs can also organize training workshops during or between LSA Annual Meetings. For example, there was a training workshop for feminist research in taxation law at the LSA Annual Meeting in 2012 held in Hawaii. CRNs can also organize methods

workshops that explore methodologies that would be useful for its members to know, such as methodologies suited to doing research on legal education.

      • *Engage in Community Building*

There are a number of ways that CRNs can engage in community building large and small. At the LSA Annual Meeting, CRNs can hold a business meeting, arrange a CRN dinner (announced and organized a few weeks ahead of the meeting), or rendezvous at a bar for drinks or after dinner gatherings, e.g., jazz in New Orleans. Outside of the LSA Annual Meetings, CRNs can arrange informal get-togethers whenever several CRN members are attending a conference convened by another scholarly society. In larger cities, where there might be a number of CRN members, they can hold a social event.

CRNs can also serve as springboards for the formation of regional scholarly societies. One example is CRN 33: East Asian Law and Society, which began inside the LSA as a CRN, then formed an Asia Law and Society Association, which now works hand-in-hand with the CRN (CRN33: East Asian Law and Society).

6. What Is the CRN Renewal Process and Why Is It Useful?

Every three years LSA asks that a CRN organizer engage in a renewal process for that CRN. The renewal process entails a review of the functions and activities of the CRN and asks the CRN organizer to assess how the CRN has served its members in the past three years. Organizers are asked to complete and to submit a brief "CRN Renewal Form," available online at: www.lawandsociety.org/crn, and to provide details on the CRN's past activities, including organizing panels at the LSA, hosting workshops, developing publications, supporting and expanding professional networks, and questions about leadership, membership, and turnover.

The renewal process is a useful exercise both for the CRNs and for LSA. For the CRNs, it provides a moment to reflect on past activities and think about how the CRN is fulfilling its functions. How has the CRN helped members connect with others in the field? How has it provided a space to communicate current research or to develop new research trajectories and collaborations? Has membership grown or declined over the past three years? Are members active inside and outside of the LSA? For the LSA, the renewal process is an effective way to learn how CRN members are engaging with the organization, how they are developing the field of law and society, how they are collaborating across disciplines, and how they communicate their research to other scholars and to the public.

On a nuts-and-bolts level, the CRN Renewal Form asks organizers to provide basic information about their CRN, including the following:

      Question 1 asks for the CRN title, and question 2 asks whether the CRN is still active. If the CRN is no longer active, then its title and description will be removed from the LSA website and its CRN number can be reassigned to a new CRN.

Question 3 asks for the contact information of the current organizers. This question allows the LSA Executive Office to update its database so that it can continue to communicate easily with current CRN organizers. This question also ensures that at least one organizer is a member of LSA (and the organizer(s) who are LSA members should be noted on the form).

Question 4 asks the CRN organizer to review the CRN's title and description and make sure that they still remain relevant to the CRN's scholarly focus. If not, the organizer needs to revise the title and/or description to make sure that they remain up-to-date and an accurate reflection of the CRN members' scholarly interest.

Question 5 asks about leadership changes over the past three years, since the last renewal.

Question 6 is perhaps the most critical question because it asks the CRN organizers to review what the CRN has done over the past three years. It asks the organizers to describe the CRN's activities and accomplishments since the last renewal.

Question 7 calls for a list of current active members of the CRN. This list should include the CRN members' email addresses.

Questions 8 and 9 allow for additional reflection on the part of CRN organizers. Question 8 allows the CRN organizer to consider how being part of LSA helps the CRN members with research in their field and Question 9 asks about future plans for the CRN.

The renewal process allows the CRN organizer(s) to step back and reflect on the CRN's activities—what has it done in the past three years and what does it plan to do in the next three years? It is useful for the CRN organizer to engage in such reflection. The renewal process is also useful for the LSA because it allows the LSA to know when a CRN is no longer active and attracting members. The LSA wants its CRNs to remain vibrant and thriving. The renewal process makes clear which CRNs have ceased to function. Their titles, numbers, and descriptions can then be retired from the LSA website, and their number can be used for a new CRN that has attracted the interest of new members.

8. What is the Role of the CRN Coordinating Committee?

• Ongoing Roles of the CRN Coordinating Committee

The CRN Coordinating Committee has several ongoing roles. One role is to review applications for new CRNs and renewal applications for ongoing CRNs. Another role is to provide an interim report to the Executive Committee and a year-end report to the Board of Trustees, letting them know about new CRN developments throughout the year and any issues that need to be brought to their attention. In this sense, the CRN Coordinating Committee can serve as a liaison from the CRNs to the governing bodies of the LSA. Any issues that percolate up from the CRNs

can be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee or the Board of Trustees through the CRN Coordinating Committee. In addition, the CRN Coordinating Committee can also raise issues on its own that it believes the Executive Committee or the Board of Trustees should be aware of or that require action by one of these governing bodies.

With respect to applications for new CRNs, the CRN Coordinating Committee (either through the chair or the entire committee) decides whether to approve a new CRN. A potential organizer of a CRN might need help in deciding whether to create a new CRN or might need assistance with how to complete the form. The chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee can readily provide such assistance. The chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee can also provide guidance about whether a proposed CRN title is too narrow or too broad; whether the description of the new CRN will be understandable to those in different disciplines; or whether all the requirements for a new CRN have been met (such as having a faculty member as an organizer or having identified the minimum number of invited CRN members who are also members of LSA). The chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee also can provide guidance to the organizer who has an interest in forming a CRN but does not know exactly how to proceed. Any potential organizer of a CRN should view the chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee as a resource during the application process. For example, during 2016-2017, seven new CRNs were approved, and many of the organizers of these CRNs sought advice and feedback from the chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee throughout the application process.

When it comes time for a CRN organizer to complete the Renewal Form (which takes place every three years), the chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee also can provide guidance to the CRN organizer, though by this point, the organizer usually has answers to all of the questions on the form. The main role of the chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee during the renewal process is to make sure that CRN organizers have notice about their upcoming renewal, to follow-up on any renewal forms that are due but have not been submitted, to review the renewal form and make sure all questions have been answered satisfactorily, and to make sure that the CRN organizer knows that the renewal was successful. Throughout the CRN renewal process, the LSA Executive Office liaison, Melissa King (melissak@umass.edu), helps with all communication between the chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee and the CRN organizer.

The CRN Coordinating Committee also can serve as a liaison between the CRNs and the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees of the LSA. At the end of every calendar year, the chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee provides an interim report to the Executive Committee, describing how many new CRNs were approved, how many were renewed, and how many were found to be inactive. The chair's interim report also describes any projects of the CRN Coordinating Committee and flags any issues that the CRNs have that the Executive Committee should know about. If CRN organizers have any issues that they want to bring to the attention of the Executive Committee, they can do so through the chair's interim report.

The chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee also prepares a year-end report for the Board of Trustees. The year-end report can include any CRN Coordinating Committee recommendations to the Board of Trustees that require a Board vote to enact. The chair's year-end report can also

serve as a vehicle for the CRN organizers to get any recommendations they might have before the Board.

    • *Ad Hoc Projects of the CRN Coordinating Committee*

The CRN Coordinating Committee also can undertake ad hoc projects depending on the interests of the CRN Coordinating Committee members and the needs of the CRNs and the LSA. For example, the CRN Coordinating Committee will hold two service panels at the LSA Annual Meeting in 2017 in Mexico City. One panel will include CRN Coordinating Committee members who worked on this handbook and who will help explain it to an audience consisting of CRN organizers and potential organizers. A second panel will consist of CRN organizers who have undertaken innovative projects and activities with their CRNs. The goal is for them to share their ideas with an audience consisting of other CRN organizers and potential organizers.

In 2015-2016, the CRN Coordinating Committee reviewed the recommendations of an ad hoc CRN Review Committee, which had made recommendations about the CRNs based on a survey it had conducted of CRN organizers. The CRN Coordinating Committee supported many of these recommendations, though it also had reservations about a few. The CRN Coordinating Committee expressed its views via the chair's interim and year-end reports to the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees. In 2016-2017, the CRN Coordinating Committee undertook the creation of this CRN Handbook as its special project.

CRN organizers and members are invited to contribute their ideas for special projects for the CRN Coordinating Committee. If there are particular projects that you think would benefit the CRNs please submit your ideas to the Chair of the CRN Coordinating Committee or to Melissa King in the LSA Executive Office.

Conclusion

The CRN Coordinating Committee invites feedback on this handbook. If there are sections you would like to see added or if there are examples that you can offer from your own CRN experience, please let us know. Although the CRN Coordinating Committee was asked to write a handbook to share information and ideas amongst the CRNs, we do not see this handbook as written in stone. Rather, we see it as a working document, and we hope you will contribute to it.