

## From the Dean

Florida Bar Exam results were released this week and the passage rate for our graduating students increased to 84.8%! This is the second-highest rate for all Florida law schools, and an improvement over last year in both absolute and relative terms. By comparison, the average passage rate for all first-time test takers was 67.2%. We're especially pleased to see an improvement for our graduates given that state bar passage rates declined substantially this year. Congratulations to all of our graduates who passed bar exams! While the vast majority of the credit goes to our talented and hard-working recent grads, I am grateful to our many FSU Law community members – the administrative team, faculty members, alumni and other friends of the law school – who work tirelessly to educate and support our students and graduates. We can all be proud of this good news!



- Dean Erin O'Connor

## Faculty Profile: Carla Laroche

[Carla Laroche](#), clinical professor and director of the Gender and Family Justice Clinic, joined the College of Law this summer. She is working at the FSU Law Public Interest Law Center, and will refocus our clinical offerings in the area of family law. The new Gender and Family Justice Clinic will focus on the collateral consequences of incarceration on women and their families. Students will work predominantly on family law cases, including child custody and visitation, divorce and orders of protection, and they will represent clients on other legal matters associated with reentry as needed. Prior to joining FSU, Laroche was a fellow at the Southern Poverty Law Center in Tallahassee, where she advocated for the reformation of mass incarceration of children and adults in Florida, and supervised our law students. In addition, Laroche served as an FSU Black Law Students Association mentor. She previously worked as a pro bono fellow at Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP in Richmond, Va., and as a clerk for the Honorable Donald M. Middlebrooks of the U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida. A first-generation Haitian-American, Laroche earned her bachelor's degree in history with a women and gender studies certificate from Princeton University. She holds a master's degree in public policy with an international and global affairs concentration from Harvard Kennedy School, and a J.D. from Columbia Law School. While at Columbia, Laroche received the Jane Marks Murphy Prize for her exceptional interest and proficiency in clinical advocacy, and she was named a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar for academic achievement. She also served as staff editor for the *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*. Laroche currently co-chairs a multi-year Women in Criminal Justice Task Force created by the American Bar Association Criminal Justice Section.



*“I am honored to be supervising our passionate and dedicated law students as they address the gap in access to justice. By representing real clients on real cases, clinic students will strengthen their legal skills and be better prepared to practice law upon graduation. Students will have a challenging experience confronting the many legal consequences of incarceration their clients face, and I am enthused to be guiding students on this rewarding journey.”*

## Alum Profile: Jose J. Arrojo ('88)

Earlier this month, Jose J. Arrojo became executive director of the Miami Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust. In his new role, Arrojo is charged with leading the commission's education, outreach, legal opinion and guidance, and enforcement mission relating to conflict of interest and ethics matters in local government. He previously spent more than two decades as a prosecutor, the last 14 years of which serving as chief assistant state attorney for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit. There, he focused primarily on the supervision of special prosecutions units and felony trial courts, and oversaw more than 90 prosecutors and sworn investigators. In previous prosecution assignments, he served as lead counsel in major public corruption, racketeering, organized crime, narcotics trafficking and insurance fraud cases. He also served as felony division chief, a homicide prosecutor and division chief of the narcotics unit. Arrojo is a member of the executive committee of The Florida Bar's Criminal Law Section and previously served on the bar's Grievance Committee and Criminal Procedure Rules Committee. He is active in the American Bar Association's Criminal Justice Section, previously co-chairing its Racial Justice and Diversity Committee. Arrojo also has served as an adjunct professor at the University of Miami and Barry University, and is a police trainer at Miami Dade College. He also lectures law students across the nation on the virtues of government service.



*“In my urban jurisdiction, regrettably, many of the persons charged with crimes, as well as many of our victims, were racial and ethnic minorities. I thus made it a professional goal to make sure that lawyers that hail from those minority communities were also well represented in our prosecution ranks. I was fortunate enough to recruit minority law students for positions in my office from law schools across the country. This took me back repeatedly to FSU to interview and recruit law students. I can say with pride, there are many Seminole lawyers working as assistant state attorneys in my former office who I was fortunate enough to interview and recruit.”*

## Student Profile: 3L Ryan Denish

**Desired Practice Location:** West Palm Beach region

**Expected Graduation:** May 2019

**Field of Law Sought:** Criminal law; also interested in family law, tort litigation and business litigation.



Third-year law student Ryan Denish is from Fort Myers. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration-management and a minor in real estate from the University of Florida. This spring, he plans to work as a certified legal intern at the Second Judicial Circuit Public Defender's Office. Since May, Denish has been clerking at Pumphrey Law, where he assists the firm's criminal defense attorneys in advocating for clients in all steps of the criminal defense process—from initial consultation to post-conviction relief. His work includes conducting factual investigations, legal research, drafting motions, and aiding in trial and hearing preparation. During the spring semester of his 2L year, Denish was a certified legal intern for Legal Services of North Florida, where he conducted legal research; drafted pleadings, motions and proposed orders; consulted with clients; and made court appearances on behalf of clients in various areas of law, including domestic violence, dissolution of marriage and contract disputes. The summer after his 1L year, Denish externed for the Twentieth Judicial Circuit Staff Attorney's Office, where he was first exposed to complex legal issues when drafting memorandums and judgments for the judiciary. Denish is a member of the FSU Law Trial Team, the Association of Criminal Justice, the Business Law Society and LitiGators. He is also a member of the Career Services Student Advisory Board. If you are interested in hiring Denish, [visit his LinkedIn profile](#).

*“My strongest attributes are my interpersonal communication skills, my desire to tirelessly seek the best outcome possible for clients, and my guiding light of always handling matters ethically. I thoroughly enjoy trial work and courtroom advocacy, and I am extremely excited to represent FSU College of Law's Trial Team in competitions this upcoming spring.”*



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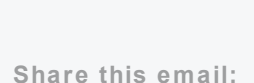
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