

From the Dean



December graduates with FSU Law Associate Dean Nancy Benavides and FSU President John Thrasher (Dec. '72)

Happy New Year from everyone at the FSU College of Law! We are looking forward to the new semester beginning on Monday, January 6, and we are excited about the promise that a new year holds. As we look forward to the new semester, we also want to congratulate our new alumni who graduated in December. Twenty-six students earned their J.D. degrees, 20 students graduated from our Juris Master program and one student earned his LL.M. in American Law. We are proud of their accomplishments and eager to watch them flourish! I also want to thank the many faculty and staff members who are preparing to welcome students back next week. It is a pleasure to work alongside exceptional, dedicated colleagues. May everyone reading this message have a rich and rewarding 2020!

- Dean Erin O'Connor

Florida Legislative Practice Course Offers Unique Opportunities for Students



The FSU Law Florida Legislative Practice: From Bill Drafting to the Governor's Desk course taught by FSU College of Law Assistant Dean for Career Services and Professional Development Debra Henley ('88) is a popular course for students interested in the legislative process. Students are able to serve on "mock legislative committees" with members of the Florida Legislature and meet with high-level professionals working in the governor's office, as legislative staff, or as lobbyists in firms and associations.



Florida Senate President Galvano addresses the spring 2019 Florida Legislative Practice class.

During the fall semester, the class hosted a lobbyist panel discussion and networking reception. The panel of eight included (top photo L-R) Holly Miller Moore of TECO Energy, Jeff Branch of the Florida League of Cities, Pamela Burch Fort ('77) of The Commerce Group, Aimee Diaz Lyon ('99) of Metz, Husband & Daughton, Abigail L. Vail ('06) of the Florida Department of Financial Services, Chris Schoonover ('09) of Capital City Consulting, Derek Silver (Dec. '19) of the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation, and Darrick D. McGhee, Sr., of Johnson and Blanton.

The class concluded with four legislative committee hearings, where students presented the bills they drafted and fellow classmates provided testimony for or against the bills. Legislators participating this fall were Representative Javier Fernandez (House District 114), Representative Elizabeth Anne Fetterhoff (House District 26), Representative Mike Gottlieb (House District 98), Representative J.W. Grant, chair of the Criminal Justice Subcommittee (House District 64), Minority Leader Evan Jenne (House District 99) and Representative Amber Mariano (House District 36).

Students in the spring 2019 course had the opportunity to visit the Senate Chamber to hear from Senate President Bill Galvano (Senate District 21) about his leadership style and role in ensuring the process runs smoothly while working successfully with the House and governor's office. This course is one example of the advantages of FSU Law's capital city location, which allows us to offer in-depth classes on the legislative process, executive, power, and political, administrative and election law, taught by and featuring top professionals in government and politics.

Alum Profile: Erik L. Sayler ('06)

Erik L. Sayler has served as deputy general counsel at the Florida Division of Emergency Management since May 2019. Sayler is responsible for providing legal support to the director and other executive staff, ensuring the Division's compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, drafting administrative rules and legislation, and overseeing the legal representation of the Division in all judicial, quasi-judicial and administrative proceedings. He previously was a senior attorney at the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Office of General Counsel, an associate public counsel at the Florida Office of Public Counsel, a senior attorney at the Florida Public Service Commission, and a judicial law clerk at the Florida First District Court of Appeal. In May 2019, he earned his M.B.A. from FSU with coursework concentrations in human resources, marketing and data analytics.



"I made many good friends while attending the FSU College of Law and the College of Business. The first-class education I received has prepared me for a fulfilling career. It is my distinct privilege to work with all the professionals at the Division of Emergency Management and in the Executive Office of the Governor. It is an honor to serve the people of this great state."

Student Profile: 3L Karina Flores

Desired Practice Location: Central Florida, preferably Orlando or Tampa

Expected Graduation: May 2020

Field of Law Sought: Criminal defense for indigent or underrepresented individuals, juvenile resentencings, criminal justice reform, prisoner's rights

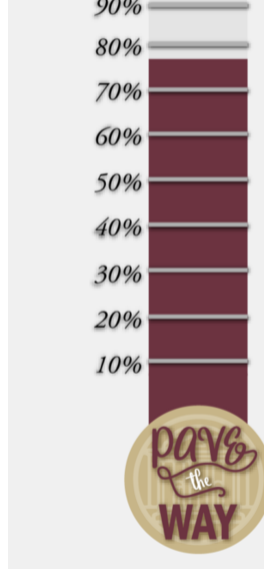


Originally from Orlando, Karina Flores earned a bachelor's degree in legal studies and a minor in business administration from the University of Central Florida. She will graduate from FSU Law in May 2020. Since the fall of her 2L year, Flores has been involved in the Public Interest Law Center Children in Prison Project. Last fall and again this spring, she is doing pro bono as a certified legal intern.

Flores helped prepare a re-entry plan for an incarcerated client and drafted a motion for rehearing, subsequent to a resentencing she participated in the previous semester. At the rehearing in December 2019, Flores presented arguments on the illegality of re-imposing a life sentence for her client. During the spring 2019 semester, Flores worked with post-conviction litigation focusing on juvenile resentencings under *Miller* and *Graham*, and legislative advocacy specifically working to eliminate juvenile solitary confinement. She also helped prepare an evidentiary juvenile resentencing for a juvenile offender initially sentenced to life without parole. During the 2019 Legislative Session, Flores spoke in front of the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice to educate about the harmful effects of juvenile solitary confinement. During the fall of her 2L year, Flores drafted an appeal and advocated on behalf of a Children's Advocacy Clinic long-time client, who is now an adult, in his appeal for Social Security benefits.

Flores' other experience includes working as a certified legal intern for the Office of the Public Defender, Ninth Judicial Circuit in Orlando, where she managed a public defender, drafted various pre-trial motions in Orlando, negotiated and presented pleas, handled arraignments and pre-trial conferences under attorney supervision, interviewed clients and prepared for trial. The summer after her 1L year, Flores interned for the Federal Public Defender's Office, Middle District of Florida in Orlando. She drafted sentencing memoranda, interviewed clients, conducted research and observed federal proceedings. Flores is a member of the FSU Association for Criminal Justice, where she previously served as 1L representative and vice president. If you are interested in hiring Flores after graduation, [visit her LinkedIn profile](#).

"FSU Law, specifically the Public Interest Law Center, has given me a space to grow and gain skills that allowed me to be an advocate for change and second chances. I am thrilled to continue learning and working in the criminal justice field."



We need your support for student scholarships!

Visit law.fsu.edu/pavetheway to learn how you can change lives and pave the way for future FSU Law students while increasing the value of an FSU Law degree. As of January 2, 2020, we have raised \$1,555,743.36 toward our \$2 million campaign goal.

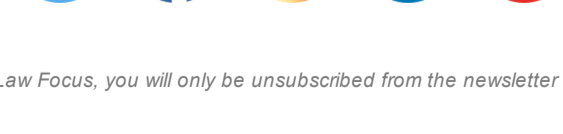
GET INVOLVED

SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE

SHARE MY TORCH MOMENT

MAKE A GIFT

[ABOUT US](#) | [ACADEMICS](#) | [ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID](#) | [OUR FACULTY](#) | [ALUMNI](#) | [CAREERS](#) | [STUDENTS](#)



If you unsubscribe from the FSU Law Focus, you will only be unsubscribed from the newsletter and not other emails from FSU Law.

Share this email:



Manage your preferences | Opt out using TrueRemove™
Got this as a forward? Sign up to receive our future emails.
View this email [online](#).

425 West Jefferson Street
Tallahassee, FL 32306 US

This email was sent to .
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.



[Subscribe](#) to our email list.