

From the Dean



Professor David Landau teaching a socially-distanced 1L class on the first day of the semester

Our fall 2020 semester began on August 24 and while classes look different this fall semester, we were no less excited to welcome our newest students to the FSU Law family. Our 1L class of 166 students is extremely impressive! Collectively, they have a median undergraduate GPA of 3.73 and a median LSAT of 161—a point higher than last year’s class. For the third year in a row, our incoming 1L class has broken the record for percentage of female students in the class (58%). Thirty-three percent of our 1Ls identify as diverse and students range in age from 20-43. They represent 56 undergraduate schools and 42 undergraduate majors, and hail from 17 states. They have a combined 648 years of work experience. We also welcomed 18 new LL.M. students and 187 new J.M. students to our community. We value our students’ wide range of experiences and backgrounds because differences contribute to a richer curricular experience for everyone. The strength of our new students was very evident when I taught some of them during a one-week virtual Contracts course as part of orientation. Thank you to Assistant Dean for Admissions Jennifer Kessinger and her team, and to the faculty members on our Admissions and Recruitment Committee for their work in recruiting our outstanding and talented new students.

-Dean Erin O’Connor

Bar Exam Fund Supports Recent Graduates

Due to job losses and delays associated with the Florida Bar Exam, many recent FSU Law graduates are facing unexpected financial hardships. To support graduates who are taking the rescheduled exam in October, the College of Law has established a fund that will benefit them directly. Everyone at the law school would appreciate donations in any amount, and Dean Erin O’Connor is pledging to match donations up to \$1,000.



“You are part of our FSU Law family, and every dollar donated will help another FSU Law family member in extraordinary and unprecedented need,” said Dean O’Connor, speaking to FSU Law alumni and friends. “I am so thankful that we can count on you for financial support!”

Individuals can [make donations online](#), designating gifts to the Student Emergency Fund. Under the “In Memory/In Honor” section of the online form, please note “Bar exam grads” in the Name field to ensure gifts get to the alumni who need support. Many thanks to everyone who is able to help recent grads with a donation!

Students Host FSU Law Community Vigil in Honor of Victims of Racial Violence



Black Law Students Association President Daynica Harley speaking at the community vigil on Saturday

Last Saturday, August 29, FSU Law student leaders hosted a community vigil on campus for students to come together for a time of solemn remembrance of the tragic racial injustices our nation has witnessed. Leaders joined together with renewed purpose to pursue equal justice under the law. For safety and social distancing, the event attendance was limited and the vigil was streamed live on the FSU Student Bar Association’s Facebook page.

Opening remarks were made by Student Bar Association President and 3L Chad Revis and Dean Erin O’Connor. Special speakers included 3L Daynica Harley, president of the Black Law Students Association (BLSA); 3L Oluremi “Remi” Abiodun, member of BLSA; 3L Corey Posey, secretary of the FSU Trial Team; 2L Kelly Kaladeen, vice president of the Multicultural Law Students Association; and 3L Walker Smith, IV, president of Lawyers for Communal Knowledge.

Before reading the names of some of the recent victims of racial violence and offering a moment of silence, Harley said it was imperative to understand that these names do not reflect the totality of racial violence in this county.

“Again and again I’ve woken up to the nightmare of seeing another Black person’s life reduced to a hashtag on social media,” Harley said. “This has to stop. The senseless killings of Black men, women and children that have been seen on the national and global scale are not isolated incidents, but rather symptoms of a greater systemic disease. In defiance of the deafening silence that surrounds racial violence, I choose to speak in honor of the names of the victims.”

Students offered words of support and spoke from their hearts about specific changes that need to be addressed to advance equity. Abiodun asked that the vigil be used as a call to action. “As law students, we need to recognize our privilege to even be in this space, use this space to recognize that institutional racism has been and continues to be built into our institutions, into our lives through policy and manifests in our daily lives.”

Alum Profile: Lolita Y. Fernandez (’17)

Lolita Y. Fernandez is an assistant public defender at the Second Judicial Circuit Office of the Public Defender in Tallahassee. Fernandez began working for the office prior to graduating from FSU Law in 2017. She is very engaged in the legal profession and was recently elected to serve on The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division Board of Governors. She also serves on the boards of the Tallahassee Bar Association (TBA), Tallahassee Women Lawyers and Legal Aid Foundation of Tallahassee (LAF)—she is currently president-elect of LAF. In March, she was presented with TBA’s 2020 Thomas M. Ervin Jr. Distinguished Young Lawyer Award. Fernandez was also a member of Leadership Tallahassee, Class 37 for 2019-20. She remains very involved with the law school, coaching the Trial Team, mentoring students and recently serving on an alumni panel during new student orientation. Fernandez also earned a master’s degree in public health/epidemiology from the University of Florida and worked in public health for five years before law school.



“My first few years of practice have been a rollercoaster, full of highs and lows I could never have imagined. I’ve had the privilege of helping clients gain their freedom and watched in joy as they reclaimed their lives. Too many times, I have held a client’s hand as they face the unimaginable after a guilty verdict. I have consoled their families and felt their fears and broken hearts as if they were my own. Through it all, I have never doubted my ability to persevere and to continue fighting for my clients and their rights. Thanks to FSU College of Law, I know that no matter what challenge lies ahead, I will be okay. I have a great community of alumni, mentors and friends who won’t let me fail.”

Student Profile: 3L Jacob Imig

Desired Practice Location: Tallahassee preferred, but open to the right opportunity in Washington, D.C.

Expected Graduation: May 2021

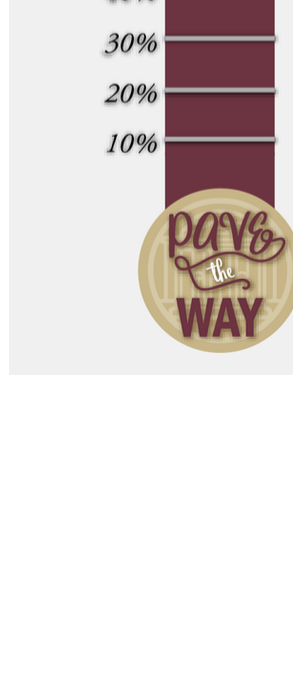
Field of Law Sought: Interested in legislative, governmental and administrative law; also open to lobbying



Jacob Imig was raised in Boca Raton, Florida, but after graduating in 2011 with a bachelor’s degree in political science from Florida State University, he moved around the country working on political campaigns before returning to Tallahassee, which he now considers home, to attend law school. Imig will become a double ‘Nole when he graduates from FSU Law in May 2021. This summer and continuing into the fall semester, Imig is interning at the Florida House Democratic Office. He has reviewed committee meetings and floor debates to aid in the drafting, reviewing and editing of two special publications for the House Democratic Office. Imig has also assisted in research relating to the development of a legislative reform package. During the spring of his 2L year, Imig served as a judicial extern for the Honorable Robert S. Cohen (’82) and the Southern District at the Florida Division of Administrative Hearings. As an extern, he researched a wide variety of state and federal administrative law topics and cases to aid the judges of the Southern District in preparing for hearings. After attending hearings, he also conducted research to make recommendations to judges and aid in drafting orders. During the summer following his 1L year, Imig interned for the Florida Democratic Party, where he worked in the communications department of Senate Victory, the state Democratic Party’s campaign arm for the Florida Senate. While there, Imig researched potential candidates and conducted opposition research for the upcoming 2020 election. He drafted and edited monthly documents detailing campaign finance reports of Florida Senate members and their Political Action Committees and drafted a memo for a state senator detailing the legal ramifications of a bill the legislator wanted to propose in the 2020 legislative session.

Imig is a member of the FSU Law chapter of the American Constitution Society, where he served as vice president during his 2L year. He is also a student ambassador for the FSU Law Admissions Office. If you are interested in connecting with Imig or hiring him after graduation, [visit his LinkedIn profile](#).

“I have a strong passion for the legislative process and hope to be working in or around that process for years to come.”



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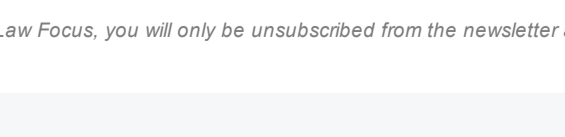
GET INVOLVED

SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE

SHARE MY TORCH MOMENT

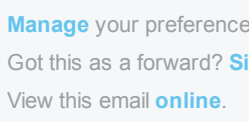
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