



FSU LAW

Focus

February 4,
2022

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From the Dean



SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS



Next week, students will begin contacting alumni during our three-week Spring 2022 Fundathon. The students will be calling and emailing graduates to solicit support for our Annual Fund, which is utilized for important needs at the law school, including student scholarships and student enrichment activities. Gifts can be designated to align with the causes, groups, and programs at the law school that are most important to a donor. A gift in any amount will make an impact on the law school and our students, so please consider giving to the Annual Fund if you have not already given. For those who have already donated this year, we thank you for your support of our students and programs!

Erin O'Connor

Dean Erin O'Connor

Alumni Meet with Students



Sarah Vespa ('11), general counsel for GMF Steel, talks to students.

We are a month into the spring 2022 semester, and many alumni have already been able to speak to students in person and virtually. FSU Law welcomed several alumni during the past few weeks and looks forward to hosting more graduates as the semester continues. In January, Sarah Vespa ('11), general counsel for GMF Steel, spoke at a Career Services session about in-house counsel work; Kubicki Draper partner Harold Saul ('88) was hosted by the Cuban American Bar Association and American Civil Liberties Union student chapters to virtually discuss interviewing and job hunting; and the Environmental Law Society hosted a "Careers in Environmental Law" session featuring recent graduates Matthew Jones ('21) and Kelly Ann Kennedy ('21), who work at the Florida Public Service Commission and Florida Forest Service, respectively. On January 31, attorneys from Stearns Weaver Miller, many of whom were alumni, visited the law school for a networking reception with students. The wisdom and advice that alumni share with students are invaluable. The law school is deeply indebted to the countless alumni who have met with students in the past, and we look forward to hosting many more alumni in the future.

Alum Profile: Evan Gibbs ('11)

Evan Gibbs recently was promoted to partner at Troutman Pepper, where he practices in the Atlanta office. Gibbs helps businesses across the U.S. with corporate espionage litigation and investigations involving the theft of trade secrets and other confidential information by former employees and others. His work in this space has made him intimately familiar with digital forensics and he routinely leverages his experience in this area to achieve successful results for his clients. Gibbs also handles business-to-business disputes involving departing executives, including shareholder disagreements, defamation claims, other business torts, and complex employment and labor issues. Gibbs is also pro bono co-counsel to Ryan Alexander Duke in *State v. Duke*, pending in Gibbs' hometown of Ocilla, Georgia.



"I greatly enjoyed my time at the College of Law, and my experiences there set me up for success as a practicing attorney. I can't say enough good things about our law school!"

Student Profile: 3L Maxwell "Max" Dietz

Desired Practice Location: Miami, but open to other locations

Expected Graduation: May 2022

Field of Law Sought: Disability law, ADA defense, immigration law, or corporate law

Maxwell Dietz is originally from Miami, Florida. He attended Florida State University for undergrad, where he graduated *summa cum laude* with bachelor of science degrees in English, with a concentration on editing, writing, and media, and psychology, with a focus on social psychology research. This semester, Dietz is serving as a student advocate with the new International Human Rights Advocacy Clinic at FSU's Public Interest Law Center. In this role, he will be monitoring and writing reports on a trial occurring in late February/early March. He will also develop strategies to dispute legal impunities in a country in Asia for violations of human rights by researching newly declassified information. During the summer before his 3L year, Dietz worked as a law clerk with the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, where he drafted a motion for summary judgment in the Northern District of Florida, and researched issues related to election law, standing, and the Voting Rights Act, and researched laws and policies related to county redistricting. In the fall semester of his 2L year, Dietz was a student advocate with the Immigration and Farmworker Project at FSU's Public Interest Law Center. There, he drafted pleadings and proposed orders for a guardianship hearing, researched issues related to Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and asylum applications, organized and ran client intake interviews, and created a video as part of a "Know Your Rights" campaign. Since beginning law school, Dietz has worked with Disability Independence Group (DIG) as a legal intern and job mentor. There, he drafted a **successful brief** for an appeal in front of the 11th Circuit (***Karantalis v. City of Miami Springs***). He also assisted with trial and trial preparations in federal and state courts, wrote direct and cross examinations, prepared clients to testify, and helped create a new job-mentoring program for persons with Autism and intellectual disabilities.



Dietz would like potential employers to know that he is a person with a disability—he is autistic. Dietz believes persons with disabilities are underrepresented in the legal field and that his experiences give him a unique perspective. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Dietz after graduation, visit his [LinkedIn profile](#) or email him at mhd15@my.fsu.edu.

"Through my externships and clinics, I have learned how to effectively communicate with clients and coworkers, succeed on collaborative and individual projects, and perform complex research projects. I am excited to put these skills to work after graduating!"

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