



# FSU LAW

## Focus

October 13,  
2023

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### From the Dean

This academic year, we are offering two unique courses taught by Dr. Mason Marks, our Florida Bar Health Law Section Professor, which will provide students with a deep understanding of the intricacies of drug law and its substantial impact on society. Professor Marks' research focuses on drug policy, data protection, and FDA regulation. He is particularly interested in controlled substance regulation and the application of artificial intelligence to medical decision making, and his scholarship has been published in many top legal and medical journals. He also is the author of a forthcoming book on psychedelic law and politics, which will be published by Yale University Press in 2024.



Professor Marks is teaching Psychedelic Law this semester. The course analyzes state, federal, and international laws governing psychedelic substances such as psilocybin, mescaline, ibogaine, and dimethyltryptamine. Students are learning about psychedelic laws of the Global North and South and the roles of international treaties, the First Amendment, state and federal agencies, and local, state, and national drug policy reforms. In the spring, Professor Marks will teach Drug Law, which will introduce students to the historical and contemporary landscape of drug regulation in the United States and beyond. Students will examine key legislation and regulatory bodies, beginning with the origins of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Drug Enforcement Administration. Other topics covered will include the regulation of clinical trials, the development and marketing of

pharmaceuticals, the federal Controlled Substances Act, and the ongoing U.S. drug overdose crisis.

*Erin O'Connor*  
Dean Erin O'Connor

## Federal Judge Stephanie Thacker Visits FSU Law



*The Honorable Stephanie Thacker talks to students over lunch.*

On Wednesday, October 4, FSU Law had the honor of hosting Judge Stephanie Thacker, of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, as part of our Jurist in Residence Program. During her visit, Judge Thacker attended Judge Lewis's Evidence class before speaking to student co-curricular members during a special lunchtime event. Judge Thacker spoke about the collegial environment at the Fourth Circuit and emphasized the importance of always being respectful toward colleagues. She told students that the Fourth Circuit court is not only extremely collegial but is also one of the most efficient appellate courts in the country, with an average of about four months between the end of arguments and publishing opinions. Additionally, Judge Thacker offered students advice regarding applying for clerkships and noted that she is the only one to review applicants' resumes, handpicking her clerks one year in advance. Judge Thacker also met with faculty members of the Judicial Clerkship Committee and ended the day over tea with students from the Women's Law Symposium. Many thanks to our Career Services team for organizing Judge Thacker's visit. It was our pleasure to welcome the judge to the law school and to be able to provide students with opportunities to interact with a federal judge.

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## Alum Profile: Kevin M. Sullivan ('17)

**Kevin M. Sullivan** is a senior associate at Bush Graziano Rice & Platter, P.A. in Tampa, where he handles all matters related to labor and employment law for both public and private sector clients, including businesses, governmental entities, and religious and educational institutions. He has dedicated his practice to management-side labor and employment law since entering private practice in 2018, representing clients in federal and state court litigation, labor arbitrations, and proceedings before administrative agencies. He previously practiced at GrayRobinson, P.A., and served as a law clerk to the Honorable Charles R. Wilson, of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. He is a member of the Hillsborough County Bar Association (HCBA), the 2023 class of the HCBA Bar Leadership Institute, the 2022 class of Tampa Connection, and the board of directors for MacDonald Training Center, Inc. He remains engaged with FSU Law by co-teaching Workplace Privacy within the Stoops Center of Law and Business.



*“I am proud of the experiences I have had since attending the FSU College of Law, including working with some of the best labor and employment attorneys in Florida. I am incredibly grateful for my time at FSU Law for providing me with the tools and knowledge needed to succeed in my practice area. I am thrilled to give back to FSU Law by working with the Stoops Center of Law and Business.”*

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**Student Profile: 3L Benjamin Schafer**

**Desired Practice Location:** Central Florida, particularly Orlando, but also interested in entertainment law opportunities in Los Angeles or Atlanta

**Expected Graduation:** May 2024

**Field of Law Sought:** Business law; would like to work with an in-house legal department, preferably for a company in the entertainment or publishing industries



Benjamin Schafer, from Titusville, Florida, earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Central Florida and completed a Graduate Certificate in Emergency Management at FSU prior to attending law school. He will graduate from FSU Law in May and will also earn the Business Law Certificate. In August 2023, Schafer began working as a law clerk for Blankenship Jordan, P.A., a solo practitioner who primarily works for local governments in the Florida panhandle. In this role, Schafer has performed legal research and provided guidance on topics including intellectual property, rules of procedure, and constitutional law, and has drafted municipal ordinances and reviewed contentious contract terms presented by a third-party vendor. Schafer is also participating in the Business Law Clinic at FSU College of Law this semester, where he is gaining first-hand experience working with entrepreneurs and other local small business clients seeking legal guidance. From October 2022 until September 2023, Schafer was a law clerk in the Office of General Counsel at the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM). During his time at FDEM, he analyzed and revised proposed contracts, internal policies, regulations, and litigation documents. He also drafted legal documents, including executive orders to be signed by the governor. During the summer after his 1L year, Schafer was a summer intern with the Brevard County Attorney's Office, where he assisted associate county attorneys by drafting memoranda on a wide array of topics and provided critical information to the Board of County Commissioners. He also reviewed and revised contract language to ensure compliance with Florida statutes and the county charter. Since August 2022, Schafer has worked as a teaching assistant for the College of Law's Juris Master Program.

At FSU Law, Schafer is a staff editor for the FSU Law Review, an article and notes editor for the FSU Business Review, president of the Christian Legal Society, vice president of the Entertainment, Arts, and Sports Law Society, and an executive board member of the Technology Entrepreneurship Club. He was also treasurer of The Federalist Society during his 2L year. In addition to his legal experience, Schafer is an independently published author of three novels, and he spent about ten years working at Walt Disney World prior to beginning law school. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Schafer after graduation, visit his [LinkedIn profile](#) or email him at [bws18n@fsu.edu](mailto:bws18n@fsu.edu).

*“Technology is changing rapidly, presenting new opportunities and new challenges for creators and business owners of all kinds. I have been able to put my education into practice helping innovative small business owners through the Business Law Clinic. I look forward to using the tools I have gained at FSU Law to provide sound legal analysis for clients in this ever-shifting landscape.”*

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