



FSU LAW

Focus

January 5,
2024

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From the Dean

We are delighted to report that Nancy Benavides, our associate dean for academic programs and student advancement, has been selected as the 2024 recipient of the Peter N. Kutulakis Student Services Award. The award was presented to Nancy this week in Washington, D.C. Given by the AALS Section on Student Services, this award recognizes outstanding contributions of institutions, administrators, and law teachers in the provision of service to students. Nancy exemplifies the spirit of this award. For more than two decades, she has worked tirelessly to ensure that our students are supported in every way possible. As Professor Larry Krieger stated in his nomination letter of Nancy, “her inspiration, creativity, and seemingly boundless energy have resulted in a multitude of programs and activities that have brought incalculable benefit to our students.” Nancy is always available to meet with students who need personal guidance and encouragement; expertly leads a team of talented individuals to implement innovative student programming, including events in our robust wellness and professionalism programs; has served as a mentor to countless students and connected many more students with professional mentors to help them transition to the legal profession; and collaborates with other members of the law school administration on a daily basis to ensure exemplary support for all students in all areas.



With Nancy’s selection for this award, FSU Law is now the only law school in the nation with two recipients—Professor Krieger won the award in 2016. This

achievement is further evidence that FSU Law's student environment is remarkable. For two of our team members to be recognized in the area of student services at the national level is very rewarding, as we pride ourselves on cultivating a supportive, collaborative, and positive student culture. Please join me in congratulating Nancy on this much-deserved recognition and in thanking Larry for his efforts in writing an exquisite nomination letter for Nancy.

Erin O'Connor

Dean Erin O'Connor

Celebrating Our December 2023 Graduates



New graduates gathered at FSU Law in December

On Friday, December 15, 17 J.D. students, 8 LL.M. students, and 101 J.M. students graduated from FSU Law! We were delighted to celebrate them throughout the day. In the morning, J.D. graduates participated in the university's special ceremony for doctoral degree recipients and were hooded by Associate Dean Nancy Benavides. Then, Friday evening, we recognized all of our graduates with a special reception and toast at the law school. Many of our newest alumni and their guests gathered at the Advocacy Center to celebrate with faculty and staff members before J.M. and LL.M. graduates walked across the street to the university commencement ceremony. You can [view photos from the law school event on our website](#). Congratulations to our new alumni—we look forward to seeing all of your accomplishments in the future!

Alum Profile: Carlos Lindo ('12)

Carlos Lindo is senior vice president of legal and compliance at Lucet, a company that provides innovative and accessible behavioral health solutions. In this role, Lindo leads the company's legal department and serves as corporate secretary and executive sponsor of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. He oversees all legal and regulatory matters related to Lucet's products, services, contracts, and partnerships, and he advises the executive team on strategic decisions, corporate governance, and business development. Prior to joining Lucet in 2017, Lindo served as associate corporate counsel for Xerox, Inc., where he specialized in the administration of Medicaid contracts and subrogation under the healthcare arm of Xerox. He also was an associate at Pumphrey & Prince, where he handled criminal cases, including first-, second-, and third-degree felonies and misdemeanor cases. Lindo remains engaged with the law school and currently serves on the FSU College of Law Alumni Association Board of Directors.



“FSU College of Law not only honed my legal and business acumen, but it also instilled in me the values of integrity, innovation, and collaboration. My outstanding classmates, exceptional faculty, and immersive learning opportunities equipped me with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to navigate my current role. I credit the university with shaping me into a leader who strives for excellence, fosters a culture of inclusivity, and drives impactful outcomes for my organization.”

Student Profile: 3L Alison Dukstein

Desired Practice Location: Anywhere in Florida, but especially interested in Central Florida or

Jacksonville

Expected Graduation: May 2024

Field of Law Sought: Criminal law

Alison “Ali” Dukstein is from Oviedo, Florida, and she earned her bachelor’s degree in political science with a minor in German from Rollins College. During the summer before her 3L year of law school, Dukstein was a certified legal intern at the Second Circuit Public Defender’s Office, where she managed a caseload of approximately 60 cases. She represented and advocated for clients through negotiation with the prosecution, filing and arguing motions, and in trial. Also in this role, Dukstein worked with Tallahassee Memorial Hospital to ensure one of her clients—who struggled with Schizophrenia and hearing loss—would be provided a service dog if her case went to trial. The hospital approved her request, providing their services to a client of the Public Defender’s Office for the first time. Dukstein also sat second chair on a battery trial, in which she presented the opening statement, cross examined the arresting officer, and successfully moved for a Richardson Hearing and mistrial. During the summer before her 2L year, Dukstein was a legal intern at Joshi Law Firm, PA in Orlando, primarily working under the supervision of Samantha Angelastro (’19). There, she conducted legal research, reviewed discovery for various criminal cases, organized trial binders, and visited clients in jail to discuss their cases. She also assisted with a week-long first-degree murder trial, which included helping with jury selection.



At FSU Law, Dukstein is vice president of the Trial Team and has been a member of the team since the spring of her 1L year. She served as the team’s competition chair last year, was a finalist in the 2022 Wayne Hogan Intramural Competition, and received an honorable mention in the 2022 All-Star Bracket Challenge. Dukstein is also fundraising coordinator for the Association for Criminal Justice and a member of the Women’s Law Symposium and Student Bar Association. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Dukstein after graduation, visit her [LinkedIn profile](#) or email her at agd21e@fsu.edu.

“FSU Law was the best decision I ever made. I am extremely grateful for all my professors. I have a passion for criminal defense, and I aim to advocate for drug legalization, promote harm reduction, and work towards abolishing the death penalty.”



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