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From the Dean

We are thrilled to share that FSU Law has been ranked the nation's second best law school for best quality of life and seventh best law school for best professors. The rankings, which are published in The Princeton Review's Best Law Schools for 2023 list, are based on surveys of 17,000 law students. The quality of life ranking is based on student answers to survey questions about sense of community, whether differing opinions are tolerated in the classroom, school location, quality of social life, and research resources. The best faculty ranking is based on student answers to survey questions concerning the quality of professors as teachers and professor accessibility outside of the classroom. Students often tell us that our collegial atmosphere and the quality of our professors are their favorite things about FSU Law, so it is gratifying to be ranked among the nation's top law schools in those areas. Providing our students with a positive, academically rigorous experience is key to their success in law school and beyond.



FSU LAW RANKS

#2 FOR BEST STUDENT QUALITY OF LIFE

#7 FOR BEST PROFESSORS

Erin O'Connor
Dean Erin O'Connor

FSU BLSA Advances to National Competition



BLSA mock trial team members (front-back, L-R) Kaya Small, Jayla Edmonds, Candice Hopkins, Sarai Glaze, Briana Saffold, Khamisi Thorpe, Larry Lynn, and Kennedy Kimble

Congratulations to our FSU Black Law Students Association members on their outstanding mock trial advocacy this past weekend! Two FSU Law teams competed in the SRBLSA Constance Baker Motley Mock Trial Competition in Orlando. A team comprised of students Jayla Edmonds, Candice Hopkins, Kennedy Kimble, and Larry Lynn placed second, and a team comprised of Sarai Glaze, Briana Saffold, Kaya Small, and Khamisi Thorpe placed third in the regional competition. Other schools competing included Emory University and the University of Alabama. In addition to the team accolades, Edmonds was named best advocate for the entire competition! Both teams earned the right to advance to the national Constance Baker Motley Mock Trial Competition, which will take place in March in Washington, D.C. Many thanks to the teams' coach, alumna C. Erica White ('01), who has also coached many other FSU Law BLSA teams to success in the past.

Alum Profile: Benjamin J. Gibson ('08)

Benjamin J. Gibson was recently named managing partner of Shutts & Bowen's Tallahassee office. He joined the firm in 2018 and is a senior member of the Governmental Law Practice Group. Gibson represents clients facing high-stakes legal issues at the intersection of business, politics, and government. His statewide practice focuses on representing corporate, political, and government clients in appellate, litigation, and administrative matters, as well as government affairs. Gibson's experience includes serving as general counsel to Governor-elect Ron DeSantis' transition team, as chief counsel to the Republican Party of Florida, and as legal counsel to numerous political committees and presidential and statewide campaigns in Florida, including DeSantis' re-election campaign for governor. Among his many professional and civic activities, Gibson serves as vice chairman of the State Board of Education, serves on and previously chaired Florida's First District Court of Appeal Judicial Nominating Commission, and served on The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division Board of Governors for eight years.



“Positioned in the capital of Florida—one of the country’s fastest growing and most dynamic states—Shutts’ Tallahassee office utilizes our appellate, litigation, state government, and political expertise to help our clients with their legal needs. Further, we are able to leverage the resources of one of Florida’s largest statewide law firms with 30+ practice areas and nearly 300 attorneys. I am excited and honored to lead Shutts’ Tallahassee office and for the continued opportunity to serve our great clients.”

Student Profile: 3L Alexis Gardner

Desired Practice Location: Central Florida area around Orlando
Expected Graduation: May 2023
Field of Law Sought: Criminal law

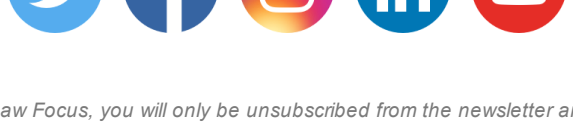
Alexis Gardner is from Orange City, Florida, and earned her bachelor's degree in criminology from Florida State University. She will graduate from FSU Law this spring. Gardner has been a law clerk for family law attorney Christine Thurman since the summer of 2021. In this role, she researches family law and adoption issues, drafts memoranda, and works with the attorney to determine case courses of action. Gardner previously externed as a prosecutor at the Leon County State Attorney's Office in the fall of 2022. There, Gardner was entrusted with a full case load, including bench and jury trials. She worked closely with defense attorneys to reach fair outcomes in her cases and to set hearings to resolve legal issues. From December 2021 to August 2022, Gardner was a law clerk for criminal defense attorney Lee Meadows in Tallahassee, where she worked on DUI cases. During the summer of 2021, she was a judicial intern for the county court chief judge in Leon County, where she observed court hearings and conducted research. Prior to law school, Gardner worked at a state law enforcement agency and managed a criminal defense law firm for nearly two years; both experiences helped confirm her passion for the criminal justice field.



Gardner is specifically interested in practicing in the Central Florida area to be close to family. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Gardner after graduation, visit her [LinkedIn profile](#) or email her at angardner@fsu.edu.

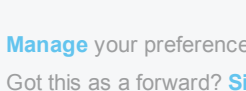
“I have experience in all areas of the criminal justice field, from law enforcement to defense to judicial to prosecution, and I will bring a unique, well-rounded perspective to my future job.”

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