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**From the Dean**



As our graduates prepare to sit for the Florida Bar Examination next week, February 24-25, we extend our warmest wishes for success and confidence in their readiness to 'Spear the Bar.'

That confidence is grounded not only in their hard work and determination, but also in the extraordinary efforts of our **Bar Success Team**—Director of Bar Success **Jami Ferrell**, along with **Deans Nancy Benavides and Laura Dennis**, and **Professor Cecelia Smith**. They have provided these first-time takers with additional resources through the Spear the Bar program, including practice exams, individual counseling, and supplemental materials.

To our Bar takers: trust in your preparation, remain steady in your focus, and carry with you the quiet confidence that comes from work done with integrity and purpose. We look forward to celebrating your success.

We invite you to share a message of encouragement and support for our bar takers as they take this critical step through our **Message Board**.

Additionally, as **FSU's Great Give** approaches on **March 4**, our College is raising funds for **Florida Bar Exam Lunches** to help ensure our bar takers are fed and fueled on exam days—one more way we can support them as they cross the finish line.

*Erin O'Connor*  
Dean Erin O'Connor

**FSU Law Homecoming**



Please mark your calendars for the **2026 FSU College of Law Homecoming celebration, November 20–22**. We look forward to welcoming our alumni and friends back to campus for a weekend marked by reflection, fellowship, and the connection that unites the FSU Law family.

We encourage you to join us for this special occasion, wrapping up the celebration of the law school's history and achievements over the past **60 years**.

**FSU Law Events**



(L-R) Professor Hong Zhao and Professor Frederick M. Abbott

FSU College of Law recently welcomed Edward Ball Chair Distinguished Speaker Professor Hong Zhao, an international economic law professor at Peking University, for a discussion on U.S.–China economic and trade relations. The event was introduced by **Frederick M. Abbott**, Edward Ball Eminent Scholar Professor of International Law.

Professor Zhao drew on her experience as former Chair of the World Trade Organization Appellate Body and as China's representative in Geneva to offer insight into the evolving U.S.–China trade relationship and its broader impact on the global trading system.



Additionally, the **Journal of Land Use & Environmental Law**, in collaboration with the **FSU Center for Environmental, Energy, and Land Use Law**, hosted the 2026 **Spring Distinguished Environmental Lecture** featuring Robert Glicksman, the J.B. and Maurice C. Shapiro Professor of Environmental Law at The George Washington University Law School. The event included a Q&A moderated by **Erin Ryan**, Associate Dean for Environmental Programs and Elizabeth C. & Clyde W. Atkinson Professor.

Professor Glicksman delivered a compelling lecture drawing on his extensive scholarship in climate change, regulatory design, and public natural resource management. The program sparked thoughtful discussion among students, faculty, and members of the legal community and reflected the College of Law's ongoing commitment to bringing leading voices in environmental law to campus.

[Watch the Recording](#)

The College also hosted the "Life of a Lobbyist," a panel presented in connection with Associate Dean of Career Services & Professional Development **Debra Henley's** **Legislative Practice** course. The event provided students with a substantive and discerning look into careers within what is often described as the "third house" of government.



(L-R) Carlos Cruz, Joseph Salzberg, Cari Roth, Joe Anne Hart, and Jeff Scala

The program offered a glimpse into the role of lobbyists in the legislative process, the challenges they face, what it takes to join their ranks, and what brings them satisfaction in their jobs.

It featured a panel of distinguished governmental affairs professionals including Chief Legislative Officer for the Florida Dental Association **Joe Anne Hart** and Deputy Director of Public Policy at the Florida Association of Counties **Jeff Scala**, as well as FSU Law alumni **Carlos Miguel Cruz ('95)**, partner and co-chair at Converge Public Strategie's Northeast Florida Office, **Joseph Salzberg ('15)**, shareholder at GrayRobinson, and **Cari Roth ('83)**, vice president for Governmental and Regulatory Affairs for Lykes Bros. Inc.

Dean Henley also shared her background as an executive director and legislative director of the Florida Justice Association for several years, as a member of the staff of the Florida House of Representatives, and as a commissioner on the Florida Commission on Ethics.



**FSU Law Student News**



(L-R) Executive Director of the Election Law Center Maureen Wagner Vinson, 2L George Minning, 3L Nicholas Capalbo, 2L Kaitlyn Gazzara, 2L Kathryn Billings, 2L Lauren Bina, 3L Spencer Moreno, and the Sheila M. McDevitt Professor of Law and Faculty Director of the Election Law Center Michael Morley

2Ls Kathryn Billings, Lauren Bina, Kaitlyn Gazzara, George Minning, and 3Ls Nicholas Capalbo and Spencer Moreno are assisting in the preparation of briefs filed with the Supreme Court of the United States.

Currently enrolled in FSU Law's Supreme Court Litigation course taught by Professor **Michael Morley**, the Sheila M. McDevitt Professor of Law and Faculty Director of the **Election Law Center**, students participate in editing and review of submissions before filing, gaining unparalleled exposure to the rigor and precision of Supreme Court advocacy.

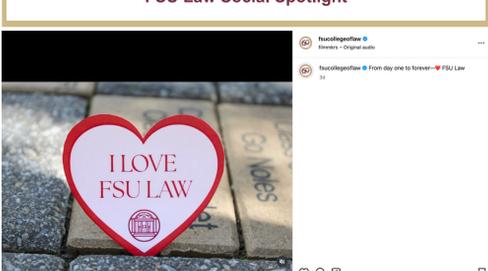
Through this work, students develop a practical understanding of Supreme Court procedure and the amicus briefing process, while further refining their legal research and writing skills at the highest level.

*"I have gained a deeper understanding of the Supreme Court process and amicus briefing, while also strengthening my research and writing skills. This is an exceptional experience that gives me a rare opportunity to contribute to a case submitted directly to the U.S. Supreme Court. The class also offers a uniquely interactive working environment as we assist the Election Law Center with its ongoing work."*



- 2L Kathryn Billings

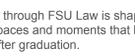
**FSU Law Social Spotlight**



From day one to forever.

Last week, our **Instagram Reel** followed the "I Love FSU Law" heart as it traveled to some of the most recognizable and meaningful spots across campus, celebrating the places that shape the law school experience.

It is a reminder that the journey through FSU Law is shaped not only by academic achievement, but also by the spaces and moments that bring our community together—connections that remain long after graduation.



Support the next generation of lawyers through the **FSU Law Book Award Program**. Sponsors select a course of their choice, and each award recognizes student achievement while helping the College of Law recruit and retain top talent. Contributions are fully tax-deductible.

**Become a Book Award sponsor today and make a lasting impact.**

