



FSU LAW FOCUS

Friday, August 16, 2024

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From the Dean



On August 2, we recognized our summer 2024 graduates with a special reception at the law school. Some of our newest J.M. alumni and their guests gathered at the Advocacy Center to celebrate with faculty and staff members before walking across the street to the university commencement ceremony. Earlier that day, our summer J.D. and LLM graduates attended a special university ceremony with hooding for doctoral degree candidates. This summer, 66 J.M. students and 3 LLM students graduated from the College of Law. We are very proud of our new alumni and look forward to hearing about their many accomplishments in the future!

This week, we are hosting our new LLM students for their orientation. Next week we will welcome our new 1L J.D. students for a weeklong new student orientation where they will get to know their fellow classmates, current students and professors, learn about our history and culture, experience their first contracts classes, including practice exams and hopefully have some fun too. Our next newsletter will highlight our new students as we prepare to kick off the Fall Semester on August 26!

Erin O'Connor
Dean Erin O'Connor

Professor Erin Ryan Takes Prominent Role in Global Webinar for The Nature Conservancy

On July 23, Professor Erin Ryan helped lead a global webinar for several hundred employees of The Nature Conservancy, one of the largest and most effective environmental organizations in the world. The Nature Conservancy has teams working for natural resource preservation in the United States, North America, South



America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Caribbean. The webinar was designed to help them understand the meaning of the United States Supreme Court's recent decisions in *Loper-Bright* and *Corner Post* and the consequences for their work in North America.

Professor Ryan is the Elizabeth C. and Clyde W. Atkinson Professor and Associate Dean for Environmental Programs at FSU Law, overseeing the FSU Center for Environmental, Energy, and Land Use Law. After two members of the Environmental Law Institute explained the Chevron doctrine and the *Loper-Bright* and *Corner Post* decisions, Professor Ryan provided overall analysis of the impacts of the decisions and their significance for the work of environmental advocates like The Nature Conservancy, including specific guidance for managing their legislative, regulatory, and litigation advocacy going forward. She also helped situate the ongoing importance of their work within the U.S. context of dynamic environmental federalism, with multiple ports of entry to environmental management and policy-making.

Professor Ryan was recruited for this role by the Environmental Law Institute on the basis of an effort she was independently asked to lead earlier this summer by a different NGO, the Center for American Progress, earlier this summer. The Center for American Progress was seeking input from environmental faculty on a possible codification of the Chevron doctrine (in anticipation of what ultimately came to pass in the Loper-Bright case).

The proposal the NGO came up with has been largely incorporated into the “Stop Corporate Capture Act” introduced in the House earlier this month, but it may eventually be adopted into a separate, smaller, and purposefully less partisan standalone bill to amend the Administrative Procedures Act. If adopted, it would clarify legislative intentions to engage agency expertise on scientific matters and others that require specialized expertise in the regulatory interpretation of statutes, warranting judicial deference in line with Chevron. The provision is designed to codify the former thrust of the Chevron doctrine and respond to the new Major Questions Doctrine and other clear statement rules raised by recent Supreme Court jurisprudence.

Alumni Profile: Patricia Dawson '94 Takes on New Role at the Florida Bar

Patricia Dawson '94 has been elected as the 2024–2025 Chair of The Florida Bar Criminal Law Section. Her tenure as chair will focus on enhancing professional development opportunities, fostering collaboration among members, and promoting initiatives that support improving the criminal justice system.

In her chair’s message, Dawson emphasizes the importance of mentorship and continuing education for legal professionals. The Florida Bar Criminal Law Section provides a forum for members to share ideas and information, promote professionalism, and enhance the skills and knowledge of its members. The section also advocates for improvements in the criminal justice system and supports initiatives that promote fairness and justice for all.



Dawson has served in various Criminal Law Section leadership positions, demonstrating her commitment to advancing the field of criminal law and supporting

her fellow attorneys. She has been an active member of The Florida Bar for many years and brings a wealth of experience to her new role. Dawson previously served as past-chair of The Florida Bar's CLE Committee. Throughout her career, Dawson has been recognized for her dedication to legal excellence and her advocacy for clients. Her leadership and vision for the Criminal Law Section align with her longstanding dedication to the legal profession and access to justice.

“As an alumna of Florida State University College of Law, ‘preparedness’ is the one word that comes to mind when I think about my law school experience. The law school’s criminal courses, trial prep, Juvenile Clinic, and the State Attorney Externship prepared me to be an experienced prosecutor on day one at the Hillsborough County State Attorney’s office. In fact, a couple of weeks after my starting date, a criminal defense attorney scolded me for being a ‘seasoned’ prosecutor instead of being a new, inexperienced attorney.”



We are inviting all alumni and students to [join FSU Law Connect](#), a new platform exclusively for the FSU Law community. Alumni can keep in touch with the College of Law and other alumni, post jobs, and access career development tools. If you haven't already joined FSU Law Connect, please join today to help us increase engagement and connection.



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