



# FSU LAW FOCUS

Friday, August 30, 2024

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## From the Dean



The fall 2024 semester began this week, and although some of our 1L students did not feel comfortable sitting on the front row, we are delighted to have students back on campus! In addition to welcoming back our returning 2Ls and 3Ls, we are joined by 138 new 1Ls, 14 in-person LL.M. students, and 15 transfer students. The hallway and classrooms are full of energy as we embrace the promise that a new academic year brings. We are also thrilled to have our faculty members on campus.

This week we also received further affirmation of something we have always known--our faculty are among the best, brightest and most cited academic scholars in the country! The 2024 Scholarly Impact Rankings of law schools' faculty was announced and FSU Law's faculty jumped 12 spots to number 34 in the nation! The rankings use law journal citations to determine "scholarly impact". Our faculty are frequently cited by others because they are exceptional scholars and their work is innovative and trustworthy. Our faculty members are

making substantial contributions to FSU Law's vibrant scholarly atmosphere, so our students are in great hands.

*Erin O'Connor*

Dean Erin O'Connor

## Introducing the FSU Law Houses



1Ls during the house reveal ceremony at orientation

We are launching a new program with the incoming 1L class: FSU Law Houses. The goal of this program is to provide incoming students with an opportunity to get to know their 1L classmates in smaller group settings, while also offering them mentorship and advice via returning law students and members of our faculty and administration. We believe this will further enhance our reputation as a collaborative community where students and faculty engage deeply inside and outside of the classroom.

Beginning this fall, incoming 1Ls have been assigned to one of nine "Houses". The houses are named after nine distinguished former FSU Law faculty members. We don't know whether any of the houses have a special handshake, a secret password or a quidditch team, but each house does have its own special color. They are:

- **House of Ladd (Cardinal Red)**
- **House of Morse (Gold)**
- **House of Gey (Heather Purple)**
- **House of Weidner (Sport Grey)**

- **House of D'Alemberte (Heather Irish Green)**
- **House of Stern (Heather Royal)**
- **House of Ehrhardt (Heather Heliconia)**
- **House of Griffith (Corn silk)**
- **House of Dore (Heather Dark Grey)**

One 2L and one 3L is assigned to each house to serve as "house coordinators." Many of our faculty members have also joined in and will serve as "house advisors." We want to instill in our 1Ls that special FSU Law culture and trust that the new houses will help accomplish this. Stay tuned for updates on how the houses are progressing throughout the year.

## Student Profile: 3L Joel Vallejo

### Desired Practice

**Location:** South Florida, particularly interested in Fort Lauderdale or Miami but is open to relocating elsewhere

**Expected Graduation:**  
May 2025

### Field of Law

**Sought:** Health, corporate law, transactional law or sports & entertainment



Joel Vallejo is from Pembroke Pines and attended Florida International University, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in finance *magna cum laude*. This past summer, Vallejo worked as an associate at Wicker Smith. Vallejo gained invaluable experience drafting legal memoranda, appellate briefs, deposition summaries and probate contracts. He also sat in on depositions, mediations and case strategy conferences. The summer before his 2L year, Vallejo worked at the 17th Judicial Circuit Court of Florida as a judicial intern where he worked on cases in the criminal and civil divisions, conducted legal research for the judges and gained valuable insight into how judicial decisions are made and cases resolved.

At FSU Law, Vallejo serves as secretary of the Health Law Society's executive board and external vice president of the Cuban American Bar Association. He previously served as secretary of the Entertainment & Sports Law Society and their 1L

representative. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Vallejo after graduation, visit his [LinkedIn](#) profile or email him at [jv22i@fsu.edu](mailto:jv22i@fsu.edu).

*“Coming from a Cuban American family, determination and hard work were instilled in me as my family came from Cuba with nothing and managed to provide a comfortable life due to their hard work. As an individual who has overcome many health challenges, such as battling childhood cancer, I’ve been fortunate to understand the privilege of being exposed to harsh environments that equipped me to think critically and helped prepare me to enter a profession that can positively impact people’s lives.”*



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