

[Get Involved](#) | [Submit a Class Note](#) | [Share My Torch Moment](#) | [Make a Gift](#)

### From the Dean



On the final day of the fall 2021 semester, we held a hooding ceremony and toast to celebrate our newest FSU Law graduates in the Advocacy Center's John W. Frost, II Courtroom and Reading Room. The December 10 event was a special opportunity to honor the 13 J.D., eight LL.M., and 39 J.M. students who graduated and to congratulate them on their accomplishments. It was especially meaningful to be able to celebrate the graduates with their family members and friends who supported them during their educational pursuits. I was honored to hood graduates, along with Manuel Utset, our William & Catherine VanDercreek professor and associate dean for juris master programs. We are all very proud of our December 2021 graduates and cannot wait to see what they achieve next!

*Erin O'Connor*

Dean Erin O'Connor

### Florida Supreme Court Honors Dean O'Connor



On December 8, Dean Erin O'Connor was recognized by the Florida Supreme Court for her important service as registrant advocate—assisting the 3,137 examinees facing unprecedented challenges in taking the 2020 Florida bar exam during the pandemic. Chief Justice Canady read a portion of the proclamation presented to Dean O'Connor, stating in part, "the Supreme Court of Florida hereby expresses heartfelt thanks to Dean Erin O'Hara O'Connor for her dedicated service and immense contributions to the Florida Board of Bar Examiners and, more importantly, to the preparation and support of examinees for the bar examination." The court created the registrant advocate position and appointed Dean O'Connor to serve in the role after the regular July 2020 administration of the exam was canceled due to COVID-19. As registrant advocate, Dean O'Connor made herself available to exam takers who had concerns as they prepared for the exam, which was ultimately administered virtually in October 2020.

### Alum Profile: Susan L. Stephens ('93)

**Susan L. Stephens** joined the Tallahassee office of Stearns Weaver Miller as a shareholder in September. Stephens has extensive experience practicing environmental, natural resource, and administrative law, including rulemaking practice and procedure and administrative litigation. She focuses her practice on balancing property and resource use with competing private, governmental, and citizen interests. Stephens is Florida Bar board certified in state and federal government and administrative practice. She represents clients before federal, state, regional, and local environmental agencies in connection with the obtainment, interpretation, compliance, and enforcement of environmental permits for regulated industrial, commercial, and development activities. This representation includes matters related to resource extraction, wetlands and mitigation banks, agritourism, wastewater, submerged lands, and state and federal listed wildlife. Stephens also has significant experience helping state agencies obtain State 404 wetland permits and assisting in the development of policy and regulatory initiatives. She is also in her second year as adjunct faculty, teaching Florida Environmental Permitting at FSU College of Law. Prior to joining Stearns Weaver Miller, Stephens was a shareholder at Hopping Green & Sams and a partner at Holland & Knight.



***"I'm thrilled to start a journey with yet another phenomenal law firm at this stage in my career. Joining Stearns Weaver Miller has allowed me to expand my personal and professional development goals, and the community of lawyers and staff I've met since I joined the firm has been incredible. Teaching at the law school, in its turn, has given me a wonderful way to help shape the next generation of lawyers."***

### Student Profile: 3L Peter Meisenbacher

**Desired Practice Location:** Tampa, Florida, but open to other locations

**Expected Graduation:** May 2022

**Field of Law Sought:** Corporate law, trusts and estate planning, criminal justice, intellectual property

Originally from Venice, Florida, Peter Meisenbacher earned his bachelor's degree in history, summa cum laude, from Clemson University. Meisenbacher is currently a judicial intern to Florida Supreme Court Justice Alan Lawson. In this role, he drafts memoranda, prepares determinations of jurisdiction, reviews, summarizes, and attends cases set for oral argument, and assists Justice Lawson and staff attorneys with legal research. Since the spring of his 2L year, Meisenbacher has served as a teaching assistant for various courses taught through FSU Law's J.M. program, including Consumer Protection, Workplace Privacy and Cybersecurity, and Risk Management for Financial Compliance. He assists professors by editing class videos, holding office hours, and grading assignments for the courses. Since the summer after his 1L year, Meisenbacher has served as a research assistant to Professor Rob Atkinson, assisting with drafting and editing several scholarly pieces, including assisting with a forthcoming chapter in the University of Geneva's Routledge Handbook of Taxation and Philanthropy titled, "The Proper Relationship of Private Philanthropy and the Liberal Democratic State: The Inquiry and the Inquirers as the Answer." During the summer after his 2L year, Meisenbacher was a summer intern with the COVID-19 Veterans Legal Clinic at FSU Law, where he worked under the supervision of attorneys to research legal issues, prepare documents, file motions, and advise and represent clients. He worked in the areas of housing, consumer representation, stimulus check assistance, unemployment compensation, and SNAP benefits. As the only certified legal intern in the program during the summer, Meisenbacher was able to litigate in every case that went to a hearing. Also during the summer, Meisenbacher was a summer law clerk with MSW Florida Capital, LLC, in Sarasota, a collections firm where he worked in transactional law and compliance.



At FSU Law, Meisenbacher is the treasurer for the Education Law and Policy Society, JAG liaison for the Student Veterans Law Symposium, and a member of the Business Law Society. He previously served as a 1L rep for the Nontraditional Students Association tournaments in 2019 and 2021. Meisenbacher also has served as a peer mentor since the spring of 2020, and he will graduate at age 21. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Meisenbacher after graduation, visit his [LinkedIn profile](#) or email him at [pmm18bt@my.fsu.edu](mailto:pmm18bt@my.fsu.edu).

***"I enjoy learning about multiple facets of the law and making myself as versatile a legal professional as possible. The many areas I've worked in have given me a holistic understanding and appreciation of the law, but my most valuable experience thus far has been working with the mentors I've come to know here. The time they've taken to guide me in my professional and personal development has shown me the kind of lawyer I want to be, and I'm incredibly grateful for it."***

[ABOUT US](#) | [ACADEMICS](#) | [ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID](#) | [OUR FACULTY](#) | [ALUMNI](#) | [CAREERS](#) | [STUDENTS](#)



If you unsubscribe from the FSU Law Focus, you will only be unsubscribed from the newsletter and not other emails from FSU Law.

Share this email:



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™  
Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.  
View this email [online](#).

425 West Jefferson Street  
Tallahassee, FL | 32306 US

This email was sent to  
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.



[Subscribe](#) to our email list.