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From the Dean



Summer graduates and their guests enjoyed a special reception at the law school in July.

At the end of July, we celebrated summer 2022 graduates with a special reception at the law school. Our newest alumni and their guests gathered at the law school for refreshments and photo opportunities before the university commencement ceremony on Friday, July 29. More than 70 J.M. and two LL.M. students graduated this summer. Including the summer graduates, more than 400 online students have earned their master's in law degrees from FSU Law since 2017. We are all very proud of our new graduates and are looking forward to watching them excel in the future! In addition, we are very proud of alumna Melanie Griffin ('06), who gave an inspirational keynote speech during both of the university's commencement ceremonies.

Erin O'Connor

Dean Erin O'Connor

Students Gain Valuable Experience Through Summer Externships

As the summer comes to an end, many FSU Law students are finishing summer externships in cities around the country and in London. Nearly 100 students have externed at a wide variety of placements, including state attorney and public defender offices, nonprofits, state and federal government agencies, law firms, corporate in-house counsel departments, and state and federal courts. Twenty-four of the students participated in our 1L Judicial Externship Program and worked directly with judges in Florida, Alabama, and New York. The experience FSU Law students acquired during their externships will benefit them throughout the rest of their studies and after they graduate, and FSU Law is grateful to the alumni and other attorneys and judges who supervised externs this summer.



"Externing at DBPR introduced me to a regulatory agency responsible for licensing and regulating more than one million businesses and professionals in Florida," said rising 3L Felipe Maccari Rosa (pictured) of his externship at the Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation. "The experience not only sharpened my legal skills, but also reiterated my passion for public service. I would certainly recommend that other law students embrace this opportunity."

Alum Profile: Russell S. Kent ('94)



Russell S. Kent is now senior corporate counsel at Citizens Property Insurance Corporation in Tallahassee. In this role, Kent handles complex litigation, legislative, and regulatory matters for the state's insurer of last resort, serving as the first in-house litigator on the corporate side. Prior to joining Citizens in February 2022, he was the special counsel for litigation at the Florida Attorney General's Office, where he worked on numerous federal and state antitrust, constitutional, election, and False Claims Act cases along with Florida's legal response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, resulting in a \$2 billion economic loss recovery, and the 2017 tobacco enforcement trial. He has also drafted legislation, including the 2013 rewrite of the Florida False Claims Act and the 2014 rewrite of Florida's data breach law. Before joining the Attorney General's Office, Kent was in private practice for a decade, where he focused in the area of litigation. He has earned many awards during his legal career, including being honored as the Florida Government Bar Association's 2015 Government Lawyer of the Year. Kent also is active in Florida Bar activities, including serving as chair-elect of The Florida Bar Government Lawyer Section.

"I have found my greatest professional satisfaction in public service. Despite all of its challenges, public service has allowed me to handle a wide variety of cases and to leave a lasting impression, both in terms of creating statutory schemes and case law precedent, as well as furthering the public interest."

Student Profile: 3L Sofia Azpurua

Desired Practice Location: New York City or Chicago

Expected graduation: May 2023

Field of Law Sought: Immigration law, specializing in representation of unaccompanied migrant children

Sofia Azpurua, from Miami, Florida, attended Florida State University for undergrad, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in criminology and minored in psychology. Since December 2021, Azpurua has worked with the law school's Farmworker & Immigration Rights Clinic, serving as a research assistant for Professor Ashley Hamill,



and she has become well-versed in many aspects of the immigration system. She drafts forms and motions for filing in immigration proceedings, performs country condition research for asylum cases, conducts status update and intake meetings with clients, and supervises clinical students. This summer, Azpurua was a legal intern with the Safe Passage Project based in New York, City, where she assisted her supervising attorney by communicating with clients, drafting affidavits and pleadings, and preparing legal filings. She also helped develop case strategy by conducting legal research, reviewing reports about country conditions, and representing clients in immigration and state court proceedings. She will continue her work with the Safe Passage Project this school year. During the summer before her 2L year, Azpurua was a judicial intern for Judges Ronald Flury ('93) and Robert Wheeler, of the Second Judicial Circuit of Florida. In this role, she gained knowledge and skills regarding effective litigation tactics and court officer interactions, and she observed criminal, family, and civil proceedings in Wakulla and Gadsden counties. She also conducted legal research and drafted memoranda.

At FSU Law, Azpurua was the founding vice president of the Hispanic Law Students Association, and she is a student ambassador with the Office of Admissions. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Azpurua after graduation, visit her [LinkedIn profile](#) or email her at sma17b@fsu.edu.

"I look forward to advocating for immigrant children like myself. I enjoy being a resource for them and ensuring they are able to pursue their dreams the way I have been able to pursue mine."

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