

From the Dean

We are delighted to report that *preLaw* magazine has ranked Florida State University College of Law the 8th best value law school in the nation! The ranking, which is published in *preLaw*'s fall 2019 issue, weighs important student outcomes—bar passage and employment rates—against tuition, cost of living and indebtedness.



According to *preLaw*, the rankings are “designed to find the law schools where graduates have excellent chances of passing the bar and getting a legal job without taking on a ton of debt.” In addition to being ranked the nation’s 8th best, FSU is the highest ranked Florida law school on *preLaw*'s list of the nation’s top 25 best value schools.

This national ranking reflects our strong employment and bar passage results. According to American Bar Association data, Florida State is the #1 law school in Florida and #28 nationally in terms of 2018 graduates who passed a bar examination on their first attempt. In addition, at a rate of 94.48%, FSU Law ranks among the nation’s top law schools in terms of graduates who passed a bar examination in any jurisdiction within two years of graduating. Being one the nation’s top 10 best law schools in terms of value is especially gratifying because employment rate is the highest weighted factor in the ranking. Providing students with a relatively low-cost, top-notch legal education and opportunities to gain hands-on experience are keys to helping our students launch successful careers in their chosen areas.

- Dean Erin O'Connor

Students Present Oral Arguments at Florida Supreme Court



Last week, four talented FSU Law students presented oral arguments at the Florida Supreme Court during our annual Moot Court Final Four Competition. The students argued a First Amendment case about defamation before justices of the Florida Supreme Court and First District Court of Appeal judges. Congratulations to second-year students and competitors (pictured above front row, L-R) Holly Parker Curry, Alex Clise, Erin Tuck and Gabriela De Almeida. Their dedication and talent was obvious to everyone watching. The entire competition is available for viewing on our [Facebook page](#), where we streamed the event live. A special congratulations to Curry, who earned the honor of Best Advocate. Thank you to (pictured above back row, L-R) First DCA Judge Bradford L. Thomas, Florida Supreme Court Justice Ricky Polston ('87), Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice Charles T. Canady, Florida Supreme Court Justice Carlos G. Muñiz and First DCA Judge L. Clayton Roberts ('91) for participating in this annual event and giving so generously of their time to our students. It is a remarkable benefit to FSU Law students to have such engaged members of the judiciary.

Alum Profile: Corey J. Portnoy ('15)

Corey J. Portnoy is an associate at Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin, P.C. in Jacksonville. He is a member of the firm’s Casualty Department, focusing his practice on maritime law, shipping litigation, cargo subrogation, premises liability, transportation law and employment law. He previously practiced at a large defense firm in Miami, representing clients in maritime, negligent security, premises liability and wrongful death actions. Portnoy is very engaged in the legal and local communities, and recently joined the Down Syndrome Association of Jacksonville Board of Directors. He will help oversee many facets of the organization, including a program that provides training to individuals with Down syndrome to help them become successfully employed. Portnoy also remains engaged with the College of Law, serving on our Alumni Association Board of Directors.



“I was always moved by people with Down syndrome as these individuals are such a powerful source of happiness. When I reached out to the Down Syndrome Association of Jacksonville, I really just wanted to volunteer, but the board learned about my legal practice, success in philanthropy and commitment to service, and they thought I would be a better fit serving on the board.”

Student Profile: 3L Joseph Burns

Desired Practice Location: Florida panhandle or Tampa area
Expected Graduation: December 2019
Field of Law Sought: Appellate law (any field), criminal law, judicial clerkships



Joe Burns is originally from Chicago. After serving as aerial gunner in the U.S. Air Force for six years, he earned a bachelor’s degree in philosophy from the University of West Florida in Pensacola. Burns will graduate from FSU Law in December 2019 and is planning to take the February bar exam. Currently, Burns is clerking at the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco, where he evaluates investigative reports from division personnel, recommends courses of action to the assigned attorneys and drafts administrative complaints. Last summer, he was an appeals clerk at the Florida Division of Emergency Management. He drafted and submitted appeals of FEMA determinations within its public assistance program. During the spring semester of his 2L year, Burns externed for the First District Court of Appeal, where he researched the current state of the law on relevant issues, read briefs, and drafted bench memos and recommendations for Judge L. Clayton Roberts ('91). Burns is a founding member and former secretary of the Student Veterans Law Symposium. He is also a student ambassador for the FSU Law Admissions Office and a member of the *Journal of Land Use & Environmental Law*, where he was an article and notes editor for the fall 2018 semester. If you are interested in hiring Burns after graduation, [visit his LinkedIn profile](#).

“My experience in the Air Force taught me how to deal with emergencies and constantly shifting priorities. Thanks to my appellate law experience, I now also know how to slow things down to ensure we get them right the first time. I would love an opportunity to apply both skills in a criminal and/or appellate context.”

We need your support for student scholarships!

Visit law.fsu.edu/pavetheway to learn how you can change lives and pave the way for future FSU Law students while increasing the value of an FSU Law degree. As of October 1, 2019, we have raised \$1,457,197.58 toward our \$2 million campaign goal.

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