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January 3, 2020

## From the Dean



December graduates with FSU Law Associate Dean Nancy Benavides and FSU President John Thrasher (Dec. '72)

Happy New Year from everyone at the FSU College of Law! We are looking forward to the new semester beginning on Monday, January 6, and we are excited about the promise that a new year holds. As we look forward to the new semester, we also want to congratulate our new alumni who graduated in December. Twenty-six students earned their J.D. degrees, 20 students graduated from our Juris Master program and one student earned his LL.M. in American Law. We are proud of their accomplishments and eager to watch them flourish! I also want to thank the many faculty and staff members who are preparing to welcome students back next week. It is a pleasure to work alongside exceptional, dedicated colleagues. May everyone reading this message have a rich and rewarding 2020!

- Dean Erin O'Connor

## Florida Legislative Practice Course Offers Unique Opportunities for Students



The FSU Law Florida Legislative Practice: From Bill Drafting to the Governor's Desk course taught by FSU College of Law Assistant Dean for Career Services and Professional Development Debra Henley ('88) is a popular course for students interested in the legislative process. Students are able to serve on "mock legislative committees" with members of the Florida Legislature and meet with high-level professionals working in the governor's office, as legislative staff, or as lobbyists in firms and associations.

Florida Senate President Galvano addresses the spring 2019 Florida Legislative Practice class.

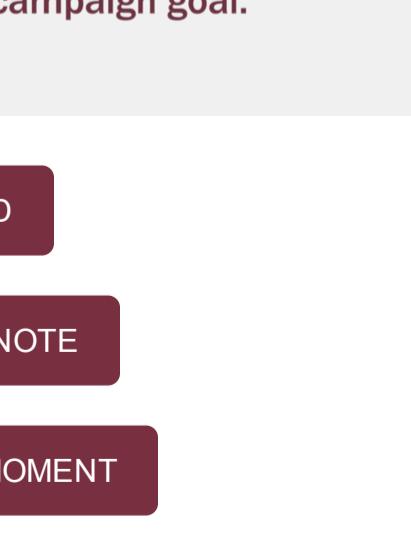
During the fall semester, the class hosted a lobbyist panel discussion and networking reception. The panel of eight included (top photo L-R) Holly Miller Moore of TECO Energy, Jeff Branch of the Florida League of Cities, Pamela Burch Fort ('77) of The Commerce Group, Aimee Diaz Lyon ('99) of Metz, Husband & Daughton, Abigail L. Vail ('06) of the Florida Department of Financial Services, Chris Schoonover ('09) of Capital City Consulting, Derek Silver (Dec. '19) of the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation, and Darrick D. McGhee, Sr., of Johnson and Blanton.

The class concluded with four legislative committee hearings, where students presented the bills they drafted and fellow classmates provided testimony for or against the bills. Legislators participating this fall were Representative Javier Fernandez (House District 114), Representative Elizabeth Anne Fetterhoff (House District 26), Representative Mike Gottlieb (House District 98), Representative J.W. Grant, chair of the Criminal Justice Subcommittee (House District 64), Minority Leader Evan Jenne (House District 99) and Representative Amber Mariano (House District 36).

Students in the spring 2019 course had the opportunity to visit the Senate Chamber to hear from Senate President Bill Galvano (Senate District 21) about his leadership style and role in ensuring the process runs smoothly while working successfully with the House and governor's office. This course is one example of the advantages of FSU Law's capital city location, which allows us to offer in-depth classes on the legislative process, executive power, and political, administrative and election law, taught by and featuring top professionals in government and politics.

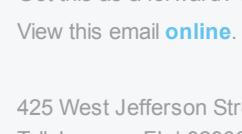
## Alum Profile: Erik L. Sayler ('06)

Erik L. Sayler has served as deputy general counsel at the Florida Division of Emergency Management since May 2019. Sayler is responsible for providing legal support to the director and other executive staff, ensuring the Division's compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, drafting administrative rules and legislation, and overseeing the legal representation of the Division in all judicial, quasi-judicial and administrative proceedings. He previously was a senior attorney at the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Office of General Counsel, an associate public counsel at the Florida Office of Public Counsel, a senior attorney at the Florida Public Service Commission, and a judicial law clerk at the Florida First District Court of Appeal. In May 2019, he earned his M.B.A. from FSU with coursework concentrations in human resources, marketing and data analytics.



*"I made many good friends while attending the FSU College of Law and the College of Business. The first-class education I received has prepared me for a fulfilling career. It is my distinct privilege to work with all the professionals at the Division of Emergency Management and in the Executive Office of the Governor. It is an honor to serve the people of this great state."*

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