

## From the Dean



(L-R) Englund, Purpuro and Kahn

This past weekend, talented student advocates on our Moot Court Team won first place in the 2020 Jeffrey G. Miller National Environmental Law Moot Court Competition! The competition was held February 20-22 at Pace University in New York, and 54 law school teams participated. Teams from many of the nation's top law schools competed, including teams from Columbia University, Emory University, University of Arizona, University of California-Berkeley, University of California-Davis, University of California-Los Angeles, University of Florida, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, University of Notre Dame, and Washington and Lee University.

Winning team members are third-year law students Ashley Englund, Steven Kahn and Alexander Purpuro. Segundo Fernandez, who practices at Oertel, Fernandez, Bryant & Atkinson, P.A. in Tallahassee, and Shi-Ling Hsu, the D'Alemberte Professor at FSU Law, coached the team to victory. Congratulations to our talented student advocates and their dedicated coaches. They have made us all proud!

FSU was one of three teams competing in the final round of competition, which was judged by the Honorable Lisa Margaret Smith, United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, the Honorable Kathie A. Stein, Environmental Appeals Board of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Honorable Jane Branstetter Stranch, United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

- Dean Erin O'Connor

## FSU Law Hosts Local Autonomy and Energy Law Symposium



Richard Briffault, the Joseph P. Chamberlain Professor of Legislation at Columbia Law School, provided the keynote.

On February 21, the College of Law's [Environmental, Energy & Land Use Law Program](#) hosted a "Local Autonomy and Energy Law Symposium," featuring speakers from across the nation. The symposium focused on the rapid energy transition in the United States and explored the decline of local autonomy, both generally and in the area of energy law. While state and local clean-energy and carbon policies, and declining renewable energy costs are driving development of solar and wind farms and associated transmission lines, the U.S. continues to be a world leader in oil and natural gas production due to drilling and hydraulic fracturing in shale formations. Thousands of new wells have been drilled, triggering the construction of new pipelines and export terminals, often in close proximity to human populations.

The speakers discussed how local governments and their residents experience the brunt of the negative impacts in the form of increased truck traffic and road damage, noise, dust and air pollution during construction, aesthetic changes and many other externalities. Despite this concentration of impacts at the local level, state governments increasingly preempt local governments' abilities to address these impacts through regulation or other tools. The symposium explored these issues and potential paths forward.

Symposium participants included Richard Briffault, Columbia Law School; John Nolon, Pace University Elisabeth Haub School of Law; Ashira Ostrow, Hofstra University Maurice A. Deane School of Law; Erin Scharff, Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law; Rick Su, University of North Carolina School of Law; Sarah Swan, FSU College of Law; Shelley Welton, University of South Carolina School of Law; and Michael Wolf, University of Florida Levin College of Law.

## Alum Profile: Major Ambar "Raju" Vyas ('09)

Major Raju Vyas serves as a judge advocate in the United States Air Force, where his current assignment is counsel for the Defense Contract Management Agency in Dallas. His areas of focus include data privacy, government contracts and cyber operations law. His military experience includes deployment to Parwan, Afghanistan, during Operation Enduring Freedom, and serving as chief legal advisor for military operations during Hurricane Harvey. Major Vyas also advises the Czech Republic's Military Legal Corps as part of the U.S. Air Force's state-partnership program. He has received numerous awards and decorations for his service, including the Air Force Commendation Medal and Afghanistan Campaign Medal with a Bronze Star.



Major Vyas received his commission as an Air Force judge advocate through Florida State University's Reserve Officer Training Corps while he was a law student. He has served since graduating from FSU Law in 2009.

*"As I look back at my time with the FSU College of Law, two things come to mind. First, I'm grateful for the camaraderie that I shared with my classmates and am pleased to say those friendships have only grown since I graduated. Second, FSU's College of Law offered a world of skill sets and opportunity which have proved invaluable as I've grown as an attorney and judge advocate."*

## Student Profile: 3L Jemma Takx

**Desired Practice Location:** Orlando, Jacksonville, Tampa, or oversees in London, Amsterdam or The Hague

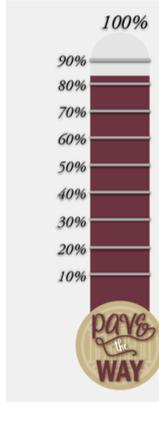
**Expected Graduation:** May 2020

**Field of Law Sought:** International business, arbitration, land use, civil rights or human rights



Jemma Takx grew up in Orlando, but she's a dual citizen of the United States and the United Kingdom. She is a first-generation American—her mother is from the U.K. and her father is from the Netherlands. Takx earned her bachelor's degree in political science and public administration and a master's certificate in homeland security and emergency management from FSU. When she graduates from FSU Law this May, she will also earn the International Bar Certificate. Last summer, Takx worked at the International Bar Association (IBA) in London with Executive Director Mark Ellis ('84). She wrote legal memos on different issues arising from international law and worked with the IBA Human Rights Institute on violations of human rights found around the world. During the spring of her 2L year, she was an extern at the Southern Poverty Law Center, where she helped write policy reports and conducted interviews of potential plaintiffs for a class action suit challenging the inhumane use of solitary confinement. The summer after her 1L year, Takx was a summer associate at Watson, LLP in Orlando.

Takx is the executive article selection editor for the *Florida State University Law Review*. She will be competing in a Moot Court competition this spring and participated on the VIS Moot International Arbitration Team last year, where her team won a pre-moot held in Atlanta and competed in Vienna, Austria. During her 1L year, Takx participated on the Black Law Students Association Moot Trial Team that won second place at the regional conference and then third place at the national convention. She is also a member of the Law School Council and a student ambassador for the FSU Law Admissions Office. If you are interested in hiring Takx after graduation, [visit her LinkedIn profile](#).



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