

From the Dean

Next week, law school graduates across the nation will be taking bar exams. Everyone at FSU Law sends their best wishes to all of our recent graduates who will be sitting for the exams. We know they are well equipped for success and we stand ready to offer support in the next few days before the exam. Although many graduates have been studying remotely and will be taking the exams remotely, including those who are taking the Florida Bar Examination, it has been a top priority to help our alumni as they studied. This summer, we offered weekly bar workshops with Professors Jonathan Grossman and Phil Sandon, who have been instrumental in helping our alumni prepare for success in the past. We also matched exam takers with alumni who served as bar mentors, set up a Spear the Bar Facebook group to provide information to exam takers and help them connect, and encouraged journaling and its mental health benefits through complimentary Spear the Bar journals and weekly journal prompts. Last week, we also sent care packages to the bar exam takers. We know this has been a trying time for our recent graduates, but we are confident that they have the knowledge and tools they need. Good luck to all of our graduates who are taking bar exams next week; please reach out if you have any last minute questions or could use some extra encouragement in these final days of preparation!



-Dean Erin O'Connor

Prof. Landau Publishes Book on Abusive Constitutionalism

[David Landau](#), the Mason Ladd professor and associate dean for international programs, recently published a co-authored book, *Abusive Constitutional Borrowing* (with Rosalind Dixon) (Oxford University Press 2021). The book explains how autocrats are utilizing comparative borrowing from liberal democratic constitutional practices to erode democracy rather than to strengthen and improve democratic institutions and policies. Abusive constitutional borrowing, the authors argue, constitutes a dark side of legal globalization. The book addresses current patterns of democratic retrenchment and illustrates the rise of abusive constitutional practices. The book further considers the role of ideologies that help support different modes of abusive constitutionalism and addresses ways to prevent abuse.



"In this era where populism is surging and democracy appears to be on the retreat in so many countries, it is more important than ever to understand the legal and constitutional means that would-be authoritarians use to attack their democratic constitutional orders," said Landau. "A range of practices closely identified with liberal democracy—rights and courts, for example—are frequently fashioned into dismayingly efficient tools to attack rather than fortifying democracy. Scholars and policymakers must be more alive to the risks of these abusive forms of borrowing and less complacent about increasing legal globalization and the protection provided by the merely formal existence of liberal democratic norms and institutions."

Landau is a recognized scholar on constitutional theory, constitutional design and comparative constitutional law. His recent work has focused on a range of issues with contemporary salience in the United States and elsewhere around the world, including constitutional change and constitution-making, judicial role and the enforcement of rights, impeachment, and the erosion of democracy. He has published in leading law journals including the *University of Chicago Law Review*, *Iowa Law Review*, *George Washington Law Review*, *International Journal of Constitutional Law* and *Harvard International Law Journal*.

Alum Profile: Kweku A. Darfoor ('11)

[Kweku A. Darfoor](#) is the managing shareholder at Darfoor Law Firm in Fort Lauderdale, where he represents plaintiffs in a wide variety of personal injury, consumer protection and wrongful death cases. Prior to founding the firm in 2014, Darfoor had a successful career advising business clients, working in a state government agency, a private law firm, an alternative financing company, a specialty finance/factoring company and a commercial real estate company. He is engaged in numerous professional and community organizations, including the Broward County Bar Association and Urban Philanthropies—a non-profit community development organization serving underserved communities in South Florida. Darfoor also serves on the Florida Atlantic University Alumni Association Board of Directors.



"The practice of personal injury law has instilled in me a burning sense of seeking justice for my clients; something that I wake up excited to attack every day. I turn to my connections and network established while attending FSU College of Law often to speed up the learning curve when I'm faced with issues I've yet to encounter."

Student Profile: 2021 Grad Rayanna Riecscs

Desired Practice Location: Orlando/Central Florida area. Also open to Washington, D.C.
Field of Law Sought: Public interest law

Rayanna Riecscs is from Weeki Wachee, Florida. She earned her bachelor's degree in English literature with minors in women's and gender studies and in writing and rhetoric from the University of Central Florida. She graduated from FSU Law in April. During the spring semester, Riecscs served as a housing justice fellow at Legal Services of North Florida, where she helped clients with rental assistance applications and worked on eviction cases on a pro-bono basis. In the fall of 2020, Riecscs worked as a certified legal intern with FSU's COVID-19 Veterans Legal Clinic. There, she worked on cases involving veterans affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in consumers, housing, SNAP benefits, stimulus check and unemployment benefits issues. Along with a partner, Riecscs also presented a webinar to veterans on accessing SNAP benefits in Florida. During the summer after her 2L year, Riecscs was a student advocate with FSU Law's Children's Advocacy Clinic, where she worked on cases affecting children in foster care, juvenile delinquency, health care, special education, disability, social security and criminal law cases. Riecscs primarily advocated for and monitored children with disabilities in the foster care system. She also worked on an appeal of an Agency for Persons with Disabilities decision, which denied services to a child with a previously established intellectual disability. Riecscs was also a student advocate with FSU Law's Children's Advocacy Clinic during the fall of her 2L year and worked on family law cases and presentations. She primarily assisted clients with issues relating to child custody, visitation and child support, and also presented to incarcerated individuals on family law issues, specifically dependency and dissolution of marriage. During the summer after her 1L year, Riecscs worked as a law student assistant with FSU Law's Office of Development and Alumni Affairs, where she contacted alumni to update their information and seek contributions to the College of Law.



During her time at FSU Law, Riecscs was a law SNAP member of the William H. Stafford Housing Inn of Court as a 3L, and chapter co-founder of the student organization If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice, where she also served as president from 2019-2021. Riecscs wrote an article and notes editor for the Journal of Transnational Law & Policy as a 3L and a sub-citer as a 2L. She also served as the Women's Law Symposium's 1L representative and as their external vice president during her 2L year. If you are interested in connecting with or hiring Riecscs after graduation, visit her [LinkedIn profile](#).

"My time as an undergraduate at UCF in Orlando inspired my passion for justice and advocacy, and the last three years at FSU have sharpened and strengthened that passion. I am grateful for the experiences and opportunities that the College of Law has given me, particularly from my work at the Public Interest Law Center. I am excited to put that hard work to good use in the form of new experiences and challenges as I begin my career as a lawyer."

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