



Association of American Law Schools

July 20, 2018

MEMORANDUM

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TO: Council of the American Bar Association Section of Legal
Education and Admissions to the Bar

FROM: Judith Areen, Executive Director

SUBJECT: AALS Activities Report

This report summarizes the major activities of the AALS through mid-July 2018.

Thank you to the Council and your Chair, Dean Maureen A. O'Rourke, Chair-elect, Dean Jeffrey Lewis, and Managing Director of Accreditation and Legal Education, Barry Currier, for your willingness to work with AALS on shared concerns of our organizations and constituencies.

Overview

Since our last report in April, AALS held the AALS Conference on Clinical Legal Education in Chicago and the AALS Workshop for New Law School Teachers in Washington, D.C. Planning is underway for the AALS Faculty Recruitment Conference in Washington, D.C. and the 2019 Annual Meeting in New Orleans. In addition, the association has focused on research initiatives, enhancing faculty recruitment services, supporting AALS Sections, and continuing the work of communicating the innovations and accomplishments of law schools—and their students and faculty—through a variety of channels.

Staff

We are pleased to report that Professor Sean Scott has agreed to serve as the next Associate Director of AALS. She recently completed eight years of service as the academic associate dean of Loyola, Los Angeles Law School, where she has been a member of the faculty for more than 25 years. Her academic areas are race and law, gender and law, and disability rights. Her term will begin on August 15, 2018.

Development

Fourteen firms and four corporate counsel departments are now supporting the AALS Project in Support of American Legal Education: Akin Gump, Arnold & Porter, Covington & Burling, Cravath, K&L Gates, Proskauer, O'Melveny & Myers, Paul Weiss, Sidley Austin, Sullivan & Cromwell, Wachtell, White & Case, Williams & Connolly, and WilmerHale. Qualcomm was the lead sponsor of the 2018 Annual Meeting. They join the corporate counsel offices of Clorox, Microsoft, and Starbucks as supporters.

The AALS Executive Committee formally launched the AALS Fellows Program at the Annual Meeting in January. The Fellows Program was established to generate funds to support activities that benefit all law schools and to help to strengthen AALS for future generations of law faculty. The Founding Circle now includes 45 members.

In preparation for the 2019 AALS Annual Meeting, we have started laying the groundwork with the Louisiana legal community. We have had discussions with several state and local bar associations including the New Orleans Chapter of the Louis A. Martinet Society and Louisiana chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel to solicit suggestions on the best way to engage the local legal community. Members of the bar and bench will be invited to attend one day of the Annual Meeting and a lunch reception.

Meetings

The next AALS Annual Meeting will be held in New Orleans, from January 2 to January 6, 2019. AALS President Wendy Perdue has chosen "Building Bridges" as the theme of her presidency and of the 2019 Annual Meeting. According to Dean Perdue, the theme serves as a call for the legal academy and profession to "display our traditions of professionalism, civility, and reasoned disagreement, and inspire the next generation to 'think like a lawyer' about society's problems: to listen, consider, reason, collaborate, resolve, and even heal."

AALS continues to work on keeping costs down for Annual Meeting attendees, and on improving the experience of those attending the Annual Meeting. As with the last three annual meetings, AALS will provide a 50 percent discount on the meeting fee at the 2019 Annual Meeting for new faculty (those in their first three years of teaching) and for retired faculty.

The Before the JD (BJD) Project

AALS staff have been working diligently on the *Before the JD* project in the run-up to the first published report from the initiative. Through a national survey of undergraduates and first-year law students, the project seeks to understand the factors contributing to the decisions of undergraduates to pursue a law degree or not. The survey, distributed in fall 2017, generated responses from thousands of undergraduate and first-year law students. Since that time, Gallup researchers have been conducting analyses of the data and working with AALS on a final report. Several groups have been involved in the review process including AALS staff, representatives

from the project sponsors (including the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar), an academic advisory group, and a set of interested law school deans. The project remains on track to release a final report in September.

In addition, AALS is working with Gallup and LSAC on a report on the factors related to the decision to seek other graduate or professional degrees. Titled *Beyond the Bachelor's*, the report is designed for university presidents, provosts, and graduate school deans.