MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Judith Arsen, Executive Director

SUBJECT: AALS Activities Report

This report summarizes the major activities of the AALS from November 2018 through January 2019.

Thank you to the Council and your Chair, Dean Jeffrey Lewis, Chair-elect, Diane Bosse, and Managing Director of Accreditation and Legal Education, Barry Currier, for your willingness to work with the AALS on issues of common concern to our organizations and constituencies.

AALS Annual Meeting

The 2019 AALS Annual Meeting convened in New Orleans from January 2-6 with more than 2,400 law faculty, deans, professional staff, and exhibitors in attendance. The theme of the meeting, “Building Bridges,” was selected by 2018 AALS President Wendy Perdue (Dean, University of Richmond School of Law) and many of the programs and events explored the important role lawyers and law schools play in helping to resolve the most pressing conflicts facing society today.

The Annual Meeting welcomed several notable speakers and presenters, including the Honorable Edwin Cameron from the Constitutional Court of South Africa. Justice Cameron addressed attendees at the Opening Plenary Session, discussing his experience as a lawyer observing the power of the law during the dismantling of apartheid and the construction of the new South African constitution.

Michael A. Olivas, professor and former dean of the University of Houston Law Center, was presented with the AALS Triennial Award for Lifetime Service to Legal Education and the Law—the Association's
highest honor—at the AALS House of Representatives meeting on January 3.

More than 140 law school deans participated in the Dean’s Forum day-long program on Friday, January 4 for sessions on leadership, peer support and the challenges facing legal education today. Former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu opened the program with a talk on leadership in a time of crisis.

2019 AALS President Vicki Jackson (Harvard Law School) delivered her inaugural address and announced her theme for the year and the 2020 Annual Meeting as “Pillars of Democracy: Law, Representation, and Knowledge.”

AALS Conference on Clinical Legal Education

AALS staff and faculty volunteers are planning the 42nd Annual AALS Conference on Clinical Legal Education taking place May 4-7 in San Francisco. The conference is the Association’s second largest behind the Annual Meeting and is organized under this year’s theme of “Teaching the Next Generation of Lawyer Leaders in a Time of Polarization.” The conference is preceded by the Clinical & Experiential Law Program Directors Workshop, to be held May 3-4.

Before the JD and Beyond the Bachelor’s

After the successful launch and reception of the Before the JD and Beyond the Bachelor’s Reports, the AALS research team is working on additional reports using the data as well as presentations to many higher education and legal profession related organizations. The National Association for Law Placement (NALP) has asked for a newsletter article or webinar for their members. The National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) has asked for an article for The Bar Examiners magazine as well as a presentation at their 2019 annual meeting. The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) has expressed interest in a presentation and the American Board of Trial Advocates is interested in an article submission as well.

Communications

For the third year, AALS measured how much law schools contribute to the delivery of much-needed legal services through clinics, other experiential courses, and pro bono activities of law students. In fall of 2018, 84 law schools reported that 16,502 law students in the class of 2018 contributed 3.48 million hours in legal services as part of their legal education, an average of about 211 hours per student. Independent Sector, a nonprofit organization coalition, estimates the value of volunteer time to be $24.69 an hour. Using this number, the total value of the students’ time at these schools is estimated to be in excess of $85.9 million. The schools participating in the survey represent approximately half of the students in ABA accredited law schools in the class of 2018.

AALS is now emailing its list of symposia at member schools on a regular basis to inform law faculty of professional development opportunities taking place across the nation. The list is currently hosted on the front page of the AALS website. AALS now reaches out to faculty with
online editions of *AALS News* and the *Journal of Legal Education*, as well as the weekly Legal Education News Digest available for anyone in the public who would like to subscribe.

**Connecting with the Bar and Bench**

AALS leadership and law school deans met with a representative group of members of the bench and bar during the AALS Annual Meeting in New Orleans for a lunch reception on January 3. Several judges and law firm partners also attended Annual Meeting programs that day as part of the invitation.

During the meeting, AALS leadership met with ABA President-Elect Judy Perry Martinez as well as ABA Immediate Past President Hilarie Bass, who took part in an AALS Program on “#MeToo The Courts, the Academy and Law Firms.”

**Nominations for AALS President-Elect and Executive Committee**

At the AALS Annual Meeting, the AALS House of Representatives confirmed the nomination of Darby Dickerson (Dean, John Marshall Law School) to serve as President-Elect of the Association and D. Benjamin Barros (Dean, University of Toledo College of Law) and L. Song Richardson (Dean, University of California, Irvine School of Law) to serve on the AALS Executive Committee for three-year terms. With the conclusion of the Second Meeting of the House of Representatives on January 4, 2019, three committee members concluded their service on the Executive Committee: 2018 Immediate Past President Paul Marcus (William & Mary Law School), Alicia Alvarez (University of Michigan Law School), and Vincent D. Rougeau (Dean, Boston College Law School) completed their three-year terms on the Executive Committee.