April 17, 2019

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Judith Areen, Executive Director, Association of American Law Schools

SUBJECT: AALS Activities Report

This report summarizes the major activities of the AALS from February to mid-April 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.

Overview

Since the 2019 Annual Meeting in January, AALS has been working on planning the AALS Conference on Clinical Legal Education in San Francisco, the AALS Workshop for New Law School Teachers in Washington, D.C., and the 2020 Annual Meeting, also in Washington, D.C. In addition, the Association has been focused on research initiatives, enhancing faculty recruitment services, supporting AALS Sections, and communicating the innovations and accomplishments of law schools—and their students and faculty—through a variety of channels.
AALS Faculty Recruitment Services

This spring, AALS staff and faculty committee volunteers are in the process of enhancing services and reworking information provided to applicants and faculty appointments committees in advance of the Faculty Recruitment Conference this fall in Washington, D.C. The new materials will better explain the faculty recruitment process and include video interviews with recently hired faculty members and links to other resources for applicants.

AALS Meetings

AALS staff and faculty volunteers are planning the 42nd Annual AALS Conference on Clinical Legal Education which will take place May 4-7, 2019 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, 2019. The conference has a new look this year with shorter concurrent sessions and new “lightning” sessions, designed to spark novel thoughts and ideas.

Registration is underway for the 36th AALS Workshop for New Law School Teachers which will take place June 6-8, 2019 in Washington, D.C. The workshop’s many interactive sessions provide an opportunity for new law school faculty to consider their career through multiple roles—as teacher, scholar, mentor, and institutional citizen.

Planning is also underway for the 2020 Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. AALS President Vicki Jackson (Harvard Law School) announced her theme for this year and the 2020 Annual Meeting as “Pillars of Democracy: Law, Representation, and Knowledge.” To better support AALS faculty, AALS staff have worked to provide clearer information on how to propose a program to be considered for inclusion in the meeting.

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 collected 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) published an article in the spring issue of The Bar Examiner magazine and asked for a presentation at their 2019 annual meeting. The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) has expressed interest in a presentation and the AALS research team will be publishing an article in an upcoming issue of the American Board of Trial Advocates’ magazine, Voir Dire.

Communications

The Communications Department assisted the AALS Section on Women in Legal Education for the launch of its Oral History Project featuring interviews with some of the first and most influential female law professors. The project can be found on the AALS website
[www.aals.org/WILEOralHistory] or as a playlist on the AALS YouTube Channel [at www.aals.org/youtube]. The project was featured in a session at the 2019 AALS Annual Meeting in New Orleans and was covered by the National Law Journal in January.

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 also hosted on the front page of the AALS website. AALS continues to reach out to faculty with online editions of AALS News and the Journal of Legal Education, as well as the weekly Legal Education News Digest, which is available for anyone in the public who would like to subscribe.

Connecting with the Bar and Bench

Kirkland & Ellis has joined the fifteen law firms and two corporate legal departments (Clorox and Starbucks) who are sponsors of the AALS Project in Support of American Legal Education. The additional firms are: 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.

For the 5th year, AALS will host a coffee reception for members of the practicing bar and bench on the morning of Friday, January 3, 2020 in conjunction with the AALS Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. Invited attendees will include representatives from local law firms, corporate counsel departments, public interest groups, bar association officials, and the local judiciary. AALS has been providing timely updates about AALS to previous bar and bench event attendees from Annual Meetings in New York, San Francisco, San Diego, and New Orleans.