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 July through October 2019.

Thank you to the Council and your Chair, Diane Bosse, Chair-elect, The Hon. Scott Bales, and Managing Director of Accreditation and Legal Education, Barry Currier, for your willingness to work with AALS on issues of importance to our organizations and shared constituencies.

Overview

Over the last few months, AALS hosted the Faculty Recruitment Conference in Washington, D.C., and continued preparations for the 2020 Annual Meeting, also in Washington, D.C. In addition, the association launched new resources on our website for those interested in law teaching, debuted an email subscription for legal education related blog articles, and created a new listing of books published by law faculty. AALS also announced the nominees for 2020 AALS President-Elect and membership on the AALS Executive Committee.
AALS Faculty Recruitment Services

The AALS Faculty Recruitment Conference took place from October 3-5, 2019 in Washington, D.C. In a sign that faculty hiring is improving, the most recent AALS Placement Bulletin contained the largest number of positions (257) and number of law schools placing ads (118) in at least 4 years. This is up from 207 position advertised and 98 schools placing ads last year.

Over the summer, AALS made two major investments in our faculty recruitment services: a new website with resources and advice on becoming a law teacher, and a new technology platform for the Faculty Appointments Register that will be used in the 2020-21 recruiting cycle.

AALS staff and faculty committee volunteers have worked to enhance services and improve information provided to candidates and faculty appointments committees in advance of the Faculty Recruitment Conference this fall in Washington, D.C. The materials are hosted on “Becoming a Law Teacher,” at https://teach.aals.org. The goal of the site is to make the process of obtaining a teaching job as transparent as possible, and to provide useful information to potential candidates. The website makes the faculty recruitment process more transparent, provides resources, and includes multi-media interviews. Additional material will be added to the site in the months to come.

This fall, AALS also hosted a webinar for candidates on preparing for the screening interviews that take place at the Faculty Recruitment Conference as well as a second webinar for candidates on getting ready for on-campus call-back interviews. Both webinars are available on the Becoming a Law Teacher website.

Faculty hiring committees have long expressed interest in technology that would allow for more digital collaboration and review of application material. The platform we will use is by Interfolio, a company with a history of supporting faculty hiring at a number of universities and academic associations. The system will be ready in advance of the 2020-21 hiring cycle.

In the meantime, upgrades have been made to the current Faculty Appointments Register system and we have revised our website to better explain the suite of AALS Faculty Recruitment Services available to member and fee-paid schools, as well as to faculty candidates.

AALS Annual Meeting

Planning continues 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 is “Pillars of Democracy: Law, Representation, and Knowledge.” To better support AALS faculty, AALS staff has provided clearer information on our website to make it easier to propose a program to be considered for inclusion in the meeting. Meeting planners have also clustered section programs on major topics to assist attendees in arranging their schedules.
Communications

In addition to the weekly AALS Legal Education News Digest, those interested can now subscribe to a new Legal Education Blogs Digest, a compilation of blog posts about law schools and legal education. An archive of blog posts and subscription information can be found at [www.aals.org/news/legal-education-blogs](http://www.aals.org/news/legal-education-blogs).

The association also debuted a new webpage that lists books authored by law faculty at [www.aals.org/faculty-books](http://www.aals.org/faculty-books/). New books will be added to the page on an on-going basis.

AALS is working to make its news archive more useful for its users including law school admission professionals and prospective law students. New search categories include advice for prospective students, pre-law pipeline programs, and 3+3 accelerated JD/bachelor’s degree programs. The new categories can be found at [www.aals.org/news](http://www.aals.org/news).

Nominees for AALS President-Elect and Membership on the Executive Committee

The Nominating Committee for 2020 Officers and Members of the AALS Executive Committee nominated Vincent D. Rougeau, Dean of Boston College Law School, to become President-elect. Vince is a nationally recognized leader in legal education who completed a three-year term on the Executive Committee in 2018. An advocate for innovation and reform in legal education, he is well-positioned to lead the Executive Committee through the challenges facing law schools today. The Committee also nominated for three-year-terms on the Executive Committee Austen L. Parrish, Dean and James H. Rudy Professor at Indiana University Maurer School of Law, and Melanie D. Wilson, Dean and Lindsay Young Distinguished Professor of Law at University of Tennessee College of Law. Their nominations will be voted on at the second meeting of the House of Representatives at the 2020 Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, January 4.

Study of the American Law School Dean

AALS has been awarded a grant from AccessLex Institute to support research and professional development, including a “study of the American law school dean” that will cover such topics as how law school deans are recruited and selected, career paths to the deanship, the leadership attributes most sought after in law school deans, the selection process, and the most pressing issues deans currently face. The study was inspired by the American College President Study prepared by the American Council on Education (ACE), now in its eighth edition.

A survey of all law school deans will be the cornerstone of the new report and is planned to be conducted in fall of 2020. The goal of the study is to make the process of becoming and serving as a law dean more transparent to the benefit of legal education and higher education.