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## From the Chair:



Chair, Danielle Kocal

Hello all! I would like to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Danielle Kocal. I am the Director of Academic Success at the Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University, and I am the chair of the AALS Section on Academic Support for 2017. I began working in Academic Support in 2009 and have been an active member of our AALS section since then. I have served on the Program Committee since 2010 and was the chair of the Committee for both the 2016 and 2017 Annual Meeting Programs.

I am thrilled to serve as Chair of our Section during this very exciting and crucial time in Academic Support. Around the country, many Academic Support programs are expanding as schools recognize the importance of addressing the changing needs of our students. Many of us are dealing with a new bar exam, or will likely be dealing with one in the near future. The focus of legal education is shifting to producing practice-ready graduates rather than treating academia as a separate entity from law practice, and our programs and departments play a huge role in instilling these necessary skills in our students. Things are changing, and Academic Support professionals are on the front lines.

Our committees have an exciting year planned for our section, and I look forward to working with all of you this year and beyond.

## 2017 Conference Recap

The 2017 Annual Meeting was held in San Francisco, CA. The topic for the Section on Academic Support was entitled “Why Academic Support Matters.” Presentations

explored the importance of Academic Support programs in addressing the needs of a changing law school student body, and how Academic Support—once a standalone skills component to the legal education—has now become ingrained in the broader law school curriculum.

**Moderator: Danielle Bifulci Kocal**, Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University  
**Speaker: Louis N. Schulze, Jr.**, Florida International University College of Law - “Why Academic Support Matters: Alternative Justifications for Academic Support”

**Speaker: James McGrath**, Texas A&M University School of Law – “Convincing your Administration and Doctrinal Faculty to Adopt Proven Learning Techniques”

**Speaker: Richard F. Storrow**, City University of New York School of Law - “Putting Academic Support Programs out of Business (in a Good Way): Integration of Academic Support Content and Methods into Family Law and Property”



Panelists from L to R: Richard Storrow, James McGrath, Louis Schulze, Danielle Kocal

# Committee Updates

## Programming Committee

### Chair: Jamie Kleppetsch

The 112<sup>th</sup> AALS Annual Meeting will be held in San Diego, California, on January 3 – 6, 2018. The meeting theme this year is “Access to Justice.” The Section on Academic Support’s Program Committee decided to relate our section program to this theme and focus on the ways academic support intersects with access to justice. Law school academic support has a rich history of providing opportunity and access to students from historically marginalized groups. Equal justice is achieved through access and access starts with admission to law school but students still need support. We wanted our section program to highlight support mechanisms in place for law students from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds when entering law school, successfully completing law school, and passing the bar exam. We also wanted to feature the important history of law school academic support and how current academic support programs strive to meet the needs of law students from historically marginalized groups. Our section program theme this year is “Equal Access to Justice: Supporting Law Students from Diverse Backgrounds from Admission through the Bar Exam.” Many excellent proposals were submitted that showcased the exceptional work being accomplished by academic support professors to address the aforementioned issues around the country. The Committee chose four presentations that share the history of academic support and provide multiple ways that academic support is making a difference with historically marginalized groups and changing the law school culture for the better. Additionally, this year our section program has been granted a half-day spot in the meeting program and we will be publishing the program in the Maryland Journal on Race, Religion, Gender, and Class. We look forward to seeing you in San Diego on January 6 from 9 am - Noon!

## Bar Passage Committee

### Co-chairs: Goldie Pritchard and Raul Ruiz

The Bar Advocacy Committee is convening to discuss goals and undertakings for the remainder of the year but also to develop recommendations for future consideration.

## Webinar Committee

### Chair: Jennifer Carr

We are excited to take advantage of the new technology offered by AALS, which gives us the ability to host webinars for our members. This will enable us to allow members to participate in AALS activities, who might not be able to travel to the Annual Meeting. The Webinar Committee is a new committee that was created after the 2017 Annual Meeting, tasked with deciding logistics of hosting a mid-year webinar. More information about webinar opportunities is forthcoming.

## Learning Curve

### Executive Editor: Chelsea Baldwin

The Learning Curve produces two newsletters a year with articles written by academic support professors and other professors interested in meeting students where they are at and helping them reach their full potential. The summer issue will be distributed soon and we are accepting articles of 500 to 2000 words in length in Word format for a Winter issue on the theme of advising, counseling, and troubleshooting academic difficulty at [learningcurveasp@gmail.com](mailto:learningcurveasp@gmail.com).

## Awards Committee

### Chair: Natt Gantt

The Awards Committee will be circulating information about this year’s Section Award, to be given at the 2018 Annual Meeting in the fall semester.

## Nominations Committee

### Chair: Courtney Lee

The Nominations Committee will be sending a Call for Nominations for the 2018 Executive Committee in the fall semester.

If you were unable to attend the Annual Meeting but would still like to sign up for a committee, email [dkocal@law.pace.edu](mailto:dkocal@law.pace.edu). Serving on a committee is a great way to get involved and have your voice heard!