2014 LES Student Representatives Elected

In September the Legal Studies Department held its annual graduate and undergraduate student elections. This year’s election winners are undergraduate student Ashley Lei, and graduate student Brad Stephenson. The student representatives serve as a bridge between faculty and students, and are a way for student’s voices to be heard by the department.

Ashley Lei was born in 1992 in China and came to the U.S. at the age of 12. She graduated from Lower Merion High School (Ardmore, Pennsylvania) with a scholar title. She took an interest in law at a young age and came to UIS to pursue her dream. In her spare time she enjoys ultimate Frisbee, and was Pennsylvania state champion in women's Frisbee in 2010. Ashley is currently the Vice President of the Chinese student association here at UIS.

Brad is currently in his final year of the Master of Arts in Legal Studies program. He is an online student, and currently resides in Chicago, where he works downtown for the law firm of Golan & Christie LLP as a Paralegal in the Reorganization and Bankruptcy, Commercial and Business Litigation, Intellectual Property, and Mortgage Foreclosure Prosecution and Defense departments. Previously, he worked as both a Paralegal and Corporate Training Manager for a national law firm in downtown Chicago. He served as the Graduate Student Representative last year and has previously worked with Dr. Jordan as a graduate teaching assistant for LES 501.

New Student Worker Hired

Duane Malany is a junior double major in Legal Studies and Political Science. He is the student worker for Legal Studies/Political Science/Global Studies departments. He is also a columnist for The UIS Journal. He previously worked for two years in a local lobbying firm in Springfield after high school. Later, he enlisted into the Illinois National Guard where he was stationed at Ft. Benning, GA as a paratrooper, and also served on active duty at Camp Lincoln for the last 4 years. Duane is primarily focused on completing his undergrad studies, and remaining flexible for the future. Duane will be assisting the faculty of Legal Studies, Political Science, and Global Studies.
Department Welcomes
Two New Professors

Assistant Visiting Professor Erica Nichols Cook

Erica Nichols Cook is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Legal Studies. She is teaching Legal Research & Citation and Intro to the American Legal System this semester. Previously, she was a staff attorney for the Illinois Innocence Project and responsible for directing the Wrongful Convictions Grant Review program which reviewed non-DNA related claims of innocence in Illinois. Prior to her role with the Illinois Innocence Project, she was an Assistant Cook County Public Defender.

Professor Nichols Cook received a Bachelor’s Degree in Legal Studies in 2005 from University of Illinois Springfield and a Juris Doctorate in 2009 from Drake University School of Law. While at Drake, she participated in the Drake Legal Clinic criminal defense clinic. Her article “Eyewitness Identification and the Need for Change in Iowa” was published in the 2009 issue of the Drake Law Review. While in law school, she clerked for the Illinois Office of State Appellate Defender and served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for the juvenile justice system in Iowa. She graduated with Honors and the Ferguson Gold Award for Public Service.

She is a Board member of the Illinois Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (IACDL) and chair of the CLE committee, a member of the Sangamon County Bar Association, Central Illinois Women’s Bar Association and Illinois State Bar Association. Professor Nichols Cook concentrates her research on wrongful convictions and junk science evidentiary issues.

Assistant Professor Riaz Tejani

Riaz Tejani is a legal anthropologist with interests in law and global governance, comparative federalism, social movements, race theory, and legal education. His current ethnographic research examines the political and moral economy behind “for-profit” law schools. Riaz’s regional interests cover the European Union and United States, and he teaches courses in Law and Society, Politics and Law, Comparative Law, Legal Anthropology, and Torts. Riaz is a contributor at New Legal Realism Conversations: An Empirical Law & Society Blog, and his recent writings have appeared in University of New Hampshire Law Review, San Diego Law Review, Political and Legal Anthropology Review (forthcoming), and The New Legal Realism: Translating Law-And-Society For Today’s Legal Practice (Stewart Macaulay, Elizabeth Mertz & Thomas Mitchell eds., Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). From 2002 to 2005 Riaz completed ethnographic field research among civil rights NGOs in France where he held affiliations with the École Normale Supérieure and the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization in Paris. He earned a PhD from Princeton University and a JD from the USC Gould School of Law where he was a Fellow at the Center for Law, History, and Culture. Riaz completed a BA magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from the University of California, San Diego.
**LES Professors in the News**

**Professors Giving Presentations Throughout Country, World**


In addition to her recent presentations, Jordan also had a very busy summer, publishing a book review in June titled, Rebels at the Bar: The Fascinating, Forgotten Stories of America’s First Women Lawyers (New Y ork: New Y ork University Press, 2013) in Women's History Review. Also, in August Jordan argued and won a petition for post conviction DNA testing in McLean County in the case of the People of the State of Illinois v. Barton McNeil for the Illinois Innocence Project. Mr. McNeil is currently serving a 100 year sentence for a 1999 murder conviction.

In August, Professor Riaz Tejani presented a paper titled, “Les Amalgams: the Extra-Legality of Race as Religion in French Civil Rights Participation”, at the University of California Irvine School of Law. This conference gathering included law scholars from the University of Wisconsin, Harvard, Northwestern, Columbia, Cornell, and UCI.

Professor Tejani had an article, "National Geographies: Toward a Federalism Function of American Tort Law", appear in the University of San Diego Law Review Vol. 51 Issue 1 in August. Along with his article, Tejani also had an essay appear in New Legal Realism Conversations in August. Please click the following link to read Tejani’s article. Are We All For Profit?
Assistant Professor Suzanne Dennis Borland has been working with Dr. Barbara Hayler, UIS Professor Emerita of Criminal Justice, on the Illinois Judicial Survey Project. In 2012, they surveyed our state’s appellate and trial court judges (replicating a 1980-81 survey) and garnered an almost-53% response rate. “The Illinois Judiciary: Comparing Judges Today and Thirty Years Ago”, co-authored with Barbara Hayler, will be published in the November 2014 issue of Illinois Issues. That article compares the demographic composition of the current Illinois Appellate Court and Illinois Circuit Court to that of those courts thirty years ago. Some of the changes that our data evidence are quite interesting. For example, in addition to the expected change in gender composition (thirty years ago, both courts were predominantly, if not entirely, male, and now female judges comprise about 30% of each bench), the religious and political affiliations of judges have also changed significantly. In 1981, Illinois Appellate Court respondents were 29% Catholic, 59% Protestant, and 11% Jewish, as opposed to 50% Catholic, 28% Protestant, and 13% Jewish in 2012; in 1981, Illinois Appellate Court respondents were 61% Democrat and 36% Republican, as compared with 47% Democrat, 38% Republican, and 13% Independent in 2012.

Additionally, Suzanne presented “Maximizing Response Rates on a 2012 Survey of Illinois Judges,” (a paper detailing the methodology of our survey project utilizing Dillman’s Tailored Design Method) at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting in Chicago (April 2014) and “Do women judge differently? Analyzing the effects of gender on judicial attitudes and role orientations, utilizing the results from a 2012 survey of Illinois judges,” at the Law & Society Association annual conference (May 2014).

UIS Competes in Mock Trial Associations Competition

UIS formed a mock trial team and successfully competed in two tournaments (in Joliet and Cedar Rapids, Iowa) last academic year. This year’s team has been working on the AMTA case, Park v. Duran, since August and will compete in fall tournaments in Quincy (November 1st) and Bloomington-Normal (November 14th-16th). The new course LES 376: Trial Advocacy: Civil has supported students’ knowledge about the rules of evidence and the litigation process, including strategy, analysis and “performance”. 2014-15 team members are: Chance Austin, Cassidy Burkardt, Andrea Carlson, Bob Gibbons, Faith Hook, Breanna Hunt, Josh Lawson, Austin Mehmet, and Vanessa Pratt. Faculty advisor is Suzanne Borland. Attorney coaches are Bill Davis and Rex Gradeless.

Students interested in mock trial should contact Suzanne Borland at sborl2@uis.edu
Alumni Spotlight

Laura Carley

Laura Carley is a 1993 graduate of Sangamon State University. She is currently the compliance manager for Colony Capital, LLC in Santa Monica, CA. Her department deals with the SEC regulatory requirements for her company. Laura chose to attend SSU/UIS based on the Legal Studies program, when her interest in the field was sparked by a business law class at another university. She credits the Legal Studies department at SSU/UIS with preparing her with the basis for legal knowledge to start her career as a paralegal. Her advice for current students is to learn the basics, be flexible, and think outside the box. “In my experience as a paralegal, I became the "go to" person as in I would figure out various issues presented to me. I was a corporate, real estate and investment paralegal for many years and I naturally fell into the compliance role. The compliance field is growing and I would advise students to look into this field if they have an interest.”

Elizabeth VonDeBur

Elizabeth VonDeBur is a graduate of the Legal Studies program at UIS. Location, availability, and affordability were some of the biggest reasons for her decision to attend UIS after completing two years at a community college. “By the time I finished undergrad I had very minimal student loans, something many of my friends were not able to say.”

VonDeBur is currently employed at the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency as a legal investigator. Her unit is responsible for reviewing the records and determining whether any of the information is exempt under the FOIA Statutes while maintaining the State’s goal of transparency and accountability. For students looking for a job upon graduation, she says she looks for candidates to have practical experience gained through internships, volunteer opportunities, or part time jobs in related fields. Her advice to current students is to utilize professors for their skills, information, and knowledge. “All of my professors at UIS possessed a plethora of information not only for the specific courses I was taking, but about opportunities in the field. Most of them had teaching, research and practical experience that they were happy to share with you and work with you to figure out what it is you are hoping to do with your education.”
ATTENTION ALL STUDENTS CONSIDERING LAW SCHOOL
The UIS Pre-Law Center is your one-stop shop for law school advising services. Whether you are just beginning to consider law school, are preparing to take the LSAT, or need advice on choosing a law school or crafting your application, the Pre-Law Center is your headquarters. If you have questions about the services provided by the Pre-Law Center, or would like to set an appointment to discuss your law school ambitions do not hesitate to reach out by emailing uisplc@uis.edu. You can also stop by Monday – Thursday between the hours of 1:30p and 5:30pm.

Drexel Law School Presentation
In October, Issa DiSciullo, Assistant Dean of Admissions at the Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law, visited the UIS campus to present on all that Drexel Law has to offer. She also put on a terrific Mock Admissions Workshop to give students insight into the somewhat mysterious law school admissions process.

UIUC Law School Fair
In September, the Pre-Law Center travelled with a group of law-school bound UIS students to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for their annual Law School Fair. Participants attended a property law class and tour at the UI College of Law and gained access to admissions representatives from law schools from all over the nation.