



PLANC Points

Newsletter of the Pre-Law Advisors National Council
PLANC.org

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Fall 2019

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Chair's Message

Sandy Self, PLANC Chair - Professor of Political Science, Director of Legal Studies Hardin-Simmons University



I have a confession to make. Stepping into the PLANC chair position has been a somewhat intimidating endeavor for me. One would think that 30+ years of courtroom and classroom experience under my belt would have assisted me in this transition from chair-elect to chair. Wrong. I have tried to analyze the source of my apprehension and I have concluded that the blame falls primarily on RJ Holmes-Leopold and Wendy Vonnegut. Wendy was the chair when I first started attending PLANC meetings as a SWAPLA representative, and

RJ, as I'm sure we all would agree, is the one and only RJ. The professionalism and competence demonstrated by both of these past chairs set the bar very high. In addition, other past chairs who I have had the pleasure to come to know and work with during my years on the PLANC Board including, Gerald Wilson, Jerry Polinard, and Mel Hailey, are also to be blamed for setting such an extraordinary standard of leadership and governance. From what I have heard about the other past chairs that, unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to come to know, the bar originally set by Gerald, the first PLANC Chair, has remained elevated since PLANC's June 14, 1984, founding. Needless to say, I have very big shoes to fill with my size 6

feet, and I feel honored and privileged to tackle this opportunity.

The fall PLANC Board Meeting was held on October 19th in New Orleans. RJ, Chair-Elect Mike Vitlip, Treasurer Don Racheter, Conference Chair Mary Nadarski, Conference Program Chair Kevin Freeman, and I arrived a day early to meet with the Intercontinental Hotel staff (our conference host hotel) and visit Loyola University College of Law and Tulane University School of Law. I want to thank the hotel staff, Loyola, and Tulane for their gracious hospitality.

On the 18th Loyola treated our exec group to a delicious lunch which we enjoyed with several of their admissions professionals spearheaded by the Director of Law Admissions Kimberly Jones and Law Admissions Specialist Tia Andrews. After lunch, Tia escorted us on a lovely walk to the law school followed by a tour of the facilities by Kimberly.

The exec group also visited Tulane on the 18th for a tour of the law school as well as some additional potential meeting spaces on the main campus. This was arranged by Assistant Dean of Admissions David Weinberg and the tour was provided by Assistant Director of Admissions Julia Martin.

On October 19th Loyola provided a classroom at the law school and lunch for our board meeting. Assistant Admissions Director Rick Bolte forfeited his day off to assist us and began by accompanying RJ to purchase bagels and coffee for the start of our meeting that morning. Rick later brought lunch for the board which included a variety of tempting and tasty New Orleans signature dishes.

I want to thank all of the members of the board who traveled to New Orleans for our meeting and Nancy Gibson, NAPLA, who joined us via conference call. We welcomed first-time attendees, Rita Ralston, NAPLA, Benita (Angel) Powell, SAPLA, Dave Diamond, NALP, and Gisele Joachim, LSAC. It was great to see each of you and to work with you on some important PLANC matters. Thank you for your input and patience, in particular, as we made a substantial amount of progress towards updating the by-laws. Scott Hendrickson did an excellent job leading the discussion regarding proposed by-laws amendments and revisions. I hope that everyone enjoyed your time in NOLA and that you are looking forward to our 2020 Conference there. Our next board meeting will be March 7-9, 2020, in Philadelphia.

Sandy Self, PLANC Chair (2019-21)

PLANC 2020 Quadrennial Conference

“Recovery and Growth: Best Practices and Creative Approaches in Pre-Law”



New Orleans, Louisiana

June 8 - June 11, 2020

Intercontinental New Orleans Hotel

Conference registration will open in early 2020.

Conference registration fees for Pre-Law Advisors:

- Early Bird - \$500
- Regular - \$550
- Walk-Up - \$625

Call for Proposals

The program submission deadline is in two weeks, Sunday, December 1!

To submit a proposal:

1. Please first review the Conference Theme and Conference Program Tracks listed below.
2. Click the link that follows to complete the submission form.

Call for Proposal information is also currently available on the [PLANC website](#).

PLANC 2020 Conference Theme

The conference theme for PLANC 2020 is “*Recovery and Growth: Best Practices and Creative Approaches in Pre-Law.*” This theme was created with several things in mind:

- It acknowledges the impact the 2008 recession had on legal education and the legal community, that we’ve been hit hard but are now recovering.
- It highlights the strong foundation of legal education and pre-law advising (Best Practices) which are making the recovery possible, as well as new ideas and

opportunities (Creative Approaches) which are paving the way for future growth in the profession.

- It is set against the background of New Orleans, a city with a strong community foundation that has been undergoing its own recovery and growth over the past 14 years.

The 2020 Conference will feature multiple Day 1 workshops aimed at new(er) Pre-Law Advisors as well as workshops for experienced Pre-Law Advisors and Law School Admission officers. The conference will also include several plenary sessions, a Law Fair, an APLA-hosted breakfast and business meeting, and multiple opportunities for networking with colleagues. Several concurrent (breakout) sessions will be offered throughout the 4-day conference, organized into six Conference Program Tracks.

Conference Program Tracks

Please see below for descriptions of the program tracks for the 2020 Conference.

- These are only intended as examples and are not meant to be exhaustive in their coverage of potential topics for each track. Proposals on other topics are encouraged as long as they align with the main idea of one or more of the program tracks; when completing the submission form please indicate the top two tracks with which the proposal best aligns.

After Law School - This track will focus on highlighting trends in the field of law with regard to changes in the legal job market and the profession as a whole. Potential session topics could include job market outlooks, career trends, alternate career options, new programs aimed at helping students make career decisions, changes in ABA regulations regarding outreach to law students, how the profession has changed since 2008, etc.

Beyond the Basics - This track will focus on how Pre-Law Advisors are working with students beyond the traditional slide presentations and 1:1 advising sessions. Session topics might focus on experiential learning opportunities, new approaches to LSAT prep, creating comprehensive programming, advising in a digital world, using social media or other technology as a resource, etc.

A Changing Legal Community - This track will focus on issues related to diversifying the profession as well as changing trends regarding why students are entering law school. Examples of potential topics could include pipeline initiatives by undergraduate institutions or law schools, working with applicants with disabilities, career pathways outside of traditional legal practice, the growing concern for social justice as a motivator for pursuing a legal career, how JDs are being used after law school, etc.

Not Your Parents' Law School - This track will focus on new and innovative approaches to legal education as well as the reality of how law schools have adapted since 2008. Examples of session topics could include changes related to law school accreditation, the rise of the GRE in

law school admissions, law school closures and adjustments to class sizes, the use of tech in the classroom, variations on the traditional 3-year JD program, etc.

The Pre-Law Profession(al) - This track will focus on the Pre-Law Advisor as a professional both at their institution and in the pre-law advising community. Session topics might include career paths for PLAs, the use of data and assessment to demonstrate the value of PLAs, cultivating leadership pipelines within an APLA, how PLAs and the pre-law advising community impact law school admissions, relationship building between PLAs and Law Schools, etc.

Supporting the Whole Student - This track will focus on how Pre-Law Advisors and Law Schools are supporting and working with students outside academic, career, or application advising. Examples of potential topics include student wellness and mental health, understanding the world in which Generation Z has grown up, student financial literacy, as well as more traditional topics related to student financial aid, scholarship negotiations, managing debt loads, etc.

Poster Session - The 2020 Conference will also include a poster session. This will be an additional opportunity for conference participants to present their ideas and work to their colleagues. While concurrent session topics will be geared toward the program tracks listed above, posters may be focused on any topic related to pre-law advising and law school admissions. This expanded focus will allow for increased idea-sharing and collaboration at the conference. Each selected poster will have a dedicated board reserved which will be displayed throughout the conference. There will be a dedicated time in the conference schedule for all attendees to visit the posters and interact with poster presenters

Follow this link to [complete the Program Session submission form](#) on the PLANC Website.

Standing One-L and Paper Chase on Their Heads

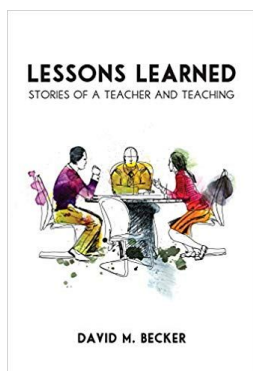
A Review of Lessons Learned: Stories of a Teacher and Teaching, by David M. Becker,
Washington University School of Law

Reviewed by Gerald L. Wilson, Pre-Law Advisor, Duke University



This book, authored by David M. Becker, Emeritus Professor of Law at Washington University School of Law, is a not-so-thinly veiled autobiography of a distinguished Professor, or, hashtag, an instance of a sheep in sheep's clothing! In this case, the fictional Professor E. Randall Mann is, well, guess who. It is, as suggested by the title of this review, the law school experience told

not from the viewpoint of the student, but rather that of the teacher -- that omniscient god-like figure who stands in front of the classroom but is, in actuality, as Becker shows, human.



There are a number of “lessons learned” contained in this book but there seems to be two prime lessons woven into the fabric of these stories of a teacher. The first lesson learned is stated in metaphorical terms in Chapter 3 and describes the best law school teacher as “a Socratic teacher who could lead and orchestrate an entire class much like the best of symphony conductors.....but leaves the making of music to orchestral players.” More direct are his descriptions of real teachers as those who earn the trust of their students, have a sense of humor and create an effective “classroom chemistry.”

The second lesson that appears as a recurring theme throughout the book, as stated by Professor Mann is simply “Dedicated teachers recognize how much they learn from students, sometimes more than they teach.” Or Professor Becker, as himself, writes in the Acknowledgments, “First are my former students, well over six thousand. They are the inspiration for everything. Best of all, they have taught me much, and their lessons appear throughout often disguised by context.”

As indicated, these lessons appear in one form or another in almost all of the nine chapters, but each chapter also contains its own special lesson. For example, Chapter 5, “Almost a Dean”, could be subtitled, “Why Would Anyone Want to be A Law School Dean?” Chapter 6, “The Reunion” could carry the subtitle “Bittersweet.” In the same chapter, there is a comment that certainly resonates with those who have been pre-law advisors for a number of years or who were law students a number of years ago. Professor Mann, attending a 25th law class reunion at the “Eliot University School of Law” looks around at the class and some of his former students and observes, “They were also very bright. By today’s admission requirements, most would have been borderline admits at best.”



As a colleague of Professor Becker’s, Michael Waterstone, wrote, this book “ought to appear on every dean’s recommended reading list for people considering law school, or about to enter law school, or about to begin as an entry level teacher in law school.” To which I would add, “and every pre-law advisor.”

Pictured: David M. Becker, Emeritus Professor of Law, Washington University School of Law

¹ *Lessons Learned: Stories of a Teacher and Teaching* by David M. Becker. [Photo from Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/lessons-learned-stories-teacher-teaching/dp/0801887110)

LSAC Ambassadors: A New Resource for Pre-Law Advisors

Vivian Bowden, Senior Vice President for Schools and Institutions, Law School Admission Council



The Law School Admission Council is dedicated to increasing access to justice, and pre-law advisors are a critical part of that mission. Our new LSAC Ambassadors program provides pre-law advisors, along with admissions professionals and allied organizations, with extra, in-person customer service and attention to their needs. To learn more about this exciting new program, I spoke with Gisele Joachim, who leads the LSAC Ambassadors team.

Vivian Bowden: How does the LSAC Ambassadors program help pre-law advisors do their jobs?

Gisele Joachim: Previously, there were two people at LSAC, Sue Trimble and Judy Florek, who provided reports and other internal resources for pre-law advisors. They continue to do so, but now we're also offering external resources. I and the other two members of my team will come out to campuses to assist pre-law advisors in their day-to-day jobs, but also with addressing their students via presentations or other means. We're also more of a front-line face for pre-law students, because this program gives us a presence at law school fairs where we can assist advisors with one-on-one work with pre-law students. We also will have a more consistent presence at PLANC and the smaller regional groups.

VB: Why is the focus on pre-law advisors so important?

GJ: The biggest reason is the sheer number of pre-law advisors. They dwarf the number of admissions professionals in our world. Both groups are equally important to us, but pre-law advisors are a much larger group of people.

VB: How do the skills and backgrounds of the LSAC

Ambassadors team help you relate to, and assist, pre-law advisors?

GJ: Isabelle Ramos previously worked on LSAC's diversity team, and before joining our organization, she managed diversity recruitment programs at Cornell University Law School, where she was the associate director for admissions. She has a passion for diversity, inclusion, and social justice. Colby Carter came to Ambassadors from an LSAC role supporting more than 90 law schools in the western United States, Canada, and Australia. He also has a technical background, in that he has helped develop and design numerous LSAC programs — including UNITE, the next generation of our ACES² proprietary admissions platform. His technical expertise allows him to be a good bridge for those kinds of issues. Before I joined LSAC, I was dean of enrollment management at Seton Hall University School of Law, and throughout my time there, I worked closely with pre-law advisors and came to understand the issues they're facing. So I think each of us has a lot to offer pre-law advisors, who play such a critical role in LSAC's larger goal of making a legal education accessible to all who seek it.

VB: Can you give me an example of a recent event in which LSAC Ambassadors have participated?



Pictured: Gisele Joachim, Director, LSAC Ambassadors

GJ: Monday, October 7, was the beginning of Louisiana State University's annual

“Geaux Pre-Law Week.” We participated by tabling at a traditional law school fair and meeting students in a one-on-one setting to provide advice and assistance for their journey to law school. After the fair, I spoke to a group of pre-law students about the LSAT, preparation for the test, and LSAC programs and services for candidates.

VB: Where can pre-law advisors learn more about LSAC Ambassadors?

GJ: They can learn about the program, and submit a request for an ambassador to attend an event, by visiting lsac.org/events/lsac-ambassadors-program.

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