Law & Courts

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From the Section Chair

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Like many political scientists, I began my career teaching the introductory course in American politics. As I quickly learned, textbook publishers invested a good deal of money in this class, enticing potential adopters with a wide variety of supplemental materials, such as test banks, instructor's editions, and the like. One inducement frequently offered was a set of full-color slides, ready for use on an overhead projector. For those whose lectures were structured around the textbook, these slides were probably a useful bonus. These were, of course, pre-PowerPoint days, when creating slides for a class was no small feat; if often required searching by hand for relevant graphics, clipping them from various publications, and then photocopying them onto blank slides. For all this effort, the success was mixed; as often as not, the slides were of poor quality. I no longer teach the American politics class, but I'm confident that publishers now make similar slides available in electronic form.

Putting together information for a classroom presentation is today infinitely easier, but for those of us who teach more specialized courses, the development of classroom materials remains pretty much a solitary enterprise. For my class on the U.S. Supreme Court, for example, I track down photos of the justices and the interior and exterior of the Court, copies of briefs and internal records, and all the rest. To present research findings, I either create my own charts and graphs from Excel spreadsheets that I assemble from available data or copy figures directly from published research.

However successful this process might be, it is still less than ideal. There are often figures from journal articles that I am keen to incorporate into a class --- graphics on judicial selection, agenda setting, the Court in the separation of power, the policy impact of the Court, and so on --- but ultimately I forgo these original figures, either because they appear at a level of complexity only appropriate for a scholarly audience or because the original graphic is rendered in poor resolution. If I tell my students anything about these interesting findings, it is typi-

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Law and Courts publishes articles, notes, news items, announcements, commentaries, and features of interest to members of the Law and Courts Section of the APSA. **Law and Courts** publishes three editions a year (Fall, Summer, and Spring). Deadlines for submission of materials are: February 1 (Spring), June 1 (Summer), and October 1 (Fall). Contributions to **Law and Courts** should be sent to the Editor:

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Articles, Notes, and Commentary

We will be glad to consider articles and notes concerning matters of interest to readers of **Law and Courts.** Research findings, teaching innovations, release of original data, or commentary on developments in the field are encouraged.

Footnote and reference style should follow that of the *American Political Science Review.* Please submit your manuscript electronically in MS Word (.doc) or compatible software and provide a "head shot" photo. In addition to bibliography and notes, a listing of website addresses cited in the article with the accompanying page number should be included.

Symposia

Collections of related articles or notes are especially welcome. Please contact the Editor if you have ideas for symposia or if you are interested in editing a collection of common articles. Symposia submissions should follow the guidelines for other manuscripts.

Announcements

Announcements and section news will be included in **Law and Courts**, as well as information regarding upcoming conferences. Organizers of panels are encouraged to inform the Editor so that papers and participants may be reported. Developments in the field such as fellowships, grants, and awards will be announced when possible. Finally, authors should notify ***BOOKS TO WATCH FOR EDITOR***, *Drew Lanier,* of publication of manuscripts or works that are soon to be completed.

Law and Courts Newsletter

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cally little more than "research has shown…" This is frustrating; students need to see more directly the connection between what we do as researchers and what we tell them in the classroom.

Occasionally, I have prevailed upon a few of my friends and asked them to share their original data with me, and I have found them remarkably generous. As a result, my students can now readily understand, for instance, the findings of Tom Clark and Benjamin Lauderdale on the question of which justice controls the Court's majority opinion. (It's the median justice of the majority coalition, by the way, as their picture-is-worth-a-thousand-words scatter plots show.)

Still, a more general problem remains: I don't know how (or even whether) other instructors present the same ideas that I try to convey to my students. Others surely share this curiosity and thus face the same challenge. One obvious reason is that we, as a subfield, don't have any institutionalized mechanisms for sharing our successes in the classroom. For those who are highly idiosyncratic (or supremely confident) in their approach to teaching, I suppose that this is not much of a concern. For those of us who are interested in learning how to improve our classroom content, however, it would be beneficial to formalize a means for sharing our ideas.

A few obvious possibilities: (1) Scholars could deposit some form of their original data in a repository created and maintained by the section. Certainly, a lot of us already make replication data available, which is a healthy thing to do. But a readily accessible spreadsheet for recreating figures and charts would make it more likely that one's research would find its way into the classroom. It can be difficult to keep current, given the number of outlets in which section members publish. So, a centralized repository might reduce the costs of locating new and interesting research.

(2) An occasional roundtable at our meetings could be organized to allow successful teachers to discuss their approaches to teaching a particular course or topic. After all, our section regularly gives an award for outstanding work in teaching and mentoring. I, for one, would value the opportunity to hear these award recipients share their thoughts on instructional effectiveness.

(3) A more demanding (but potentially fruitful) undertaking might be the "conference within a conference" option, whereby a larger number of participants could devote a portion of their time at a professional meeting to a more organized discussion around a formal agenda. I could easily imagine participants presenting segments of their lectures and then describing the logic behind the format and content of their presentation. Similarly, a portion of such a program might be given over to discussing how to teach a specific substantive topic. (Collegiality on the Supreme Court is a significant issue but one that I've never covered to my satisfaction, for example; I could certainly benefit from a conversation among colleagues about what to present and how to present it.)

Those who doubt the utility of such activities would do well to remember how little formal training we actually receive in teaching. Many of our colleagues are in the spring of their teaching careers, fresh out of graduate training, and are trying, for the first time, to find their niche. True, a lot of universities have resources devoted to advancing their teaching mission --- UNC's Center for Faculty Excellence is first-rate and offers a number of programs for faculty and graduate students --- but not all colleges have these types of institutions, and even those that do exist are doubtless of variable quality. For its part, the APSA sponsors an Annual Conference on Teaching and Learning, but that conference is more general in its ambitions; it is not designed to allow teachers who share a similar substantive interest to have extended conversations about their subject matter. No one, I suspect, goes to that conference looking for ways to innovate their classroom discussions of plea bargaining, civil litigation, or the relative merits of methods of state judicial selection.

I know that we have a wealth of outstanding teachers in the subfield. I have attended panels at the APSA and elsewhere and have seen junior scholars (e.g., Deborah Beim) mid-career scholars (e.g. Matt Hall), and senior scholars (e.g., Larry Baum) command the attention of a roomful of attendees. Invariably, I find myself wishing that I could be a student in their classes and thinking that there is much that I could learn from them. I wonder if the section might consider how to take advantage of such talents and explore ways to improve the transmission of our research to the widest possible audience.

In my transition to section head, I have benefitted enormously from the leadership of the past section head, Cornell Clayton. Likewise, I'm delighted to have the support of an outstanding executive committee, whose newest members include Jeb Barnes, Rebecca Hamlin, and Mark Hurwitz. The Journal of Law and Courts continues to thrive under the able editorship of Dave Klein. Likewise, we all profit from the hard work of Stephen Meinhold, who helms the Law and Politics Book Review. And of course Todd Collins' dedication produces this terrific newsletter. Our portion of the program at next year's meeting is in the capable hands of Lisa Hilbink and Elizabeth Beaumont. They will look forward to receiving your proposals by the deadline of January 8.

Advising and Mentoring Graduate Students - A Message from the *2015 Teaching and Mentoring Award* Recipient

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In the spring of 2009, I wrote a memorandum to the graduate students and faculty in my department entitled, "The New Realities of the Job Market." We were navigating the violent ripple effects of the economic crash, when the number of tenure-track jobs plummeted and several jobs were unceremoniously yanked after having been listed, leaving that year's candidates in miserable and stressful circumstances. I advised that everyone in our program, both graduate students and faculty, adopt a much more aggressive, proactive approach to the academic job search process while waiting for the return of normalcy. However, as the title of the memo indicated, I feared that the crash, rather than initiating a down market for a few years that would bounce back, would bring about a "new normal" to which those of us reared and placed in a gentler era would have to accommodate our advising strategies.

I've sent out the same memorandum, with modest revisions, each year since 2009. Certainly the market has improved; as I write today, APSA's ejobs listing has more than 20 postings for tenure-track positions in public law. Most of these positions will field a smaller pool of applications than a typical search in American Politics or International Relations, and at least some of the applicants (though clearly not the readers of this Newsletter!) will be mere poseurs, with research and publication records that reveal their lack of expertise in the field of public law. Nonetheless, the new reality to which my memo refers is harsh and in my view qualitatively different in ways too often unrecognized by those of us who secured positions before 2008.

As I say in person to graduate students, this should not be cause for despair. It should, however, motivate both students and faculty to think through how to approach academic job placement through an ambitious but workable strategy – and also when to figure out an alternative plan. Those of us who mentor graduate students must take our responsibilities seriously. The learning curve for market participants is sharp and unforgiving, and with limited opportunities, our students need us to help them actively to achieve the best possible outcome. Some of the things I emphasize to both students and faculty are the following:

1. Manage the research agenda effectively

Students should obviously write good dissertations that rely on sound arguments arising from properly designed, executed, and analyzed research. Most advisors worth their salt are on board with this advice. However, an effective presentation of one's research should show some evidence of the student's investment in the project. A student and advisor should both have a good story about why the topic is substantively important, why they care about it, and why others considering the student should care.

Pre-market publications are increasingly important, especially for students looking for positions in research universities or selective liberal arts colleges. Advisors and students should work together to identify good article-length projects that will neither distract nor steal the thunder from the dissertation.

Most importantly, advisors should be responsive and ride herd on committees to help students to get through the dissertation phase efficiently. Students are often understandably reluctant to press advisors and committee members for feedback on their work, even if significant time has passed. Everyone should be clear about establishing schedules for submitting materials and receiving feedback so that the project moves forward in a timely fashion, and the advisor should ensure that other committee members are engaged at levels where they can be effective without delaying things unnecessarily.

2. Teaching experience matters

In reviewing applicant pools and considering my own students' experiences, I now conclude that independent

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teaching experience is almost a "must" in this market, regardless of the type of academic job for which a student is applying. Many of those getting interest in candidate pools have a package of independently taught courses under their belts and can be expected to walk in the door ready to teach, and teach well. In an environment in which enrollments and student retention are increasingly on the minds of administrators, search committees are thinking about how well an applicant will be able to work with their institutions' students. They may not be willing to take the risk of hiring an unseasoned teacher who will not be effective in the classroom. Since many institutions are responding dramatically and quickly to changes in enrollment data, hiring committees may be less willing than in the past to hire a green teacher and figure that allowing a few years of learning on the job will pay off in the long run (even though that's still true!).

3. Devising a good job search strategy – and exit strategy – is essential

Candidates and their advisors should work together to plan a strategy that will maximize the number of applications the candidate will put in for positions s/he would accept and for which s/he is a credible candidate. Candidates may sometimes need some help decoding the language of job ads – if an ad is listed in public law but is seeking a candidate who can teach national institutions and graduate-level quantitative methods, the wonderful student with an ethnographic dissertation on legal consciousness within the property rights movement need not apply. But if a candidate has, say, limited geographic flexibility, her or his constraints on the type of position he or she will consider should loosen accordingly, even to looking well beyond the tenure track if the geographic scope is particularly narrow. There just are not all that many research intensive positions for public law candidates within a 200 mile radius of Chicago, folks!

Candidates should also understand that an academic job search is likely to be a multi-year process. A candidate may only net an interview or two the first year and may land in a visiting position the second year, but then parlay that teaching experience into a much more competitive third year on the market. Candidates who don't land positions the first year out must aggressively work to keep their credentials fresh and improving, gaining additional teaching experience and establishing a research and publication profile.

Finally, advisors and candidates should be ready to have hard conversations about when a candidate should seek an alternative to a tenure-track teaching position. Teaching as an adjunct is not a viable long-term career, and advisors should be willing and ready to help their advisees focus on building toward a successful career path that will use their ample talents fully and provide appropriate wage compensation for their highly skilled labor. The amount of time a person should spend on the adjunct track will vary according to her or his other life circumstances, but advisors and candidates should attend to situations in which a hardworking individual is set on a long-term path of drastic under-compensation for the work that she or he is performing. Above all, advisors should not encourage their advisees to hang on in long-term adjuncting roles in the hope that they will eventually land a tenure-track placement so that the advisor will appear to be a successful mentor. The most successful mentors are those whose former students are doing productive work that they enjoy and being compensated appropriately for that work, regardless of whether the former students can call themselves professors!

4. Mentoring never ends

Navigating the tenure track is challenging, and it can be very helpful for junior faculty members to maintain good relationships with senior advisors outside of their universities. Senior faculty, either the ones they know from their graduate programs or those they've met along the way, can provide crucial disinterested advice when tough situations arise. Often, a junior faculty member's departmental mentors are both highly invested in that person's success and are on the hook for evaluating the person, so soliciting an outside voice may feel safer in figuring out what to do to address problems, whether they relate to one's research agenda, to what's happening in the classroom, or to one's relationship with colleagues. Colleagues at other universities can also help junior faculty members develop a sense of perspective by describing how common processes like committee assignments, teaching evaluations, tenure reviews, and other things work at different institutions.

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Mentoring is not only for junior faculty! I've been fortunate to be able to turn to a number of individuals over the years and through the ranks to ask vexing and ignorant questions without fear of repercussions. I will embarrass and thank in particular Amy Bridges, Howard Gillman, Mark Graber, Ronald Kahn, Carol Nackenoff, and Gretchen Ritter, to name only a few of the people who've provided me with great advice in critical moments for my own career. Professional peers are critically important as well, and junior faculty should nurture the relationships they form early in their careers.

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Overall, I'm glad to be in a field with a longstanding tradition of generosity in mentoring. Public law folks, I've found, are often quite willing to lend a hand to their colleagues, whether graduate students or senior faculty, and we subscribe to an ethos that what helps someone in the field get ahead helps the field. The impact of active mentoring is hard to measure and assess in our metric-driven world, and some of the most important things we do for each other will never end up on our CVs or in our annual activity reports. I wish the best of luck to this year's market candidates and encourage you all to accept any help you're offered along the way – along with a silent promise to pay it forward when your time comes.

Finishing the Dissertation: Advice for Graduate Students and Faculty Mentors

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Finishing a dissertation is one of, if not the most, significant achievements in graduate students' academic careers. In a real way, upon completion of the dissertation, graduate students shed an identity that has helped to define them for the previous five years or more. No longer are they graduate students, they are now doctors, a milestone that marks new adventures and is often accompanied by feelings of both excitement and trepidation.

Certainty, finishing the dissertation is a monumental event that deserves much celebration. But how do we get there? The purpose of this brief essay is to provide some advice to both graduate students and their faculty mentors for making the dissertation writing process go smoothly. There is, of course, no one-size-fits-all model for writing a dissertation. Nonetheless, my goal here is to provide a series of tips that I believe will be applicable to a variety of environments. This advice is based on my own experiences as a dissertator and faculty mentor, as well as from conversations with graduate students and faculty members on this topic.[1]

I. Start Early

Graduate students should begin thinking about a dissertation project early in their careers. One way to do this is to take seminar papers more seriously. That is, instead of thinking about them as one-off manuscripts that will go no further than the trash can once the semester ends, seminar papers can instead be viewed as opportunities to test drive potential ideas for the dissertation. One of the chief considerations in picking a dissertation topic is whether it is sufficiently interesting such that you are willing to spend years of your life with it.[2] If it is, you should consider following through on the project in other courses and present it at conferences. Note that using significantly revised versions of the same project in multiple courses will require the permission of faculty members teaching those courses.

Faculty mentors can encourage this type of behavior by discussing candidly whether a particular idea would make for a good dissertation topic. Of course, not all ideas are the type of material for full blown dissertations (though they can still make for outstanding journal articles). When discussing this with graduate students, I think it is important to indicate early: 1) whether the topic under investigation is novel, in the sense that it will make an original contribution to the field; 2) what type of venues (e.g., journals and presses) publish the type of research in question and whether those are desirable publication outlets; and 3) whether the project is feasible given the time and resource constraints of conducting research as a graduate student. If a project is deemed "dissertation material," faculty advisors might

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come to an arrangement with the graduate student and other faculty members that allows them to use significantly revised versions of the project in multiple classes as they flesh it out into a dissertation. Though not all faculty members may be on board with this idea, faculty advisors can encourage their colleagues to be open to it based on the long term interests of the graduate student. In particular, allowing graduate students to use substantially revised papers related to the same project in multiple classes will provide them with more time to work on their dissertation (potentially allowing them to tackle more ambitious projects), the opportunity to gain valuable feedback from a variety of perspectives, and the chance to publish papers that are related to their dissertation relatively early in their academic careers (which will help them on the job market).

II. Set Clear Goals

Graduate students should make a realistic plan for finishing the dissertation and do their best to stick to the timeline. Of course, things come up so graduate students will need to revisit their plans from time to time. One way to follow a schedule is to set aside a particular amount of time on a daily (or semi-daily) basis that is devoted to dissertation research and writing and nothing else (no internet, no texting, etc.). I have found the strategy of compartmentalizing my time to be particularly useful. That is, when I was writing my dissertation while teaching my own classes, I set aside hours or days that were devoted to teaching or research, but not both. This allowed me to focus on the task at hand exclusively, which promoted my efficiency in both writing my dissertation and preparing for classes. I also suggest that graduate students schedule routine meetings with their faculty mentors for the purpose of discussing the dissertation and providing updates on their progress. This will provide graduate students with an additional incentive to stay on track, while also keeping faculty advisors up to date on the student's progress. Finally, to ensure their sanity, graduate students also need to set aside personal time that is devoted exclusively to their non-academic interests.

Faculty mentors can assist graduate students in mapping out their dissertation plans by being realistic about how much time it takes to research and write a dissertation. More importantly, faculty mentors need to set clear expectations for the dissertation up front and refrain from moving the goalposts mid-game. To be sure, there is wide variation in faculty members' opinions about what constitutes a good dissertation. Some expect essentially a ready-to-be-published book. Some expect a high quality research project that has the potential to be published after revisions. Some feel that a good dissertation is a done dissertation. Regardless of one's perspective, it is essential that faculty mentors communicate their expectations to graduate students and help them set up a plan to meet those expectations. I also recommend that dissertation chairs meet with the other committee members early in the process to ensure that all of the faculty are on the same page with respect to the expectations for the dissertation. This should include discussing the process for adjudicating disputes between committee members on the direction of the dissertation, should they arise.

III. Commit to Timely Revisions and Feedback

Graduate students should take the feedback they receive from faculty on their dissertations very seriously and ensure they address all of the concerns raised by faculty mentors in a timely manner. Although it can be time consuming, I think a best practice is to provide a memo outlining the changes made in light of faculty comments. This has two benefits. First, it allows graduate students to create a record of revisions that demonstrates their responsiveness to the issues raised by committee members. This record can be very useful as a reminder regarding exactly how the dissertation has changed, which can help resolve disagreements should advice change over the course of the years it takes to write a dissertation. Second, this has the benefit of serving as a type of practice for drafting the dozens of revise-and-resubmit memos that graduate students will hopefully submit to editors and reviewers over the course of their careers.

Faculty mentors should commit to providing timely feedback that includes making it clear whether the revisions have successfully addressed their concerns. Faculty advisors have a variety of obligations competing for their time, including research, teaching, service, and personal commitments, but it is very important that they respond to dissertation revisions in a timely manner. Of course, exactly what is and is not a timely manner will vary.

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Thus, it is important for faculty mentors to make it clear to graduate students their timeline for providing feedback and responding to revisions.

IV. Be Transparent

Graduate students need to be transparent with respect to their progress. Unforeseen obstacles can come up that derail a dissertation project. To put it simply, life interrupts. Rather than keeping such unforeseen events to oneself, it is important to be open with faculty mentors about any events that may disrupt the completion of the dissertation. This will allow for the advisor and advisee to work together to establish a new course of action.

Faculty mentors can encourage this transparency by frankly discussing their own struggles in academia. Instead of portraying themselves as some sort of superheroes, I believe it is important for graduate students to understand that there are many obstacles in the research process and plans seldom workout in the manner in which they were first designed. Sharing stories of their own highs and lows can help graduate students understand that writing a dissertation is a long process that will involve overcoming a variety of complications.

V. Concluding Thoughts

Finishing the dissertation is a joint venture between graduate students and their faculty mentor(s). My purpose here was to provide some best practices that can help this process proceed with a limited number of obstacles. Obviously, neither the graduate student nor the advisor can control everything that comes up in the course of writing a dissertation. But, by candidly discussing the process, setting clear goals, committing to timely responses, and generally being transparent, finishing the dissertation can be a more effective and enjoyable process for both the graduate student and faculty mentor.

Notes:

1. I am especially grateful to Wendy Martinek, my dissertation advisor, who is a mentor par excellence.

2. This can actually be decades since many academics develop long-term research agendas based on their dissertation research.

Encouraging Graduate Students to be "Active Agents"

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Graduate school is challenging for virtually every student at one time or another and there is no dearth of good advice on how best to forge ahead (see, e.g., Benesh, 2001, Cohen 2002, Vick and Furlong 2013, 2014). As my own thoughts about graduate school and how to mentor graduate students have developed over the past fifteen years, I have found myself repeating (ad nauseum) two refrains when speaking with students. First, "You are an active agent of your own graduate education (and, ultimately, your subsequent career)." And, second, "Position yourself to be, not only a successful graduate student, but ultimately a successful job applicant, assistant professor, and scholar."

When I encourage students to think of themselves as active agents of their own graduate education, I am emphatically not saying that they have to figure it out all on their own. (How on earth would they even be able to do that?) As the beneficiary of much careful and caring mentorship myself,[1] I understand all too well how important it is to have mentors to help shepherd students as they make their way through the process. Even if I did not know this from personal experience, there is too much evidence as to the value of mentorship in fostering graduate student success to overlook its importance (see, e.g., Heslie, Fink, and Duffy 2003). But too often graduate students—including very bright graduate students who excelled in their undergraduate studies—are much too passive when it comes to their graduate education. The transition from undergraduate student to graduate student is not necessarily easy and, understandably, some have difficulty in embracing the idea of themselves as scholars-in-training who possess at least some agency in the course of their graduate education.

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Encouraging students to think in terms of success beyond merely success as a graduate student is particularly important given the challenging (perhaps depressing though not entirely dismal) nature of the job market (APSA 2014). Though the job market is difficult for everyone, the difficulty is not evenly distributed among all those on the job market. Rather, students can take affirmative actions to improve their chances of being competitive applicants. Thinking in terms of success beyond merely success as a graduate student means helping students develop cohesive research agendas that can yield publication(s) before they hit the job market and propel them forward as pre-tenure faculty members. (Note that the dissertation is the crown jewel in a cohesive research agenda but it is not—or should not be—the entirety of it.) And, it means helping them develop teaching skills and abilities. Not only do they need evidence of such to be appealing candidates on the job market, but developing those skills and abilities while a graduate student will position them to be good teachers once they are in faculty positions and, hence, aid them in their quest for tenure.

There is any number of ways to put these two pieces of advice into practice, here, I wish to touch on three items: departmental workshops, professional conferences, and peer networking. These are not, by any means, novel points to discuss in terms of graduate student training but they nicely illustrate the benefits that can accrue to graduate students if they are (a) active agents in their own education and (b) see graduate school as a time to prepare for success beyond merely graduate school.

Departmental workshops in which student work is presented can be organized in a variety of ways. Whether framed as informal brown bags or set up as formal presentations modeled on job talks or the presentations of invited speakers, such workshops offer students the chance to hone their abilities to communicate their work, of course. But, more importantly, they afford students the opportunity to learn how to engage in collegial intellectual exchange and, hopefully, benefit from the commentary and critical feedback of other participants. Such workshops are already established in many departments. But if they are not then students (as active agents in their own graduate education) can and should organize them (enlisting the aid of willing and interested faculty as necessary). Over time, participation in such workshops (both as presenters and as audience members) will help students to develop the ability to engage in the kind of collegial intellectual exchange that will enhance the quality of their work and identify new lines of inquiry (new lines that can move them beyond the dissertation and into the next phase of their scholarship).

Love them or hate them, professional conferences play an important role in the dissemination of research and exchange of ideas. They "provide an opportunity for scholars to present their work in progress, to see what others are working on, and to network with their peers" (Gupta and Waismel-Manor 2006, 485). They are, to be sure, daunting affairs for most novice conference attendees (particularly for first-time presenters). As active agents, graduate students can and should seek out opportunities to attend professional conferences before they are actually on a program to present work. Doing so may require a student to incur some financial costs, depending upon what resources are available from their home institutions. But it will give them the valuable chance to get a feel for what to expect when they themselves are presenting. It will also afford opportunities to begin the process of learning about and meeting others (both faculty and graduate students) who work in the same area. This is a point at which students can and should be proactive about facilitating the conditions for such meetings. They should absolutely approach faculty from their home departments and enlist their assistance in this task. Perhaps a home school faculty member can arrange an introduction (e.g., in a panel room before or after a panel takes place, at one of the ubiquitous receptions that take place). Perhaps that faculty member might invite the graduate student to coffee or lunch with colleagues from other institutions. Though it would be terrific if faculty were proactive about extending such invitations, they often are not because they are distracted by their own frantic preparations for conferences. But, if asked (by students acting as agents in furthering their own education), they are also usually glad to be of help.

Clearly, conferences are an important (primary?) location for networking. But there are other means of networking available for students to take advantage of. First, of course, the peer network at a student's home institution is critical. Connecting with members of one's cohort as well as advanced graduate students not only provides a source of emotional support for the stressful times and advice on navigating the particular ins and outs of a given graduate program, but it (a) sets the stage for research collaborations between and among students and (b) opens up the possibility for synergistic networking. This is where simply being a good friend can be useful. By that I mean that students can and should help one another in the networking process. If one student makes a connection with a faculty member or student elsewhere then, by all means, that student should (as opportunities arise) share the love and introduce them to his or her graduate school colleagues. In this way, such students are both active agents of their own graduate education and active agents in enhancing the graduate educa-

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tion of others. The resulting discussion at panels and over coffee, drinks, or meals over one or more conferences is how an awful lot of good research ideas germinate. This means that students are also setting themselves up for success as job applicants and assistant professors.

The law and courts community is truly lucky when it comes to the willingness of its members to nurture and mentor not only their own students at their own institutions but also those of the larger community. For example, I volunteered to participate in a mentoring lunch at a conference not too long ago. I was meeting with two colleagues right before I was to meet the graduate student I was taking to lunch and happened to mention this lunch. Immediately, both of them volunteered (without me asking) to join me in taking the graduate student for lunch, despite the fact that both had full schedules at the conferences (including a panel immediately after the lunch).[2] This kind of generosity is not rare in our community. And, it translates into an environment that is congenial for graduate students to be both active agents of their own education and situate themselves for long-term success

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NOTES

1. Thanks, Harold Spaeth!
2. Thanks, Pam Corely and Art Ward!

Books to Watch For

Fall 2015

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Renée Ann Cramer (Drake University) has published *Pregnant with the Stars: Watching and Wanting the Celebrity Baby Bump* (Stanford University Press 2015, ISBN 978-0-804-79255-4). It may be of interest to those examining reproductive law and politics and the legal consequences of a bio-politics of pregnancy and birth. “This book charts how the American understanding of pregnancy has evolved by examining pop culture coverage of the pregnant celebrity body. Investigating and comparing the media coverage of pregnant celebrities, including Jennifer Garner, Angelina Jolie, Beyoncé Knowles, Kristen Bell, M.I.A., Jodie Foster, and Mila Kunis, Cramer shows us how women are categorized and defined by their pregnancies. Their stories provide a parazzi-sized lens through which we can interpret a complex set of social and legal regulations of pregnant women. Cramer exposes how cultural ideas like the ‘rockin' post-baby body’ are not only unattainable; they are a means of social control. Combining cultural and legal analysis, Pregnant with the Stars uncovers a world where pregnant celebrities are governed and controlled alongside the recent, and troubling, proliferation of restrictive laws aimed at women in the realm of reproductive justice and freedom. Cramer asks each reader and cultural consumer to recognize that the seeing, judging, and discussion of the ‘baby bump’ is not merely frivolous celebrity gossip—it is an act of surveillance, commodification, and control.”

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Leila Kawar (University of Massachusetts Amherst) has published *Contesting Immigration Policy in Court: Legal Activism and Its Radiating Effects in the United States and France* (Cambridge University Press 2015, 978-1-107-07111-7). Since the 1970s, networks of progressive attorneys in both the United States and France have attempted to use litigation to assert rights for noncitizens. Yet judicial engagement – while numerically voluminous – remains doctrinally curtailed. This study offers new insights into the role of law in immigration policy making by focusing on the complex webs linking legal doctrine, lawyer advocacy, and movements for social change. Challenging the conventional wisdom that "cause litigation" has little long-term impact on policy making unless it produces broad rights-protective principles, this book shows that legal contestation can have important radiating effects on policy by reshaping how political actors approach immigration issues. Based on extensive archival and interview research in the United States and France, Kawar explores the paths by which litigation has effected policy change in two paradigmatically different national settings.

Julio Ríos-Figueroa (CIDE – Mexico City) has a forthcoming volume *Constitutional Courts as Mediators: Armed Conflict, Civil-Military Relations, and the Rule of Law in Latin America* (Cambridge University Press 2016). This book offers a new theoretical framework for understanding the mediator role played by constitutional courts in democratic conflict solving. The book proposes an informational theory of constitutional review in which constitutional courts obtain, process, and transmit information to parties in a way that reduces the uncertainty causing their conflict. The substantive focus of the book is the role of constitutional courts in democracies where the armed forces are fighting internal armed conflicts of different types: Colombia, Peru, and Mexico in Latin America and also Israel, Turkey, and Pakistan. Through detailed analyses of the political context, civil-military relations, and the constitutional jurisprudence on military autonomy and the regulation of the use of force the book shows that constitutional courts can be instrumental in striking a democratically accepted balance between the exercise of civilian authority and the legitimate needs of the military in its pursuit of order and national security.

Philippa Strum (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars) has authored *Speaking Freely: Whitney v. California and American Speech Law* (University Press of Kansas 2015, 978-0-700-62135-4). Anita Whitney was a child of wealth and privilege who became a vocal leftist early in the twentieth century, supporting radical labor groups such as the Wobblies and helping to organize the Communist Labor Party. In 1919, she was arrested and charged with violating California's recently- passed laws banning any speech or activity intended to change the American political and economic systems. The story of the U.S. Supreme Court case that grew out of Whitney's conviction, told in full in this book, is also the story of how Americans came to enjoy the most liberal speech laws in the world. In clear and engaging language, Strum traces the fateful interactions of Whitney, a descendant of Mayflower Pilgrims; Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, a brilliant son of immigrants; the teeming immigrant neighborhoods and left wing labor politics of the early twentieth century; and the lessons some Harvard Law School professors took from World War I-era restrictions on speech. Although the Supreme Court upheld Whitney's conviction, it included an opinion authored by Justice Brandeis--joined by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.--that led to a decisive change in the way the Court understood First Amendment free speech protections. Speaking Freely takes us into the discussions behind this dramatic change, as Holmes, Brandeis, Judge Learned Hand, and Harvard Law professors Zechariah Chafee and Felix Frankfurter debate the extent of the First Amendment and the important role of free speech in a democratic society. In Brandeis's opinion, we see this debate distilled in a statement of the value of free speech and the harm that its suppression does to a democracy, along with reflections on the importance of freedom from government control for the founders and the drafters of the First Amendment. Through Whitney v. California and its legacy, Speaking Freely shows how the American approach to speech, differing as it does that of every other country, reflects the nation's unique history. Nothing less than a primer in the history of free speech rights in the U.S., the book offers a sobering and timely lesson as fear once more raises the specter of repression.