



Houston Bar Association Convenes

A Conversation on the Accreditation of Law Schools in Alabama, Florida, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas and the Nation

Monday, June 29, 2026

2:00 - 5:00PM Central Time

Virtual

Approved for 3.0 hours of MCLE credit (Texas) and 3.0 General Credit hours (Ohio)

Co-Conveners:

Austin Bar Association
Broward County Bar Association
Cincinnati Bar Association
Cleveland Bar Association
Dallas Bar Association
Florida State University College of Law
Houston Bar Association
Lincoln Memorial University (LMU) Duncan School of Law
Samford University Cumberland School of Law
San Antonio Bar Association
Tarrant County Bar Association
South Texas College of Law Houston
St. Mary's University School of Law
Toledo Bar Association
University of Cincinnati Donald P. Klekamp College of Law
University of Houston Law Center
UNT Dallas College of Law

Agenda

2:00 – 2:30 PM

Welcome

Gregory C. Ulmer

President, Houston Bar Association

Partner, BakerHostetler

The Status of ABA Law School Accreditation in Alabama, Florida, Ohio, Tennessee, and Texas

Leonard M. Baynes

Dean, Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished Chair, and Professor of Law
University of Houston Law Center

Member of the Executive Committee of the Association of American Law Schools

Haider Ala Hamoudi

Dean and Nippert Professor of Law

University of Cincinnati, Donald P. Klekamp College of Law

Blake Hudson

Dean and Ethel P. Malugen Chair of Law

Samford University, Cumberland School of Law

Matthew Lyon

Vice President and Dean

Lincoln Memorial University (LMU), Duncan School of Law

Erin O'Hara O'Connor

Dean and Donald J. Weidner Chair

Florida State University College of Law

2:30 – 3:15 PM

The Institutional Perspective on ABA Law School Accreditation

Kellye Y. Testy

CEO and Executive Director

Association of American Law Schools

Daniel R. Thies

Chair of the Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar

Shareholder, Webber & Thies PC

Fiona Trevelyan

President and CEO

NALP (National Association for Law Placement) Foundation

Agenda

3:15 – 4:15 PM

Critique of ABA Law School Accreditation

- **Removal of the 206 Diversity Standard**

Erwin Chemerinsky

Dean, Jesse H. Choper Distinguished Professor of Law
University of California, Berkeley School of Law

Dennis Patterson

Board of Governors Professor of Law and Philosophy
Co-Director, Institute for Law and Philosophy
Rutgers University School of Law

- **Antitrust Concerns**

Darren Bush

Leonard B. Rosenberg Professor of Law
University of Houston Law Center

Harry First

Charles L. Denison Professor of Law Emeritus
New York University School of Law

- **Other Issues**

Todd J. Clark

Dean and Professor of Law
Widener University, Delaware Law School
Member, National Working Group
Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators
Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform (CLEAR)

David Yellen

Dean Emeritus and Professor of Law
University of Miami School of Law
Member, Special Advisory Committee
ABA Council, Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar

4:15 – 5:00 PM

Moderated Q&A

Moderated by

Dean Leonard M. Baynes

University of Houston Law Center

BIOGRAPHIES



LEONARD M. BAYNES

*Dean, Hugh Roy and Lillie Cullen Distinguished Chair, and Professor of Law
University of Houston Law Center
Member of the Executive Committee of the Association of American Law Schools*

Leonard M. Baynes, currently the longest serving law dean in Texas, made history in 2014 with his appointment as the first dean of African descent at the University of Houston Law Center.

During his deanship, the UH Law Center's admission credentials have steadily increased — the median LSAT score climbed from 159 to 163 and the median GPA grew from 3.47 to 3.79, with over 20% of the students in the 2025 entering class from first-generation college backgrounds and more than 83% from first-generation law school backgrounds. Under Dean Baynes's leadership, the Law Center completed the \$93 million world-class John M. O'Quinn Law Building in 2022 and expanded pathways to legal education through innovative

programs including the 3-3 Program with UH Honors College, the UH Law Express Program, and the award-winning Pre-Law Pipeline Programs, which prepare first-generation, economically challenged students for the competitive law school admissions process.

A prolific scholar, Dean Baynes co-authored the casebook "Telecommunications Law: Convergence and Competition" and has published over 25 law review articles and book chapters. He has received numerous honors, including recognition as one of the nation's 100 most influential lawyers of color, the Paul Robeson Award from his alma mater Columbia Law School, and the Clyde Ferguson Award from the Association of American Law Schools. He is serving a three-year term on the AALS' Executive Committee.



DARREN BUSH

*Leonard B. Rosenberg Professor of Law
University of Houston Law Center*

Professor Bush's scholarship focuses on antitrust and economic regulation.

Professor Bush received his Ph.D. in economics and J.D. from the University of Utah. His Ph.D. fields were industrial organization, history of economic thought, labor economics, and political economy, with his dissertation focusing on creating competition in deregulated electricity markets.

While completing his J.D., he consulted on issues regarding state deregulation of electric utilities, interned at the U.S. Department of Justice's Antitrust Division, and taught various economics courses. After receiving his J.D., he served as an Attorney General's Honor Program Trial Attorney at the Antitrust Division's Transportation,

Energy, & Agriculture Section, where his primary focus was the investigation of mergers and anticompetitive conduct in wholesale and retail energy markets and airlines. He has testified numerous times on antitrust matters before congressional committees and federal commissions.

He is also a fourth-degree black sash (4th degree black belt) in Northern Shaolin/Northern Praying Mantis Kung Fu.



ERWIN CHEMERINSKY

*Dean, Jesse H. Choper Distinguished Professor of Law
University of California, Berkeley School of Law*

Erwin Chemerinsky became the 13th Dean of Berkeley Law on July 1, 2017, when he joined the faculty as the Jesse H. Choper Distinguished Professor of Law.

Prior to assuming this position, from 2008-2017, he was the founding Dean and Distinguished Professor of Law, and Raymond Pryke Professor of First Amendment Law, at University of California, Irvine School of Law. Before that he was the Alston and Bird Professor of Law and Political Science at Duke University from 2004-2008, and from 1983-2004 was a professor at the University of Southern California Law School, including as the Sydney M. Irmis Professor of Public Interest Law, Legal Ethics, and Political Science. From 1980-1983, he was an assistant professor at DePaul College of Law.

In 2016, Dean Chemerinsky was named a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2024, *National Jurist* magazine again named Dean Chemerinsky as the most influential person in legal education in the United States. In 2022, he was the President of the Association of American Law Schools. He received his B.S. at Northwestern University and his J.D. at Harvard Law School.

BIOGRAPHIES



TODD J. CLARK

*Dean and Professor of Law
Widener University, Delaware Law School
Member, National Working Group
Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators
Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform (CLEAR)*

Todd J. Clark is the current Dean of Widener University Delaware Law School. Dean Clark is one of only three law school deans selected to serve on a 15-member working group under the Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform (CLEAR), a standing committee of the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators. The working group is part of a broader effort by state court leaders to examine how legal education and licensure systems can better serve the public and help address the nation's justice gap.

Dean Clark is an avid scholar and writes on legal issues involving: employment discrimination, sports, the intersection of hip-hop culture and the law, and corporate justice. He has published articles in the *Cincinnati Law Review*, the *Case Western Law Review*, the *St. Thomas Law Review*, the *Louisiana Law Review*, the *St. John's University School of Law's Journal of Civil Rights and Economic Development*, the *Tennessee Journal for Race, Gender and Social Justice*, and the *Georgetown Journal of Law & Modern Critical Race Perspectives*. He has published book chapters in the *Oxford Handbook of American Sports Law*, published by Oxford University Press, and in a book published by Carolina Academic Press entitled *Hip Hop and the Law*. Additionally, Dean Clark co-authored a textbook with Dean André Douglas Pond Cummings entitled *Corporate Justice*, that explores issues of social justice, corporate power, and diversity. Dean Clark and Dean Cummings are presently working on a second edition of their book. Dean Clark regularly teaches contracts, employment discrimination, sales, business associations, sports law, hip hop law & social justice, and corporate justice.

Prior to joining Delaware Law School, Dean Clark was the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and a Professor of Law at the St. Thomas University Benjamin L. Crump College of Law ("STU") in Miami, Florida.



HARRY FIRST

*Charles L. Denison Professor of Law Emeritus
New York University School of Law*

Harry First is a specialist in antitrust and business crime. He is the co-author of the casebook *Free Enterprise and Economic Organization: Antitrust* (7th Ed. 2014) (with John Flynn and Darren Bush), as well as a casebook on regulated industries (with John Flynn). He was twice a Fulbright Research Fellow in Japan and taught antitrust as an adjunct professor at the University of Tokyo.

First's most recent scholarly work has focused on various aspects of antitrust enforcement and theory, including *The Microsoft Antitrust Cases: Competition Policy for the Twenty-first Century* (with Andrew I. Gavil) (MIT Press, 2014), *Exploitative Abuses of Intellectual Property Rights*, in *The Cambridge Handbook of Antitrust, Intellectual Property, and High Tech* (Cambridge Univ. Press 2017), "Philadelphia National Bank, Globalization, and the Public Interest" (*Antitrust Law Journal*, 2015), "Your Money and Your Life: The Export of U.S. Antitrust Remedies" in *Global Competition Law and Economics* (Stanford University Press, 2013), and "Antitrust's Democracy Deficit" (with Spencer Weber Waller) (*Fordham Law Review*, 2013). First is also the author of a casebook on business crime and the article "Business Crime and the Public Interest: Lawyers, Legislators, and the Administrative State" (*University of California Irvine Law Review*, 2012).

First is a contributing editor of the *Antitrust Law Journal*, foreign antitrust editor of the *Antitrust Bulletin*, a member of the executive committee of the Antitrust Section of the New York State Bar Association, and a member of the advisory board and a senior fellow of the American Antitrust Institute.

BIOGRAPHIES



HAIDER ALA HAMOUDI

*Dean and Nippert Professor of Law
University of Cincinnati, Donald P. Klekamp College of Law*

Dean Haider Ala Hamoudi became Dean of the University of Cincinnati College of Law in 2023. Since then, he has guided the College through a period of growth and transformation marked by record enrollment, new student success initiatives, and innovations in experiential learning, professionalism, and civil discourse.

In addition to his work at Cincinnati Law, Dean Hamoudi is a recognized scholar of Middle Eastern and Islamic law, focusing on the lived interaction of state, customary, and religious laws. He serves as Editor-in-Chief of *Arab Law Quarterly*, where he has revitalized the journal's scholarly profile and global reach. His teaching and research have included positions at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, where he served as Interim Dean, Vice Dean, and Professor of Law, as well as visiting appointments at the University of Utah,

William & Mary, and Columbia Law School. Earlier in his career, he clerked for the Hon. Constance Baker Motley of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York and practiced law at Debevoise & Plimpton.



BLAKE HUDSON

*Dean and Ethel P. Malugen Chair of Law
Cumberland School of Law, Samford University*

Blake Hudson came to Cumberland School of Law after serving as the Samuel T. Dell professor of law and director of the Environmental Land Use and Real Estate Law Program at the University of Florida's Levin College of Law.

As a professor, Hudson teaches courses related to property, environmental and natural resources law. His research focuses on the intersection of land use law, policy, and planning with natural resource management, with particular emphasis on the role of forest management in combating climate change and the implications of land development for sustainable natural resource management.

His research has also centered on the complex role of private property rights and government institutions as solutions to common dilemmas and how federalism and constitutional structure have the potential to both complicate and resolve land use and natural resource management issues at the state, federal and international levels. He has published over 30 articles in legal and peer reviewed academic journals, 10 book chapters and three books.



MATTHEW LYON

*Vice President and Dean
Duncan School of Law, Lincoln Memorial University (LMU)*

Matt Lyon became the fourth Dean of the Lincoln Memorial University Duncan School of Law ("LMU Law") in July 2020. As Dean, Lyon has overseen the development and implementation of LMU Law's part-time hybrid J.D. program, as well as increases in enrollment, admissions standards, and bar passage rates. He continues to teach bar-tested required courses in both the full-time and part-time hybrid programs, including Civil Procedure, Contracts and Sales, and Business Organizations. His scholarship has been published in numerous law reviews, but he also believes strongly in writing and presenting on issues of interest to the state and local bar.

Lyon began his career at LMU as an adjunct professor when the law school first opened in 2009, later joining the full-time faculty in 2011 and serving as Associate Dean of Academic Affairs from 2015 to 2020. Prior to working at LMU, Lyon was a commercial litigation associate at Sidley Austin LLP in Chicago and served as the senior law clerk for Justice Gary R. Wade of the Tennessee Supreme Court. Lyon earned a B.A. from the College of William and Mary, an M.P.A. from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, and his J.D. *cum laude* from the Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law. He is a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation and the Knoxville Bar Foundation.

BIOGRAPHIES



ERIN O'HARA O'CONNOR

*Dean and Donald J. Weidner Chair
Florida State University College of Law*

Erin O'Hara O'Connor has served as dean of the Florida State University College of Law since 2016, leading the College through a decade of significant growth, national recognition, and strategic innovation. Under her leadership, FSU Law has strengthened its reputation as one of the nation's best values in legal education, expanded experiential learning opportunities, enhanced student success initiatives, and deepened engagement with alumni, the legal profession, and policymakers.

A nationally recognized scholar, Dean O'Connor's research focuses on conflict of laws, arbitration, behavioral law and economics, and the legal marketplace. Prior to joining Florida State in 2016, she was a professor at Vanderbilt Law School, where she served as director of the Law and Human Behavior program from 2007 to

2010, associate dean for academic affairs from 2008 to 2010, and director of graduate studies for the Ph.D. Program in Law and Economics from 2011 to 2016. Earlier in her academic career, she taught at the University of Chicago Law School and has also held teaching appointments at Clemson University, George Mason University, Georgetown University, and Northwestern University.

Dean O'Connor received her J.D., *magna cum laude*, from Georgetown University Law Center, where she served as a senior article's selection editor for the *Georgetown Law Journal*. Following law school, she clerked for Chief Judge Dolores K. Sloviter of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.



DENNIS PATTERSON

*Board of Governors Professor of Law and Philosophy
Co-Director, Institute for Law and Philosophy
Rutgers University School of Law*

Dennis M. Patterson, a Board of Governors Professor at Rutgers University School of Law, has expertise in commercial law, trade law and legal philosophy. He has won senior research grants from the Fulbright Commission, Humboldt Stiftung, and the American Council of Learned Societies. He is the author of numerous books and articles in both commercial law and legal philosophy.



KELLYE Y. TESTY

*CEO and Executive Director
Association of American Law Schools*

Kellye Y. Testy is the executive director and chief executive officer of the Association of American Law Schools which serves as the institutional membership organization for its 175 member law schools and as the learned society for the legal academy.

Prior to joining AALS, Testy served as the president and chief executive officer of the Law School Admission Council, where she led the organization in its committed efforts to advance law and justice by encouraging diverse, talented individuals to study law and by supporting their enrollment and learning journeys from prelaw through practice.

Testy served as dean and professor of law at University of Washington School of Law from 2009 to 2017 and at Seattle University School of Law from 2005 to 2009. She began her career as a law professor at the University of Puget Sound in 1992, which then became Seattle University.

BIOGRAPHIES



DANIEL R. THIES

*Chair of the Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar
Shareholder, Webber & Thies PC*

Daniel R. Thies is the Chair of the Council of the American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. He is a shareholder at Webber & Thies, P.C. in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. His practice focuses on litigation, insurance law, business representation, and estate planning.

Thies has served as Chair-Elect of the Council of the American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar (2024-25), Vice Chair (2023-24), Chair of the Standards Committee (2021-24), Co-Chair of the Strategic Review Committee (2022-24), Member of the Council Executive Committee (2019-present), Member of the Managing Director Search Committee (2019-20), Chair of the Non-J.D. Committee (2018-21), and Member of the Council (2018-present). He first served on the Council as a law student (2008-2010) and as

a liaison from the ABA Young Lawyers Division (2013-16). He also served on the Accreditation Committee (2016-18).

Prior to joining Webber & Thies, Thies was an associate at Sidley Austin LLP (2013-2018). He also clerked for Chief Judge James F. Holderman of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois (2011–2013) and for Judge Jerry Smith of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit (2010–2011). Thies graduated *magna cum laude* from Harvard Law School in 2010, where he was Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, and *magna cum laude* from Yale University in 2007.



FIONA TREVELYAN

*President and CEO
NALP (National Association for Law Placement) Foundation*

As President & CEO of the NALP Foundation, Fiona S. Trevelyan provides leadership for the Foundation's mission to improve the quality and delivery of legal services through research, education, and the expansion of opportunity within the legal profession.

Prior to joining the Foundation, Fiona served as Assistant Dean for Career Development and Public Service at Boston University School of Law for over six years, and as the National Director of Legal Recruiting for Bingham McCutchen for seven years. She practiced as a litigator at Bingham before leading the firm's recruiting, and has also worked as an independent consultant to law firms and as a Principal in a boutique practice. She has held numerous leadership positions in both national and local legal and recruiting organizations,

including NALP and the ABA. She regularly publishes and speaks on a wide variety of issues in the legal profession, and currently serves on the Board of the Institute for Well-Being in Law (IWIL).

Fiona received her BA from Harvard University and her JD from Boston College Law School. Following law school, she clerked for the Hon. Frank M. Coffin, senior judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.



GREGORY C. ULMER

*President of the Houston Bar Association
Partner, BakerHostetler*

Gregory Ulmer is the 2026-2027 Houston Bar Association (HBA) President. He serves as Deputy Group Chair of BakerHostetler's Litigation Practice Group. He is also the firm's Product Liability and Toxic Tort team leader and a member of the Policy Committee, BakerHostetler's governing body.

Gregory is a practicing trial lawyer with more than 25 years of experience. His practice consists of civil defense litigation with an emphasis on defending products, product manufacturers and distributors, as well as premises owners, in areas of product liability, premise liability, wrongful death, catastrophic injury and toxic exposure. He also assists clients in crisis management and emergency incident response, including governmental agency investigations such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Gregory holds a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and a J.D. from the University of Houston Law Center.

BIOGRAPHIES



DAVID YELLEN

*Dean Emeritus and Professor of Law
University of Miami School of Law
Member, Special Advisory Committee
ABA Council, Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar*

David Yellen has served as Dean of three law schools: the University of Miami, Loyola University Chicago and Hofstra University. He has also been the Reuschlein Distinguished Visiting Professor at Villanova University School of Law and twice served as a visiting professor at Cornell Law School.

He has been very involved in law school accreditation matters, writing articles and blog posts, serving on the Standards Review Committee of the Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar during a major revision of the Standards, and currently serves on the Council's Special Advisory

Committee on Accreditation.

Yellen's major area of academic expertise is criminal law and sentencing. He has written widely about the federal sentencing guidelines, advised President Clinton's transition team on white collar crime, and argued a federal sentencing case before the United States Supreme Court. He was also appointed as Special Master by the Presiding Judge of the Cook County Criminal Court to investigate claims of torture committed by a Chicago Police Commander.

Yellen also served as Chief Executive Officer of the University of Denver's Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System and as President of Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. He graduated from Princeton University and Cornell Law School.