

Section on Part-Time Division Section Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 1

December 2005

Join us at AALS for the Section program:

“The Balancing Act: Issues and Concerns About Part-Time Student Wellness”

Friday, January 6, 2006
1:30–3:15 p.m.

Business meeting to follow.

For more information on the program, see the article on pages 1, 2, and 3 of this newsletter

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Message from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to report that in June the AALS granted our petition for permanent status as the AALS Section on Part-time Division Programs. As many of you know, this marks the culmination of five years of good work on the part of many, starting with the idea for the Section, which originated with Steve Bahls, then the dean at Capital Law School. Steve’s notion – shared by many – that part-time legal education is not an artifact of the past but rather a vibrant and important part of today’s American legal education is validated by the continuing expansion of part-time programs around the country.

Our goal, of course, is to offer the same high-quality education to our part-time students as we do to their full-time colleagues, but that entails unique challenges flowing from the limited amount of time and energy that our part-time students have for their education. The Section is devoted to identifying those challenges and to sharing our collective experience and ideas for surmounting them. The leadership of Dean Bahls and his successors as Chair of our Section – Dean Gil Holmes at the University of Baltimore and Professor Sharlene Lassiter at Northern Kentucky University – has been essential to the Section’s progress from probationary

to permanent status.

The main vehicle for discussing common issues has been the Section’s program at the Annual Meetings. In past years, we have presented panels concerning the role of part-time programs in today’s legal education, the ways in which clinical opportunities can be extended to part-time students (particularly evening students), and the possibilities and potential problems of incorporating distance learning into a part-time program. This year’s program addresses another challenge faced by part-time programs – wellness issues faced by students who are not only subject to the pressures of *continued on page 2*

Section Program Focuses on Wellness

Please join us for the Section’s annual program on January 6, 2006, at 1:30 p.m. The program will focus on wellness issues that pertain to part-time students.

Within the last decade,

empirical data has revealed that lawyers are both unhappy and unhealthy. Generally, lawyers are more clinically depressed than non-lawyers, consume more alcohol and use more recreational drugs than any

other profession, and commit or consider suicide at more significantly alarming rates. Divorce among attorneys is reportedly higher than any other profession. This lack of wellness has been *continued on page 3*

Message from the Chair— continued

law study but to the stresses from their other obligations, be they professional, family or some combination of these and other concerns. Part-time law study presents a unique opportunity for these students to pursue a legal career, but it also is a potential trap. It is incumbent on we who are engaged in providing this opportunity to be aware of these wellness issues and to be equipped to address them, both preventively and responsively.

We are quite fortunate to have four experienced and thoughtful speakers to lead this discussion on student wellness – Moderator Brenda Saunders Hampden, Associate Professor at Seton Hall University, and Panelists Darby Dickerson, Dean at Stetson University, Sue Schechter, Associate Dean for Student Services at Golden Gate University, and Georgene Kaleina, third-year part-time day student at University of Baltimore. The panelists have been assisted by Paula Lustbader of Seattle University. I want also to recognize and to thank Brenda Saunders Hampden, Program Chair, for her untiring efforts to make this program happen in the face of challenges that no one expected.

A second vehicle to share ideas with and to seek help from each other is a Section listserv, and we are working to have one in place this spring. Once the listserv is inaugurated, you will be contacted by the AALS and offered the opportunity to participate. I hope and expect that participation will be widespread and lively.

Finally, our Section maintains a website at www.law.capital.edu/parttime, and I invite you to visit it and to learn more about the work that we do. Although we have made a good start, there is much more that we can do to recognize the Section's potential for improving our programs. We welcome your ideas and participation as a member of our Section.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I appreciate your interest and wish you all success in the coming year.

Sincerely,
Art Leavens

Proposed Slate of Section Officers for 2006–2007

Join us for the Section's annual business meeting, which will follow the program on Friday, January 6. Below is the proposed slate of officers and Executive Committee members. If you are interested in becoming more involved in the Section, please contact one of the current officers and express an interest. We also are seeking ideas for the 2007 Section Program. If you would like to be involved in developing the program, please contact Darby Dickerson at darby@law.stetson.edu.

Chair: Brenda Saunders Hampden, *Seton Hall University*

Chair-Elect: Darby Dickerson, *Stetson University*

Secretary: Frederic White, *Golden Gate*

Executive Committee

Members: Arthur Leavens, *Western New England College*; Raven Lidman, *Seattle University*; Athornia Steele Capital *University*; Michelle ("Shelley") Harker, *Hamline University*; Jack Lynch, *University of Baltimore*

Part-Time Program Facts

The following information is based on the ABA's Statistical Take-off Reports for 2004–2005.

Enrollment:

1L PT = 8,315

2L PT = 5,248

3L PT = 4,709

4L PT = 3,875

Total PT enrollment = 22,147, which represents 15% of all J.D. students.

Number of schools with part-time programs (30 or more students) = 88

Average number of part-time students in a program = 248

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Section Program — Wellness and Balance (continued)

attributed to the pressures of the legal profession. Many of the unhealthy patterns resulting from these stresses originate in law school. Law students are introduced to the demands of the profession with its time constraints and deadlines, competition and other stress inducers. For students in part-time division programs, the impact of the stress may be greater, since most part-time students tend to be “non-traditional” in the sense that they are older, married with children, have responsibilities for aging parents, maintain full-time employment and otherwise attempt to balance their lives against the rigors

and demands of law school and their worlds.

What type of advice can we give them? How can we assist in maintaining their wellness amidst the constant pressures? What lessons can we teach? As legal educators, how can we be alert to the specific signals that our students may be sending? This panel, consisting of experienced wellness experts in the academy as well as a student participant, will explore several successful initiatives utilized by many law schools. The panel will discuss how various wellness issues affect part-time students differently than full-time students and how wellness

issues affect academic performance. The panel also will provide ideas to promote wellness among part-time students. All panelists will address how schools might deal with students who are experiencing problems coping with issues of depression, stress, drug abuse, and alcoholism.

We hope that you will join us and share your thoughts and ideas with the group.

Meet the Program Panelists

Darby Dickerson

Stetson University

Darby Dickerson is the Vice President and Dean of Stetson University College of Law, which has a dual-division program. Part-time students take classes on the main campus and a satellite campus. Dean Dickerson also has served as Vice Dean, Associate Dean, and Director of Legal Research and Writing. Her scholarly interests include higher education law and policy and legal writing. In 2005, Dean Dickerson was presented with the Burton Foundation Award for Outstanding Contributions to Legal Writing and was named Business Woman of the Year in the Nonprofit Sector by the *Tampa Bay Business Journal*. She received her B.A. and M.A. from The College of William & Mary and her J.D. from Vanderbilt.

Brenda Saunders Hampden

Seton Hall

Brenda Saunders Hampden is an Associate Professor at Seton Hall University School of Law. She received her B.M.E. and M.M.E. from Howard University and her J.D. from Seton Hall. She completed a post-graduate fellowship at Stanford under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Before joining the Seton Hall faculty, Professor Saunders was Musical Director and Legal Analyst for the Dance Theatre of Harlem and Associate Legal Counsel to Carousel Communications, Inc. She founded the Summer Institute for Pre-Legal Studies and directs the law school's Legal Education Opportunities Institute and Academic Support Program. She publishes in the areas of copyright law and legal education. In 2002, she received the Outstanding Alumni Award from BLSA.

Susan Schechter

Golden Gate University

Susan Schechter is Associate Dean for Student Services and Clinical Professor of Law at Golden Gate, University School of Law where she supervises the Civil Practice, Family Law, and Public Interest/Government Counsel clinics. Dean Schechter earned her B.A. at Washington University and her J.D. at the University of Pittsburgh. She has worked as a Staff Attorney and Campus Organizer for the National Association for Public Interest Law and has represented clients in acute psychiatric facilities with the Mental Health Advocacy Project.

These professors will be joined by **Georgene Kaleina**, third-year part-time day student at the Uni-

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
LAW SCHOOLS

Section Officers

Chair:

Arthur Leavens
Western New England College

Chair-Elect:

Brenda Saunders Hampden
Seton Hall University

Immediate Past Chair:

Sharlene Lassiter
Northern Kentucky University

Secretary:

Darby Dickerson
Stetson University

Executive Committee

Raven C. Lidman
Seattle University

Athornia Steele
Capital University

Frederic White
Golden Gate University

**Part-Time Facts —continued from
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Schools reporting the largest number of part-time students = Thomas M. Cooley, Suffolk, Widener, William Mitchell, Georgetown, McGeorge, Seton Hall, Brooklyn, New England, New York Law School, John Marshall, Fordham, Whittier, DePaul, Loyola-L.A.

Largest part-time enrollments at public schools = Baltimore, George Mason, Puerto Rico, Northern Kentucky, Indiana-Indianapolis, Cleveland State, Temple, Rutgers-Newark, Akron, Rutgers-Camden.

**Books, Articles, and Websites of
Interest on Wellness and Part-Time
Programs**

Edwin J. Butterfoss, *Part-Time Legal Education: It's Not Our Parents' Old Oldsmobile*, 35 U. Tol. L. Rev. 25 (2003).

Susan Swaim Daicoff, *Lawyer Know Thyself* (Am. Psychol. Assn. 2004).

Georgetown Law, *Center for Wellness Promotion*, <http://www.law.georgetown.edu/wellness/index.html>.

Barbara Glesner Fines, *Law School and Stress*, <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/profiles/glesnerfines/bgf-strs.htm> (1999).

Steven Keeva, *Transforming Practices* (Contemporary Bks. 1999).

Larry Krieger, *Psychological Insights: Why Our Students and Graduates Suffer, and What We Might Do About It*, 1 J. ALWD 259 (2002).

Benjamin Sells, *The Soul of the Law* (Element 1994).

Visit the section website:

www.law.capital.edu/parttime