

ST. THOMAS LAW NEWS

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4

SEPTEMBER 9, 2011



PROFESSIONALISM IN LAW SCHOOL

As has been pointed out to all law students since Orientation, the day you walked into law school is the day in which you began to embark on the road to becoming a professional, a lawyer. Your behavior in law school is subject to close scrutiny by the various state bars in deciding whether you meet the character and fitness requirements for admission to the bar. Certainly, admission to the bar can, and should, motivate “professional” behavior.

But, maybe more importantly in the short term is that you should exercise the discretion and judgment of a “professional” with regard to your colleagues and professors, and the law school and University administration. So, here are some tips I hope you will keep in mind.

The law library is designed for study and research. For many students, the law library by choice (or necessity) is the one place they should be able to find a peaceful, quiet environment to study. Yet, time and time again, the library personnel and I receive numerous complaints about students talking with each other, or on their cell phones, or engaging in other disruptive behavior that makes it difficult for other students to focus their attention on their studies. The lobby to the library is available for conversations, and students wishing to study in groups that require conversation should book study rooms or study in empty classrooms. If you want to socialize then take advantage of the breezeway. It is designed to give you an area conducive to socializing. The stairwell of the library and the areas adjacent to the elevator do not in any way buffer sound. In fact, those areas amplify sound. So, please be mindful that “your” conversation is not likely something other students who are trying to study care to hear. All students should appreciate and practice courtesy and respect for their colleagues studying in the library.

Classroom behavior and decorum is also a component of being a professional student. Students should arrive on time and prepared for class. It is inconsiderate to your colleagues and professors to arrive late, disrupt class, and then to not be prepared when called upon. Studying the law is a dynamic process. It works best when the students and professor are prepared, knowledgeable, and engaged. Do your part to make the class experience meaningful and worthwhile for both you and your colleagues.

Please remember the limitations on smoking and food in the classrooms. Smoking is limited to the designated areas, and food is not allowed in the classrooms.

One last bit of advice. We all encounter frustrations day to day in dealing with bureaucracies. The university and law school both have a number of bureaucratic systems that (at times) do not function optimally for some particular student. If you encounter a problem, please remember to exercise a bit of discretion when dealing with the person who is addressing your problem. It may be a truism, but often he or she is just doing his or her job, and following procedure and policy he or she is required to follow. We have tried to provide you as much in house assistance at the law school as feasible. If you are unable to achieve a satisfactory result then bring the matter to my attention. One of my primary roles is serving as your liaison in resolving problems. If all of us work together and keep a level head, we often can achieve a more timely and efficient resolution.

CHANGE OF EXAMINATION TIMES FOR THE BAR EXAM

Beginning with the February 2012 Bar Examination, the Florida Board of Bar Examiners will begin testing at 9:30 a.m. and end at 5:00 p.m. for both Parts A and B of the examination. This information supersedes any information previously announced regarding the hours of testing. The amount of time to complete the examination has not changed. The following is the new test schedule for both examination days:

Morning Session		Afternoon Session	
Arrival/Badge Distribution	7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Lunch Break	12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Exam Entry	8:30 a.m. - 9:10 a.m.	Exam Entry	1:25 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.
Test Instructions	9:10 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Test Instructions	1:45 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Session 1	9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Sessions II	2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

OBSERVANCE OF UPCOMING RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

St. Thomas Law does not “count” absences associated with a good faith observance of a religious holiday. We try to keep track of dates associated with religious holidays and to send out notifications regarding our attendance policy. If you are aware of some religious holiday that is upcoming, but no notice has been provided, then please email Assistant Dean Hernandez the relevant information to jhernandez@stu.edu.

This semester, we have the following Jewish holidays:

Rosh Hashanah, which precludes work from the sunset of 9/28 through nightfall of 9/30.

Yom Kippur, which prohibits work from sunset on 10/7 through nightfall of 10/8.

Sukkot, which prohibits work on 10/13 and 10/15.

Shemini Atzeret, which prohibits work on sunset of 10/19 through nightfall of 10/20

Simchat Torah, which prohibits work nightfall of 10/20 through nightfall of 10/21.

For any holiday that begins on sunset, we will not count absences associated with a class that *ends after 4:00 pm*. If you will be observing any of these holidays (and accordingly unable to attend class) then you will need to fill out a form that will be available from the Law School Registrar beginning the week of September 19. You must submit the form no later than the week BEFORE the week you will miss the class(es). On that form, you will need to specifically state the date you will miss class, which class(es) you will be missing, and the professor for the class. Forms have been emailed out or can be picked up from the Law School Registrar’s counter. You may also mention to your professor that you will be missing class due to the observance of the holiday.

Please note that although the absences do not count, you should consult with your professor(s) regarding the material that may be missed. Some professors request that their classes be taped, others will review the material during office hours. Also, please note that if an assignment is due on one of these dates then generally the assignment becomes due the day before the holiday begins (the holiday does not create an extension for the assignment). Again, this is something you would need to discuss with the professor. For students in the LL.M. in Intercultural Human Rights Program or the LL.M. in Environmental Sustainability Program, please consult the program directors for guidance on how such absences are treated.

HEALTH INSURANCE CARDS

If you have not waived out of the Health Insurance Program provided by the University then you are automatically enrolled in the University’s Health Insurance Program. Coverage became effective August 1, 2011. Cards will be distributed by the Office of Campus Health in the next week or so. So, be on the lookout for an email from Campus Health concerning the new cards. If you need medical care in the interim, prior to the receipt of your card, you should contact the Head of Campus Health, Nellie Baez, at nbaez@stu.edu, and she will assist you in receiving a card or verification of coverage or both. Please note the insurance carrier this year is **not** Aetna Health. The University selected Pan American Life Insurance Company as the carrier, and it is administered through GM-Southwest, Inc. The coverage is comparable to the coverage provided under the prior policy. This year’s policy expires on July 31, 2012. We have booklets that outline the coverage available in the Law School Student Affairs Office, and the information is also available online.