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Stetson Law--Advocacy and Legal Writing

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PRESENTER: Good afternoon and welcome to the live stream of advocacy and legal writing to Stetson's strength. This is the second in a series of multiple live streams to help them engage and learn more about Stetson Law. My name is Darren Kettles and I am the Director of Admissions. I am joined by my colleagues, Karla Davis Jamison and Carmen Johnson, Associate Director of Admissions and Diversity Initiatives. Today we have an informative event planned for you and we are glad you could join us. Some of you may be aware Stetson Law is ranked the top advocacy school in the nation, 23 times perhaps. Something we're proud of and work hard to uphold. Ever since legal writing rankings have been established Stetson Law has always ranked in the top six nationally. We are currently ranked third in the nation for legal writing. Just a bit of information about the event before we get started. I will introduce our faculty and

current student in a moment who will be the headliners of today's live stream. The presenters today will speak first, then following their presentations we will welcome all of your questions. We would like for you to focus your questions on the topic of today's live stream as much as possible. We will host an admissions question and answer forum on Tuesday, April 14th, to cover more general questions, so be sure to mark your calendar. You can post your question in the question section on your go to webinar panel that is on your screen now. Just as a reminder, please mute your mics when the presenters are speaking. Let's get started here. I would like to introduce Professor Julia Metts. Professor Metts earned her JD from Stetson Law. She was a member of Stetson's trial team and was a finalist in Houston, Texas. She was a national champion when she and her co-counsel won the National Institute For Trial Advocacy Tournament of Champions competition in Los Angeles. She was a proud member of the Dispute Board Resolution Board. She is the Director of Trial Programs at Stetson. As the Director she is responsible for managing, coaching and training the members of Stetson's national recognized trial team. She also teaches evidence and trial advocacy. So thank you, Professor Metts, the floor is now yours and we are happy to have you here.

PRESENTER: Thanks a lot, Darren. And a special thanks to everyone from our admissions team for putting this

together today so we can reach prospective students at a time when we aren't together at all. A couple things I've been asked to talk about today is Stetson's -- what makes us different than other schools and why it is that we're continuing to maintain that number one ranking. First I want to talk to you about what advocacy really is. Because people have this idea that advocacy means that I have to be in a courtroom, that I have to be litigating, that I have to be contentious. None of that is true. You see we're advocating right now. I'm in my living room, Professor Feeley is somewhere in her house and Forest Sutton is in his house as well. But we are advocating for a place we love and care about.

Advocacy at Stetson is so much more than trial work. What it means is that you learn to communicate effectively and that you learn to persuade. Those are skills you will carry with you as a Stetson lawyer for the rest of your career. What does it mean to be a Stetson lawyer. Well, that means that you're going to be dedicated, that you're going to be focused on the things that make us exceptional. And that's going to be advocacy in a courtroom, advocacy in pretrial, advocacy in social justice, advocacy in negotiations, advocacy in mediations, advocacy in depositions. There really is no limit to the places that we advocate and the things that we do at Stetson.

One of the things I want you to understand is why I direct the trial tournaments, I have the privilege of running the trial teams, advocacy isn't limited to trial at all. The other thing that I want to talk to you about today is, are the course offerings that we have at Stetson that are available to all of our students. In just a few minutes we're going to transition and talk about the board specifically. We have classes ranging from pretrial practice, counseling negotiations, we have special drafting classes, we have classes devoted to cross examinations, jury selection, advance trial case, basic trial advocacy. We're constantly coming up with new ways to teach and to communicate advocacy skills across the board to all of our students. An important thing to understand is just because you're not on an advocacy board doesn't mean you won't have an opportunity to be engaged in advocacy at Stetson. We offer an advocacy concentration for students who want to pursue this route. That's available for students who want to concentrate in an area of advocacy that may not be trial. It may be pretrial advocacy, it may be social justice advocacy, it may be any other realm of advocacy you can think of. That's available to students regardless whether or not they're on the board.

We have active involvement in clinics and externships to allow students an opportunity to go into and advocate in real settings, so to be in places where lawyers are already

practicing and advocate in those settings as well. It's a phenomenal opportunity for everyone involved. Candidly, I am not objective. I graduated from Stetson in 2004. In a few minutes you'll hear from Professor Kelly Feeley, who was my Professor and coach on the Dispute Resolution Board when I was a student. She is phenomenal as well. The unique thing you will find about the panelists today, we are all Stetson people. Forest is getting ready to graduate, I coached him. Professor Feeley was my Professor and coach as well. You'll have an opportunity to ask significant questions about what writing and advocacy are at Stetson and why we're ranked so highly in both of those particular fields.

I talked a little bit about what advocacy means. The other question that comes up so often when we talk about advocacy, it isn't for everyone. What if you don't want to advocate, I don't want to be a trial lawyer. Do you want to convince someone to do something that you need them to do. Do you want to persuade someone. Are you going to need to be able to talk to your client and sign a contract or convincing them the things you've done for them are meaningful. If you do, then advocacy is for you. We're always in the business of human communication and persuasion, regardless of where our feet are planted or these days regardless of where we're sitting and Zooming from. We need to be able to look at people, persuade people, and get them

where we need them to be. And that's all advocacy is. So if you're not interested in being a trial lawyer, but you're interested in making a difference, then statute and advocacy are exactly where you need to be.

I want to transition now and talk a little bit about the Boards at Stetson, because that's a big question. These are the competition teams, these are the Boards. We have a trial team, we have a Moot Court Board and we also have a Dispute Resolution Board. What you'll notice is it covers every aspect of a case. So when you first get a case and you try to settle it, negotiate it, interview your clients and figure out what's going on, those are the functions of the Dispute Resolution Board. If that can't be done, then we've got to go to trial. That's the function of the Trial Team Board. Sometimes trial lawyers make mistakes. I've never seen it happen. And sometimes we need someone to review our work, both the lawyers and the judges. And that's exactly what we have a Moot Court Board for, for those appellate arguments, that appellate drafting. But everything is being a well-rounded lawyer. Stetson has the ability to prepare you for and make sure you're ready to navigate.

Now, our competition Boards are limited to the people who actually try out and make the Boards. We have consistently increased the number of students who have been allowed to participate in this. Later on whenever Forest

Sutton speaks you'll learn about recent initiatives with our advocacy Boards, making sure we are reaching everyone who wants to be involved. Oftentimes we have anywhere between 60 to a hundred people try out for each of the individual Boards. We carry about 30 members on each board. The Boards -- more sometimes depending on the level of talent. Less sometimes if there aren't that many people trying out. There is no set size to the Boards; meaning the more people who try out, the more who have talent, the more we're able to take onto the Boards at any given time.

The next thing that comes up when we talk about advocacy Boards is of course they're competitive. We travel around the country. You may have seen earlier either on our website some of the social media posts, the pictures of the trophies and the things we won over the years. There are in excess of 450 trophies on our campus that all of the Boards have had a part in winning over the years. While we understand they're shiny, we understand it's nice to win, the real significance of that are the hours and the moments that each and every coach and student use to prepare in making them a better lawyer. When you look back on your law school career, you're thinking about the hard cases, thinking about the hard times, you're not going to think about a trophy. You're going to think about the practice that you fought through the hard material, that you figured out what was going on, you had an A-HA moment.

The trophies are nice, we are competitive, we like to win, but at the end of the day it is teaching us about purpose, why we advocate.

I can tell you having gone through Professor Feeley's training on the Resolution Board and Pam Bell's training during that time, it made me a more efficient lawyer. I was able to do case analysis and get through cases more quickly. I had no fear of being in a courtroom, being in depositions or being in any particular setting I needed to be in because of the countless hours we spent preparing for all of those moments in a safe setting at Stetson. While we are extremely competitive, there is a plus size to that. It's never going to be about the trophies we win. It's always going to be about the purpose we find in advocating for others, giving us a voice to speak on the behalf of others.

I will tell you the first 13 years of my career as a prosecutor I learned to speak on behalf of victims because I had incredible professors at Stetson who helped me find my voice and confidence to speak on behalf of others. It really is about training you and preparing you for the next phase of your career.

The other thing that comes up is, is it a time commitment. The answer's yes. You've set aside and committed the time to be here for this webinar to talk to us, to hear from us, to engage with us. Obviously, you're



interested. Just like people who want to be in better shape have to be -- you've got to put the hours aside. You've got to be dedicated to it. Is it an unbearable time commitment, no, not at all. Is it something that you can do if you want it bad enough -- video froze up.

PRESENTER: If you have any questions about that later on absolutely Forest is going to be the perfect person to answer that. He has had to balance being on both Boards and competing at the same time.

The other thing that comes up is what if I don't make the board. What if I'm not one of the 30 selected to be on trial team or I'm not one of the 30 selected to be on DR, moot court. Guess what, you're just fine. There are lots of people who don't make Boards. Honestly, I have lots of friends that I went to law school with who didn't make a board who make significantly more money than I do now. They're partners at incredible firms, they work hard and they love their work. Making a board sometimes is an incredible opportunity. But not making a board is never the end of the world. The reason is because you still have an incredible opportunity to be engaged and involved.

For me in particular, if you haven't made a board, you still want to be involved, we invite you into practice. We allow you to come in, have a shadow team opportunity, where you get to practice the skills against trial team members and

get better. Where you get to come in and play witnesses or be an advocate or participate in any of these programs that you like. We also have the concentration programs, we have the clinic programs. All of these things that are there for you in the event that you don't make a board. I will tell you I've had people who made Boards who weren't the most successful. Making a board sometimes is like getting picked to be on a playground ball team, right. It's an imperfect process. But the thing you need to know is if it's a desire of yours, do everything possible to work towards that goal. If you don't make it, it is not the end of the world, because you have an entire faculty at Stetson and student body that's dedicated and devoted to making you the most successful Stetson lawyer you can be, that's a lawyer who practices with integrity and with purpose. It is definitely not the end of the world.

The other thing that often comes up with regard to this is why, why should I put myself through this process, is it worth it. And the answer is absolutely. I never worried about a job in my career, because I've had a skill set that gets me through every situation. I walked into a courtroom, into judge's chambers, and into those places with confidence and with the ability to speak clearly to people because I had professors at Stetson who took the time to teach me how to do those things.

I'm a kid who grew up stuttering. So when I was called on in elementary school to read books in my fifth grade class, and in Ms. Douglas' fourth grade class, I remember it clearly, I put my head down and I would cry because I couldn't articulate the words. So speaking like this and advocating like this isn't a natural talent, it's a skill. The thing that Stetson does that makes us so unique is we're not looking for the people who already do it right. You see, the secret behind our success is our willingness to invest in the people who have the grit and the determination to get the job done. The people who want to advocate for a purpose and advocate on behalf of others. You see, there's nothing natural about me being able to speak to you now. What it was, was a desire to not disappoint and a desire to get better at something that I wasn't good at before. And along with the help of incredible professors like Kelly Feeley, like Pam Bell and all the other people at Stetson who have made us great at what we do, I am able to be here with you now.

What you need to know about these trying times and the reason I'm on this camera and that I'm not in a great hall or the lounge talking to you today is that Stetson is unique. We have an amazing set of people who decided we're not going to let this get in our way, we're not going to let this stop us. We're going to make sure we reach the people. We're going to advocate for the school we love. Right now it means

we're doing that from our living room via Zoom, Blackboard, all kinds of other resources. The thing that makes Stetson so incredible, the reason we're number one is not the trophies, it's because no matter what gets thrown in our way, no matter what obstacles we have to face, everybody on this campus comes forward and finds a way to get through it. Advocacy isn't limited to the department and the building that I happen to sit in. Advocacy is Stetson. Every place you touch on this campus, every person that you meet, every single office, we're advocating for the institution, the place that we love. We just hope that you will join us very soon and let us teach you how to advocate with purpose as well.

All right, Darren, I'm going to send this back off to you now. I think they're probably tired of hearing from me for a minute.

PRESENTER: I never get tired of listening to you, so thank you for that, and for your inspiring words and happy to be part of the Stetson community.

All right. So we are going to shift now to Professor Kelly Feeley. Professor Feeley earned her JD from Stetson Law and joined the Stetson faculty in 2000, where she teaches research, writing, interviewing and counseling. While earning her JD at Stetson she was a member of both the Mock Trial Team and the Moot Court Board, was named to the Order of Barristers. Since 2001 she has been an integral part of

Stetson's national award winning advocacy program and is the founder of Stetson's Alternative Dispute Resolution Board. Coach of arbitration teams, she has helped the teams capture a national championship. She has coached Stetson's Environmental Negotiation teams to two national championships, two national finals and seven semi-finals. And she has also coached the mediation teams to national semi-finals and two regional championships. So at this time I would like to welcome Professor Kelly Feeley, my friend, who I am so happy you joined us today. So, Professor Feeley, why don't you share with our admitted students today about our amazing legal writing program and more on the advocacy that you are an integral part of. Thank you.

PRESENTER: Thank you, Darren. And thank you, Professor Metts, for all your kind words. I have to say that I am a Stetson grad. As Darren just said to you, I was on several of the Advocacy Boards. I know that I am a better attorney and a better professor because I had professors and coaches who cared enough to spend the time to teach me the proper way to advocate, to organize my thoughts, to be as persuasive as possible. And part of being persuasive and being an advocate is through written communication. And even though so much of what we do nowadays is through e-mail or texting, there's so much that doesn't go out of style in terms of good legal communication, which is what we try to teach

you at Stetson. So I know one of the things that Professor Metts said is that advocacy is everywhere. And students are always wondering how can I get involved and how soon can I get involved. I'm going to tell you at least from legal research and writing, you're going to be involved from your very first semester. It's a required first year course. In your first semester you'll take research and writing one. In your second semester you'll take research and writing two. Research and writing one is focused on objective writing. It's as if you're working for a law firm, a client comes in with a legal problem, it's your job to figure out should you take this client or not. It's one of those things that sometimes is difficult for students because they so badly want to be persuasive and let someone win. But really what you need to do is evaluate the law and find out if the client has a strong case or not. Because one of the things you'll learn it's just as important or just as helpful to tell a client they don't have a good case as it is to tell them they do. It's important to tell a client don't waste your time or your money because the law is not in your favor.

So really what we do in legal research and writing is -- I'm going to take it in two parts. First the research. We help you to identify the legal resources that are out there. I've always said to students what separates lawyers from nonlawyers is really the library. Whether it's printed

material or it's an online library, it's your ability, lawyers' abilities to understand how those resources work, what order to use them, how to locate the information that you need, and how to identify what is relevant and mandatory information that you have to use.

Once you know that, the next step is applying that law to a set of facts. And so usually a client will come in with some story, some legal issue, some legal challenge and it's your job as the lawyer to diagnose what that problem is and then predict what can happen. The only way you can do that is to understand those facts and find the applicable and relevant law that will impact those facts and figure out what the outcome will be. So on the research side, we're teaching you all the different legal resources that are out there and available. We're teaching you how to use them most efficiently and effectively. Also how to extract, find and identify the relevant law for your client's particular scenario.

Once you have that and you have the facts that your client has presented you with, you now have to explain how that law is going to impact those facts. So it's either going to help you predict a particular outcome, which is what you're doing in research and writing one, or it will allow you to persuade for a particular outcome in research and writing two. So one of the things we're always asked is why are we ranked

so high in research and writing. Well, I think a lot has to do with our program. To explain to you a little bit about how we teach research and how we teach writing I'm going to say first of all Stetson really values research and writing as a course. I told you it's a first year course, I told you it's required. Just that makes it important. It's also the number of credit hours that we -- that students earn from taking those classes. They get four credit hours for taking research and writing one, and three credit hours for research and writing two. You'll find when you come to law school that's an awful lot of credit hours devoted to one topic. It's because we think it's that important.

In research and writing one what we try to do is also include an extra research lab class, which ends up being a hands-on way to learn some of those tools of researching which allows us then to use our class time to focus more on the writing. So, it's devoted a lot of time to learning how to be a good researcher, which will ultimately help you to be a legal writer. What does it mean to be a legal writer. And what does legal writing look like, and how is it different than other types of writing. I tell my students all the time that I'm sure an undergrad if given a word count limit or page limit for a class project, let's say they were given ten pages. They may have had four pages of actual solid good information they wanted to include and the other six they had to find



something to fill in. They had to fluff it up a little bit to fill in that extra, because really they had nothing else to say. Well, in legal research and writing it usually works the other way. You're usually given a word count limit or page limit. And let's say you're only given a limit of three pages. You might have ten pages of material you'd like to include. So now you have to figure out how can I be clear, concise and correct, and get all the information into the fewer number of pages for the smaller word count. So one of the things we're teaching you is to be more clear and concise.

I will tell you that legal writing is a very structured, formal and very logical way of writing. I also say it's kind of like taking an IKEA instruction manual and making it seem easy. Sometimes the law is very confusing. Sometimes your client's fact scenario is very complex or confusing. Then trying to take that complex law and try to apply it to this complex set of facts, then explain it to somebody else can feel a little overwhelming. So the idea about teaching you a logical, formal, structured way of writing makes sure you don't skip a step. It also makes sure that you cover everything you're supposed to, so what you're saying makes as much sense as possible.

And I'm telling you that lawyers and judges, they think a certain way and they expect information to be communicated a certain way to them, so that's what we teach you. We teach

you the most formal way to communicate with that legal community and also how to communicate with a client. A lawyer is one type of audience, a judge a different audience, and a layperson who's never had to deal with a lawyer before is even another audience. So being an advocate means being able to take the information you do know and effectively communicate that to multiple audiences. And it make sure you're tailoring it for each audience. So that's one of the things that we teach.

So more about our program. What we try to do is even though you might come in and your entire section, your class section might be anywhere from 70 to 95 students, your research and writing classes will be smaller, anywhere from 25 to 35 students. That's one thing we do is keep the classes smaller. We also tend to assign smaller assignments all throughout the semester so we can provide you feedback throughout the semester. That's another thing that makes our program effective. Most of the professors, although each section is going to be slightly different, most of us employ a rewrite of at least one of the assignments that you do so that way you can get feedback, implement that feedback, then you can see how much your writing can improve by adding in, you know, making those tweaks and those fixes. So that's the whole point is the way you become a better writer is to continue to write, to continue to edit, and to continue to

be critical of your own writing.

Because although you might know a topic inside and out, how do you communicate that to somebody else who hasn't been spending the hours, the days or the weeks that you've been spending researching a topic, thinking about the topic, analyzing the topic. You need to make it seem simple, easy and clear, and that's one of the things that we teach you. Also, the smaller assignments those are meant to help build towards a larger assignment so you're more prepared for that.

Going back to getting feedback throughout the semester, that's hugely important. One of the things I hear all the time is in some of their other lecture classes, if all they have in those classes is just a final exam they're often wondering how am I doing in this class. Am I doing enough. Am I going to do well on the exam. Maybe they don't know. So at least with research and writing, by getting feedback all throughout the semester you have a better gauge of whether you're getting it or if you're not getting it, which allows you to get more help.

One of the things I will say about Stetson, and it's always been this way, it is very student centered. If you want the help and you're willing to put the time into it, you're going to find for the most part professors are very accessible and willing to help. So you definitely should take advantage of that.

Another reason I think we are ranked high is our presence in the research and writing community. That doesn't mean just on campus, that means nationally. So that means that much of our scholarship is focused on research and writing. We might belong or be a member of a board of one of the national writing organizations. We might host conferences on campus. We will present at conferences across the country. So it's really being a presence. One of the things that Professor Metts mentioned was our Moot Court Board, which is appellate oral argument. And that goes hand in hand with students writing what's called a brief, which is a misnomer because it's usually something that's anywhere from 25 to 50 pages, along with an oral argument about the brief. Well, our success from our Moot Court Team, that impacts our legal research and writing ranking, because there are schools that see our ability to have winning teams because we write solid briefs, means that really shows that we also have a good research and writing program. So a lot goes into rankings, but I wanted to at least give you a brief overview of some of the things that impact that ranking.

I also hear am I really going to use this stuff in the real world, is it like algebra, and the answer is absolutely. Even if you think you're going to be in trial every day, you can't go into trial without being prepared. You have to know the law, because the judge is going to know the law. Your

opponent is going to know the law. You also need to know your facts inside and out. If you haven't thought through not only the best arguments you're going to make, but what the other side is going to argue, you're not prepared. And you're going to find that out as soon as you get in front of that judge and the judge either starts asking you questions that you aren't ready for, or you haven't thought of a response, or you haven't realized there was another case out there that the other side found and you didn't. So regardless of what you do, what area of law that you practice in, research and writing is going to be one of those classes you're going to find you use in some way virtually every day as an attorney. It's looking up a quick statute, it's finding a case that you need, it's answering a client's question, you will be using all of the tools that we're going to teach you in research and writing on a daily basis as an attorney. So I have to tell you it's one of those things that the more you do, the better you'll get. And I think our program really tries to help give feedback so we can show you how to become the best legal writer that you can be. Because I will tell you, especially from Professor Metts and myself, and soon coming up is Forest Sutton, your degree is our degree. So we want you to make us proud. So we want to make sure when you graduate from Stetson you've been given all the tools necessary to be the best lawyer you can be. And having a

strong foundation in legal research and writing, which is really the basis of advocacy and persuasion, that's only going to help you.

So with that, Darren, I'm going to turn it over to you. Thank you.

PRESENTER: Thank you, Professor Feeley. I always enjoy listening to you. And I know our admitted students will really benefit from having you teach them in their year during their time at Stetson. Hopefully that will bring in a few more questions for us with that.

So at this point we're going to pivot now to Forest Sutton. Forest is a fantastic student here at Stetson and a leader. He is a member, as I said earlier, of Stetson Law's nationally ranked Advocacy Board. He is also the current president of -- Forest attended the University of Central Florida for undergrad. He will graduate in May with his JD from Stetson. So, Forest, why don't you share with some of our admitted students about your experience at Stetson, and being part of the Board, and just let them know what its like from your perspective. We heard from faculty, I think it would be helpful for them to hear from you, how you gained interest in that, how you feel it's going to help launch your career.

PRESENTER: Absolutely. Thank you for the introduction. Good afternoon, everyone. As Darren said, my

name is Forest Sutton. It's a pleasure to meet you all virtually. I've been asked to give my perspective of students' life at -- the first thing I want to talk about is the skills. Professor Metts and Feeley, they both talked about that at length with you. But I think when you talk about becoming a Stetson advocate, some of the things that I've been able to obtain are beyond just critical thinking. The skills that I learned from that, being able to break down cases, knowing what to do before ever taking a case to trial, probably the most important is communication. I mean, we all want to be better communicators, we want to persuade. Being part of the Board provides that opportunity, that skill set that you can gain by few other methods.

In addition, Professor Metts talked to you about purpose and finding that purpose. Something I want to add to that is something I learned at Stetson is by coming here, what you gain by being on the Advocacy Boards is a voice. Sometimes we can say all the right words, we know what the words are, but we don't always know how to connect with people. And so probably the best thing that I've learned is how to reach other people, how to be persuasive, how to gain that empathy. So being a part of Stetson and being part of all the teams that I'm a part of have given me that skill set that allows me to make that connection with others, my audience, whoever that may be.

So at Stetson I've had the privilege of touching quite a bit of areas. First the dispute resolution teams. So I've got to compete for client counseling, I've gotten to join the arbitration. I've been -- I had involvement with negotiation teams by helping the coach, which I'll kind of address at the end of this. My mom is a mediator. So I've had a wide array of experience as it relates to dispute resolution. For trial team I've gotten to compete. I've been able to compete two times, almost three, but unfortunately there have been some issues with COVID-19. But nonetheless I've had amazing experiences.

Even moot court, what Professor Feeley said, all one has ultimately have to write briefs and do oral arguments. I had the experience of touching all three areas of advocacy at Stetson. Aside from being ranked number one in advocacy, being a part of the Boards not only helped with communication aspect but networking. That's something that, you know, students don't think about. I've noticed it's building this camaraderie, building connections while you're here at Stetson. Ultimately networking is one of the most important things you can do in law school. It's about building the relationships now so when you get out in the legal field you are aware of people's legal ability.

Being part of the Boards, what it helps is with job search too. When you go in for those OCR interviews after



your first summer, basically you have employers who are lining up saying we want to interview you, we want to see if you're a good match. You'll see when you get here that oftentimes one of the first things that are on that list, that criteria, you'll see Moot Court preferred, Dispute Resolution preferred, Law Review preferred. So all those things give you the advantages that get you in the door and ultimately allow you to have a step up when you go for interviews.

Not only that, the notion of marketing yourself. I mean, the market for Tampa and St. Pete is really unique. It's unlike Gainesville or Tallahassee. A lot of Stetson alums stay in the area. Make connections now not just with teammates, also your coaches and professors. Because ultimately that gives you that advantage when you're going out in the job market in the Tampa Bay area.

Something else I wanted to talk about is how to be involved. Obviously, you know, if you're here, you want to have some involvement, how much, right. What I can tell you is my involvement has been phenomenal for my personal development and my growth. Getting involved your first year, it's not impossible at all. In fact, what I will say is first years aren't allowed to compete on Stetson's teams. It's because Stetson values, you know, for all its students to come in and get that foundation, be able to gain those basic skills before they try branching out and develop those advocacy

skills. What you can do is get involved other ways, right. So one of the best things you can do is make sure you volunteer.

You know, my first year at Stetson I made sure that I was seen by the professors. I went to all the practices that they would allow me to go to. And they make sure your face is known, your desire to get involved is known. Furthermore, that also gives you the opportunity to see what they're looking for, see the kind of advocacy that is going to basically get you on the teams.

In addition, there's also competitions. What you can do is compete at Stetson. Stetson offers opportunities for one Ls to do what they call one L competitions. I did the trial team competition, because I knew what I was leaning towards. That opportunity got me a lot of face time with the judges, got me to see, you know, what Stetson looks for for its advocates, got me one-on-one coaching with, you know, current Stetson trial team members. In addition, Moot Court does the same thing with one L competitions. DR does the same with one L competition in the upcoming year.

Also there are resource materials. I know that it's not probably the first thing you want to do, but, you know, DR, Dispute Resolution, we use a resource, a book authored by Professor Sheehan. This book is invaluable in teaching you the ropes of the skills you need to have as an advocate, as a Stetson lawyer. Getting that firsthand take at that book

maybe before starting or during your one L year will be a great way to get involved as early as possible.

You know, as far as getting involved, what I want to say is that first a lot of student tryouts are held after your second set of finals after your first year. And something that scares students is, well, you know, I don't know if I can -- help at school, when. What I want to tell you, that actually wasn't my initiative for joining Stetson. What I will tell you is that obviously I want to win. For me what you'll see is oftentimes advocates, trial lawyers, they're competitive at heart. My goal is actually becoming the best advocate I can be, developing my own personal skills, professional skills, becoming a greater litigator. When you have that as your goal, winning comes.

Focusing on your own personal growth is really why you want to join the team. So ultimately once law school's behind you, you have that skill set, not other graduates, only something you can get after years of practice. What does the calendar look like. It's not for the faint of heart, it's a commitment. It's something that anyone can do as long as they put the time and effort in. So it's not easy. That's why one Ls aren't allowed to complete their first year.

Coming into your second year the biggest thing is prioritization. For me, I used a calendar, that was the most efficient calendar you'll see. It was a calendar, I had wake

up, I had workout times, I had studying time, I had class time, and then I had, you know, trial team. I had DR. So making sure that you're able to calendar your life is going to be crucial to being an effective advocate and being an effective student while you're here. In addition, prioritizing, right. So oftentimes we don't know kind of that balance, social life with school life. That's something you'll kind of want to get down your first year. So when you're heading into your first year you know full well things you have to do to make sure you prioritize your commitments.

For me it sort of took a lot of that social time. So I had to focus on my studies and my commitment to trial teams, commitment to Dispute Resolution. You know, for you it might be different, but putting priorities first. That's becoming a better advocate, becoming a better legal writer. All those things should be your focus while you're at Stetson. Making sure that's the top of your list will help you make effective priorities.

Now, Professor Metts also mentioned Trial Team. That's something I had the privilege of overseeing. This year was the first year we've done DR BLSA team. BLSA stands for Black Law Student Association. Definitely one of the highlights I've had here at Stetson. Being involved in the Advocacy Boards, making that connection together, really it goes back to your voice. As I said before, you know, there's

always going to be barriers to how you connect with people. Realizing who that audience is and realize how you advocate as an individual, that's what BLSA Trial Team as well as Stetson teams do for you. But when it comes to BLSA, DR, BLSA Trial Team and hopefully Moot Court, it provides that added layer. What I'll say, being African-American is something I identify to my core, it's important to my identity. For me being able to bring in diverse advocates, diverse lawyers who have kind of gone through the same things I've gone through has solidified and amplified my experience on the Boards. And being able to help coach those teams, it provides you with that extra layer of communication and communicative ability.

So I encourage you whether you decide -- whatever Board you decide to ultimately go for, they're all going to help you develop your voice, effective communication, hopefully your writing skills. So don't be -- don't be turned away by the thought of winning, but just think of it as how can I become a better advocate. That's what Stetson is going to provide for you.

I look forward to hearing questions you guys have in the next question and answer session. I'll hand it over to Darren. Thank you.

PRESENTER: Thank you, Forest. I hope that our admitted students have found that helpful. And maybe they have a plan because of that of how to get involved. Because

it's always that time when you start law school, you always have to make choices about how you're going to get involved. I hope that inspired you to see what's possible for you all.

At this time I'm going to invite the other members of our panel, Professor Feeley and Professor Metts, to join us as we're going to kind of switch into some questions from our admitted students. I just want to mention at this point, not to make it the focal point of our questions, but we did reach out to our Dean. We just wanted to assure you all at this time, during this very kind of unstable time in our world, that -- you know, just regarding our fall upcoming class, that we are fully planning to continue operating and bringing in our class in fall 2020. There are no plans at this time to delay the start of fall classes.

We will continue to follow the CDC, federal and state guidelines and policies regarding the safety and welfare of our students, staff and faculty. We will be prepared to start classes in the fall either on campus or online based on the guidelines provided by the CDC, federal and state authorities. You will be the first to know. We will promise to communicate this with you as soon as we are aware of any updates. But at this time we are planning to enroll our fall incoming class as scheduled.

So at this time I'd like to kind of open to your questions, and we have this great panel and I hope that you

will type them in. At this time maybe Carmen, do we have anything to address the panel with regarding questions?

PRESENTER: Yes, Darren, we do. This is Karla. So our first question is a two-part question from Devon. The first part of the question is directed to Forest. Devon would like you to restate the name of the book that you recommended so that he can look for that. And then the second part of the question is for Professor Feeley and Professor Metts. Can you provide any information about other workshops or resources on trial advocacy outside of Boards and Trial Team at Stetson.

PRESENTER: Hey, Devon, I didn't know the name of the book. Professor Feeley might know it. It is a book that we used for class several times. That's why I recommend it, because before you even step foot in the advocacy teams it's a good idea to look at the book, see what the skills are so you have that notion going in what to expect. Do you know the name?

PRESENTER: I do, because I know the co-author, it's me. It's called Mastering Alternative Dispute Resolution. It's by Carolina Academic Press. They have a whole series of mastering books. The whole idea behind them, basically it's meant to be a very easy version of whatever topic it's on. Professor Sheehan and I wrote that as if we were coaching a class or team and how we would explain the different

prospects to them, that's the perspective it's written from. It's an entire mastering series. I believe it has every topic imaginable in it.

PRESENTER: We had another question from Devon, right, Darren?

PRESENTER: Yes. The second part of Darren's question relates to does Stetson offer workshops or any other resources on trial advocacy outside of Boards and trial teams.

PRESENTER: So the short answer is yes, right. We have -- if you look at the catalog and the class offerings, these classes are open to any student at Stetson, regardless whether or not you're on a Board. You can still concentrate in advocacy, trial advocacy, advanced trial advocacy, jury selection, we have med mal offerings, things like that. Cross-examination, specialty courses. There's an entire curriculum built around the education of lawyers, to teach them how to be advocates. It just so happens we also have the skills team who have the privilege of competing. What you have to understand is the entire curriculum at Stetson is built around creating a well-rounded advocate in the beginning. That's an advocate who can write well, speak well and defend the position of their client. The Advocacy Board's a bonus. So don't look at this if I'm not on a Board, I'm not going to be able to grow or I'm not going to have the same opportunities, that's not true. That's candidly one of



the reasons we have been number one for so long. It's not just the teams or people who get to travel, it is everything that we do, the conferences we host. We travel nationally and internationally to train lawyers all over the world. That really is about the curriculum and the offerings at Stetson.

PRESENTER: Just to follow up on what Professor Metts said, we also have a lot of intramural competitions that are open to all students. So if you're interested in, you know, just seeing if you are a good advocate and you feel comfortable speaking in front of people, take advantage of one of the many especially first year competitions that are designed for one Ls who don't have a lot of experience in conducting an opening statement, or a closing argument, or actually putting on a mock trial. There are lots of opportunities, like Professor Metts said, that go completely outside of trying out and being chosen for a Board.

PRESENTER: So Professor Feeley I'm going to direct this question to you. It comes from Sara. She's asking what are some specific legal careers that have a primary focus on legal writing.

PRESENTER: Well, first of all, I'm going to say pretty much every legal career requires legal writing. Whether it requires longer, more formal documents, if you're clerking for a judge or you're a staff attorney in a

courthouse, those are probably going to require more extensive writing than maybe working at a general law office. However, if your law firm is a litigation firm, basically even if you're not going to be in trial you will be doing motion practice, which is each side is trying to ask the court for something. To support what you want you usually have to write something, whether it be a memorandum of law or something as part of the motion to advocate for your client's position.

I will tell you even writing a letter to opposing counsel is legal writing. It's hard to say that there is an area of law where you're not going to use legal writing. But I guess in terms of longer documents, probably working for a federal judge and helping to draft opinions and things like that might take slightly more writing than maybe some other areas. But it's a tough call. Sara, you're going to be writing all the time.

PRESENTER: All right. And we have a question from Selena in San Antonio, Texas. She's asking about the subject, specific research and writing courses that students can take in their second semester, could you discuss those classes.

PRESENTER: Absolutely. I also want to say, I want to follow up on something Professor Metts said, which was if you don't make an Advocacy Board, that does not mean you're not going to be a good advocate, because we have so many other

opportunities. I also want to say it's wonderful we have these specialty sections for research and writing two, but if you don't get the section you really wanted, you will still get the same education about what you need to know about research and writing two regardless of the topic. What's nice is we do offer some specialty sections. Even though you will be learning the same advocacy and persuasion skills as all the other R and W classes, you get to know in advance what that topic's going to be. For instance, I teach my R and W class with a focus on elder law. If somebody has an interest in elder law, they would want to sign up with me because we will do something that has to do with elder law. We have social justice, international law. We have ones on media law or First Amendment, we've done one on employment law. Sometimes it changes, but we offer at least a handful, usually about four or five specialty classes. Which, again, allows students if they already have a predetermined interest in a topic or they think they might be interested in a topic, it allows them to get a little more exposure to that topic while they're also learning the skills of research and writing.

PRESENTER: So our next question comes from Thomas. His question is what is the audition process for the ADR Board, what does that look like.

PRESENTER: Unmute yourself. Forest, you want to take that. Unmute yourself.

PRESENTER: Does that work?

PRESENTER: Yes, we can hear you now, thank you.

PRESENTER: I'll take that one. So as far as the trial process for Dispute Resolution team, really it's kind of a three to four part process. So you actually get to touch almost every single opportunity there is on DR. So you get to do a little bit of client counseling, which is basically something every lawyer needs to know, to be able to speak to a client, be able to pull facts of a case out, and be able to give advice on a particular subject area of law. You also get to do a mediation, at least opening statement, which is a taste of what you would actually get in a mediation, where you're sitting with maybe two different opposing parties and trying to figure out a middle ground, how to create some sort of agreement between the two. And then you also get to do a negotiation. And usually this is done with a partner. So you would go against another set of two individuals who are trying out. Basically, it's a skill where you're trying to kind of again pull facts from another party, figure out where you can both come to a middle ground. Like I said before, it's about being able to communicate and knowing who you're talking about, trying to find an effective voice, whether it be between client, opposing counsel or just another party in a lawsuit, so --

PRESENTER: If I can follow up with something Forest

said. The biggest thing we look for in these Boards is your ability to be in the moment and think on your feet. Not be so stuck to a script that you can't react to something that the other person just said that might be very beneficial to your client or might be something that's very harmful that you're going to have to address. So really a lot of what we're looking for is your ability to think on your feet and be engaged in the moment.

PRESENTER: Absolutely. And usually what will happen is -- so after finals, after your second semester after finals, we usually have about I think four to five days of tryouts for all the Boards. All the Boards are usually trying out about the same week post finals. I assume it will probably happen the same next year. So you'll commit to one or maybe two Boards that you have to try out for and so they will give you dates. They'll make sure you don't have any conflicts between any other Board you're trying out for if you so choose.

You will go through each of those exercises, client counseling, negotiation, and mediation. And usually you'll have finals. So once you kind of advance through each day they'll give you feedback, tell you how did, then they will let you know if you have chance to go to on finals.

PRESENTER: I popped on the screen here for a second. We're coming down to our one hour time slot, but it looks like

we have several more questions. I wanted to make sure the panelists can stay maybe an extra 15 minutes, so if we can get through some of these other questions from these admitted students. Is everyone okay to stay a few more minutes and maybe get those questions answered?

PRESENTER: Absolutely.

PRESENTER: I am going to sign off and we're going to continue with questions. Thank you all.

PRESENTER: Thanks, Darren. So our next question comes from Lauren. Her question is again related to legal writing. If she is interested in pursuing further skills in legal writing past her first year of law school, are there upper level or advance level writing research classes and what do those entail.

PRESENTER: Yes, there are. There actually is an advanced legal research class and there are other writing courses. First of all, one of the things every student has to do is a seminar course. They have to do that or write an article for Law Review, assuming they make the Law Review. That will count as an upper level writing requirement. There's also classes on advanced appellate advocacy. Quite frankly, you're going to become a better writer the more you do it. So I strongly encourage students to take a writing course even if they don't, quote, need it for graduation requirement. But there is lots of opportunities. Quite

frankly, a student could take a seminar class pretty much every semester after their first year if they wanted to make sure they wanted to continue research and writing so they could always stay fresh. Those seminars cover an unbelievable array of topics. We have great people that will come in and have some really interesting seminar topics. So there are lots of opportunities for writing.

PRESENTER: Thank you. So we have another question from Sara. This one related to Law Review. What kind of requirements are there to be on Law Review.

PRESENTER: Okay. Well, just so happens I went to our Law Review site so I could find that out and answer that question. Basically, it's either a grade on process, so you can grade on after your first semester if you're within a certain percentage or after your second semester if you're within the top percentage of class, or any semester after that if you at least have three semesters left. There's also a write on competition that's open to all students. Then there's also you could publish a paper with them. You could write an article, submit it to the Law Review, and if they accept it they will also invite you to be a Law Review Board member. If you go to our Stetson website, put in the search bar Law Review, the very first link takes you to the Stetson Law Review. One of the links on the left-hand side is how to become a member and it has all that information listed.

PRESENTER: We have a question now from Christa related to the part-time program. Do part-time law students have the access to advocacy teams as full-time students.

PRESENTER: Absolutely. So, Christa, absolutely they do. We have part-time members who advocate on our Boards. The only issue is going to be oftentimes the part-time students also work a lot, so that's going to be scheduling. But I can tell you even when I was on the Boards back in 2003, 2004, we had part-time students then. We had students who were working during the day. I advocated with a woman who was a single parent, who was raising two kids, and was also a registered nurse. So there is no limit. Our part-time students are not treated any differently when it comes to the Advocacy Boards or to the opportunities. The only limitation is your ability to manage your time. I think Forest talked about that earlier. We really do have a lot of time in our days if we take the time to manage it and to understand how to get the most out of it.

PRESENTER: So, Forest, I have a question for you from Sammy related to student organizations. When do student organizations typically meet?

PRESENTER: So this is an interesting question because it's up to each individual student org how they hold their meetings. Usually they will have a first general body meeting that's open to anybody that's interested to come in



and see what the organization is about. Usually they will do that between two to four weeks after the start of the semester, because they want students to have an opportunity to get invested in their classes, know what they're doing before they try to add on. Usually the first general body meeting, then maybe a second one midway to the end of the semester.

And I know from my organization, I've done usually three or four general body meetings every school year. And we do that so that students have the opportunity to see what events are coming up, see how they can get personally and also for election process, which is usually at the end of April every year. So we've done four, but I want to say the first general body that you should be worried about, just so you can have kind of a scheduling sense, would be usually between two and three weeks into the beginning of the semester.

PRESENTER: Okay great.

PRESENTER: One more question, then we're going to wrap things up. Do we have one more question.

PRESENTER: We do. So this question is a general one. It's related to the difference between advocacy and social justice advocacy, what are the differences?

PRESENTER: So I can take that question first. The interesting thing is there's really not a difference, except social justice advocacy is a specialized form of advocacy.

We have a social justice concentration that's run by Professor Skully and Professor Card. In that you'll be working directly with those professors, take classes that are tailored to social justice, presentation projects that are related to social justice topics. Remember, social justice isn't limited to poverty, it's talking about what makes good corporate leaders. What makes corporations be more environmentally friendly. Social justice is such a broad topic, but it is a specialized area of advocacy at Stetson. It is a separate concentration that students are allowed to pursue. Does that answer that question?

PRESENTER: Yeah, that was terrific, Professor Metts. Of course you can always continue this conversation, but at this time we are going to wrap things up. I would just like to thank our amazing panelists for their time and great information. I know I learned something, so I certainly hope you all did as well. I would like to thank our admitted students for attending today. We hope that it was helpful to you and gives you further insight about who we are and what is possible here at Stetson. In addition, we also hope that you're still considering Stetson Law for your legal education. I know you have choices and we are happy to be here and available for you and continue this process. So on the screen now we're actually going to post our upcoming live streams that we will have. Specifically this coming Tuesday

we are going to host an open forum. It's an admissions question and answer forum, it's on the 14th, the day before our seat deposit deadline. So hopefully if any questions didn't get answered today, we certainly want to make sure they get answered before you have to maybe make a decision. So at this time I would like to welcome you all to that event. We will be sending out that registration just shortly, so look for that in your inbox. So at this point we are signing off from Stetson Law, and we appreciate your time and hopefully we will see you on Tuesday. So reach out to us if you need anything. We are here for all of you. Thank you and be well and be safe.

PRESENTER: Thanks everybody.

PRESENTER: Thank you.

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