Legal Research and Writing

Leading the Way

Legal Research and Writing

STETSON UNIVERSITY
U.S. News and World Report ranks Stetson’s Legal Research and Writing Program third among law schools across the country. Stetson seeks to educate students as ethical, self-motivated and excellent legal communicators and to develop legal writing as an academic discipline on a local, national, and international level.

Rigorous First-Year Requirement
As a leader in legal research and writing education, Stetson requires seven credits of legal research and writing in the first year of law school, four in the first semester. The courses emphasize legal problem solving, analytical methods, research strategies and techniques, and effective predictive and persuasive communication. Professionalism is a core value in Stetson's legal research and writing courses. Students are expected to meet the ethical demands of lawyers, including the professional obligations of competency, diligence, autonomy and integrity. Low student-to-professor ratios in legal writing courses increase classroom interaction, and students are expected to perform as lawyers in their courses. Extensive feedback on writing assignments helps support students' professional growth.

Advanced Upper-Level Curriculum
After their first year, Stetson ensures that law students have multiple opportunities to excel at researching and writing. Students can take courses in legal drafting, appellate advocacy and pretrial practice; these courses maintain small enrollments to support individualized feedback. Students can write articles and serve as editors for Stetson’s three law journals: the Journal of International Aging Law and Policy, the Journal of International Wildlife Law and Policy, and the Stetson Law Review. Stetson's highly acclaimed Moot Court Board allows students to refine persuasive writing and oral advocacy skills. Upper-level students also serve as Legal Research and Writing Teaching Assistants.

Expert, Experienced and Engaged Faculty
The first-year legal research and writing curriculum is taught by full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty members who produce scholarship that contributes to the growth of knowledge about legal research and writing, the refinement of communication in legal practice, and the improvement of pedagogy in the discipline. Faculty have held positions in state and federal government, as judicial clerks, in international and public interest organizations, and as attorneys in large and small firms. They hold leadership positions in state, regional and national legal research and writing organizations. Some hold or are working toward advanced degrees in law, human communication, library science, and other fields, enriching their perspectives on the legal research and writing curriculum and disciplinary development. Six Stetson legal skills faculty have received tenure and promotion to full Professor of Legal Skills since the creation of the programmatic tenure-track in 2008. In addition, the Director received tenure as an Associate Professor of Law in 2010.

In all, more than 30 individuals are involved in Stetson’s Legal Research and Writing curriculum, including faculty members, librarians, and a team of Legal Research and Writing Teaching Assistants. The award of programmatic tenure recognizes the unique teaching, scholarship, and service contributions of legal writing faculty.

National Writing Awards
In recent years, three Stetson University College of Law graduates have won the Burton Legal Writing Award. Forrest Bass won the award in 2010 and Elizabeth Wood Voss won in 2009 (both pictured below). Alumna Carrie Ann Wozniak won in 2005.
Disciplinary Leadership

Selected Research and Writing Faculty Scholarship

Brooke J. Bowman (with Colen M. Barber), ALWD Companion: A Citation Practice Book (Aspen Publishers 2010).
Jeffrey Minneti & Catherine Cameron, Briefs and Its Correlation with Success on Appeal: Affect Your Chance of Winning an Appeal?—An Analysis of Readability in Appellate Writing Course (Island Press 2011).
Kirsten K. Davis, Family Discourse (with Karen Sneddon & Cassandra Hill).
Joan Catherine Bohl, Brooke J. Bowman (with Coleen M. Barger), Steps Leading to Large Results: Selected Research and Writing Faculty Scholarship—Leadership, Disciplinary, and Interests of Children, Parents and the State (Hampshire Law School).

Kirsten K. Davis, You Can Bet on It!, (with accompanying Teacher’s Manual).

Ann Piccard, Teaching to Different Levels of Experience: What I learned from Working with Experienced Writers from Different Fields, 17 Persps. 160 (Spring 2009).
Stephanie A. Vaughan, Persuasion is an Art... But It Is Also an Available Tool in Advocacy, 64 Baylor L. Rev. 101 (2003).

Faculty accomplishments

Kirsten K. Davis
Associate Professor of Law
Director of Legal Research and Writing
B.A., J.D., The Ohio State University; Ph.D. candidate, Arizona State University
Professor Davis is a member of the board of directors of the Association of Legal Writing Directors and serves on the Executive Committee for the AALS Section on Women in Legal Education. She served as Scholarship Committee co-chair for NALSD and as a member of the Legal Writing Institute's Awards Committee and Plagiarism Committee. She regularly presents at regional and national legal writing conferences. Professor Davis is pursuing a doctorate in human communication, and her scholarship focuses on legal method and writing, law and rhetoric, professional responsibility, and law and life law. Her recent article appearing in the University of Missouri Kansas City Law Review explores the interplay between rhetorical theory and legal form use. In addition to legal research and writing, Davis teaches professional responsibility and is the Gulf Campus Director of Stetson's Pre-Law Institute. She is an affiliate member of The Florida Bar and has been admitted to practice in Arizona, Ohio and West Virginia.

Linda S. Anderson
Professor of Legal Skills
Assistant Director of Legal Research and Writing
B.A., Boston University, J.D., Suffolk University
Professor Bohl joined Stetson’s legal writing faculty in 2004 after 13 years of teaching legal writing at Southwestern University School of Law in Los Angeles. She served for five years as staff attorney to the Rhode Island Supreme Court, becoming counsel to the Court’s Ethics Advisory Panel. During this period, she also taught college writing to evening students at Providence College, Rhode Island. Professor Bohl was a visiting professor of Law at the Santa Clara University School of Law during the 2006–2007 academic year. Her scholarship has focused on legal ethics, custody and visitation. Professor Bohl is a nationally recognized expert on grandparent visitation. Four state supreme courts, four state appellate courts and more than 40 law review articles have cited her work in evaluating the constitutionality of grandparent visitation statutes. Professor Bohl’s most recent book, Children and the Law: The Competing Rights, Privileges, and Interests of Children, Parents and the State, was published by Vandegrift Publishing in 2010.

Joan Catherine Bohl
Professor of Legal Skills
B.S., Indiana University, B.A., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, J.D., Stetson University
Professor Bowman co-authored the ALWD Companion (with accompanying Teacher’s Manual). She has published articles in the Oklahoma Law Review, the Second Draft, Stetson Law Review; and Perspectives: Teaching Legal Research and Writing. She regularly presents at national and regional conferences on teaching strategies, citation, research, scholarship, and working with research assistants. She is the Assistant Editor-in-Chief and a member of the editorial board for Legal Writing: The Journal of the Legal Writing Institute. Professor Bowman is also the AALS Moot Court Advisor, and she has coached a number of award-winning moot court teams. In addition, she is the co-director of Stetson’s International Environmental Moot Court Competition and a member of the competition committee for Stetson’s National Priority Competition. She teaches Research and Writing, as well as a workshop on “Polishing for Professionals.”
Catherine J. Cameron
Professor of Legal Skills
B.A., M.A., J.D., University of Florida
Professor Cameron's scholarship focuses on media law and legal research and writing. She is co-authoring a legal writing textbook with Professor Lance Long that he titled The Science Behind the Art of Legal Writing, which focuses on the empirical research that supports many of the theories behind legal writing instruction.

Lance Long
Associate Professor of Legal Skills and ADR Board Co-Advisor
B.A., J.D., Brigham Young University
Professor Long taught legal research and writing for nine years at Brigham Young University and the University of Oregon before joining the Stetson faculty. His scholarship focuses on empirical analyses of language patterns in appellate briefs and opinions and the development of a theory of argumentation strategy. He is a regular presenter at national and regional legal writing conferences. His most recent article, “Does the Readability of Your Appellate Brief Affect Your Chances of Winning an Appeal?” – An Analysis of Readability in Appellate Briefs and Its Correlation with Success on Appeal” is forthcoming in the Journal of Appellate Practice and Process. Before entering academia, Professor Long practiced law in California and Utah in the areas of intellectual property, contract, and construction law.

Tisha A. Dunham
Assistant Professor of Legal Skills and Director of Bar Preparation Services
B.S., Florida State University, J.D., Indiana University
Prior to joining the Stetson faculty, Professor Dunham practiced law for seven years in the areas of employment law, commercial and business litigation, and real property with an emphasis on community associations. She served as a bar exam grader for the Florida Board of Bar Examiners for five years. While in private practice, she volunteered her time to help repeat takers pass the Florida Bar exam.

Jeffrey J. Minnet
Associate Professor of Legal Skills and Director of Academic Success
B.A. University of South Florida; M.B.A., J.D., Cumberland School of Law, Samford University
Professor Minneti recently published “Relational Integrity Regulation: Nudging Consumers Toward Products Bearing Visible Environmental Marketing Claims” in Environmental Law and “It is Too Easy Being Green? A Behavioral Economics Approach to Determining Whether to Regulate Environmental Marketing Claims” in Loyola Law Review. He co-authored two articles in the spring 2009 edition of Perspectives: “Resident Students Are Different from the General Population: Empirical Findings Regarding Learning Styles” and “Teaching Every Student: A Demonstration Lesson That Adapts Instruction to Students’ Learning Styles.” Professor Minneti has served as resident director for Stetson’s summer abroad programs in Granada, Spain, and The Hague, Netherlands, and has coached First Amendment and criminal procedure moot court teams. In May 2010, he received the Dean’s Award for extraordinary service to the College of Law.

Kelly M. Feeley
Associate Professor of Legal Skills
B.S., Florida State University, J.D., Stetson University
Professor Feeley teaches Legal Research and Writing as well as Interviewing and Counseling. She advises Stetson’s Alternative Dispute Resolution Board, which consists of competition teams for arbitration, client counseling, mediation, and negotiation. Professor Feeley coached the first and second place regional arbitration teams and the national semi-finalist arbitration team in 2010-11. She coordinated the American Bar Association’s National Finalist Arbitration Competition and serves on the advisory board for the Sarusan & Suzuki International Lawyering Competition. She also works as an associate for Holland & Knight LLP and as a mentor for the Minority Bar Association. She teaches advanced legal research and writing and leadership and negotiation courses.

JASON PALMER
Associate Professor of Legal Skills
B.A., University of Virginia; J.D., George Washington University

Ann M. Piccard
Professor of Legal Skills
B.A., Florida State University; J.D., Stetson University; LL.M., University of London
Professor Piccard teaches U.S. Legal Research and Writing to Stetson’s J.D. and international LL.M. students. She also teaches and writes in the area of international human rights law, with an emphasis on an international distributive justice. Her most recent scholarship includes “U.S. Ratification of CEDAW: From Bad to Worse?” in Law and Empathy, and “The United States’ Failure to Ratify the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Must the Poor Be Always with Us?” in The Scholar’s St. Mary’s Law Review on Minority Issues. She presented her current research on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights at the AALS Workshop on Women Rethinking Equality at Washington, D.C. in June 2011.

Stephanie A. Vaughan
Professor of Legal Skills and Special Assistant to the Dean for Alumni and Development
B.A., University of Alabama, J.D., Stetson University
Professor Vaughan teaches Research and Writing and co-teaches International Sales and Arbitration. She served as Most Court Advisor to Stetson’s award-winning Most Court Board for over a decade. During her tenure, the school won 17 championships, 22 best brief awards, and over 42 individual awards. This year’s Most Court was both Willem and Willem. She is a part of the International Commercial Arbitration team (hence to both Hong Kong and the other to Vienna, Austria). Professor Vaughan was awarded the first-ever Most Court Cornerstone Award for her decade of distinction in his advisor. She has served as the resident director of externship programs, administrative study-abroad programs in Lausanne, Switzerland; Freiburg, Germany; the Cayman Islands; Buenos Aires, Argentina; The Hague, Netherlands; and Tallinn, Estonia.

Virtual Legal Writing Conference Webinars
Stetson recognizes the importance of fostering a national conversation among faculty about legal research and writing topics to the growth and development of the field. To that end, Stetson launched a webinar series through its Project for Excellence in Legal Communication in fall 2009. Over the last two years, Stetson has hosted eight webinars with more than 20 presentations and 250 attendees for the live events. Topics have included outcomes and assessment in legal writing, coaching, most court teams, advanced writing course innovations, the definition of “legal writing scholarship,” technology for giving feedback, and new ideas and ways in legal writing scholarship. These webinars will continue to be archived, and archived presentations are available by registering for free at www.law.stetson.edu/src, and then clicking on the “Project for Excellence in Legal Communication” category.

“As legal writing faculty, we are part of a continuing conversation about important issues of pedagogy, service, professional development and scholarship. When we come together at our conferences, we are rejuvenated by our interactions, renewed in our commitment to the profession, and stimulated by the presentations to think more deeply about those topics of significance to our community. The goal of the Virtual Legal Writing Conference is to create an online opportunity for legal writing faculty to have the ‘conference experience’—education, immersion, and professional renewal—without needing a travel budget.” – Kristen K. Davis, Director of Legal Research and Writing and Associate Professor of Law

Praise for the webinars from the participants:
“far exceeded my expectations. The insight was very practical and extremely useful.”
“I enjoyed the webinar very much and learned a lot. In fact, I’ll be downloading the conference to go over some of the points again, and hope to share it with some of my colleagues.”
“Very informative and just the right length for an online course.”
“this is a wonderful idea. we deplored resources have made it impossible to attend many valuable conferences offered in the legal writing community...Great information delivered in an economically friendly package!”
Legal Research and Writing

- Full-time tenured and tenure-track legal writing professors with substantial practice, teaching, publication, and leadership experience
- Seven credits of legal research and writing courses required in the first year
- Individualized attention for first-year legal writing students, including office conferences, oral arguments and small classes
- Specialized moot court training in Stetson’s award-winning advocacy program
- Seven courtrooms featuring advanced technology
- 2009 host of the Southeast Regional Legal Writing Conference
- 2010 host of Legal Writing Institute One-Day Workshop for Legal Writing Faculty
- Three academic law journals: *Stetson Law Review*, *Journal of International Aging Law and Policy*, and *Journal of International Wildlife Law and Policy*
- Project for Excellence in Legal Communication produces legal writing programs and materials
- Scholarly Writing Series for students in seminars and independent research courses
- Championship moot court teams who have won 25 brief awards in past five years
- Home of the International Environmental Moot Court Competition and the National Pretrial Competition
- One of few law schools to share space with a working court, Florida’s Second District Court of Appeal
- Honors Program for top-ranking students
- Frequent awards for student writing excellence, including two consecutive Burton Legal Writing Award winners
- Host of Virtual Legal Writing Conference Webinars
- Committed to developing the discipline of legal writing
- Dedicated faculty for academic success and bar preparation

Now available: Recorded webinars online

You can now watch archived webinars from Stetson’s Virtual Legal Writing Conference series by logging into our Advocacy Resource Center at [www.law.stetson.edu/arc](http://www.law.stetson.edu/arc). Access is free to law professors and students.