



# RAISING THE BAR

EVIDENCE-BASED THINKING ABOUT THE BAR EXAM

Summer 2025  
Volume 8 Issue 3

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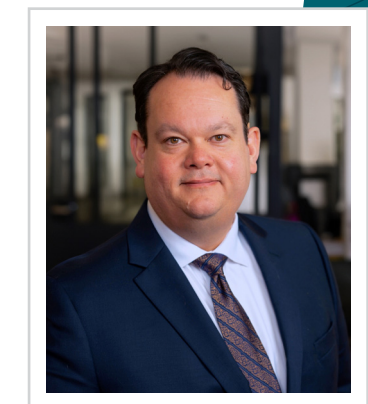
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# FROM THE DIRECTOR

We are pleased to publish the second annual PLEDGE takeover issue of *Raising the Bar*. This issue represents the research, programs, and reflections of our partners and Fellows engaged in the PLEDGE Initiative. PLEDGE, a partnership between AccessLex Institute's Center for Legal Education Excellence® and the Southern Education Foundation, stands for Professionals in Legal Education Developing Greater Equity. The work of PLEDGE Fellows reflects their passion to effect change in legal education and their commitment to ongoing professional development in pursuit of this commitment. PLEDGE Fellows spend 14 months under the guidance of faculty coaches from Rutgers University's Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Leadership, Equity, & Justice to complete an empirical research project. With three cohorts, 18 Fellows, and seven institutions represented, PLEDGE has quickly impacted research and programming in legal education.

In this takeover issue of *Raising the Bar*, you will hear from the PLEDGE educational research faculty, coaches, and mentors at the Proctor Institute and PLEDGE Fellows from the past three cohorts. Each submission reflects the purpose of the PLEDGE program and AccessLex Institute's commitment to research excellence and collaboration with our member law schools. Please enjoy this reading, and feel free to reach out to any of the authors to learn more about their work. We will be back with the research, insights, and program updates you rely on in the fall issue of *Raising the Bar*.



*Joel Chanvisanuruk*

Joel Chanvisanuruk, M.P.A., J.D.

Senior Director, Programs for Academic and Bar Success  
AccessLex Center for Legal Education Excellence®

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# FROM THE SAMUEL DEWITT PROCTOR INSTITUTE FOR LEADERSHIP, EQUITY, & JUSTICE

**Marybeth Gasman** is the Executive Director of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Leadership, Equity, & Justice, **Alice Ginsberg** is the Associate Director for Research and Grant Development, and **Rebecca Perdomo** is a Senior Research Associate.

Traditional research methodologies often fail to capture marginalized communities' complex experiences within law schools. This gap underscores the need for practitioner inquiry, an interactive collaborative approach in which law school professors and administrators study phenomena or programs currently occurring in their institutional context. This methodology ensures that the insights, findings, and recommendations are deeply rooted in real-life, real-time experiences, leading to more authentic and actionable outcomes. Moreover, practitioner inquiry addresses the ethical concerns associated with traditional research, which can inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes and mute the voices of key stakeholders, such as students. In practitioner inquiry, those doing the research have a vast "stake" in the findings because they are deeply invested in student success.



For example, these research studies are based on compelling questions: How can we better support first-generation and low-income students at our institution? What kinds of bar study preparation are most effective for students coming from underserved and marginalized communities? How can we increase the level of belonging and engagement of students of color when they are only a small percentage of the student body? What kinds of interventions are effective in helping to attract and retain law school students from African American or Hispanic backgrounds? How have law students' prior experiences with standardized testing influenced their self-confidence and agility as they navigate law school? What kinds of mentorship programs and strategies have struggling law students found to be the most meaningful?

The Professionals in Legal Education Developing Greater Equity (PLEDGE) Initiative exemplifies the transformative potential of practitioner inquiry in legal education. Designed to enhance empirical research skills among legal educators, PLEDGE emphasizes collaborative inquiry into student success and DEI challenges. The program ensures a multifaceted exploration of institutional dynamics by pairing professionals from the same institution, leading to more comprehensive and context-sensitive solutions.

Participants receive robust support from scholars at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Leadership, Equity, & Justice at Rutgers University. Through a blend of virtual sessions and immersive in-person workshops across partner campuses, PLEDGE fosters a vibrant community of practice. This structure enhances research competencies and cultivates a network of change agents committed to advancing equity in legal education.

Engaging in DEI-focused practitioner inquiry has far-reaching implications beyond individual institutions. It contributes to a growing body of scholarship on legal education that challenges long-standing inequities and informs policy reform. Furthermore, such research empowers marginalized voices, ensuring that interventions are inclusive and resonate with those they aim to support. As legal education confronts the complexities of a diverse society, initiatives like PLEDGE demonstrate how collaborative inquiry can lead to meaningful, lasting change, ensuring that legal institutions reflect the diversity of their communities and champion equity at their core.



# RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

## Introducing Bar Skills Through an Evidence Course

**Aviva Orenstein** is a Professor of Law, Karen Lake Buttrey and Donald W. Buttrey Chair, at Indiana University Maurer School of Law and has taught Evidence for over thirty years. The 2023-24 PLEDGE Fellowship team from the Indiana University Maurer School of Law also included **Katie Beck**, Director of Student Services.

Our PLEDGE Fellowship team investigated how doctrinal faculty can improve students' knowledge and confidence about the bar exam.

### Our Goals

The team investigated the students' confidence in their success on the bar after engaging them in low-stakes formative assessments, including multiple-choice questions and an assignment patterned after the Multistate Performance Test (MPT) in Evidence class.<sup>1</sup> It is extremely difficult to measure how one course, let alone one or two interventions inside a course, affects bar passage. But the literature indicates a strong positive correlation between confidence in taking the bar and passing the bar, and that such confidence comes from familiarity and practice.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the team inquired into how much the students knew about the bar exam and how confident they felt before and after the designated class exercises.

<sup>1</sup> The MPT The Multistate Performance Task (MPT) is a closed-world problem including a File and a Library. The File consists of source documents containing the facts and might include transcripts of interviews, depositions, hearings or trials, pleadings, correspondence, police reports, etc. The Library includes primary sources such as cases and statutes as well as secondary sources such as excerpts from bar journals and law reviews. The examinee must complete a task (such as a memo, brief, client letter) as described in a memo from a supervising attorney.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Christopher J. Ryan, Jr. & Derek T. Muller, *The Secret Sauce: Examining Law Schools that Overperform on the Bar Exam*, 75 Fla. L. Rev. 65 (2023) (reporting that structured exposure to bar exam methodologies, beginning early in law school and reinforced with targeted preparation in the final year, significantly enhances students' likelihood of passing the bar exam).



### Methods

I required students in the four-credit Fall 2023 Evidence class to:

1. Complete an ungraded MPT-like exercise related to Rule 407 of the Federal Rules Evidence. (Rule 407 limits introduction of evidence of subsequent remedial repairs.); and
2. Engage in multiple opportunities throughout the semester to practice and receive feedback on MBE-like multiple-choice questions. The feedback included explanations of doctrine and discussion of test-taking strategy.

Early in the following semester of Spring 2024, all my Evidence students were invited to take an anonymous survey with qualitative and quantitative questions. Answering the survey came with a gift card, which, in turn, prompted an impressive 78% response rate. With a focus on first-gen and students of color, 19 students also participated in one-on-one follow-up interviews conducted by two trusted alumni who were trained for this purpose.

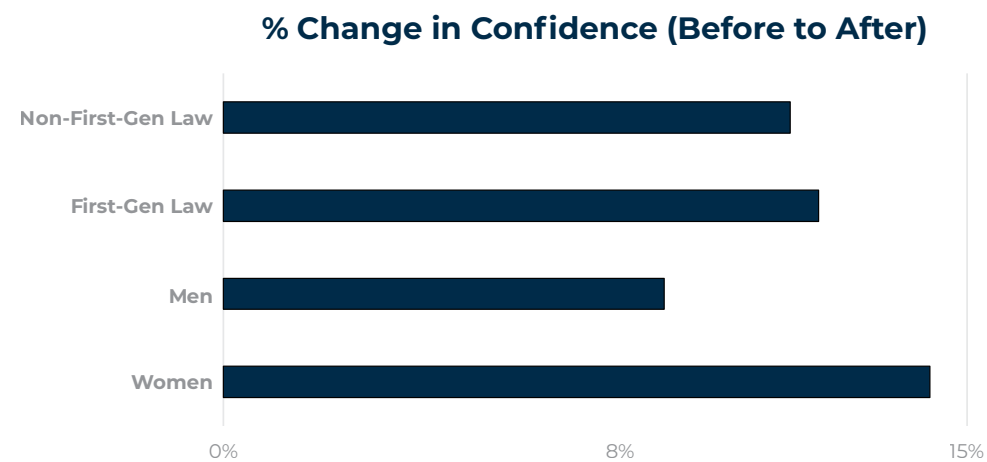
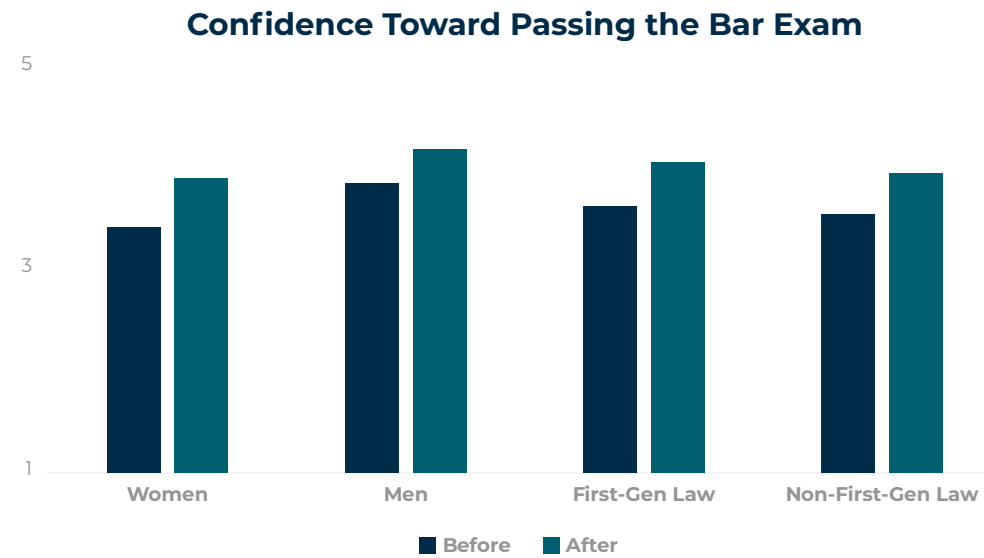
The survey and interviews were wide-ranging, exploring students' experiences and resources in law school regarding bar exam preparation. The main focus was on the success of the skills-based assignments in increasing student confidence.

### Results

After analyzing the survey data and interview transcriptions, the team derived the following interesting findings.

1. Many students told us they did not know what an MPT was or what it looked like before taking the Evidence class, and that this lack of awareness caused a general sense of anxiety. Here is a typical comment from a student: "I know that the law school has bar exam information sessions. I just haven't been to them yet because I don't want to think about it."
2. Most students expressed a sense of appreciation for exposure to the MPT exercise because it demystified the MPT, made students feel more confident that they possessed the requisite skills to pass the bar, and fostered a growth mindset. Exposure to the testing technique prompted students to conclude that they could do well by drawing on their pre-existing skills and doctrinal knowledge if they prepared appropriately. Students self-reported confidence regarding the bar exam because of this early exposure. One student wrote: "Having early access in a low stress environment was extremely helpful. It let you see that even with minimal prep, which is less than you should have with the bar exam, that you can handle the MPT questions. Therefore, with more prep, I feel confident that I can succeed."

- Men reported a higher starting point in confidence than women, but women reported a larger change in confidence from the beginning to the end of the semester. First-gen law students also reported larger gains in confidence than their non-first-gen peers.



- Survey and interview results revealed that classroom interventions had a more serious impact on students' confidence toward the MPT than toward the multiple-choice questions. Most students had sufficient prior experience with multiple-choice-style assessments so that their sense of self-efficacy toward this testing method was already established: students already self-identified as either being strong or weak multiple-choice test-takers. The MPT, by contrast, was less well-known for most students, which allowed for greater changes in their sense of confidence.

## Recommendations

More valuable information can be mined from the data, and we hope to pursue this rich data set further. Current findings indicate the wisdom of early student exposure to MPT analysis. Faculty must become aware of what is tested on the NextGen Uniform Bar Exam (NextGen UBE), engage in new testing methods, particularly for the MPT and its progeny, and provide practice opportunities in their classrooms. Faculty should also add ungraded formative assessments that mimic the style of the NextGen UBE, affirmatively informing the students that such exercises reinforce bar skills and knowledge. This approach has many benefits, including:

- Reviewing substantive material;
- Providing feedback to faculty about student understanding;
- Demystify the bar exam;
- Demonstrating to students that the faculty and administration care about them and their success; and
- Satisfying ABA accreditors, who may soon be demanding formative assessments.





# PROGRAM PROFILE

## PALS at Loyola University Maryland

**Matt Beverlin** is an Assistant Teaching Professor and Pre-Law Advisor, and **Douglas Harris** is a Professor at Loyola University Maryland. They are 2024-25 PLEDGE Fellows.

*“The law school application process can be daunting. And so being able to go slowly and hit each marker has proven to remove some of the stress that comes with the territory,”* said a Loyola undergraduate ('25, B.A. in Political Science). To support pre-law undergraduate students from groups underrepresented in law school, Loyola University Maryland has created an innovative, wrap-around, pre-law support program called PALS (Preparation for Admittance to Law School). The PALS Program centers on the success of these underrepresented students who are both contemplating and actively seeking admission to law school.

Loyola University Maryland (LUM), one of the 28 Catholic Jesuit colleges in the United States, is located in Baltimore. LUM’s Jesuit mission calls on university faculty and staff to enact *cura personalis* (care for the whole person) in how we teach and support students. This includes enacting the Jesuit ideal of *magis*, or “the better way.” LUM is a predominantly White institution with an undergraduate enrollment of around 4,000 students. The university is committed to diversifying its student body and furthermore its Strategic Plan for 2030 supports equity, inclusion, and sense of belonging for all community members. In line with LUM’s Jesuit mission of both cultivating and supporting diverse students in pursuit of an undergraduate education and, potentially, a professional life, the PALS program is wholly focused on providing the supports for the success of undergraduates who are racial or ethnic minorities and/or first-generation college students.

For a university its size, LUM has a substantial pre-law program. Each year approximately one-third of incoming freshmen indicate they have an interest in exploring law as a career. Loyola’s active pre-law student group engages 300 members. On average, LUM sends 15-30 graduates directly to law school every year. Additionally, young alumni yield an average of 35-45 law school matriculants. Part of this interest is doubtless driven by Baltimore’s proximity to D.C., an interest sparked by the high number of LUM students completing internships in the nation’s capital.



In response to representation gaps in law school enrollment observed among LUM graduates, and mirrored in national trends, the pilot PALS program was launched with the goal of supporting the whole person as a law school applicant. The pursuit of our goals was marked by multiple partnerships across the LUM campus, the legal community, and among each other as a learning community.

A primary focus of the pilot PALS program was on student writing — specifically the law school application personal statement and the new argumentative writing prompt on the LSAT. To support our efforts of developing student writing, we partnered with LUM’s campus Writing Center to offer participants grammar- and writing-focused online learning modules in addition to tailored in-person tutoring.

To support applicants in their application and preparation for legal study, we also collaborated with LUM’s graduate psychology program and its Office of Disability and Accessibility Services to offer participants the option of engaging in a disability and accessibility services review. Some PALS students opted to take part in this to reflect upon and assess their learning needs as undergraduates, any accommodations that could be needed for the LSAT, and to build a record for accommodations that might be essential for success in law school.

The pilot spanned 15 months, inviting a cohort of 26 sophomores and juniors based upon the criteria of racial/ethnic minority or first-generation college status. Finally, we turned to the local legal community to coordinate trips to nearby law firms and to bring attorneys to campus to speak to PALS participants. Our hope is that these shared events, and the ongoing advising and outreach of their dedicated Pre-Law Advisor, served to build a learning community to support participants in the months-long work.

To learn and assess the outcomes of our pilot PALS program we applied to AccessLex Institute’s PLEDGE program. As a PLEDGE team, we are receiving support and training to collect data and engage in program evaluation of the PALS pilot. We look forward to finalizing and presenting the results of our program assessment at LexCon ’25 in Savannah, Georgia. The outcomes of our assessment and learning will guide future developments of the PALS program at LUM. We are interested in developing alumni-attorney mentors and for-credit internships. The insights we gain from our PLEDGE work evaluating the pilot program will support our future work and LUM’s abiding commitment to the success of all our students and the goal of an increasingly diverse legal profession. We are grateful for the support from AccessLex and welcome further inquiries from other institutions.

# PLEDGE FELLOWSHIP REFLECTIONS

## Indiana University Maurer School of Law

**Katie Beck** is the Director of Student Affairs, Indiana University Maurer School of Law, and a 2023-24 PLEDGE Fellow.

When I first joined the PLEDGE Fellowship, I knew I'd be stepping into a space dedicated to advancing equity in legal education. What I didn't realize was just how transformative the experience would be — not only for my professional skills, but also for my sense of connection to a larger community of educators and advocates.

One of the greatest insights I gained from my time as a PLEDGE Fellow was a new appreciation for the process of social science research. While I had long been interested in questions about student engagement and equitable access to higher education, the nuts and bolts of designing a rigorous research project were relatively new territory for me. Through the Fellowship, I learned how to draft an effective survey, conduct a thorough literature review, and navigate the complexities of working with my school's Institutional Review Board. I discovered the art and science of analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, and how the research process can be a powerful tool for understanding our students' experiences in real and nuanced ways.

This work reminded me that, even in the context of legal education — a field sometimes perceived as less data-driven or empirical than others — it is possible to apply research principles to test our hypotheses about student learning, engagement, and the impact of institutional programs. Being able to approach our assumptions with the discipline and curiosity of a researcher has opened new doors for me as a professional. It's given me both the confidence and the skill set to ask better questions, gather meaningful data, and translate findings into action that serves students.



Of course, the technical skills and research knowledge I gained are only part of what made this Fellowship so impactful. The heart of the experience was, without a doubt, the people. Sharing time with my cohort — colleagues from institutions across the country — was both inspiring and rejuvenating. We came together from different backgrounds, roles, and regions but found common ground in our commitment to advancing equity and our curiosity about what works for students. These colleagues became collaborators, confidants, and, I hope, lifelong friends.

Equally meaningful were the relationships built with the AccessLex and Rutgers teams who guided us through the Fellowship. Their leadership was defined not only by expertise, but by humor, humility, and genuine care for both our professional and personal growth. I often found myself energized after our group sessions — reminded of the importance of community in this work, and grateful for the chance to learn alongside so many smart, dedicated, and hilarious people.

As I look ahead, I feel a renewed sense of purpose and possibility. The PLEDGE Fellowship has encouraged me to integrate research into my everyday work in legal education and to stay curious about the impact of our programs and policies. It's also given me a network of people who I know I can turn to for support, ideas, and inspiration. Most importantly, it has reminded me that real change is always a collective effort, built on relationships and fueled by our shared commitment to equity.

I'm deeply grateful for the PLEDGE Fellowship, and I'm excited to move into my professional future with a new set of skills, new friends, and a renewed belief in what's possible for our students and our profession.



## Cooley Law School

**Lesley Cremeans** is the Assistant Director of The Teaching and Learning Center and **Tonya Krause-Phelan** is the Associate Dean of Academics and Professor, Cooley Law School. They are 2024-25 PLEDGE Fellows.

Participating in the PLEDGE Fellowship has been an enriching and exciting experience. Starting with the PLEDGE Bootcamp, the PLEDGE Fellowship's intentional design and expert guidance have created a rich and supportive environment for learning, professional development, and collaboration. The support we have received — from the Fellowship leaders and our fellow “Hurricane Cohort” members — fostered personal growth, institutional innovation, and scholarly engagement.

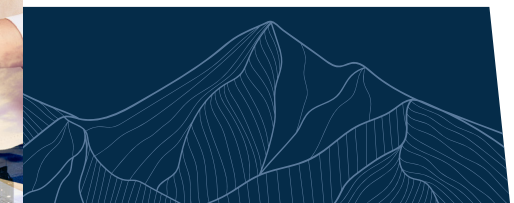
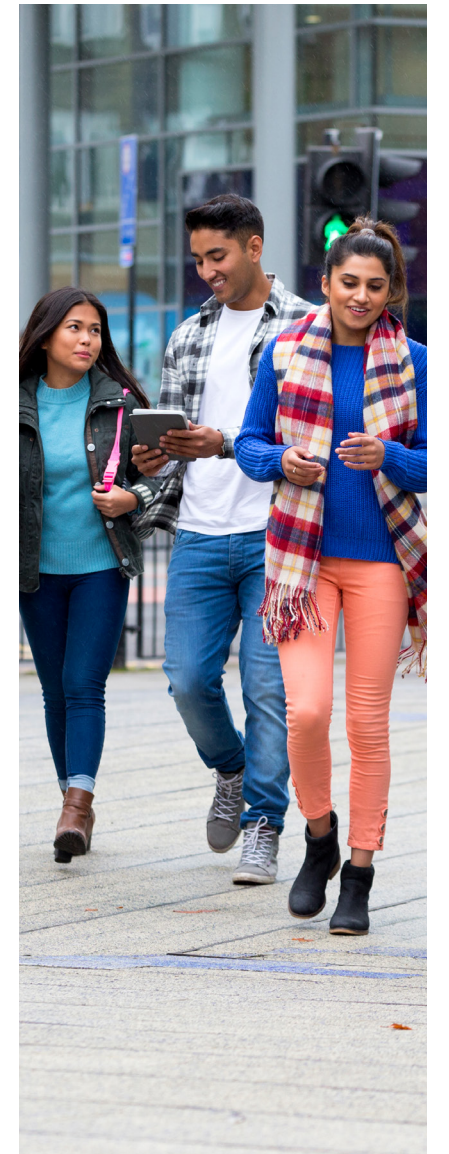
We cannot overstate Marybeth, Alice, and Rebecca’s leadership. Together, they represent a powerhouse of knowledge, experience, and generosity. Their combined expertise in grant writing, social science research methodology, and data analysis has been pivotal in this experience. All three have been true mentors — approachable, insightful, and deeply invested in our success. Their willingness to share their knowledge, practical strategies, and hard-earned wisdom created an atmosphere of trust and inspiration. The structure and content of the program were clearly the result of careful planning and thoughtful pedagogy, with each session carefully designed to teach a skill necessary for this project and provide the opportunity to practice it.

The opportunity for peer collaboration is also a highlight of the PLEDGE experience. Our first in-person session was in Atlanta during Hurricane Helene. From walking through torrential rain to our cohort dinner, to disruptions of travel plans, to pivoting the last day from in-person to online, we formed a special bond, dubbing ourselves the Hurricane Cohort. The collective generosity, encouragement, and shared commitment to improving equity in legal education made each conversation meaningful and every challenge manageable.

Professionally, the Fellowship has pushed us to grow in several critical areas. Because our institution does not currently have its own Institutional Review Board (IRB), working with an independent IRB for the first time has been an eye-opening and empowering experience. Navigating this process helped us better understand ethical research practices and compliance, which we can now carry forward in institutional and collaborative projects.

Perhaps most exciting has been the opportunity to build new skills in social science research design, data collection, and analysis. Working within our institution’s legal educational program, we found these new competencies both challenging and rewarding. They are already proving valuable in our current project, which focuses on evaluating and improving the Dean’s Fellow peer learning program at our law school. Using evidence-based methods, we now feel more confident in assessing the program’s equity goals, measuring outcomes, and proposing data-informed improvements that support underrepresented students.

The impact of this Fellowship extends beyond a single initiative, opening the door to new scholarly possibilities and professional networks, including thoughts about how and where we will share our research. Whether through academic conferences, journal submissions, or cross-institutional collaborations, the tools and confidence we’ve gained will enable us to contribute meaningfully to the larger conversation about access, inclusion, and student success in the context of peer learning in legal education.



## Wayne State University Law School

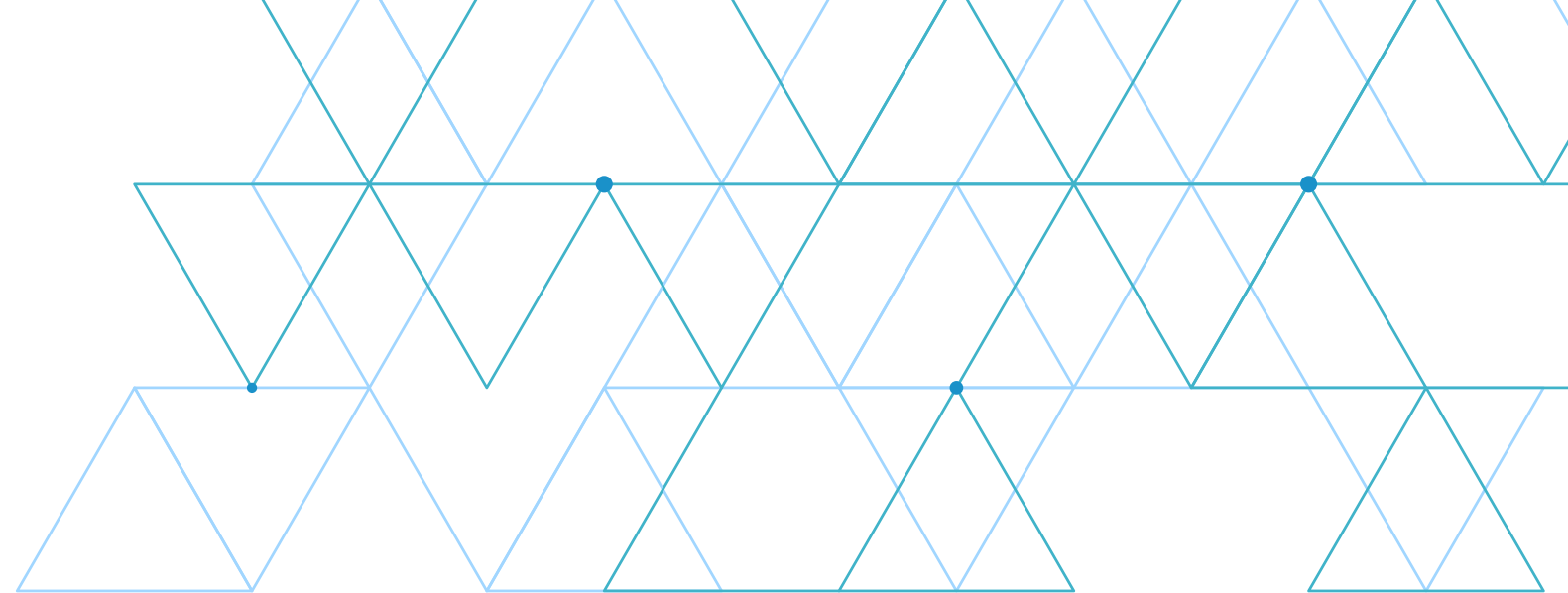
**Tierney Hoffman** is the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and **Michelle Taylor** is the Assistant Director of Scholarship Program and Assessment, Wayne State University Law School. They are 2023-24 PLEDGE Fellows.



For law school administrators who hold graduate and professional degrees, the PLEDGE Fellowship offers a rare but valuable opportunity to engage in academic scholarship. In legal academia, there are limited opportunities for administrative professionals to participate in research and scholarly discourse, despite the expertise and unique perspectives we bring to the table. The PLEDGE Fellowship bridges this gap to include diverse voices across our institutions to study systemic inequalities in legal education. This opportunity allowed our team from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan to deepen our professional development while contributing to equity-driven scholarship in a collaborative and intellectually rigorous environment.



As members of the second cohort of PLEDGE Fellows, one of the most meaningful aspects of the Fellowship was the ability to learn, sometimes unlearn, and grow from our mentors and peers. The team from the Samuel D. Proctor Institute for Leadership, Equity, & Justice, led by Marybeth Gasman and Alice Ginsberg, served as exceptional guides for what was for many of us an accelerated course in social science-based empirical research. Under their direction, we expanded our research skills, gained practical tools for assessing our programs, and learned to communicate our findings and recommendations to effectuate institutional change in legal education. Similarly, our fellow cohort members were a dynamic group of law school professionals who proved to be the most supportive, collaborative, and generous colleagues during the entirety of the Fellowship. They offered invaluable feedback, and their insights challenged us as we were introduced to new or unfamiliar social science concepts and materials.



Participating in the Fellowship has also deepened our understanding of the systemic inequalities in legal education. Our research investigated the impact of a cohort learning model on Black first-year law students, focusing on four key areas: academic success, learning environment, peer connections, and sense of belonging. We framed this investigation within the concept of spatial justice, which emphasizes equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, highlighting how space influences social relations. By analyzing cohort models as a manifestation of spatial justice in the racially structured environment of law schools, our research underscored the social and academic advantages cohorts can provide. Specifically, our study found that Wayne Law's Black first-year law students experienced enhanced community and belonging that they would not otherwise have in the law school. Students also reported feeling empowered and confident due to their cohort, which facilitated connections with peers from similar backgrounds facing similar challenges. One student illustrated this sentiment, comparing the experience to soldiers marching together toward a common goal — their J.D. — emphasizing the importance of shared support in navigating the complexities of law school. This camaraderie was described as a significant confidence booster in the students' collective journey.

As the result of the professional development opportunities and research skills we gained during the PLEDGE Fellowship, we emerged with a renewed commitment to equity focused scholarship in legal academia. Together, we have pursued opportunities to publish articles, reflections, and book chapters about our research and its findings. Beyond the academic scholarship, the PLEDGE Fellowship has fostered lasting friendships and professional connections within our cohort (and within the other cohorts) that continue to enrich our careers and personal growth.

## Seattle University School of Law

**Isabel Freitas Peres** is the Director of the Bar Studies Program and **Lily Su** is the Director of the Access to Justice Institute, Seattle University School of Law. They are 2022-23 PLEDGE Fellows.



When we joined the inaugural PLEDGE Fellowship cohort, we had no idea this would lead to supporting our law students in starting a first-gen law student organization. Applying for this Fellowship, our goal was to explore whether students' past experiences with standardized testing affected their success in law school. Our hope was to use data to better prepare students for the MPRE and the bar exam. After working with our PLEDGE curriculum advisors, Marybeth Gasman and Alice Ginsberg from Rutgers University, to refine our research, we invited the first-year class to participate in an online survey. Afterwards, we invited 25 of the 133 students who responded for individual interviews. What we learned was a surprise to us both.

During these meetings, which lasted between 30 minutes to an hour, we had a chance to get to know our first-year students just starting their law school journey. They shared their firsthand experiences, sometimes through tears, about the challenges they faced. One student we interviewed shared their standardized testing experience:

*"[M]y parents don't even speak English. So, I kind of had to do everything alone. And I didn't do any tutors or anything. I just kind of took what my . . . teacher said at the moment. I felt like I was at a huge disadvantage. Because after everyone felt . . . accomplished and comfortable with their score, . . . I remember I left crying, because I felt like, so stupid, for lack of a better word, during the testing."*

Statements like these were one of the biggest surprises from our research. Students repeatedly pointed to first-generation status as a major factor affecting their success with standardized testing, and with law school in general. First-generation status was not a question we had even thought of including in our initial survey. After listening to our students, we offered the following three recommendations from our research findings: focus on programs tailored to first-generation students, increase academic resources to students, and gather additional data.



In past years at Seattle University School of Law (Seattle U Law), students attempted to start a first-generation organization. With the demands of law school, those initiatives lost steam. This time around, we reached out to connections developed during PLEDGE and received helpful advice from our Rutgers curriculum team, mentors, and fellow cohort members. Using what we learned, we supported our law students in starting a first-generation law student organization. We are grateful for the support of Seattle U Law and Dean Tony Varona for helping us realize this goal. The First Gen Lawyers Coalition is now off and running, with the students leading their own programming and reaching out when needed. Coalition members define "first-generation" as the first member of the family to attend law school. It is wonderful to see how their members are actively partnering with our AccessLex representative, Justin Ziemann, and our law school's Student Financial Services Team, to take advantage of financial guidance already in place. From their members, we continually learn what first-gen students need to be successful during their law school journey.

As the driver for our project was to help students' success on the bar exam, we have used what we learned to improve the content of the bar preparation classes. We also partnered with our first-gen organization and created a presentation that discussed academic success, class selection, and general strategies that would position students for first-time success on the bar exam.

Participating in such a supportive research atmosphere has also encouraged us to seek funding for new opportunities. Since the students we interviewed for our PLEDGE research were just starting law school a few years back, we have since developed meaningful relationships with participants. Recently, we learned that a student we met through PLEDGE was weighing the pros and cons of accepting a fellowship in Central Washington, where attorneys and legal support are scarce. This got us thinking about ways to address the isolation and loneliness that law students experience working in geographical areas considered "legal deserts." With the knowledge developed from PLEDGE, and Marybeth and Alice's support long after our formal PLEDGE Fellowship ended, we are actively seeking funding to support law students in rural placements by integrating mentorship, professional development, and community-building opportunities into their summer experience. When successful, we plan to use the research skills we have developed to gather more information to support future law students.

This May, many of the students who participated in our PLEDGE research are graduating and preparing to join the legal profession. We hope to extend our research by connecting with the students we interviewed and learning about their experience with their last key standardized test, the bar exam. We are so grateful for the insights they shared with us, and we will continue to support them on their journey.

# CONFERENCE CORNER

- [American Association of Law Libraries Annual Meeting](#) (July 19-22)
- [Southeastern Association of Law Schools Annual Conference](#) (July 27-August 2)
  - [AccessLex Institute Center for Legal Education Excellence® Research Luncheon at SEALS Conference](#) (July 28)
- [Workshop on Research Design for Causal Inference](#) (July 28-August 1)
- [LexCon '25 Financial Capability and Student Success Conference](#) (November 5-7)
- [Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference](#) (November 12-15)
- [Association of American Law Schools Annual Meeting](#) (January 6-9, 2026)

Please email [RTB@accesslex.org](mailto:RTB@accesslex.org) about upcoming bar-related conferences.

# PUBLICATIONS AND POSTS

- Paola Cecchi Dimeglio, [An Empirical Analysis of the Impact of Student-Faculty Demographics on Law School Graduate Attrition, Attrition Rates, J.D.s Awarded, and Bar Passage](#), 73 J. Legal Educ. 491 (2025).
- Danielle N. Graham, Christopher M. Swoboda & Amy N. Farley, [Breaking Down Bar Passage: Examining the Predictive Utility of Academic Performance and Student Characteristics on Subscale Scores of the Uniform Bar Exam](#), 73 J. Legal Educ. 469 (2025).
- Titichia Jackson, [Embracing a New Approach to Academic Success: How the Adoption of a Growth Mindset Can Enhance Legal Education](#), Cap. Univ. L. Rev. (forthcoming 2025).
- Robert R. Kuehn, [How New Lawyers Value Law School Experiential Training](#) (2025).
- Kari E. Milligan, [NextGen Bar Success: A Student-Tested, Student-Approved Method for Completing Counseling Integrated Question Sets](#), Wisc. L. Rev. Forward (2025).

Please email [RTB@accesslex.org](mailto:RTB@accesslex.org) with recent and forthcoming bar-related publications, posts, and podcasts to be included in future issues of *Raising the Bar*.

# RESOURCES FOR LEGAL EDUCATORS AND LAW STUDENTS

## Research and Data

- [AccessLex Resource Collections](#)
- [Analytix by AccessLex®](#)
- [Legal Education Data Deck](#)

## Student Resources

- [AccessLex® Law School Scholarship Databank](#)
- [AccessLex® Student Loan Calculator](#)
- [MAX by AccessLex®](#)

Please email [RTB@accesslex.org](mailto:RTB@accesslex.org) with information about resources for faculty and students in your jurisdiction.

## Research Fellowships, Grants, and Partnerships

- [AccessLex Bar Success Intervention Grant Program](#)
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- [American Association of Law Libraries \(AALL\)](#)
- [Bar Exam Success Analyses Program](#)
- [Professionals in Legal Education Developing Greater Equity \(PLEDGE\) Initiative](#)

## ASP and Bar Success Resources

- [ABA Bar Information for Applicants with Disabilities](#)
- [AccessLex Building Bar Skills Modules](#)
- [CALI Lessons](#)
- [JDEdge by AccessLex®](#)
- [NCBE Bar Admission Guide](#)
- [NCBE Bar Exam Fundamentals for Legal Educators](#)
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