

## **SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF LAW SCHOOLS GUIDELINES FOR NEW SCHOLARS**

Congratulations on being selected by your school to fill the slot that is granted for the New Scholars Workshop series at this year's Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Association of Law Schools (SEALS). SEALS is a law school association of approximately 80 law schools in the southeastern region of the United States. It also has a number of affiliate members from other regions of the United States, as well as some foreign law schools. Typically, there are approximately 850 attendees at each annual meeting, representing roughly 100 law schools.

The New Scholar Workshop series is a wonderful opportunity for you to make a presentation on your current scholarship to a peer audience and to interact with faculty from other SEALS law schools. Presenters in previous years have found the forum to be quite useful. In order to make your presentation as successful as possible, please review these guidelines concerning your presentation and your responsibilities as a New Scholar. In addition, these guidelines offer suggestions regarding the style and substance of your presentation.

### **DETAILS ABOUT THE SEALS ANNUAL MEETING**

New Scholars must register to attend this year's Annual Meeting and pay the conference registration fee. A registration form is available online at <http://sealslawschools.org/>. You must contact the hotel directly to make room reservations. We have reserved a block of rooms at a discounted rate, but the number of attendees often exceeds the number of allotted hotel rooms. You therefore should contact the hotel as soon as possible to reserve your accommodations. If for some reason you have to cancel attendance at the conference, please contact us immediately so that your school can nominate a replacement.

While some people attend the conference for the full week, others attend for only a few days centered around the time they are speaking. You can find out when you are scheduled by looking at the Program. And if you are put on the resort's wait list, do not panic. People often book initially for longer than they intend to stay and then drop the days they will not attend as their plans firm and the conference gets closer. Many people on the wait list are able to be accommodated at the resort. The SEALS website may also have information about alternative accommodations in the area.

### **THE BIG PICTURE: WHAT IS A NEW SCHOLAR PRESENTATION?**

New Scholar Workshop participants typically are faculty with zero to six years of teaching experience. The purpose of the workshop series is to give you the beneficial opportunity to present your work early in your academic career. The nature of the presentations varies from speaker to speaker. In particular, some presenters use the workshop primarily as a way to obtain feedback for further development or refinement of a work still in progress. Other workshop participants present a work that is nearing completion and use the workshop primarily as a forum to showcase their work. In fact, it is not necessary to have completed a draft paper in order to make a New Scholar presentation; however, sufficient progress should have been made to enable the New Scholar to respond to and benefit from questions and comments from the audience. Regardless of your approach, SEALS strongly prefers that presentations be of pieces that have not yet been published.

There is value in either approach. You therefore should decide what the primary goal of your presentation is and plan your talk accordingly. For example, those wishing for greater discussion and feedback on their work may alert their moderator that they wish to allot more time for questions. We also recommend that you state your purpose and approach at the beginning of your presentation, so that you can get the type of feedback most valuable to you. For example, if your presentation is of a work-in-progress, you should state this very clearly. You may even want to ask audience members to focus their comments on specific issues, if that would be helpful to you.

### **NEW SCHOLARS MENTORS**

Every New Scholar has been assigned a mentor, who is typically a senior faculty member from another law school. The Mentors' role is to provide New Scholars with guidance and constructive feedback on their work leading up to their presentations, on their presentations, and on their papers. We have done our best to find a mentor with expertise in your area, but not all pairings will be perfect matches.

There are no formal requirements for how you might use your Mentor, but that person is assigned to you to provide guidance and is very willing to do so. At the least, you should contact your mentor approximately 30 days before the SEALS conference to discuss your work and your ideas for your presentation. You may provide your mentor with a draft or outline of your presentation for review and comment, but even if you choose not to do that, conversations about your work prior to the presentation will help you and will also help the mentor tailor his or her advice and feedback to maximum effect.

### **DETAILS ABOUT YOUR PRESENTATION**

*Schedule of Panels.* There are several New Scholars panels held throughout the week of the Annual Meeting. Panels are typically in the morning, usually between 8 and 10 a.m. SEALS will select the date and time of your presentation and will post the information by posting the program on its website (<http://sealslawschools.org/>). To the extent possible, the New Scholar panels have been grouped by subject matter and placed near other panels of like substance, but because we place no restrictions on panelists' topics, and last minute substitutions are often made, some presentations will be unrelated to others on the same panel.

*Format of Panels.* Each panel typically consists of two to four New Scholars and is one to two hours in length, depending on the number of panelists. A dean, senior faculty member, or New Scholar Committee member will serve as a moderator and will introduce each speaker and facilitate transition between speakers. The moderator will contact each New Scholar on the pane, usually several weeks before the conference, with specific information about the panel (such as order of presentation).

*Length of Presentations.* Each New Scholar panelist will receive 30 minutes of time for their presentation and question and discussion period. We highly recommend that you spend no more than 20 of those minutes to make your presentation (including time necessary to set up any A/V equipment--note you are responsible for bringing a laptop if you do wish to include audio or visuals in your presentation) and leave at least 10 minutes for questions and discussion. As noted above, reserving more time for questions may be appropriate in some cases, especially for work-in-

progress presentations. The moderator will ensure that speakers do not run over their allotted time and will facilitate questions and comments from the audience. Because New Scholar presentations are sometimes not topically related, the question and comment period for each presentation will take place immediately after each presentation.

*Attendees.* All Annual Meeting attendees and their guests are invited to attend each New Scholar session. Your audience is thus likely to be diverse in its areas of expertise and knowledge and can offer useful feedback in a collegial environment. You should expect an audience of 10-20 attendees.

*Acknowledgement.* SEALS requests that your final paper include a footnote acknowledging that it was presented at a SEALS New Scholar Workshop.

### **SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR PRESENTATION**

*Keep It Short.* Since you only have 20 minutes to present the body of your work plus 10 minutes for questions, keep your presentation concise. For the same reason, we recommend that you not read your paper, but rather prepare separate comments based on your paper. In order to leave more time for discussion and questions, try to limit background information as much as possible and focus your discussion on normative matters rather than description.

*Handouts.* Because of the brief nature of presentations, it is sometimes useful to have an outline or other visual aid that can be handed out to attendees. If you use such materials, however, please bring all copies with you, because it is usually difficult, if not impossible, to make copies at the hotel. It is also certainly acceptable to hand out a draft of your article if you wish, but again, you will need to bring all copies with you.

*Audio-Visual Capabilities.* Each conference room will be equipped with a podium and microphone. The rooms will also be equipped with projectors and screens for PowerPoint presentations, but you will need to bring your own laptop or tablet. Your moderator may also instruct you to bring a copy of your presentation on a flash drive. Use of PowerPoint is strictly optional; it is common for panelists to present papers without any A/V aids. However, if you do plan to use presentation aids, please have a backup plan in case A/V equipment does not work.

*Attire.* Presenters typically wear business or business casual attire. While attending sessions in which you do not make presentations, casual attire (including shorts) is appropriate. Although the weather at the Annual Meeting is typically warm, hotel conference rooms tend to be well air-conditioned, so plan accordingly.

*Other Practical Pointers.* As collegial and supportive as New Scholars Workshop presentations are intended to be, it can be daunting as a new faculty member to make a presentation to an audience full of law professors. Also, consider the following suggestions:

- Start your presentation by explaining why you have chosen your topic and why others should care about it. This helps put your research in context.
- Speak slowly and breathe. It is surprising how effectively this reduces a case of nerves or

jitters.

- Welcome questions. After all, one of the primary goals of the New Scholar Workshop series is to give you feedback. If you don't know the answer to a question, a good response is to turn the question back on the questioner to elicit more information and discussion.
- If unfamiliar with a source referenced, thank the questioner for the tip and state that you will add that to your research plan. You may also ask for further detail if you would like to entertain the question hypothetically.
- Practice in advance—with colleagues, mentors, and alone.
- Contact your mentor and moderator in advance if they do not contact you, and talk about your ideas. Do not be shy; they are there to help you.
- Have fun! The New Scholar Workshop series is intended to be a supportive, collegial exercise, and everyone involved (including attendees) should view them this way.