

**SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF LAW SCHOOLS
GUIDELINES FOR MODERATORS OF NEW SCHOLARS PANELS**

Thank you very much for agreeing to serve as a moderator for a New Scholars Panel at the Southeastern Association of Law Schools (SEALS) Annual Meeting this year. The New Scholars Panels are consistently recognized as one of the most valuable opportunities available through SEALS, and the commitment of time and effort by seasoned scholars who serve as moderators is an essential ingredient in this project's continuing success.

CONFERENCE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

Please remember to register for this year's Annual Meeting, pay the required registration fee, and reserve your hotel room as soon as you are able to finalize your travel plans. Please contact the hotel directly to make room reservations. Conference registration is available online at the SEALS website, <http://www.sealslawschools.org>.

THE NEW SCHOLARS PANEL PROGRAM

The New Scholars Panels are intended to give junior faculty members an opportunity to make a scholarly presentation early in their academic career in order to gain experience and confidence in this important skill. "New Scholars" are generally defined as untenured faculty members with somewhere between zero and six years of teaching experience. A dozen or more New Scholars panels, usually consisting of four New Scholars each, are scheduled during the SEALS Annual Meeting. Whenever possible, New Scholars Panels are scheduled at times when they do not conflict with other presentations to encourage attendance. Typically, between 15 and 40 attendees can be expected at each panel presentation.

SEALS strongly encourages New Scholars to present papers that have not yet been published in order to maximize the usefulness of the feedback they will receive as a result of the presentation. Some New Scholars choose to present fairly complete pieces for which a draft is available, while others present work that is much less complete. Either way is entirely acceptable, although we do encourage New Scholars to have put sufficient thought and research into the project to respond to questioning from audience members.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MODERATOR

Contacting New Scholars. Please contact the New Scholars on your panel before June 1 to introduce yourself, remind the New Scholars of the logistics for the panel and the availability of the New Scholars guidelines on the SEALS website, discover whether they will have any technology needs other than PowerPoint, and request any of their background information that is particularly relevant to their presentations. A sample e-mail for this initial contact is provided as an appendix at the end of these guidelines. The tentative schedule for the Annual Meeting should be published no later than January, and the schedule will contain the names and school affiliations of each panelist.

Timing. The most critical role of moderators is to keep the panel running in a timely fashion. “Moot court” style time cards are an effective, relatively unobtrusive way to keep presenters – especially those who are relatively inexperienced in making formal scholarly presentations – on track during their 15- to 20-minute presentation periods and the 10- to 15-minute question-and-answer periods.

Starting Promptly. Please be ready to begin on time. The New Scholars Panels typically are scheduled to last for two hours. In order for each panelist to have the full thirty minutes for both the presentation and question and answers, beginning on time is imperative.

Introductions. Please introduce speakers right before they make their presentation as attendees will be coming in and out of the session. The introductions should be brief—name, school affiliation, topic, and a short mention of their background relevant to their presentation are all that is necessary. Please also introduce the New Scholar’s mentor, who will typically be in the audience.

Order of Presentations. Please follow the order of the panelists in the conference program unless unusual circumstances prevent you from doing so. Since two or three New Scholars Panels usually run concurrently, attendees frequently rely on the program order in planning to attend presentations by New Scholars on different panels.

Timing of Presentations. Each panelist should have approximately 30 minutes total, which includes 15-20 minutes for presentation and 10-15 minutes for questions. Especially because one of the most important goals of the New Scholars program is to allow panelists to gain experience in fielding questions on their scholarship, it is important that at least 10 minutes per presenter be reserved for questions and discussion.

The Question-and-Answer Period. *Questions should take place after each panelist has finished speaking*, rather than being reserved for the end of the session. Inevitably, when the questions are reserved until the end of the session, one or more panelists are shortchanged of the opportunity to field questions, which diminishes their experience.

Conducting the Question-and-Answer Period. SEALS is a collegial group, and you are likely to find that attendees have more than enough appropriately incisive questions of your panelists. Should you find that questions are not promptly forthcoming for one or more of your New Scholars, please plan to begin the discussion with a question or two yourself. Suitable questions for New Scholars may include the following:

- How did you become interested in your topic?
- What is the next step in your research (for a panelist who has a relatively undeveloped thesis), or has this work given you any ideas for additional projects?
- What developments are you expecting to see in this area in the next year and in the next decade?

- Is the best solution a judicial or legislative one? If legislative, is this an issue in which uniform state or national law would be preferable, or do local and national needs vary sufficiently that the law will vary as a matter of necessity from place to place?

If possible, only ask a question or two to begin the discussion, and then let other members of the audience participate. Your role as a moderator means that you should be a facilitator, rather than monopolizing the question-and-answer period.

In the relatively infrequent event in which one questioner from the audience does dominate the discussion period, it would be appropriate for you to suggest that others be given the opportunity to address the panelist. The New Scholars on your panel may be reluctant to make this request on their own for fear of alienating a senior scholar.

Ending the Question-and-Answer Period. After the thirty minutes for the panelist's presentation and question-and-answer period has expired, you may need to step in and suggest that questioners can continue the discussion with the panelist after the session ends. The next panelist needs to begin his or her presentation as soon as possible, which can be prompted by your introduction.

OTHER INFORMATION

Technology Capabilities. New Scholars are notified that PowerPoint will be available, although they are responsible for providing their own laptops. If there are any other technology needs, then SEALS needs to know at least 30 days in advance of the Annual Meeting (and you can check in with Russ about this). Moreover, even the best technology sometimes fails: everyone should be encouraged to have a back-up plan in place, just in case the technology is not working well. A lectern and microphone will be available in each panel presentation room, as a matter of course.

Handouts. Some panelists may choose to bring drafts, PowerPoint slides, or other handouts for distribution during the panel presentation. SEALS has advised the panelists that they should come to the conference with any copies they need, rather than relying on any photocopying facilities that may or may not be available at the hotel to support these needs. Should your panelists bring handouts, please assist them in making these materials available to attendees.

Attire. Attendees are likely to be in pretty casual attire. The moderator and the panelists for the New Scholars Panels are likely to be dressed a little more formally, usually in "business casual" attire (although sometimes in business suits).

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX

Sample initial contact e-mail to New Scholars:

Dear _____,

I'm delighted that I will be moderating the New Scholars Panel on [date/time]. I wanted to contact you in advance of the conference regarding a couple of matters. First, I'd like to confirm your topic, so please send me your final title and an abstract. Second, I would appreciate a brief bio, including any background information particularly relevant for your topic. It would help me prepare for the conference if you could send these to me by [date].

Third, please remember that you will have 15-20 minutes for your presentation, with 10-15 minutes for questions immediately following your presentation. To ensure that everyone has the full opportunity to present, I will have to be strict on keeping to these time limits.

Fourth, if you have any technology needs other than PowerPoint, please let me know immediately. SEALS has made arrangements to have PowerPoint available for each panel, although you will need to bring your own laptop. Any other technology needs must be arranged at least 30 days before the Annual Meeting begins.

Finally, I'd like to remind you that the New Scholars Guidelines are available on the New Scholars Committee page of the SEALS website, <http://www.sealslawschools.org>. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any other questions, and I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting.