Chair’s Message
RJ Holmes-Leopold, PLANC Chair - Director, Career Center, Carleton College

Two years seems like a long time when you start, but as the time comes to an end you realize how quickly it can fly. My term of service as PLANC Board Chair concludes in a few weeks and I am grateful for the opportunity to have served the pre-law advising profession in this way. I am grateful for two main reasons.

First, PLANC has created opportunities for me to deepen my understanding of the issues we face as pre-law advisors to best serve our students and alumni. The complexity of the law school admission process has increased significantly and the conversations I’ve had with pre-law, law school admission, and law school partners have enriched my knowledge as an advisor. Throughout all of the conversations, I know we all have the interests of students in mind and strive to help each person find the best choice for them that meets their needs and dreams. The authentic care and compassion colleagues across the country present in thinking through and implementing programs to support pre-law students is simply incredible.

Second, the collegiality and relationships I’ve developed throughout my time with PLANC (which isn’t quite over yet as I’ll be
Past Chair for two years) are experiences I will cherish. I have to offer special appreciation to the chairs who immediately came before me—Mel Hailey, Heather Struck, Gwyn Wallander, and Wendy Vonnegut—for the wonderful examples of leadership they set. Gary Keith and Don Racheter have made sure we have our financial house in order, and for that I’m appreciative of their fiscal abilities. The LSAC partnerships with Anne Brandt and Vivian Bowden have allowed both organizations to thrive, and their collaborations have been tremendously valued. My ex-work wife, Rodia Vance, made my 2016 Conference planning experience the pre-law advising contribution of a lifetime. Sandy Self and Mike Vitlip, the incoming Chair and Chair-Elect, respectively, are going to be great leadership partners the next two years too and I know PLANC is in excellent hands.

Being a volunteer leader is such a rewarding experience, and while it sometimes feels like a second job, I wouldn’t have it any other way.

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**PLANC 2020 Conference - New Orleans**

**PLANC 2020**

“Recovery and Growth: Best Practices and Creative Approaches in Pre-Law”

**Monday, June 8 - Thursday, June 11, 2020**

Intercontinental New Orleans Hotel

Join us in New Orleans one year from now for the 2020 PLANC Quadrennial Conference! Registration will open in Fall 2019 and our call for program proposals will go out in late summer! Mark your calendars and we look forward to seeing you all in New Orleans. Laissez les bons temps rouler!

**Program Selection Committee**

Applications for the Program Selection Committee are now open. Please [complete this interest form by Monday, June 24th!](#) The Program Selection Committee will review submitted program proposals for our concurrent sessions during the conference. Participation in another conference committee does not preclude you from also putting in an interest form for this committee.

Sincerely,

Mary Nadarski, PLANC 2020 Conference Chair

Kevin Freeman, PLANC 2020 Program Chair
The Pre-Law Transfer Student Project: A Collaboration Between Community Colleges and Four-Year Universities

Julie Lantrip, JD, Ph.D, Tarrant County College Northwest Campus and Wendy Watson, JD, Ph.D, University of North Texas

Pre-Law Advisors presented on this project both at MAPLA in 2018 and recently at SWAPLA 2019 conferences.

The Pre-Law Transfer Student Project website at prelawtransfer.org will officially launch this fall, providing a one-stop portal for transfer students, community college advisors, and university pre-law programs to share and exchange information. This project originated during a panel discussion at the 2016 PLANC national meeting with both university and community college advisors. This article introduces the new website and explores additional ways in which the pre-law advising community can support the community college student population.

Many transfer students are first generation college students, who arrive at their universities as juniors having had little or no pre-law advising. A survey in 2015 of the pre-law advisors listed in LSAC found that the vast majority of community colleges did not offer a dedicated pre-law advisor (Lantrip and Hill 2015). Even when a community college has a volunteer staff or faculty member serving as ad hoc pre-law advisor, they are unlikely to have the resources or training to develop their own pre-law materials. Community college advisors also do not have access to the level of LSAC data on their alumni that universities have, so arguing to college administration that funding for pre-law advising is a priority can be difficult.

Further, university pre-law advisors may have difficulty collaborating with community colleges when they have no stable pre-law contact at a community college. There has also been a lack of transfer-specific resources and collaboration strategies available to university advisors. In addition, there is currently no directory of pre-law advisors that is easily available to community college advisors who are not LSAC members and to potential transfer students, so they are often left with cumbersome and inefficient Google searches to find university pre-law contacts.

To fill these needs and provide a portal to share resources and strategies, the Pre-Law Transfer Project website will offer online access to resources prepared specifically for transfer students, community college advisors, and university advisors. For students, materials will include a transfer student checklist, a CLEO Edge magazine article on the transfer transition process, and a guide on what to expect in the law school application process.

The site will also have a page of resources for both community college advisors and faculty who wish to provide materials for their students, train themselves on how to identify and advise pre-law students, and how to sign up for an email listserv to collaborate and request assistance from other community college and four-year university advisors.

Lastly, the page will offer suggestions for university pre-law advisors who want to
assist transfer students, and provide a means for university advisors to share resources and strategies with each other, their two-year college colleagues, and transfer students by contributing to the page and to the listserv.

In the future, the site also hopes to provide potential transfer students with access to contact information for APLA members, so that students can make contact with their transfer pre-law advisor as they begin to consider university pre-law program options and during the transfer process. Such a resource could also offer two-year advisors the ability to connect with their university colleagues.


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### 2019 Wilson Award

Congratulations to **Wendy Vonnegut, JD**, Associate Professor and Director of Legal Studies at Methodist University, for being awarded the 2019 Dean Gerald Lee Wilson Award for Excellence in Pre-Law Advising.

Wendy has dedicated many years to pre-law advising and to the PLANC Board in roles including PLANC Chair (2015-2017), Past Chair, 2012 PLANC National Conference Program Chair, SAPLA President and SAPLA Representative. Congratulations and thank you, Wendy!

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### PLANC Elections, Transitions and Departure Recognitions

The PLANC Board is excited for the changes and additions to our leadership, effective July 1, 2019.

**Mike Vitlip, JD** (pictured left), Director of Legal & STEM Professions Advising at Franklin and Marshall College, has been elected PLANC Chair-Elect (2019-2021). Learn more about Mike in his [biography](#)!

**Don Racheter** was re-elected as PLANC Treasurer.

Additionally, PLANC welcomes **Benita(Angel) Powell** as SAPLA President, **Rita Ralston** as NAPLA Designated Member, **Oak Vichaikul** as WAPLA President, **David Diamond** as NALP Liaison, and **Nancy Gibson** remaining on the board as NAPLA President, effective July 1.
PLANC offers its most sincere thanks to Board members who will be rotating out of their current positions:

- **Sandy Self**, as PLANC Chair-Elect, remaining on the Board as Chair
- **RJ Holmes-Leopold**, as PLANC Chair, remaining on the Board as Past Chair
- **Wendy Vonneugut**, as PLANC Past Chair
- **Sara Mock**, as SAPLA President
- **Tom Rozinski**, as NAPLA President
- **Brian Lewis**, as NALP Representative
- **Mary Nadarski**, as WAPLA President, remaining on the Board as 2020 Conference Chair

Your hard work is appreciated!

### Demystifying the CAS Report

Matthew Kerns, JD, UA Little Rock Bowen School of Law and Colby Carter, Law School Admission Council

During the 2019 SWAPLA Annual Conference we presented on the LSAC Credential Assembly Service (CAS) Report and how law schools use it in the admissions process. Below is a brief summary of the presentation’s key points. A more detailed explanation of the CAS Report can be found in LSAC’s “Key to the Online Academic Summary Report” which pre-law advisors are encouraged to read.

The CAS Report is a summary of a law school candidate’s academic background. It includes LSAT score(s) and writing sample(s); all undergraduate, graduate, and law/professional school transcripts; letters of recommendation; and other relevant information, such as prior law school matriculation and admissions index.

The CAS Banner page consists of four sections – (1) background, (2) degree school, (3) transcript analysis, and (4) summary. Every law school interprets the information differently; however, below is an overview of what each section contains and how law schools generally use the information.

#### Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Notes from Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2777</td>
<td>Unknown Transcript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2515</td>
<td>10-11 Academic Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2516</td>
<td>09-10 Term, Action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section contains biographic and academic information. It indicates the institutions attended, as well as the degree(s) earned. It also contains academic notes from the transcript,
such as, dean’s list, credit obtained from study abroad, and academic probation. These are noted along with relevant dates.

Generally, law schools use this information as a broad overview of a student’s academic history to ensure that the candidate has earned a bachelor’s degree and to flag any concerns they should look for on the transcripts.

Degree School

This section contains LSAT score and grade-point average (GPA) information for a candidate’s undergraduate degree-granting school. This section is divided into two subsections.

1. Percentage Distribution of LSAT: The top line indicates percentiles; the bottom line indicates the percentage of graduates from the school from mid-March 1991 and onward, and obtained LSAT scores falling within the percentiles indicated.

2. Percentage Distribution of GPAs: The top two lines indicate the GPA ranges; the bottom line indicates the percentage of graduates from the school who obtained GPAs falling within the ranges indicated. Only graduates registering for the Credential Assembly Service for the years the candidate attended their degree-granting school are included. No information will appear under the percentile ranges when the undergraduate degree-granting school has fewer than 50 applicants in the LSAC system.

Generally, law schools use this data to determine how a candidate compares to other candidates that graduated from the same institution. However, since the data does may not represent all undergraduates, law schools use the information with caution.

Transcript Analysis

This section contains an overview of a candidate’s transcripts. LSAC summarizes all US/Canadian undergraduate transcripts and presents them in a columned table. Undergraduate courses taken after the first four-year degree is awarded are listed as graduate coursework and are not summarized. The vertical columns represent academic achievement by year. The horizontal rows are the academic summaries for each year.

Generally, law schools use this information to look for grade trends and potential areas of concern. A law school will then look for more specific information on the candidate’s actual transcript.
Summary

This section provides an overall profile of a candidate’s academic data. It will list all of the candidate’s LSAT administrations, summarize the Degree and Cumulative GPA, indicate the number of letters of recommendation, highlight any prior law school matriculations, indicate if there is any misconduct or irregularities in the admissions process, and provide a score band to show the level of confidence of the candidate’s LSAT score. Additionally, if the law school uses an admissions index (a calculation of LSAT and GPA) the index will be noted in the index column.

Generally, law schools use this section to see the candidate’s LSAT performance history, and to note any prior law school matriculations and misconduct or irregularities determinations.

2019 APLA Conferences

**NAPLA** - June 18-21, 2019
Boston, Massachusetts

**MAPLA** - September 19-21, 2019
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
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PLANC Communications Coordinator
PLANC Points Editor

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AccessLex Institute Liaison

Matthew O’Gara, WAPLA Designated Member

Vivian Bowden, Law School Admission Council (LSAC) Liaison