Florida Coastal School of Law Alumni Association

Alumni Chapter Manual
**General Overview**

Florida Coastal School of Law is an independent, private and co-educational ABA-accredited institution. The school’s mission is to distinguish itself as a visionary, forward looking, globally interactive, and culturally diverse institution dedicated to having a positive impact on its students, the community, legal education, the legal profession and the legal system.

**Facts and Figures:**

- Florida Coastal School of Law is fully accredited by the American Bar Association;
- About evenly divided by gender, Coastal Law students come from approximately 46 states and numerous countries, representing approximately 254 colleges and universities;
- Our full-time faculty members represent more than 50 ABA-accredited law schools from across the country, including Harvard University, George Washington University, Duke University, Georgetown University, Columbia University, and New York University;
- Coastal Law graduating classes consistently pass the bar in Florida, most recently with an 85.2 percent pass rate in February 2008. That rate placed Coastal Law third among Florida's 10 law schools and was almost nine points higher than the state average;
- Graduate employment rate after nine months was 96.6 percent in February 2008; and
- Coastal Law competitive teams regularly earn team wins and take individual honors at statewide, regional, national and international competitions, including Florida's oldest and most prestigious moot court competition in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

**Coastal Law Alumni Association**

The Florida Coastal School of Law Alumni Association is your organization, representing over 2,000 graduates of FCSL practicing across the nation and internationally. All students who graduate are members of the alumni association. There are no dues or fees to join the alumni association. *The mission of the Association is to enhance the future success of Coastal Law by engaging, inspiring and increasing the visibility and participation of alumni.*

Alumni are an invaluable resource in terms of referring prospective students, providing internships, clerkships and jobs for its graduates, and serving as a mentor to students preparing to take the bar.

Lead by the Alumni Board of Directors, the alumni association provides opportunities to network and socialize, assist with admissions, mentor and speak to students and sponsor and help plan events. Alumni improve the educational experience and reputation of the school.

**Alumni Chapters**

Alumni chapters are geographically or affinity based volunteer groups initiated by alumni and supported by the Alumni Association and the Office of Alumni Relations.
The purpose of alumni chapters is to provide a local presence and opportunities for alumni to stay connected to their classmates and to their school. Alumni get together regularly for social occasions, networking, and continuing education forums. Besides providing opportunities for social engagement between members, chapters support the Association in the areas of student recruitment, career and social networking, bar mentoring, and fundraising.

Here are some examples of how some of these activities may look in your area:

- Assist with new student recruitment. These activities include attending recruitment fairs, placing calls or sending letters to prospective students, or personal meetings with admitted students to encourage them to commit to attending the school;
- Offer career advice to current students. Alumni can answer the call from the Office of Alumni Relations to network with students seeking job advice in certain geographic or practice areas. The advice may include an analysis of the legal market in your area, connecting students to firms or individuals who may be in a position to hire, counseling students in the process of career exploration or introducing the student to job announcement resources; and
- Provide bar mentorship to Coastal Law graduates. More students now leave Florida than remain in the state. Thus, alumni who have passed the bar in various states can serve as mentors to student during the bar preparation process. Alumni can provide tactics, strategies and moral support to students.

**Chapter Responsibilities**

To be sanctioned by the Office of Alumni Affairs, a chapter of the Florida Coastal School of Law Alumni Association must agree to carry out the Association mission in the following ways:

**Chapter Leadership**

Each chapter will elect a president and vice-president to provide leadership. Descriptions of both positions follow:

1. **President**

- Represents the alumni chapter as the official spokesperson.
- Serves as an ex-officio member of all chapter committees.
- Presides at all area chapter and officer meetings.
- Assumes responsibility for the scheduling success (and follow-up) of each activity or project the chapter undertakes.
- Approves agenda for each meeting.
- Should be visible at chapter functions or appoint a board/steering committee member to attend.
- Works to increase membership and participation.
- Makes every effort to attend Alumni Weekend and other signature alumni events.
- Serves as the chapter liaison to the Alumni Relations Office staff.
2. Vice-President

- Performs the duties of the president/chapter leader in his/her absence.
- Handles arrangements for programs and meetings.
- Co-leads meetings with president.
- Assists all officers at chapter functions in order to become familiar with and promote chapter operations.
- Makes every effort to attend Alumni Weekend and other signature alumni events.
- Ready to assume the presidential duties when deemed necessary.

Association & Governance

- Remain aligned with the Association's mission and goals;
- Adopt a steering committee form of leadership;
- Adopt bylaws (see sample bylaws below); and
- Uphold the Association's bylaws as well as Chapter bylaws, as prescribed by the Association.

Programming & Events

- Provide programming for diverse interests and age groups. This includes at least one of the following chapter-wide alumni events each year, when officers are elected:
  
  Student recruitment/appreciation
  Educational
  Membership
  Fundraiser
  Career Networking (alumni or student)

- Provide an events schedule to the Office of Alumni Relations quarterly to allow for efficient planning; and

- Promote participation in the Florida Coastal Alumni Association initiatives and national events to all chapter members.

Communication with Office of Alumni Relations

- Use resources of the Office of Alumni Relations and the Association only for communication with members and potential members who live in the chapter area;
• Send formal chapter e-mail messages through the Office of Alumni Relations. (informal emails among chapter members do not need to go through the Office of Alumni Relations);

• Submit any event dates at least 3 weeks in advance to ensure proper planning time. Please submit these event schedules to Alumni Relations staff;

• Coordinate chapter Web site updates with Office of Alumni Relations communications and alumni programs staff; and

• Provide timely reports and summaries of chapter activities and include names of individuals in any photos submitted if known.

Support from Office of Alumni Relations & Association

The Office of Alumni Relations

The purpose of the Office of Alumni Relations is to be a resource for the alumni association and alumni chapters. While Chapter Leaders are responsible for organizing events and gauging group interest in certain activities, chapters will receive support from the Office of Alumni Relations and where appropriate, the Association, in the following ways:

• Event listings on the alumni website and calendar. Each chapter will have an individual page on website (updated text must be submitted by chapter);

• In-person annual attendance at one of your Chapter events;

• Communicating by postal mail, email, and the internet with your Chapter members as needed;

• Coastal Law kits and/or promotional giveaway items for events; and

• E-mail and phone support.

Contact Information:
Florida Coastal School of Law
8787 Baypine Rd.
Jacksonville, FL 32256
Phone: 904-256-1212
Email: fcsalumni@fcsl.edu
www.alumni.fcsl.edu
Chapter Resources

Sample Chapter Bylaws

Article 1 – Name

The name of the organization shall be the Florida Coastal School of Law Alumni Association __________ Chapter, hereinafter referred to as the Chapter.

Article 2 – Purpose

The purpose of the Chapter shall be to foster a spirit of loyalty and friendship among alumni and friends of Coastal Law, through the coordination of educational, student recruiting, career networking, cultural, and social activities, in an effort to advance the best interests of the Coastal Law and its constituents.

Article 3 – Membership

Membership shall consist of those alumni and friends of Coastal Law who reside and/or receive mail in the __________ area. Only alumni whose contact information has been updated with the Coastal Law Office of Alumni Relations are assured of receiving all notifications of activities in that area.

Article 4 – Office of Alumni Relations Staff

The appropriate members of the Office of Alumni Relations staff shall serve the Chapter’s Leader/President as: advisors and consultants, providing recommendations to the chapter on past, present and future activities; and as executors, by accepting responsibility for the timely production and distribution (within the control of the Office of Alumni Relations) of all promotional materials.

Article 5 – Board of Officers/Committee

Section 1. The business of the chapter shall be managed by its Officers/Committee in accordance with these bylaws and any applicable current or future amended bylaws of the Coastal Law Alumni Association.

Section 2. Each Chapter shall have a President and a Vice President. The President may create any additional officers during the President’s term of office. Committee members shall be by nomination.

Section 3. Nominations for the Officers/Committee shall be made by an appointed subcommittee or by self-nominations from members. The subcommittee shall reduce the candidates to a workable number. Elections shall be by majority vote of the chapter members present at the chapter event.
Section 4. Ex officio Officers/Committee Members shall consist of the two most immediate past presidents and other representatives as designated by the President. Term of office shall be ______ years. The board shall not exceed_________members or seat less than ________ members at any time. If a Coastal Law Alumni Association national board member resides in the ____________chapter, they shall receive an automatic seat on the chapter board.

Section 5. Vacancies on the Board/Committee shall be filled by a majority vote of the Board/Committee at the next meeting.

Section 6. Meetings of the Board/Committee times and locations will be determined by the Board/Committee upon reasonable notice.

Article 6 – Finances

No local dues for membership in the Chapter shall be charged. All chapter activities shall be self-supporting. When this is not possible, prior approval by the Coastal Law Office of Alumni Relations must be obtained. Financial security of each activity shall be a major consideration of the Board.

Article 7 – Chapter Communications

Formal correspondence to the chapter as a whole must be approved and delivered through the Office of Alumni Relations. This includes paper and electronic communications. Chapter e-mail addresses shall be housed at the Office of Alumni Relations. Informal email communications may occur among Chapter members without approval or delivery by the Office of Alumni Relations.

Article 8 – Amendments

The Bylaws of the Chapter may be amended by approval of three-fourths of the total membership of the Board present at the announced meeting.
Chapters F.A.Q.

Q. Does every graduate of the Florida Coastal School of Law automatically become an Association member?
Yes. Every Coastal Law graduate achieves alumni status. There are no membership dues to join or remain a member. Members who have updated their contact information with the Office of Alumni Relations receive invitations to national and local alumni events, a subscription to Coastal Law Magazine and access to our online alumni community tools.

Q. Can a local chapter charge membership dues to help fund more activities?
No. Chapters are one of the many benefits members receive as a member of the Alumni Association. Local chapters and clubs may not charge additional membership dues or maintain private bank accounts. Chapters and clubs may hold events and fund-raisers, but those funds must be approved and managed by the Association.

Q. Who can obtain a list of alumni in our area?
Lists are administered through the Office of Alumni Relations. Chapter leaders may consult with our staff for the purpose of promoting the Association and affiliated events.

Q. Who will be invited to events that our chapter sponsors?
For most events, invitations will be sent to all Association members within a designated area. Anyone who chooses to receive chapter e-mail updates will also receive these invitations. Event information will also be posted on our Web site, www.fcsl.edu/alumni.

Q. Are Coastal Law speakers available for chapter events?
Our staff will work with chapter leaders to secure speakers from the school. Potential speakers include any of the deans or faculty members. If you have a particular request, please contact the Association as soon as possible. Because of the busy schedules of these Coastal Law ambassadors, our staff will need considerable time to coordinate with their schedules.

Q. Will the Association send a representative to our event?
Our goal is to visit each alumni chapter at least once every academic year. Decisions to attend will be made based on the purpose of the event and the number of alumni in attendance.

Q. Will the Association pay for our events?
Chapter events must be paid for by the chapter members. Chapters can fund events by, for example, charging admission, hold “pay as you go” events, or by seeking sponsorships by alumni and/or their firms. Also, Alumni Relations will send event kits out that include free information and/or other promotional items.

The Office of Alumni Relations will make every attempt to hold at least one event per year with each chapter that includes complimentary drinks or appetizers selected and/or approved by the Office of Alumni Relations.