

## A SAFE HARBOR IN ACADEMIC WATERS

Another semester has kicked off to a great start here at the Indiana University (IU) Maurer School of Law. Welcome Week featuring coffee, donuts, and trivia was a huge success, law journal students are busy sourcing and cite-checking, and the 1Ls are slowly losing the “deer in the headlights look” . . . I think. As the new student services librarian for the Jerome Hall Law Library, I am very excited to see what the upcoming year will bring.



I finished my MLS in May, started my first grown-up job here at IU, and attended my first American Association of Law Librarians (AALL) Annual Meeting this past July; loving every minute. Not every newly minted law librarian can say they landed their dream job right out of library school, but I certainly can! Coming to work every day, interacting with students, responding to reference requests, maintaining a library environment conducive to student success, and helping them navigate the turbulent waters of law school are among the many reasons I joined the profession.

Over the course of the last five weeks, during journal orientation and library tours for the 1Ls, I have attempted to impart some holistic advice that I received when I was in law school to the students. The advice was this: the best way to become a successful law student is to be in the law school even when you are not in class. Instead of making a beeline back to your apartment after Contracts or Civil Procedure, stick around—congregate with classmates and talk to people even if you don’t have a formal study group.

I truly believe that there is a certain osmosis that occurs among law students when they are together in the same space. They tend to pick up on concepts from class they would not ordinarily grasp if they were by themselves. But this “Fellowship of the Students” is more than just academically beneficial. It also embodies a holistic approach to student success, including mental and emotional well-being. It provides the foundation for short- and long-term friendships, for moments of commiseration about old-school, Socratic-driven professors, and the vehicle by which to blow-off steam in an emotionally and intellectually charged sea of learning.

I may be biased, but the natural place for this process to occur is the law library. We all know that C.C. Langdell correctly asserted that the library is the “laboratory” of the law school curriculum, but we should also keep in mind that we, as legal educators, are not just contending with final exam grades, bar passage rates, or ranking statistics—we are dealing with human beings, and human beings are often mentally and emotionally vulnerable. This is especially true of law students. Not only do they have professional lives that are filled with uncertainty and anxiety, but their personal lives may also be just as unstable and stressful. To expect them to check their worries and problems at the front door is both unrealistic and callous.

So, as we embark on another academic year of molding the next generation of legal professionals, I resolve to not only work to ensure the academic success of our law students, but to approach them as individuals who need a safe harbor from the rigors and stresses of law school and of life. When they are in search of a space for both hard work and rejuvenation, I will welcome them into the library. This newly minted, wet behind the ears law librarian welcomes any and all sage advice in this endeavor.

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