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### DEI Newsletter 2023 Issue 1

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# MAINE

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SCHOOL OF LAW

# LAW

## DEI Committee



Class of 2026: What Does Professionalism Look Like In and Outside the Classroom?

## Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 1 | Issue 1 | Maine Law DEI Committee Newsletter | Sept.-Oct. 2023

### *Welcome Back!*

#### Our New Newsletter:

- The DEI Committee is tasked with listening, assessing, and recommending actions by Maine Law that will improve inclusion, equity, justice, and belonging within our community and beyond. We are launching this newsletter to share relevant news, events, programming, and curriculum with the Maine Law community. Our goal is to elevate, inspire, and invigorate this work throughout our community. We would love your feedback and would be delighted to highlight events within and beyond our Maine Law community. Please email [law.deicommitee@maine.edu](mailto:law.deicommitee@maine.edu).

### *Inside This Issue*

#### PG. 2

In the Spotlight, Maine Law's new first year course entitled Introduction to Race, Racism, & US Law and the Refugee & Human Rights Clinic's asylum workshops.

#### PG. 3

Learn about Maine Law affinity groups and what's going on around town, and read about recent programming at this year's new student orientation.

## In the Spotlight

- ❖ **Introduction to Race, Racism, & US Law:** A new course is being offered to all first-year students at Maine Law that will discuss the roles of race and racism in U.S. law, with a particular focus on the first-year law school subjects.
- ❖ **In the Refugee and Human Rights Clinic (RHRC),** student attorneys serve low-income immigrants through a broad range of cases and projects, including providing direct legal representation and broader advocacy to immigrants and refugees seeking political asylum and similar protections under federal law. As part of the Clinic's work, Maine Law hosts pro se asylum workshops where RHRC student attorneys and faculty work with the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project to give individuals seeking asylum the opportunity to learn about the process and file asylum applications with limited legal representation. Due to the shortage of legal aid resources in Maine, many low-income asylum seekers must navigate the complicated application process without legal representation. By focusing on community education and limited legal representation through these pro se workshops, RHRC student attorneys can improve unrepresented individuals' chances of being granted asylum in federal courts and avoid deportation to countries they fled due to violence and persecution.



**Sahra Hassan, a student attorney with the Refugee and Human Rights Clinic, speaks to participants at a pro se asylum workshop hosted at Maine Law in June 2023.**

## Upcoming Events at Maine Law

- **September 18: Constitution Day Lecture.** 4 pm in the Moot Court Classroom
- **September 20: The Right to Vote: Maine Law's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Voter Registration Event.** Please join Deputy Secretary of State, Joann Bautista '18 and Anna Kellar, Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Maine to learn about the state of voting rights in Maine and how to protect them. Volunteers will be on hand to register voters at the event. *Lunch hour in the Moot Court Classroom*
- **October 3: Answering the Call: Serving Your Community in Public Defense.** Please join Rachel Rossi, Director of the Federal Office for Access to Justice, and defenders from Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire for a special panel and networking event. *4:30 pm in the Moot Court Classroom and Living Room*
- **October 6:** The first annual **1L Day of Service** will be held with the goal of highlighting the value of public and *pro bono* service. 1L students will be participating in a service opportunity of their choice in the Greater Portland community.
- **October 26:** Please join our Director of Field Placement & Pro Bono, Professor Marcia Levy, to celebrate **National Pro Bono Week!** *Lunch hour in the Moot Court Classroom.*
- **November 17: Third Annual Indian Law and History Lecture**



## Student Affinity Groups

Student organizations are an important piece of the student experience at Maine Law! They add vibrancy and richness to our community and highlight the diverse perspectives, interests, and missions of our student body. For more information, reach out to our student affinity groups.



Multicultural Law Society:  
multicultural@maine.edu



Black Law Student Association:  
BLSA@maine.edu



LGBT+ Law and Policy Group:  
lawlgbt@maine.edu



Women's Law Association (WLA):  
wla@maine.edu

## Around Town

- ❖ [Hispanic Heritage Month Events](#)
- ❖ **September 23:** The popular, annual **Latino Food Festival** will be held inside and outside Guild Hall, part of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on 307 Congress Street in Portland, on Saturday, Sept. 23, from 11 am until the food runs out. All are welcome to attend.
- ❖ **October 19: The Maine Gay Symposium: The Spark that Started Queer Liberation in Maine** exhibit and discussion at Glickman Library at 5:30 pm. Free and no registration required.
- ❖ **October 26: Evening for the Environment:** Join Penobscot Nation Ambassador Maulian Bryant in conversation with Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson. [Sign up here.](#)

## Orientation

- Sahra Hassan (3L) and Allie Smith (2L) led a discussion on the article “From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces” (Arao and Clemens, 2013) with the new students.
- Students also attended a workshop with [Maine Inside Out](#), an organization that “creates theater for social change in schools, prisons and in the community.”
- President & Dean Leigh Saufley and Professor Jon Lee presented to the students on professionalism, followed by a discussion among students that was facilitated by faculty and staff. The word cloud on page one is a reflection of that conversation.

## Faculty News

- Professor Jennifer Wriggins led discussions on equity and inclusion in teaching with both adjunct faculty teaching this fall at the Adjunct Faculty Orientation, and with full-time faculty in August 2023.