



THE COMMENTATOR

Vol. XLI, No. 9

The Student Newspaper of the New York University School of Law

February 28, 2008

Administration Considering Cutting Early Application Processes for Moot Court, *Social Change*

By GARRETT COYLE '08

The law school administration is nearing a decision to eliminate the early application process for the *NYU Review of Law & Social Change* and Moot Court, according to Vice Dean Barry Friedman. Although discussions are ongoing, Friedman said the new policy likely would be a "joint or universal process" for first-year students to apply for journal membership.

Discussion of the decision began early last fall, when Friedman approached the leadership of *Social Change* and the Moot Court Board with a "request for information" about the current selection system, according to *Social Change* editor-in-chief Deena Fox '08.

Friedman said that he has long heard complaints about the current system. Other journals had complained about the lack of parity in the current system, he said. He also claimed that he has heard complaints from students who became *Social Change* members through the early application process but later regretted their decision. Friedman noted that although he initiated the current reconsideration of the journal membership application process, the idea originated with former Vice Dean Larry Kramer,

who is now the Dean of Stanford Law School.

"I think the current situation is unfortunate for 1Ls," Friedman said. Friedman explained that three important goals are in tension with the current early application process. First, Friedman wants to ensure that extracurricular activities do not distract first-year students from the first-year curriculum. He also wants first-year students to have all of the information about their journal participation options before them at the same time, he said. Finally, Friedman said that he wants to have a unified competition for membership on NYU's nine student-edited journals to reduce the extent to which first-year students face redundant application requirements.

These three rationales did not win over Fox. "I think we all know how to balance our time and make decisions about what organizations we want to join," she said. She felt that the reasons that Friedman offered for eliminating the early application process reflected a belief that first-year students lack the capacity to make informed decisions in their best interests.

Matthew Haggans '08, Chair of the Moot Court Board and a former student of and research assistant for Vice Dean Friedman,

also was initially skeptical. He felt that all of the information pertinent to journal membership decisions is generally available to first-year students, which allows them to make informed choices.

Under both organizations' current write-on competitions, first-year students who decline to accept early offers have a second opportunity to join the organization, through the general write-on competition. The general competition takes place in May, and participants learn the results of this competition in July.

Haggans and Fox said they prefer the current system because it permits their respective organizations to tailor their write-on competitions to target particular skills in first-year students.

Under the current system, first-year students sign up for the Moot Court write-on competition in February. A seven-page brief and a personal statement become due shortly after spring break, and the Moot Court Board extends offers to selected participants in April. Evaluating first-year students on these briefs, according to Haggans, allows the Moot Court Board to select students likely to excel in the advocacy training that Moot Court emphasizes.

See APPLICATION page 3

Law School Alumni Donated Over \$43 Million Last Year

Second only to Harvard Law School, NYU Law received more than \$43 million in donations during the 2006-2007 fiscal year, reports Washington Square News. Total commitments and gifts since 2002 amount to nearly \$330 million.

Dean Ricky Revesz said that much of the donations will go toward making the law school accessible to lower income students by providing funding for needs-based scholarships, according to the National Law Journal. Jeannie Forrest, associate dean for development and alumni relations, indicated that the money will also be used to assist with building and retaining faculty.

The NLJ reports the law school's donations at a slightly lower \$42 million, while HLS received \$48 million. Columbia Law School took in slightly less than \$24 million.

SBA Waves Arms at Registration, Spring Fling, Commentator Offices

By TAREK KHANACHET '08

These last few weeks have been particularly busy for the Student Bar Association (SBA). A great deal of work has gone into working with student groups, assisting student advocacy, and especially planning the weekly parties.

Two weeks ago the SBA met with the Deans to discuss many current issues regarding student life at the law school. Of particular interest was the new bidding and registration system. This proposal will radically change how students select courses, and many students and student groups have begun to advocate for greater student involvement in the design process.

Following the SBA's meeting with the Deans, the administration announced a schedule of events and trainings that have been tailored to allow students to test the new system, and then comment on it and make their opinions heard. The resulting events include yesterday's town hall meeting that addressed student questions and concerns about the auction system, training sessions taking place the week of March 3rd and mock registration the following week, after which participants will be invited to evaluate the new registration system.

The SBA has also worked extensively with the Deans on some of the "nuts and bolts" issues

See SBA page 3

A Mild Winter Gives One Last Hurrah



Andrew Gehring

A mostly melted snowman bids farewell to winter in Washington Square Park. February 22, 2008 saw the first major snowfall of the season. Parts of the city received as much as 8 inches of snow. Meteorologists had forecast as little as 1 inch of snowfall, so their current predictions that New York City won't see any more snow until next winter should perhaps be taken with a larger grain of salt than usual.

Infra

Chances are, you aren't going to donate to the law school after you graduate. Coase understands, but he doesn't have to like it. page 2

SCHUDOKU! page 4

Predictably Irrational: Our reviewer liked it, and therefore so should you. page 7

Pascale Walker walked away with our interviewer's heart. We want it back. page 8

Social Change Deserves an Early Application Process

TO THE EDITOR:

I write as a concerned member of the *Social Change* community. The *Review of Law and Social Change* is a unique and important progressive community within this institution that has for many years facilitated open and honest discussions among students concerned about a diverse range of legal and moral issues. *Social Change* has prided itself on having an alternative non-binding journal application process for students who are particularly interested in joining its ranks. As discussed in a piece in this week's *Commentator* (see page 1), the Deans have decided to eliminate this process.

The early decision process was purposefully designed to give applicants a preview of actual work that they could expect as a 2L Staff Editor. Instead of writing a miniature note based on a set of cases, statutes and secondary sources, we asked applicants to review an article that had actually been submitted to the journal with the intention of recommending that *Social Change* accept or reject it. The process also involved a personal statement, a statement on *Social Change*, an optional note on diversity and a short blue-booking exercise.

Many members of *Social Change* feel the reasons given by the Deans for ending the process were inadequate. Our process was purposefully designed to be less time-consuming and more focused than the general writing competition. The self-selecting nature of the process, and the fact that applicants were evaluated based on the type of work they would actually do on the journal, enhanced our ability to judge future members and their contributions to our community. Moreover, the process was not binding and thus permitted accepted students to enter the writing competition to apply to additional journals, and students could even apply for *Social Change* again during the writing competition.

NYU is able to draw so many talented students, in part, because of its much-touted commitment to the public interest. *Social Change* offered an additional alternative application process that was designed to target those students truly committed to progressive issues and those who might not otherwise enter the one-size-fits-all writing competition. It is disheartening that 1Ls now and in the future will be denied the option to apply through our alternative process and that ending this process may change the character of one of the most important progressive communities within NYU.

DREW KOVACS '08

THE COMMENTATOR

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Our Alumni Giving Rate Is Pitiful, and You Should Be Ashamed

BY ANDREW GEHRING '09

The law school pulled in over \$43 million in donations last year. (See the squib on page 1 for more information.) Not bad. At least, with no context, from the perspective of a guy whose highest paying job so far in life made him just over \$26,000 a year (before taxes), it's not bad. But for a school that's turning out over 400 graduates each year, every one with the potential to be earning more than \$1 million a year, many of whom will, in fact, be earning more than \$1 million a year at some point in their lives, it's really not very good.

I don't want to start off too negatively. There are a number of things about the \$43 million that are impressive. Comparing ourselves to other law schools, we did pretty well, only raising less money than Harvard, a school with a larger population than our own, and nearly doubling the fundraising efforts of comparably sized Columbia.

At this point, I think the appropriate question is something along the lines of, "Did you have any basis at all for the conclusion of your first paragraph?" And that's an understandable reaction because, as I mentioned, the number certainly seems impressive without the appropriate context. The context I'm talking about is the alumni donation rate, which is around a strikingly low 24%.

Twenty-four percent. Let's try to put that number in context, too, with some back-of-the-envelope-style calculations. We'll low-ball and say that 400 students graduate a year (this is low-balling because class sizes are actually closer to about 430, and I imagine that LL.M.s are included in the alumni giving

rate calculation). Extend that out for, oh, 40 years, which I again believe is on the conservative side for estimating how long NYU Law graduates will be productive, earning members of society. That gives us 16,000 potential donors.

From this number, I think it's fair to subtract everyone involved with the loan repayment assistance program (400 people who are theoretically too poor to be able to pay their loans, so should we really be expecting them to donate?), and let's go ahead and double that number to account for other graduates now working in the public interest that have repaid their loans, but still aren't making enough to donate. Let's also subtract graduates who have been out for three years or fewer because they're just getting their feet and repaying their own loans. I think the last group of people to subtract is those that have foregone a career in law or business and chosen to pursue their less lucrative dreams, a number I can only stab wildly at, but I'll put it at a hefty quarter of those remaining.

My really conservative guess, then, of the number of people that we could reasonably expect to donate (and this is operating on the assumption that if you make less than a third-year associate, you don't make enough to donate, which I think is a terribly misguided assumption) comes to 10,500 graduates, 65% of the total number of graduates available to donate. That means that about 41% of graduates make (more than) enough money to be able to make reasonable donations to the school, but don't.

I must be missing something. The law school has made the careers and lifestyles of all of us possible, opening doors that would have been undreamed of without NYU's assistance. And graduates have an interest in funding the school's projects: donations

contribute generally to the endowment, enable renovations and expansions, and assist in professor recruitment and retention, among other things. Each of these potential uses of donations contributes to NYU's prestige in the legal community and the world at large, thereby contributing to each graduate's personal reputation. It's a beautiful synergism: helping NYU helps the donor.

The problem, I think, must be our old friend, the externality. The benefit derived from every dollar donated to the school is spread out over every other graduate and those currently attending the school. Positive externalities like this, as we all should know, result in sub-optimal investment in the beneficial activity. We can't internalize the benefit of donations, so we don't donate.

It's so assuredly common knowledge that it's probably not even worthwhile to mention that the solution to the problem of externalities is to have an enforcement mechanism that forces individual actors to internalize the costs or benefits of the externality. Tax deductions do that to some extent, but they clearly aren't sufficient. The better solution here, I think, is what I'm trying to do right now: appealing to everyone to recognize that donating to the school is a worthwhile cause.

We could nearly triple the amount of money taken in by the school each year if every person that doesn't currently donate but is able to (as per the above schematic) began to. I don't know what the law school would do with all of that money, nor can I even really fathom what it would mean to have that kind of cash, but I assure you that it would benefit us all.

Letters to the Editor: Desired daily, Printed bimonthly.

Write a Letter to the Editor.

Contact asgehring@nyu.edu.
Make your voice heard, through print media.

SBA: Commentator Gets a New Home, Spring Fling Drinks Still Under Discussion

Continued from page 1

facing student groups. Now that 135 MacDougal – formerly home to some student housing and student group offices – is being renovated for academic use, the SBA worked with the administration to find space for *The Commentator's* new

offices in Mercer. Additionally, in response to student concerns, the SBA lobbied for the opening of Furman on the weekends, and now Furman will be open normal hours for student use on Saturday and Sunday.

Lastly, the SBA will be working with the Deans on Spring Fling, the law school's annual spring

semester bash, and will be re-opening negotiations to discuss the number of drink tickets allowed and the hours of the event. The Deans have committed to working out a solution suitable to both the administration needs and student desires, and hopes are high that Spring Fling will satisfy all parties.

APPLICATION: *Social Change* Unhappy with Changes, *Law Review* Blamed by Some

Continued from page 1

The current competition for *Social Change* operates in a similar fashion, with one central difference. Instead of a brief, first-year students are asked to submit an essay responding to an article submitted for publication in *Social Change*. According to Fox, this process targets the skills pertinent to the position of a *Social Change* staff editor better than the general write-on competition, which requires students to compose a six- to eight-page comment in response to a set of materials about a particular topic.

Both Fox and Haggans also feel that the personal statement required in their organizations' respective write-on competitions allow a better evaluation of the students' fit with the organization. Fox explained that when students compete in a single competition for a spot on one of nine different journals, they often submit to every journal nearly identical personal statements that lack details indicating their compatibility with each journal. This individual tailoring is especially important to *Social Change*, according to Fox, who emphasized the strong *Social Change* community.

After hearing these concerns, Friedman said that he remained open to "workarounds." He postponed a final decision, he said, until after a discussion period for considering the needs and interests of affected parties. He encouraged interested parties to submit feedback to him before spring break, when the discussion period will end.

Fox said that she and the other *Social Change* leadership proposed a compromise solution to Friedman at the end of the fall semester: *Social Change* would conduct its own write-on competition that first-year students would complete during spring break. Fox said that this compromise would eliminate any potential distractions from the first-year curriculum.

Shortly before the start of this semester, Fox said that Friedman informed her that he would not adopt the proposed compromise. According to Fox, the reasons Friedman offered to justify this decision were similar to the three goals he presented to her in the fall.

Fox said that the *Social Change* leadership then proposed a second compromise to Friedman. According to Fox, this proposal would require first-year students interested only in *Social Change* to compose the response essay required under *Social Change's* current write-on system. However, this competition would occur at the same time as the general competition. To accommodate first-year students interested in membership on other journals in addition to *Social Change*, Fox said the proposal would continue

to allow students who completed the general competition requirements to be eligible for *Social Change* membership.

The Moot Court Board is responding to the administration's decision in a different way. Although the decision has not been finalized, the Board plans to require first-year students applying for Moot Court membership to submit the briefs they compose in the spring semester of the Lawyering course. Currently the subject of this assignment is the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

Haggans said that one benefit of using students' ICWA briefs as the basis for the write-on competition is that it encourages students to work hard on the briefs in a class that is graded on a credit/fail basis. Still, he said, the solution is not perfect. ICWA briefs reflect influences other than the student's own work, including feedback from Lawyering professors and classmates.

Haggans said that, as a concession for the abrogation of the current system, the administration has indicated that it is amenable to providing the journal preference rankings of the first-year participants to all nine journals, information they do not currently receive. These rankings, Haggans said, will benefit the journals by allowing them to focus their write-on competition grading efforts on students whose journal preference rankings indicate a strong interest in that particular journal. The information also will allow journals to judge students' commitment to the journal as reflected in their rank ordering of preferred journals.

Some have suggested that the motivation for the elimination of the early application processes is to increase diversity in the membership of the *NYU Law Review*. Moot Court and especially *Social Change* often attract diverse memberships, and the offer of secure journal membership in April may lure students away from investing their efforts into a second write-on competition that ultimately could be fruitless.

When questioned about these allegations, Friedman said that he had not heard of them before. He denied that increasing diversity in the membership of *Law Review* had motivated his decision.

When asked about the possibility that this motivation was driving the administration's decision, Fox said that she did not believe that the new system would result in changes to the membership makeup of *Law Review* or *Social Change*. But it would be detrimental to *Social Change*, she said, because it would hurt the sense of community that the journal attempts to foster.

Friedman said that he expects to reach a decision in time for the 2008 write-on competition.

This is the second of four house ads in this issue.

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THE FIGHT



REVESZ

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A MYSTERY
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14th Annual
NYU School of Law
Public Service Auction
Thursday, February 28, 2008

Find Out
Who!



Black Allied Law Students Association (BALSA) Asian Pacific American Law Students Association (APALSA)
 South Asian Law Students Association (SALSA) Latino Law Students Association (LaLSA)
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of New York University School of Law are proud to present:

The 2008 NYU Law All-ALSA Symposium

**“Can People of Color Become a United Coalition?
 Legal and Political Debates for Twenty-First Century America”**

Tuesday, March 4, 2008
 11 am to 5 pm
 Greenberg Lounge, Vanderbilt Hall

10:45 am - 11:00 am: Registration (only for those desiring CLE credits)

11:00 am - 11:15 am: Introductory remarks

11:15 am - 12:45pm: Panel 1:
To Be or Not To Be ‘White’?: Racial Identification and Classification of People of Color in 21st Century America

Vinay Harpalani, Ph.D., and NYU School of Law ('09)
 Tanya Hernandez, Professor of Law, George Washington University Law School
 John Tehranian, Professor of Law, University of Utah School of Law

12:45pm – 1:30 pm: Lunch

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm: Panel 2:
Driving while Black, Flying while Brown, and Spying while Yellow: Racial Profiling in the Post-9/11 Era

Smita Narula, Assistant Professor of Clinical Law, NYU School of Law
 Gary Okihiro, Professor, Dept. of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University
 Anthony Thompson, Professor of Clinical Law, NYU School of Law

3:15 pm – 4:45 pm: Panel 3:
United We Stand, Divided We Fall: Building Political Coalitions among People of Color

Chandra Bhatnagar, Human Rights Advocacy Coordinator, ACLU
 Shanta Driver, National Director, United for Equality and Affirmative Action
 Marc Lamont Hill, Assistant Professor of Urban Education, Temple University

4:45 pm – 5:00 pm: Closing remarks

**Symposium is free and open to the public (please bring photo ID).
 CLE credit will be available for ALL DAY ATTENDANCE.**

For further information, contact Vinay Harpalani at vinay.harpalani@gmail.com

Public Interest Auction Breaks Donation Records, Expected to Bring in Large Crowd

By JACK LEO '10

The 14th Annual Public Service Auction – the largest student-run event at the law school and typically one of the most well-attended events of the law school year – is tonight, February 28th, at 6pm in Vanderbilt Hall. Co-chairs Lars Johnson '09 and Carly Leinheiser '09 have led a record-breaking donations drive and brought in a tremendous amount of ticket sales.

The various donations committees have brought in a wide variety of items from NYU Law graduates, corporate sponsors, local businesses, and law firms, including week-long getaways in Palm Springs and the Catskills, box seats at a New York Mets game, and lunch with Jeffrey Toobin, CNN Legal Analyst and author of *The Nine*. Ticket holders will also be able to bid on some exciting items donated by the NYU Law community. NYU's own students have offered a cornucopia of baked goods, language lessons, private cooking instruction, a sitar

serenade, and even an enlightening dinner with Auction Co-chairs Johnson and Leinheiser. Law School faculty and staff donated items sure to fetch fine prices: a weekend at Dean Revesz and Professor Been's Connecticut farm; a six-course dinner prepared by Professor Weiler; a ping-pong tournament with Professor Persico; and a chocolate tasting with Professors Barkow, Wyman, Rodriguez, Arlen and Marotta-Wurgler.

Items suitable for all price ranges will be available at the auction. The event features both a silent auction in Greenburg Lounge and a live auction across the hall in Tishman Auditorium.

Proceeds from the auction support NYU's commitment to guarantee summer funding for public interest work. Through the generous contributions of local and national businesses, law firms, alumni and other members of the NYU community, over \$170,000 was raised during last year's auction to support over 300 students as they engaged in public interest work throughout the world.

If having The Commentator in your hands isn't convenient enough, read it online.

<http://www.law.nyu.edu/studentorgs/commentator/>

Upcoming Events

February 29:
With Liberty and Justice for All
 Vanderbilt Hall
 9 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.

March 3:
Networking Reception for Clerkship Applicants
 Greenberg Lounge, Vanderbilt Hall
 5 - 7 p.m.

March 4:
Can ‘People of Color’ Become a United Coalition?
 Greenberg Lounge, Vanderbilt Hall
 11 a.m.

March 6:
Judging International Criminal Law Cases
 Lester Pollack Colloquium Room, 9th Floor, Furman Hall
 6 - 7:30 p.m.

March 8:
Cultural Arts Spring Show
 Tishman Auditorium, Vanderbilt Hall
 7:30 p.m.

SCHUDOKO!

Below you'll find a variation on a standard sudoku grid. Fill in the missing boxes such that each row, column, and three-by-three box contains one of each of the following letters: N Y U L A W S C H

	S		Y	H				
U		H		C		L		Y
		W		A		H		N
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L		U		Y		W		
S		C		W		Y		A
				S	A		C	

Solution on page 7.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW MASTHEAD

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dances from around the world

spoken word

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musical performances

and more!



Saturday, March 8 at 7:30 p.m. (after party to follow)

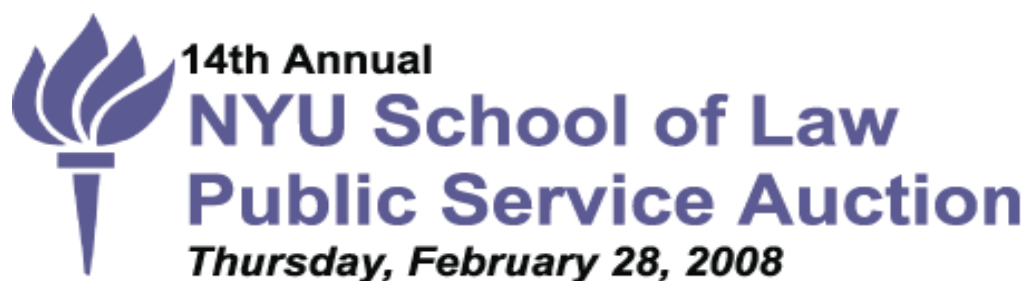
Tishman Auditorium, Vanderbilt Hall

TICKETS: \$5

On Sale February 25 – March 7

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. in Golding Lounge

Don't miss your opportunity to be a part of one of the year's biggest celebrations! MOKA showcases the artistic talents of our student community, and unites members of our ALSA organizations with the larger law school community. Come join NYU students as they cultivate, celebrate, and express the myriad of cultures represented at NYU Law School.



Your presence is requested at
Six o'clock in the evening Thursday,
the Twenty-Eighth of February
Vanderbilt Hall
NYU School of Law

The Public Service Auction is

Tonight

Tickets Still Available at the Door

Silent Auction ends at 10 p.m. or thirty minutes after the live auction
(whichever is later)

Student tickets are \$5 in advance and at the door day of the auction

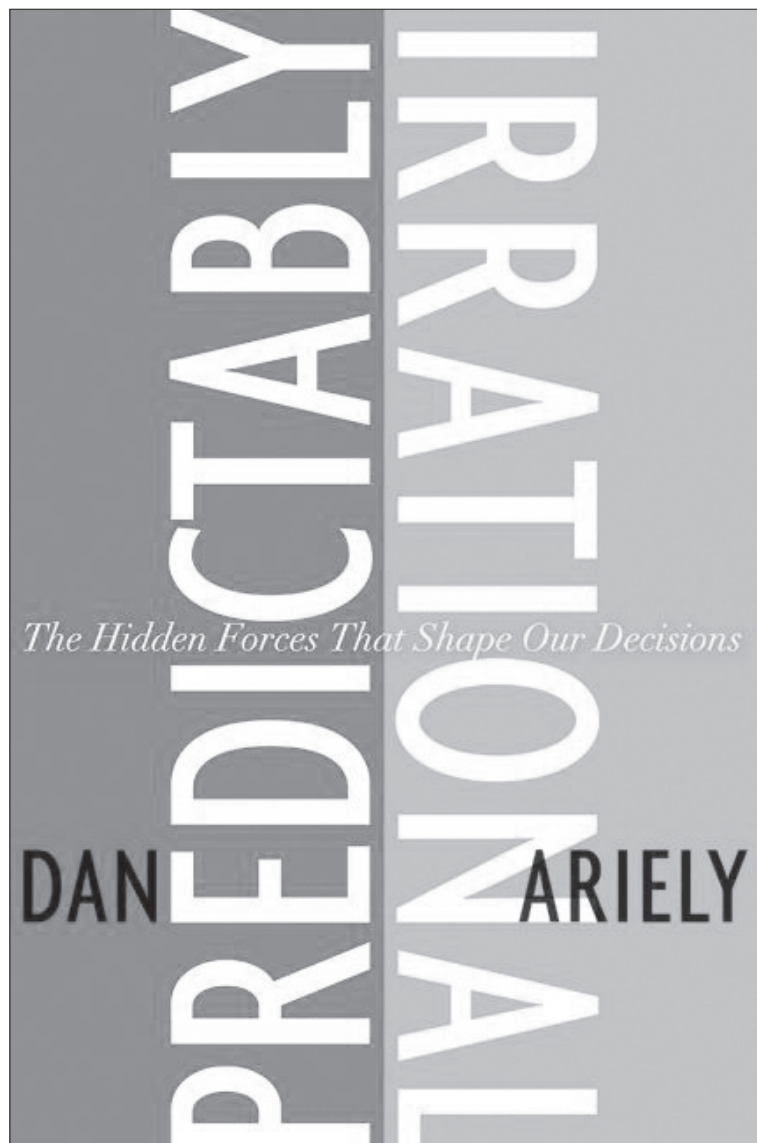
Guest tickets are \$15

Save money on your bar review! When you buy your ticket you can also bid in a special Bar/Bri silent auction for Bar/Bri Coupons. Special Bar/Bri pre-auction bidding ends February 27th, but Bar/Bri coupons will be available during the silent auction on February 28th.

A weekend in the country, an FDNY fire helmet, walking tours, sporting event and concert tickets, and more are all waiting for the highest bidder – and it could be you!

Visit our website at www.law.nyu.edu/studentorgs/psa for an exciting list of items to bid on!

Predictably Irrational Is an Irresistible Look at Our Not-So-Rational Foibles



Dan Ariely uses real-world examples of unexpected behaviors to critique the neoclassical rational actor model in his new book *Predictably Irrational*.

BY DEREK TOKAZ '08

Why do NYU students walk slower after thinking about old people? Why does a vitamin C tablet work wonders to ward off the pain of an electrical shock when sold for \$2.50, but is ineffective if sold for 10 cents? How did Starbucks get to raise the price of coffee by 1000% in only a few years? Why are 6% of heterosexual MIT students unaware that if aroused they would consider having sex with a man?

All these questions and many others are answered in Dan Ariely's behavioral economics smash-hit *Predictably Irrational* (HarperCollins 2008). Unfortunately, the

answers tend to be that humans are a bit silly, not as insightful as they think and far more prone to deceit, theft and sexual misconduct than anyone but a lawyer (or client) would think.

But the book isn't all gloom and doom. In addition to providing valuable insights into the "hidden forces that shape our decisions," *Predictably Irrational* also gives some good advice on how to resist these forces, or – if you're a little more sinister – how to use them against others. For instance, if you're having trouble meeting potential mates when you go out, try bringing along a friend who is a lot like you, but slightly less attractive. I won't give away

the reason why this works, but I will say that it's the same reason why people who only want to pay \$59 for an online subscription to the Economist will shell out an extra \$66 to get the print edition too.

Predictably Irrational keeps it light, with a generous helping of delightful anecdotes (such as how the French were unmoved by Amazon's 20 cent shipping charge, but really loved free shipping), but also maintains scientific relevance with detailed studies of everything from the healing power of fake surgeries to the deliciousness of vinegar-tainted beer.

Still not convinced? Then check out the author's website, predictablyirrational.com, where you can read excerpts, play with optical illusions, and request to participate in research experiments. If you do decide to participate, be warned, while some participants get paid, or are asked to watch porn, others are subjected to strong electrical shocks (but it's still probably not half as painful as a C&S or doc review).

There is, of course, a risk that comes with discovering all the ways you've been fooled (or have been fooling yourself). Might your coffee from Starbucks be less tasty if you learned why you liked it so much? Might your medicines be less effective if you learn about the link between price and efficacy? Might reading *Predictably Irrational* make your life worse off? I asked Ariely this at his February 19th discussion at the Union Square Barnes and Noble, and – as you may have predicted – he answered in the negative. Ariely does not think that reading his book will be bad for you. And as someone who encourages drinking, watching porn, and getting electrocuted, he knows a lot about what's bad for you, so I'd take his word for it.

Actually, he said you may be less happy with your decisions in the short term, but will probably see a benefit in the long run. So feel free to dig in and enjoy. Just don't give it to your grandparents.

WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL: NONCITIZENS AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

New York University School of Law
Vanderbilt Hall
40 Washington Square South
Friday, February 29th

Presented by:

National Lawyers Guild
Immigrant Voting Project
World Policy Institute
New York Coalition to Expand Voting Rights

Schedule of Events:

- 9:00 – 9:30: Breakfast & CLE Registration
- 9:30 – 9:45: Opening Remarks
Cristina Rodriguez, New York University School of Law
- 10:00 – 11:30 Panel 1: *Constitutional Borderlands and the Meaning of Citizenship*
Moderator: **Cristina Rodriguez**, NYU School of Law
- Speakers:
Michele Wucker, Executive Director, World Policy Institute
Liz Ouyang, New York University School of Law
Peter Spiro, Temple University School of Law
Rogers Smith, University of Pennsylvania
- 11:30 – 1:00: Lunch Break
- 1:00 – 2:30: Panel 2: *The American Demos: Defining the Body Politic*
Speakers:
Myrna Perez, Brennan Center for Justice
Stuart Comstock-Gay, Demos
Juan Cartagena, Community Service Society
- 2:30 – 2:45: Coffee Break
- 2:45 – 4:15: Panel 3: *Next Steps: Towards a Vision of an Inclusive Democracy*
Moderator:
Haeyoung Yoon, New York University School of Law
- Speakers:
Ron Hayduck, Immigrant Voting Project
Cheryl Wertz, Peace Action New York State
Chung-Wha Hong, New York Immigration Coalition
Ana Maria Achila, Make the Road New York

SCHUDOKU!

Solutions

See puzzle page 4.

A	S	L	H	W	N	C	Y	H	W	Y	L	S	N
U	N	H	W	N	S	A	S	U	A	W	H	C	W
C	Y	W	W	N	S	A	U	Y	C	N	W	Y	N
H	N	C	A	U	A	W	H	Y	S	Y	U	C	S
Y	S	U	U	A	C	W	H	N	Y	W	L	S	A
H	N	C	W	L	Y	H	S	C	U	Y	L	C	H
C	U	W	A	S	N	W	L	U	C	S	A	H	Y
W	Y	N	Y	N	L	U	C	S	A	H	Y	L	C

Walk This Way: The Pascale Walker Story

The new Assistant Dean for Student Affairs sits down with The Commentator, and she invites the members of the law school community to pay her a visit of their own.

By JULIAN DAYAL '08

Some of you, nay many of you, probably never knew we had an Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (“ADSA”). The only reason I knew we had an ADSA is because during my 1L year then-ADSA Yvette Bravo-Weber called me into her office to discuss an anonymous tip she received that I was, shall we say, “on edge.” (Those that know me know I am far too in love with myself to ever contemplate drastic measures, but to which-ever prankster and so-called friend came up with that one, touché.) An extremely awkward conversation ensued, and over the course of the following two years whenever I ran into Yvette I tried with great earnestness to demonstrate that I was very happy, very happy indeed. Nevertheless, her smile always betrayed a look of “please don’t anything rash.”

I shouldn’t joke about these things, of course, but I bring it up only to underscore my suspicion that there’s a good chance you’ve never met the ADSA before, especially if you didn’t have a problem or concern that merited her assistance. That’s about to change. The truth is, there’s a new ADSA in town, and she’s moving her office out from behind the scenes to take a more proactive role in ensuring that all law students, whilst at our esteemed institution, enjoy a dose of the good life!

Her name is Pascale Walker. To help you get acquainted with her, I sat down with Pascale in her Furman 413 office to ask the tough questions. (Parts of conversation may be paraphrased/entirely invented.)

JD: Pascale, great to see you again. Is that a vanilla frappuccino with a touch of cinnamon? Smells delish!

PW: Just coffee. Julian, it’s great to see you, too! How have you been?

JD: I’m great. I’m very happy. Just loving life. So you left NYU after my 1L year and came back just a little while ago to be the new ADSA. What brought you back?

PW: Well, it’s hard to stay away. I think you’ll find yourself missing this place a lot after you graduate in a few months.

JD: Oh, I already miss it on the weekends. Particularly the library.

PW: You laugh, but you’ll see.

JD: In all seriousness, I’m sure I will. But are you familiar with the term “feet to the fire”?

PW: I am.

JD: Well that’s what I do, I put feet to the fire. That’s what our readers expect when they see my byline, so please let’s not make this about me. I’ll ask you again, what brought you back to NYU?

PW: I love the law school. As a PILC counselor I got to meet and work with so many amazing students – leaders full of talent, dreams and ambition. It was extremely gratifying. I was honored then to be a part of their lives and



Pascale Walker officially took over the position as Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in January, replacing former ADSA Yvette Bravo-Weber.

I’m honored now to continue that work as the new... ADSA? NYU attracts a certain kind of student: the kind of student who is courageous and curious enough to create their professional identity in the heart of New York City where anything is possible. People come here because they see that we can help them become extraordinary professionals. Ricky and the faculty work really hard to create the intellectual environment that will make that happen. I want to support their efforts to make sure that it happens in our student life.

JD: I came for the ladies.

PW: Well for the sake of a rich and diverse community, I suppose it’s good to have someone here like that. Not too many such people, mind you, but one or two is okay.

JD: So how do you see your role in the law school community? What’s your job?

PW: Well, my job historically has several facets. First is to create a safe environment for students to discuss any issue that is interfering with their academic performance. Second, to work with student groups to not only navigate administrative resources but to also develop aspirational goals for our student body. Third, to plan events in the NYU tradition that celebrate our community, including orientation, convocation and socials. Additionally, I facilitate interaction between faculty and students outside of the classroom and contribute to the administrative team responsible for developing policies that impact student life. In short, I am here to

ensure that the time our students spend here is characterized by quality, meaningful and valuable experiences. Quality of student life is a big priority for me.

JD: I know what you mean. And if I hear you correctly, you’ll be getting rid of exams starting this semester?

PW: No. Hard work isn’t always fun, and law school certainly isn’t meant to be easy, but my goal is to create an environment in which students can grow and succeed and get the absolute most out of their time here.

JD: So if you’re not getting rid of exams, what are you doing?

PW: Well, since I just began in January, my agenda consists in large part of getting to know as many students as possible, soliciting their views on a whole range of issues and really listening to what they have to say. I intend to perform all the responsibilities I mentioned before, and I am interested in doing more. To help me create my long term agenda, I want to talk with students.

JD: Kind of like Hillary’s listening tour during her first Senate campaign.

PW: I suppose. I don’t think many Senators are too keen on actually talking to all of their constituents, but I invite – and I sincerely hope everyone will take me up on this – all students to come talk to me about their sense of the law school, that is, what we do well, and what we could do better. Also, I’ll soon be sending out an online student survey that was created in partnership with

other administrative offices to help gather this information. I encourage everyone to take a few minutes to fill it out – it won’t take much time to complete, but the surveys can make a huge difference. Additionally, in partnership with the SBA and other student groups, I’ll be conducting issue-specific and class-specific focus groups designed to get a sense of your experience at the communal level. And, yes, I am more than happy to sit down with anyone who wants to talk, especially about their well-being. You introduced this conversation by joking about something which we take very seriously. This can be a tough time of year for people for a wide range of reasons. If you are having a tough time, let someone know. I have drop-in hours on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 to 2:00 in Furman 413 for any of the purposes mentioned in this interview. Actually, come to think of it, Hillary won that campaign, so perhaps a listening tour is in order! Is she doing a listening tour now?

JD: No, she’s currently on a voice-finding tour. Namely, she’s finding her voice and voters are finding they don’t like it.

PW: Let me also add that we have such a vibrant student body that probably the last thing we need is too much administrative intervention. But I really want to look deeply at what makes so many of the micro-communities here so strong and healthy, and see if we can apply those lessons at a macro-level.

JD: Trickle-down community-building? Reagan is so hot these days....

PW: I should also emphasize that it’s my job to represent the student voices to the administration. So to the extent there are any divides between the administration and the student body, I am here to build bridges. That sounds cliché, but it’s true.

JD: Ok, this is all well and good, but I think we’re getting bogged down in the trivial. Let’s move onto to some more penetrating questions. M&M’s: plain or peanut?

PW: Peanut, easy.

JD: Gross. Moving on, I

haven’t taken a night off from studying to go to the movies in almost three days. What was the last movie you saw?

PW: The last movie I saw was *Sweeney Todd*, which stars Johnny Depp. Johnny Depp... should never sing. It was awful! So good on Broadway, but I don’t know what they were thinking making it into a movie. Come to think of it, I don’t know what I was thinking going to see it. Hmm....

JD: Favorite restaurant in the city?

PW: Meskerem. The one in midtown. Great, great Ethiopian food. Have you been?

JD: I’ve been to the Meskerem on MacDougal, and I have to admit I was skeptical at first because Ethiopia isn’t really known for, you know, food, but it was great!

PW: The one in midtown is even better. I also really like Madiba’s in Fort Greene. It’s fantastic South African food.

JD: You were a fellow in South Africa after law school, right? What else did you do before coming to NYU?

PW: I worked down in Alabama with Professor Stevenson on capital defense cases, which was amazing. And then I joined the Brooklyn DA’s office to prosecute sex crimes.

JD: Star Jones was a prosecutor there! Did you ever meet her?!

PW: No, she left long before my time in order to pursue a TV career. JD: She traded in perp walks for the red carpet! She is glamour personified. Simply fabulous.

PW: That’s one view.

JD: No, that’s *The View*.

PW: Right.

JD: Well, I think we’ve covered everything I wanted to get through. Thanks for taking the time to sit down with me. It’s been a pleasure!

PW: The pleasure is mine. And please come by again and we’ll chat some more. I’d really like the opportunity to turn the tables and ask you some questions!

JD: Will do. See you soon.

PW: See you later. Oh, and Julian – try not to fabricate too much of the interview.

JD: Cross my heart.

How weird is leap year?

Write for *The Commentator*.

Contact asgehring@nyu.edu.
Make your voice heard, through print media.