The Southeastern Association Of Law Schools: A Thematic History

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THE SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF LAW SCHOOLS: A THEMATIC HISTORY

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Southeastern Association of Law Schools, Inc. (SEALS) completed its seventh decade of existence in August 2017. SEALS began in 1947 as a small regional organization of twenty or so schools that met in Southeastern destinations, and it remained relatively small for most of its first half century. Over the past twenty-five years, SEALS gradually grew in both size and stature. Today, it is a relatively large national organization, with 101 institutional and affiliate members, including foreign law school affiliates, and a meeting that attracts more than 700 attendees per year.

The story of how SEALS grew and developed into the organization that it is today is a credit to the hard work of numerous individuals. It is also directly attributable to the fact that SEALS functions democratically and inclusively. The organization tries to empower faculty by giving them the chance to showcase their ideas and talents to others in the legal academy. On the theory that good ideas are not the province of a privileged few, SEALS does not discriminate in favor of (or against) elite schools or prominent faculty. Everyone is encouraged to attend and participate, and anyone with an idea to test in the “intellectual marketplace” is welcome to come forward and present that idea through the program submission process.

SEALS has not always followed a smooth upward path, and this article discusses financial and participation issues that could have doomed us at several points. Likewise, our relationship with the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) has been stronger in some periods than in others. Finally, we continually address our governance structure and paths to leadership for new faculty members. Rather than following a straight line, indicating events in chronological order, we organized this history into topical themes. Readers can approach the topics in whatever order they deem most interesting; there is no “magic” to the order we selected.

One referential note: although, as discussed below, the organization has had several names, we use them only when required by the context. In all other settings, we use the SEALS acronym.

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II. SOURCE MATERIAL

Writing a history of SEALs requires personal knowledge or access to relevant sources. Although we both have been continuously involved with SEALs for more than 25 years and sporadically for a slightly longer period,¹ our knowledge of the 1947 through 1989 period is largely based on other sources, primarily SEALs Steering Committee minutes. Professor Richmond, the current SEALs secretary, has copies of minutes produced for 1955 through 2017 (except for 1981).² Our discussion of the 1947 through 1954 period is largely derived from an article by Professor William H. Agnor, who served as SEALs Secretary from 1956 until he was elected Chairman-Elect in 1970.³ Because his article covered SEALs from 1947 through 1964, we used both it and SEALs minutes in discussing events from 1955 through 1964.

We also consulted the Association of American Law Schools Proceedings, which are a HeinOnline database;⁴ this article indicates the year of the relevant AALS meeting in text. As discussed at various points in this article, SEALs and the AALS have a longstanding (albeit with some interruptions) relationship. Our review of AALS Proceedings led us to revise some of our longstanding beliefs.

Finally, we consulted SEALs governance documents and historical lists (all available on the SEALs website), the Central States Law Schools Association website, and references to regional associations we found through online searches in preparing this article.

III. THE SEALs NAME

SEALs began in 1947 as the Southeastern Regional Law Teachers Conference.⁵ By the time we began attending meetings, it was the Southeastern

¹ Professor Richmond served on the Steering Committee in 1974 and 1975 and then dropped out of SEALs activities for several years after her second child was born. She has been an officer (President twice and Secretary for several years) or Steering Committee member since 1990. Professor Weaver, our first Executive Director, has been an officer (Executive Director, President, Secretary-Treasurer, or Treasurer) or Steering Committee member since 1991.
² Rather than clutter this article with footnotes to those minutes, we refer to the meeting year in text. The earliest minutes appear to have been written long after the meeting ended and include reports of post-meeting events. We identify those minutes by the meeting year, e.g., 1955, rather than by the period covered, e.g., 1955–1956, which is how the Secretary who produced them identified them. Our usage conforms to that of later minutes, which use only the year of the actual meeting, e.g., 2017.
⁴ We cite all documents in this database as AALS Proceedings. Some of them use Handbook instead of or in addition to Proceedings on their title page.
⁵ Agnor, supra note 3, at 441. Minutes for 1955 through 1960 refer to the organization as the Southeastern Regional Conference of Law Teachers. Minutes for 1961 refer to it as the Southeastern Regional Law Teachers Conference. Although Professor Agnor was Secretary for all
Conference of the Association of American Law Schools. That change occurred at the 1964 annual meeting, when the Steering Committee voted to adopt that name. Although the 1964 minutes indicate that the name was discussed at a panel the preceding day, they contain no information regarding the nature or contents of that discussion. Professor Agnor's article also omits that information. It indicates that the change reflected the fact that we were "essentially a conference of law schools," but it does not indicate why the words Association of American Law Schools were included in the name.\footnote{Id.} We assume that inclusion was one factor in the belief, discussed later, that SEALS was initiated in response to a request by the AALS. The fact that none of the earlier names indicated corporate or other status may have led to the belief that SEALS was both formed in response to an AALS request and was an AALS subdivision.

Eventually, the minutes dropped "of the"; beginning with the 1977 meeting, they placed Southeastern Conference on one line and Association of American Law Schools on the next line. That continued through the 2002 minutes.

Although Conference was part of our name during 1964 through 2002, it was not part of our acronym. Instead, we referred to the organization as SEAALS.

A variant of our current name first appeared in 2003; those minutes refer to the Southeastern Association of Law Schools. Although we officially incorporated in June 2005, the minutes do not add "Inc." until 2006. Since 2003, our acronym has been SEALS.

The story of how our name and acronym changed in 2003 appears in the discussion of our relationship with the AALS.

\textbf{IV. REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS}

\textbf{A. The Southeastern Region}

Although we do not know how many states Dean Samuel Prince\footnote{Samuel Prince became Dean of the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1946. He was the first SEALS Chairman and served in that capacity until 1956. When he stepped down, he was named Permanent Honorary Chairman.} considered Southeastern when he hosted the 1947 conference, we know that we currently define Southeastern more broadly than he did. Professor Agnor indicates that Dean Prince invited twenty-one schools but does not indicate which schools or states.\footnote{Agnor, \textit{supra} note 3, at 439. In remarks he made at an AALS meeting, Dean Prince indicated that twenty of the region's twenty-three schools sent representatives and that approximately seventy individuals attended. \textit{See} 1947 AALS PROC. 15 (1947).} The Statement of Policy adopted in 1950 listed ten states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia) but also included "and of
such other law schools as a meeting of this Conference may decide to invite.”

It is not clear whether that phrase referred to an invitation to participate or an invitation to membership.

The first potential broadening of the organization’s footprint appears in the 1956 minutes. The Steering Committee adopted a motion to invite the College of Law of the University of West Virginia to become a member. A note included in the minutes indicates that the invitation was declined “with regret.” Membership by West Virginia appears at several points in our history, unfortunately with no explanation. At the 1959 meeting, the Steering Committee again discussed West Virginia. It adopted a motion “that the invitation previously extended to this school be considered as still open if the University of West Virginia should request membership in the Conference.” The following language appears later in the Secretary’s report for 1959: “The College of Law of West Virginia University requested membership in the Conference and became the twenty-fifth member in May, 1960.” The Steering Committee adopted a motion to admit the school at the 1960 meeting.

The 1958 minutes indicate that the Steering Committee adopted a motion to invite the University of Puerto Rico to become a member, “as requested by that school.” The Steering Committee also adopted a motion to invite the University of Arkansas to attend the 1959 meeting and to consider it for membership at that time. At the 1959 meeting, the Steering Committee again discussed the University of Arkansas and decided to “continue in effect the invitation to that school to attend the 1960 meeting of the Conference.”

The minutes do not mention West Virginia or Puerto Rico again until 1982. Although Professor Agnor indicated that both “have been members for short periods of time,” no minutes reflect any participation by those schools after they were invited to join. The 1982 minutes indicate that an invitation to join had been extended to, and accepted by, the University of West Virginia. Those minutes also indicate that the law schools in Puerto Rico had been invited to attend as observers but had not done so.

West Virginia appears to have accepted the 1982 invitation; a faculty member from that school served on the Steering Committee in 1983 and was welcomed by the Chairman. The law school appears to have dropped out after that meeting; subsequent minutes are silent on this matter.

The University of Arkansas is mentioned again in 1986, by which time there were law schools on two University of Arkansas campuses. In response to a question as to whether they should be invited to join, “it was pointed out that these schools were in another group that met informally.” But in 1998, with no indication of any discussion, the Steering Committee was informed that the state

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9 Agnor, supra note 3, at 440. The list above is alphabetical; the list in the Statement of Policy is not. Although Professor Agnor refers to the statement as one of “policy,” because it is more generally understandable, he indicates that the Conference actually used the term “polity.”

10 Of the three law schools in Puerto Rico, only the University of Puerto Rico was an AALS member and would have been eligible to formally join SEALS.
of Arkansas had been added to the host state rotation “based on an expression of interest by one of the Arkansas schools.”

The first major expansion occurred in 1999, again with no discussion in the minutes. In addition to Arkansas, SEALS added West Virginia and the Houston schools to the host state rotation. It added the District of Columbia in 2000; that year’s minutes indicated that “We may have reached our geographical limits.”

Two more additions occurred soon after we made that statement. The 2003 minutes indicate the addition of Maryland and the possible addition of Missouri, and a representative from one of the Missouri schools served on the 2004 Steering Committee. Neither the 2003 nor the 2004 minutes changed the host state rotation to reflect the addition of either state. The last frontier—the state of Texas—was considered and rejected by the Board before the 2006 Steering Committee meeting. In 2011, after the Board changed its recommendation, the institutional members voted to amend the By-Laws and add the entire state of Texas. Because membership criteria now appear in the By-Laws, the addition of any other states will require approval by the institutional members.

B. Other Regional Organizations

As noted earlier, SEALS did not consider inviting the Arkansas schools in 1986 because they belonged to another regional organization. Our various searches through SEALS minutes, AALS Proceedings, and the Internet yielded a few references to other regional law school associations. Professor Agnor indicates that only a Western Conference had been activated and consistently held meetings. AALS Executive Director Carl Monk, in an address at the 1992 SEALS meeting, indicated that the “Western Chapter and mid-Continental Chapters” continue to function.

The AALS Proceedings include a few references to other regional organizations. References to the Midcontinent Association of Law Schools appear in the 1989, 1990, and 1991 Proceedings (spelled both Midcontinent and Mid.Continent). References to the Conference of Western Law Schools, Western Conference of Law Schools, the Western Conference of Law Teachers, and so forth.

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11 The 1999 minutes indicate that the initial assignment of 2007 as the year Arkansas would be the host state had been tentative.
12 Both states were added in the 2005 minutes, by which time the rotation was of the leadership, not of hosting duties.
13 Agnor, supra note 3, at 444.
14 It is not clear whether the plural “Chapters” referred to two mid-states groups or was a typographical error in the minutes. In fact, we do not know—because we do not have his written remarks—whether Dean Monk actually used the terms “Chapter” or “Chapters” in his remarks or said “Continental” rather than “Continent.”
15 The “Mid.Continent” spelling may result from a scanning error, in which case “Mid-Continent” may have been the intended spelling.

We located the website for the Central States Law Schools Association (CSLSA). That group holds an annual Scholarship Conference, hosted by a member school. Meetings are held in the fall, generally in September or October, and focus on works-in-progress. Its Bylaws indicate that membership is open to any fully or provisionally approved law school "located in the central portion of the United States." The Bylaws do not define "central portion."

Not surprisingly, given the reference to the Arkansas schools above, CSLSA and SEALS have member schools in common. Some of those schools are SEALS institutional members; others are affiliate members. Of the four 2016–2017 officers listed on the CSLSA website, two teach at SEALS institutional member schools and one teaches at a SEALS affiliate member school.

We located only a handful of other references. We found a few references to the Mid-Continent Law School Association in law school reports and faculty résumés. We did not find any other website references for that organization; nor did we find any non-AALS references to a Western association. This failure may reflect our searching skills rather than the nonexistence of such references.

V. SEALS MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

A. Institutional and Affiliate Member Schools

As noted earlier, twenty-one schools responded to Dean Prince’s invitation to the first Conference meeting and twenty sent representatives. By 1957, SEALS had twenty-four member schools. Although Professor Agnor’s

18 The website does not provide an organizational history, but it does list the Presidents since 2004–2005.
20 It is likely that SEALS had twenty-four members before 1957, but the 1957 minutes are the first set we have that indicate that number of members.
article does not list them, we feel safe in concluding that they were schools that met two criteria: (1) they were located in the ten states listed in our discussion of the Southeastern Region; and (2) they were members of the AALS. Those schools were the law schools affiliated with the University of Alabama; Samford University; 21 Duke University; Emory University; University of Florida; University of Georgia; University of Kentucky; Louisiana State University; University of Louisville; Loyola University (New Orleans); Mercer University; University of Miami; University of Mississippi; University of North Carolina; University of Richmond; University of South Carolina; University of Tennessee; Vanderbilt University; University of Virginia; Stetson University; Tulane University; Wake Forest University; Washington and Lee University; and the College of William & Mary.

SEALS currently has 101 member schools, seventy-two of which are institutional members located in fifteen states and the District of Columbia. The increase from fewer than twenty-five to the current number reflects multiple, often overlapping factors. First, some law schools located in the ten states attained AALS membership and became eligible to join SEALS. 22 Second, several new law schools began operations and eventually attained AALS membership. 23 Third, SEALS changed its membership criteria and allowed ABA-accredited law schools to join; both fully approved and provisionally approved law schools became eligible. 24 Previously, those schools were not members and thus were not represented on the Steering Committee. The 1965 minutes indicate the Steering Committee agreed that “the present policy of permitting the host schools and the Chairman, in their discretion, to invite such schools to participate in the annual meeting would continue.” 25 Fourth, some state-accredited law schools achieved ABA accreditation. Fifth, SEALS added an affiliate member category, open to accredited U.S. and foreign law schools that were not located in the Southeast. The twenty-nine affiliate member schools are located in California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada,

21 Samford University’s Cumberland School of Law, which became an AALS member in 1952, would be the most recent of those twenty-four members.
22 Chase College of Law, for example, began operations in 1893 in Ohio, received ABA accreditation in 1959, became part of Northern Kentucky University in 1971, and became an AALS member in 1984.
23 Florida State University College of Law, for example, enrolled its first class in 1966, became an AALS member in 1969, and joined SEALS in 1970.
24 This appears to have occurred in the late 1980s. Beginning in 1989, minutes list Steering Committee members from ABA-accredited schools that did not belong to the AALS. The minutes do not indicate the change in membership criteria.
25 Norbert Rayford, of Southern University, is listed as attending the 1975 Steering Committee meeting in New Orleans. Although Mr. Rayford’s obituary does not indicate that he taught at Southern University, his listing on the Southern University Law Center’s Alumni Recognition page indicates that he returned to Baton Rouge in 1973 for a position as an assistant professor at Southern. See Alumni Recognition, SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER, http://archive.is/eE5J [last visited Sept. 25, 2017]. The law school was not then a SEALS member because it had not yet become an AALS member.

Institutional and affiliate members enjoy several common benefits. Each school is entitled to a Steering Committee representative. Each school can designate a New Scholar for the New Scholars Workshop. Faculty members from each category can serve on, and even chair, most SEALS committees. But, as discussed later in this article, because we are a Southeastern Association, we reserve certain rights to faculty from institutional member schools.

B. Honorary Members

SEALS also has honorary members, a category added in 2006, or so we thought. The current iteration covers “individuals who attended meetings of the Corporation when affiliated with a Member school or are individuals who attended meetings of the Corporation although not affiliated with a Member school.” Admission to honorary member status requires a majority vote of the Board of Trustees. An honorary member may register for the Annual Meeting at the rate charged faculty at member schools; there are no other benefits associated with honorary member status.

Despite the broad eligibility language, the Board has bestowed honorary membership status on only six individuals since 2006. Five of them were faculty members who moved to schools that were not then SEALS members; the sixth was Carl Monk, who was leaving his position as AALS Executive Director. Interestingly, four of the five faculty members now teach at (or are retired from) an institutional member school; the fifth teaches at an affiliate member school.

The Board last added an honorary member in 2010.

While researching old minutes, we learned that SEALS had established an honorary membership category much earlier in its existence. Because the organization then had no articles or by-laws, we could discern no criteria associated with the original honorary membership status. We found a grant of honorary life membership in 1973, to Michael Cardozo, who was retiring as AALS Executive Director; Professor Cardozo received a certificate of appreciation and was to receive complimentary accommodations at future annual meetings.

Owen Shaffer, a long-time West Publishing employee, received

27 Id. at §§ 2(4), 3(7).
28 Perhaps all roads lead not to Rome but back to SEALS.
29 Professor Cardozo attended the 1984 annual meeting and the Steering Committee meeting, as did Millard Ruud, his successor as AALS Executive Director. Although Professor Ruud’s institutional listing in the minutes is AALS, Professor Cardozo’s listing is SEAALS, a recognition of his honorary life membership.
honorary membership in 1995.\textsuperscript{30} The 1998 minutes indicate that longtime Secretary–Treasurer Erwin Surrency had received life membership.

C. European Law Faculties Association (ELFA)

Although somewhat younger than SEALS, ELFA has also experienced significant growth and currently has more than 200 members. It also holds an annual conference, which includes “discussions and workshops concerning various aspects of legal education.”\textsuperscript{31} In March 2012, SEALS and ELFA executed a Memorandum of Understanding discussed elsewhere in this article. Although neither organization (or its member law schools) is a member of the other organization, faculty members teaching at each organization’s member schools participate in the other organization’s annual meetings.

VI. SEALS AND THE AALS

The relationship between SEALS and the AALS is both longstanding and complicated. Many SEALS members believed that AALS had requested the establishment of regional chapters shortly after the end of World War II. As discussed in this section, that belief was fortified by the name used since 1964 and our organization’s lack of any corporate structure.\textsuperscript{32}

We could not locate any document that indicated a formal affiliation, but we found numerous documents that infer recognition by the AALS. AALS Presidents and Executive Directors regularly attended and spoke at SEALS meetings. The President of the University of Miami referred to us as the Southeastern Regional Conference of the Association of American Law Schools.\textsuperscript{33} The AALS’ Journal of Legal Education published Professor Agnor’s history of the organization that referred to it as the Southeastern Conference of the Association of American Law Schools. SEALS continued to host an event at the AALS annual meeting through 1975.\textsuperscript{34} The 1976 Steering Committee minutes indicate that the breakfast was discussed and a motion was adopted to discontinue the breakfast for that year. The same motion passed in 1977, 1978, and 1979. The minutes do not explain why this change occurred.

Language supporting our belief appears in various years’ AALS Proceedings. For example, the 1968 Proceedings include a schedule reference to

\textsuperscript{30} Although the minutes include no explanation for this award, we assume it was to recognize Mr. Shaffer, a regular SEALS attendee, on the occasion of his forthcoming retirement.


\textsuperscript{33} See Program and Proceedings, 3 MIAMI L.Q. 73, 78 (1948).

\textsuperscript{34} The 1974 minutes approved holding a breakfast at the AALS meeting in San Francisco. The Chairman of the Local Arrangements Committee for the 1975 annual meeting was tasked with “the furnishing of grits and giving instructions to the chef as to the proper method of cooking same.”
the breakfast held by the "Southeastern Conference of the AALS." Given references of this sort, it is not surprising that SEALS members believed they were a group within the AALS. But, as explained below, if we had read the 1947 Proceedings, we would have known our assumption was erroneous.

We had long been under the impression that SEALS' genesis could be traced to the World War II era and its immediate aftermath, a time of limited non-essential travel. In 1942, the AALS canceled its annual meeting, with little dissent from law school deans, in response to a government recommendation to defer all meetings, conventions, and tours that were not closely related to the war effort. Its Executive Committee adopted and acted on a suggestion to meet the purposes of the annual meeting by holding conferences "in a way that would not increase transportation burdens." It held a conference at the Detroit College of Law during the ABA meeting, to which faculty at area schools and other faculty attending the ABA meeting were invited. Meetings were also arranged in Washington, DC, in January and October 1943, and during the ABA meeting in Chicago in August 1943. Reports of all three meetings appear in the 1943 AALS Proceedings.36

Before the AALS suspended its meetings, and after it reinstated them in 1945, it held them between Christmas and New Year's, primarily in Chicago. According to Professor Agnor, Dean Prince attended the 1946 AALS annual meeting and decided, based on conversations there and afterward, that "a conference of law teachers in the Southeast was much needed." He had one goal that remains important to SEALS today: "He concluded that the young law teacher had little chance of participating in the programs of the Association and that, unless he was on a meeting program, he had difficulty in securing travel money." Although Professor Agnor's article does not address logistics, the cost and other difficulties of travelling between small Southern cities and Chicago during the time between major holidays was likely another deterrent to attendance by junior faculty.38

As we learned when researching this article, AALS President Warren A. Seavey invited Dean Prince to speak about the "innovation" of the 1947 meeting. Although the colloquy below does not support them, the statements above may still be accurate. Without access to the minutes for any meeting before 1955, we can neither verify nor disprove them. Dean Prince made the following statement about his rationale: 39

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35 See Program of the Annual Meeting of the Association, December 26-29, 1968, 1968 AALS PROC. 7, 11 (1968). Because the AALS held its annual meetings in December rather than in January through 1977, this meeting occurred after the SEALS name change in summer 1964.
36 See 1943 AALS PROC. 31, 39 (1943).
37 Agnor, supra note 3, at 439.
38 Travel costs and logistics appear to have concerned even senior faculty. The Steering Committee minutes for 1963 indicate that the Secretary was directed "to explore the possibility of arranging a charter flight to [the AALS meeting in Los Angeles] or some other form of group travel."
39 1947 AALS PROC. 15 (1947). Dean Prince also indicated that approximately seventy faculty members and deans attended, with representation by twenty of the twenty-three schools in the
The Regional Conference embracing teachers from the Association law schools in the southeastern area of the United States which we held in Columbia, South Carolina, this last August was not an effort to break into the machinery that is the pattern of the Association, but was born of a need. I came out of the law practice in the summer of 1946 to become Dean of the Law School of the University of South Carolina, and I am an excursionist with you in the field of legal education. I had thought that there might be somewhere a normal school for law teachers in which methods and techniques of teaching could be studied by law teachers. However, I found that this was not a fact. In exploring the matter of establishing a seminar at our school to consider methods and techniques of teaching law, the thought of this Regional Conference was born through the suggestion of Professor Cheatham of Columbia University and a few others; however, chiefly upon the suggestion of Professor Cheatham.

Professor Seavey’s response sums up the AALS’ non-role in the formation of SEALs:40

I liked the meeting in South Carolina. I liked it for its implications. I liked the way in which it arose. It was not something which was suggested by the Association. It came up out of a need by a member of the Association, and that is the way in which I think we can best make progress.

The AALS appointed a Committee on Time of Annual Meeting in 1948. That group considered not only when the meeting should occur but also where it should be held. One option was alternating between national and regional meetings. The committee investigated the possibility of regional meetings “largely by the interest in regional meetings which the southeastern schools have provoked by conducting just such meetings in their region during the past three years.”41 The committee suggested continuing to hold national meetings but rotating their site between Chicago, a place farther West, and a place farther East.42 The committee listed several pros and cons for alternating between region. The published proceedings of the 1948 meeting bear out Dean Prince’s focus on teaching. Topics included Teaching Problems and Classroom Techniques; Examination Problems and Techniques; The Law School of the Future; and The Law Review as an Essential Part of the Curriculum. See Program and Proceedings, supra note 33, at 74.

40 1947 AALS PROC. 16 (1947).
41 1949 AALS PROC. 129 (1949).
42 Id. at 134. The 1948 meeting, at which the committee was appointed, was held in Cincinnati rather than Chicago. The AALS returned to Chicago in 1949, 1950, 1952, 1953, 1955, 1956, 1958,
regional and national meetings, one of which probably related to the region in which SEALS was located: “Some of our fellow teachers might be confronted with racial discrimination with respect to hotel and other facilities were we to resort to the regional meeting plan.” The committee report did not imply that SEALS was formed to avoid attendance at an integrated AALS meeting; nor did President Seavey’s remarks about the 1947 meeting.

The AALS President or Executive Director attended and often spoke at SEALS meetings. The available minutes indicate that AALS Executive Directors attended Steering Committee meetings in 1984 and 1985 (Millard Ruud), 1990 and 1991 (Betsy Levin), and 1992 (Carl Monk). Because we lack registration data for most of SEALS’ existence, we cannot determine attendance at our annual meetings by AALS personnel who did not attend the Steering Committee meeting. The 1973 minutes do indicate that retiring Executive Director Michael Cardozo, received Honorary Life Membership “In view of his long interest, faithful attendance and support of the Conference.” A 1951–1974 list of programs in our files indicates appearances by the AALS President in 1961 through 1972.

SEALS stopped limiting membership to AALS schools at some point in the late 1980s, but the officers continued to regard it as an AALS entity. That belief might have continued indefinitely had the Internet and other aspects of technology not become so much a part of the landscape. As reported in the 2002 minutes, SEALS planned to implement a website and requested permission to link it to the AALS site. Because the officers erroneously believed that SEALS had been founded at the behest of the AALS, they assumed this request would receive an affirmative response. Much to their surprise, they were informed that the AALS Executive Committee was unaware of SEALS’ history. The two organizations had different membership policies, and AALS did not control SEALS’ finances.

After a meeting with Executive Director Carl Monk, the two organizations came to an amicable agreement, which the 2003 minutes referred to as “our harmonious separation from the AALS umbrella.” SEALS dropped references to the AALS in its name, becoming SEALS rather than SEAALS, and incorporated as a nonprofit organization. SEALS continues to have cordial relationships with both the AALS and the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar.

VII. LEADERSHIP AND ANNUAL MEETINGS

From 1947 through 1962, SEALS had only three Chairmen, but it met in ten different cities, each in a different state. Its leadership structure was lean, and
it depended greatly on the largesse of member schools. Little changed from 1963, when Chairmen began serving one-year terms, through the 1991 debacle at The Homestead.44 A series of major changes, instituted after that meeting and the embezzlement discussed later in this article, saved SEALS from extinction. Samuel Prince (Dean, South Carolina) served as SEALS Chairman from 1947 to 1956, when he was succeeded by John Fox (Professor, University of Mississippi). Professor Fox served a one-year term. His successor, Harold Sebring (Dean, Stetson University) served from 1957 to 1963 and was the final sequential-term president.45 Beginning with John Wade (Dean, Vanderbilt University) in 1963, the Chairman/President position rotated on a one-year basis.

Beginning in 1964, SEALS began electing a Chairman-Elect, whose job was to organize the entire meeting for the following year.46 Eventually, the Chairman-Elect would select the site for the following year, plan the program, advertise it, order the catering, and oversee the meeting.47 At that time, SEALS had no regular staff and only three officers: Chairman; Chairman-Elect; and Secretary. The Secretary position later became the Secretary-Treasurer position. Although the Steering Committee discussed decoupling the President-Elect position and host state status in 2000, they decided against that change because “The rotation system allows us to keep someone from the host state involved in the planning.”

During the early years, the meeting was relatively relaxed. The program document covering 1951 through 1974 never listed more than six panels or speeches; for the 1973 and 1974 meetings, it listed only two. In the middle years, the actual programming usually occupied two days (usually a Friday and a Saturday)—and only from nine a.m. until noon. On the afternoon of the first day, there was a tennis tournament and a golf tournament, followed by a reception and dinner. By noon the following day, the meeting had reached its conclusion. That format worked fairly well until 1991, when SEALS virtually collapsed. That year’s meeting, held at The Homestead, produced only a miniscule number of attendees (eleven faculty members and the AALS Executive Director attended the Steering Committee meeting), and led to considerable soul-searching

44 What we refer to as The Homestead is now The Omni Homestead Resort.
45 Three other individuals served more than one term as Chairman or President, but none did so in sequential years. Gail Richmond was president in 1993–1994 and 2002–2003; Robert Felix, in 1994–1995 and 2004–2005; and Parham Williams, in 1979–1980 and 1986–1987. Dean Williams is the only person to have been elected a second time while at a different school than he led the first time. Professors Vincent Cardi (2007–2008) and Jonathan Cardi (2009–2010) are the only parent–child combination to have served as president.
46 The Steering Committee minutes for August 29, 1964, indicate that the Chairman had the discretion to decide if the Vice-Chairman would serve as Program Chairman.
47 For many years, schools within a state collaborated on offering to host the meeting. In some of those years, the Chairman-Elect was not a faculty member at a school within the host state. For example, the August 22, 1970, Steering Committee minutes indicate that the Chairman-Elect for 1970–1971 was from a Georgia school, but the 1971 convention was hosted by the Virginia Elects and they were authorized to select the site.
regarding the organization’s future.\textsuperscript{48} There was considerable doubt regarding whether SEALS would meet again the following year. As the minutes indicate, there was doubt—because he was not in attendance—whether our choice for President would accept the nomination.

Even before The Homestead, several deans had expressed doubts about the organization’s viability or relevance. The recreational aspects appeared to dwarf the substantive elements, and the meeting time often conflicted with state bar association meetings.

Following the severe decline in attendance and the embezzlement discussed later in this article, SEALS altered its leadership structure. SEALS continued to elect a President-Elect each year, and to rotate the presidency from state-to-state, and the Steering Committee remained the governing body. But, at that point, many of the President’s duties became largely ceremonial. The President gavelled the meeting open, chaired the Steering Committee meeting, introduced the new officers, and gavelled the meeting closed. By the next year, the bleeding had stopped and a turnaround began. Attendance was 31 persons in 1992 and 47 in 1993. Although those numbers reflected a major percentage improvement over 1991, they pale in comparison to recent SEALS attendance. Much of that turnaround is attributable to centralizing site selection and program development, initially with the Secretary-Treasurer and later with the Executive Director.

At the 1995 meeting, the Secretary-Treasurer recommended that the two positions be divided so that SEALS would have more elected officers and benefit from enhanced institutional memory. Professor Weaver remained as the Treasurer and Professor Gail Richmond of Nova Southeastern University was elected Secretary. After that change, there were five principal officers: President; President-Elect; Past President;\textsuperscript{49} Secretary; and Treasurer. In a few post-embezzlement years, we had Co-Treasurers.

In 2004, we added four leadership positions, an Executive Director and three at-large Trustees, and added Corporate Compliance Officer to the Secretary’s title. In 2005, SEALS was incorporated as a Florida nonprofit corporation.\textsuperscript{50} We added a Deputy Corporate Compliance Officer/Secretary in 2007 and a Deputy Executive Director in 2008. The Executive Director, CCO/Secretary, and Treasurer serve five-year terms and can run for reelection.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{48} Attendance at the limited number of sessions was so sparse that attendees began referring to themselves as “the Homestead Seven.” Both of us belong to that group, as does Professor David Partlett. See David Partlett, Reflections: Personal and Institutional, on the Past and Future Southeastern Association of Law Schools, 86 UMKC L. REV. 559, 560-62 (2018).

\textsuperscript{49} The Past-President seems to have faded away in 1995 and 1996 rather than staying on as an officer. In 1997, the minutes list the Past-President as an officer.

\textsuperscript{50} SEALS filed for tax-exempt status with the IRS in May 2006 and obtained that status in January 2007.

\textsuperscript{51} Treasurer David Partlett stepped down in 2017 after 13 years in that position; Professor Richmond steps down as CCO/Secretary in 2018. Professor Weaver, our first and only Executive Director, will continue to serve at least through 2020.
The potential long-term nature of these three positions provides continuity for day-to-day operations. Continuity is particularly important for the Executive Director position, because that officer is responsible for investigating and negotiating with potential meeting sites and for compiling the program after the panel submission deadline passes. At-large Trustees serve three-year terms and cannot immediately run for reelection. This limit has two advantages: it brings in new perspectives and it allows more faculty to participate in SEALs governance. In several cases, at-large Trustees have later been elected to other SEALs offices.

The leadership structure changed slightly in 2013, when the Steering Committee adopted the Trustees' proposal to make both Deputy positions non-voting positions. One reason for this change was a potential perceived voting conflict because the Deputies each reported to another Board member.

The process for electing officers remains democratic. Anyone who teaches at an institutional member school can self-nominate or nominate another faculty member for any officer or board position. Although SEALs had a nominating committee in the early years, it often met for a short time during the meeting at which it presented its recommendations; as a general rule, it nominated a Chairman or—in later years—a Chairman-Elect. It initially nominated a Secretary only when the position became vacant through resignation or death.52

While the board and officers set policy, many SEALs activities are now carried out through a vibrant committee structure. The Steering Committee, whose membership includes one representative from each institutional and affiliate member school, votes to fill open Board positions. Other committees, which are appointed by the Executive Director, are the Beginning and Newer Law Teachers Committee, Call for Papers Committee, Electronic Education (formerly Distance Learning) Committee, Global Outreach (formerly International) Committee, Hospitality Committee, Inclusiveness Committee, Mentor Committee, Moderator and Coordination Committee, New Scholars Committee, Program Committee, Program Advisory Committee, Program Formatting Committee, Prospective Law Teachers Workshop, Resource Teams, Scholarly Research Committee, Sponsorship Coordinator, Website, Technology & Communications Committee, and Works-in-Progress Committee.53 Several of these committees are highlighted in the discussion below of Innovations. SEALs has also been fortunate to obtain the services of several law school staff members, who manage registration, name tags, tickets, and other aspects of our

52 Professor Agnor wrote that the Secretary-Treasurer held his position until he failed to show up for a meeting. Agnor, supra note 3, at 442. This was likely his attempt at humor, but it certainly appeared to be true in practice. His predecessor served until 1956, when he was unable to attend the meeting. Professor Agnor served through the 1970 meeting, at which time he became Chairman-Elect. SEALs has had only ten Secretaries, Secretary-Treasurers, or CCO/Secretaries since its inception.

53 At various points in its early history, SEALs had other committees. These included committees tasked with local arrangements, site selection, and program. Between 1973 and 1998, the minutes indicated the existence of a nominating committee in most years.
meeting. As a result, the officers and Trustees can focus more on policy issues and long-range planning.

The other major post-1991 change was that SEALS began to take more seriously its role as a scholarly and educational leader. As will be detailed more fully below, SEALS began to significantly increase its scholarly offerings in a variety of subject matter areas. In addition, SEALS began to encourage and stimulate scholarly productivity. This change in focus resulted in SEALS being taken more seriously by law school deans.

VIII. FINANCES

A. Funding Sources

SEALS has always tried to limit the cost to member schools and attendees, and to do as much as possible with its available funds. Currently, SEALS relies on member dues, conference registration fees, sponsorships, and interest on its reserves. Its goal has always been that revenues generated each year equal or exceed outlays. In addition, SEALS tries to build reserves as insurance against a meeting catastrophe like that at The Homestead in 1991. Because interest rates have been low for several years, interest on those reserves contributes relatively little revenue.

Dues were initially modest, particularly by today's standards. Each school paid $25 per year for its membership. Dues were remitted to a school in the host state for the next year's meeting as part payment for the conference costs. Dues increased to $100 beginning in 1994. Dues are currently $500 for U.S. member schools. Registration fees distinguish only between faculty at institutional and affiliate member schools and faculty at other schools. Each carries a small penalty for late registration.

SEALS has always been blessed with strong publisher participation at its meetings, and this participation has been very beneficial to SEALS attendees. Publisher representatives are present throughout the meeting and available for

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54 Having a robust website allows us to post minutes, history documents, and other items of interest to members. This has reduced our costs for printing and postage and allowed us to share information with members on a more-timely and permanent basis.

55 Interest was important even when SEALS had relatively small reserves. The 1965 minutes instruct the Secretary–Treasurer to "look into the question of placing some of the Conference funds on savings certificates to earn interest and to take such action in this regard as might appear feasible."

56 The inflation calculator available from the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, indicates that $25.00 in January 1947 had the same buying power as $282.37 in January 2017. See CPI Inflation Calculator, U.S. DEP’T LABOR BUREAU LABOR STATISTICS, https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl?cost1=25&year1=194701&year2=201701 (last visited Sept. 25, 2017). Money went a long way in the early days. The Secretary reported that $100 plus a contributed bottle "was sufficient to satisfy all the members, guests and the stragglers who claimed they were from the southeast" at the SEALS reception held at the 1955 AALS meeting in Chicago.
discussions about book proposals. They have participated in several “book pitches” panels over the years. Attendees frequently encounter publishing representatives at the beach or at the pool, as well, and discussions continue in these venues. Attendees and publishers both appreciate the opportunity to interact in a less-crowded setting than the AALS meeting.

Publishers have also been a source of sponsorship funding since SEALS began. They allow SEALS to maintain a relatively low registration fee by funding many of the luncheons, coffee breaks, tournaments, and evening receptions. Although many of the early sponsors are no longer independent entities, SEALS has been able to add newer publishers and other organizations. Recognizing the importance of keeping registration fees as low as possible, SEALS added a Sponsorship Coordinator to its committee structure.

B. The Embezzlement

One of the most challenging events in SEALS’ history began unfolding after the 1994 meeting. The officers learned, and reported to the Steering Committee, that a staff member at the Secretary-Treasurer’s law school had embezzled a significant amount of SEALS funds. This was particularly devastating because it followed by only a few years the attendance debacle at The Homestead. Although SEALS recovered no funds from the offending employee, it did receive compensation from both the Secretary-Treasurer and from his law school. Since that time, SEALS has separated the offices of Secretary and Treasurer and required additional check-signing controls for outlays above $500. Board members became more vigilant in reviewing tax returns and bank statements. Fortunately, annual meeting attendance has thrived since its nadir at The Homestead, allowing SEALS to rebuild its reserves.

IX. MAINTAINING TRADITIONS WHILE INNOVATING

A. SEALS Traditions

Several SEALS traditions have survived from our early days, while others have faded away. The discussion in this section addresses some of our

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57 At the 2017 Annual Meeting, Pam Siege Chandler (West), Thomas LeBien (Harvard University Press), Niko Pfund (Oxford University Press), Keith Sipe (Carolina Academic Press), and Joe Terry (Wolters Kluwer) agreed to listen to pre-arranged individual book pitches.
58 Minutes of the 1984 Annual Meeting, for example, include Matthew Bender & Co., Inc., Carswell Legal Publications, and Mead Data Central (the founding parent of LEXIS).
59 Professor Robert Felix of the University of South Carolina and Professor Jim Bryce of the University of Alabama were instrumental in this effort.
60 The breakfast or other event at the AALS meeting ended in the mid-1970s. In 2016, SEALS substituted a reception for the Gala, a dinner at which we awarded trophies and closed the meeting. In 2017, it ended the pizza party for teenagers.
continuing traditions.

1. Rotation Among the States

From 1947 through 1963, in which only three persons served as chairman, only the meeting site rotated. With the exception of 1947, when Dean Prince convened the meeting in South Carolina, the member law schools located in a state that the steering committee approved at the preceding meeting hosted the annual meeting. Indeed, as the 1963 minutes indicate, the steering committee initially avoided committing to a state more than one year in advance: “according to custom, these indications [of a desire to host] were received with thanks, but no action taken at this time.”

Other than one meeting in Dauphin Island, Alabama, SEALS met in cities, many of which had law schools, through 1971. Although it occasionally met in cities after 1971, beach and mountain locations became the norm. The 1990 meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, was the last SEALS meeting that was not held in a beach or mountain area.

SEALS initially took invitations from member states to host the meeting, but it eventually moved to a relatively fixed rotation of states. Although states knew when they would be hosting, the schools involved were unlikely to select a hotel even a year in advance. The Board’s current practice of contracting as far in advance as possible with hotels that meet our room rate and other requirements, is a major improvement. Because meeting dates and locations through 2021 appear on our website, faculty members can plan their summer schedules well in advance.

From 1979 through 1994, the meeting took place in the state in which the incoming president’s law school was located. That continued until 1995, when SEALS chose to meet in the Florida Panhandle rather than in Louisiana. With the exception of the 2004 meeting in Kiawah, South Carolina, and the 2014 meeting in Amelia Island, Florida, SEALS has not met in the incoming president’s home state since the 1997 meeting in Asheville, North Carolina. Beginning in 1999, all annual meetings have been held in either Florida or South Carolina.

Although SEALS no longer automatically rotates the meeting site, it continues to rotate the presidency. The initial ten-state rotation initially gave way to an eleven-state rotation to accommodate the addition of West Virginia. As SEALS expanded to accommodate new law schools and a larger Southeastern footprint, the Board realized that a state-by-state rotation had several downsides. Guaranteeing each state and the District of Columbia a President required a sixteen-year rotation; an active participant could retire long before his or her state’s next turn. The fact that the number of law schools ranged from one in West Virginia to eleven in Florida caused other potential problems. While it was never possible to guarantee that any particular school would ever have a President, the odds favored schools in states with fewer law schools. Second, the smaller the number of schools in a state, the more likely it was that no one from that state would run for election. Ultimately, SEALS reached a compromise.
First, because it was part of SEALS’ tradition, it retained the rotation concept. But, to give each school a more-equal chance, it grouped states together. Only Florida (eleven member schools) and Texas (eight member schools), are not grouped with another state.

2. Southeastern Origins

Although faculty at affiliate member schools enjoy many of the same participation rights as faculty at institutional member schools, there are some differences. Only faculty at institutional member schools can vote at the Steering Committee meeting, vote in special elections, and serve as officers and Trustees. In addition, the policy for filling panels gives them a formula preference over faculty from affiliate member schools. We thus remain a Southeastern organization. In addition, although only institutional member schools have the “right” to nominate a New Scholar, every affiliate member that has nominated a New Scholar in a given year has received at least one slot. Indeed, in some instances, affiliates have received more than one slot.

3. The Steering Committee

SEALS vests major decisions in its Steering Committee. That group elects the Board of Trustees, including all officers who are Board members, approves changes in the Articles and By-Laws, and meets each year at the annual meeting. The 1950 Statement of Policy gave the Steering Committee the power to determine the year of the next meeting, the host school or schools and place of meeting, to select a Secretary to collect contributions from each member school, and to appoint a Conference Host Committee.61 The 1955 minutes indicate that the committee “according to custom, was appointed the preceding day by the chairman of the arrangements committee of the host school or schools.” Those minutes do not indicate the criteria for selection. Some Steering Committees had representatives from all member schools; others included fewer than all the schools. Eventually, each school became represented and that continues under our current governance structure. To increase member access, SEALS invites the Trustees, non-Board officers, and committee chairs to attend the Steering Committee meeting. In addition to voting on relevant matters, representatives hear reports on Board actions taken during the prior year. The minutes include reports from the various SEALS committees. Steering Committee meetings now draw approximately 100 hundred attendees each year.

4. Openness and Inclusiveness

Under its new structure, SEALS began to grow and to thrive. Attendance

\[61\text{Agnor, supra note 3, at 440.}\]
steadily increased from year-to-year as the site selection and programming improved. Despite the growth, SEALS has tried to maintain an air of intimacy and to avoid becoming a large bureaucratic organization. SEALS achieves that objective in part by virtue of the nature of the annual meeting, which is typically held at an oceanfront resort. An oceanfront venue allows faculty to interact not only in formal settings, such as panels and discussion groups, but informally at the beach or around the swimming pool. SEALS continues to host annual golf and tennis tournaments which give faculty the chance to interact on a more social level.

One way that SEALS maintains a level of openness and participation is through the panel submission process referred to earlier. Rather than establish subject matter sections, which are given control over all programming in a particular subject matter area, SEALS allows any and all faculty to submit proposed panels. As a result, anyone with a good program idea, who is willing to find other panelists to speak on the topic, may find his/her way onto the program. If a subject area draws multiple panels and discussion groups, SEALS tries to schedule those offerings on a single day or on back-to-back days so that faculty members who cannot attend the entire conference do not miss offerings in their area of interest.

SEALS has always focused on inclusiveness, regularly expanding how it interprets that term. As noted earlier, Dean Prince wanted to give young faculty an opportunity to participate they might not have at the AALS annual meeting. The 1967 minutes indicate a “problem of the attendance of younger teachers at Conference meetings” and discussion of “how this could be encouraged.” Unfortunately, the minutes do not indicate what impediments existed at the time, or what strategies the Steering Committee discussed for dealing with the problem. SEALS currently supports newer faculty with the New Scholars Workshop (originally called the Young Scholars Workshop), programs sponsored by the Beginning and Newer Law Teachers Committee, and mentoring programs. SEALS also encourages junior faculty to participate in panels and serve on committees. Not uncommonly, some of those who do eventually become SEALS officers or board members.

Another early SEALS tradition is a focus on families, which has benefited both younger and more senior faculty members. Professor Agnor noted that “Attendance of wives and families at the annual meeting has been encouraged and appropriate programs are arranged for them.” Although it no longer provides programs specifically for spouses or children, SEALS retains its family-friendly atmosphere. In selecting sites, the Executive Director considers the availability of housing for faculty members travelling with families and has thus far been able to limit the standard room charge to $159 per night. Family

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62 Id. at 439.
63 Id. at 440. The program for the 1948 meeting included the following events: Sightseeing Boat Ride for the Ladies; Sightseeing, Conducted Tour; Tea Dance and Fashion Show; Ladies' Luncheon; Reception; and Dinner. See Program and Proceedings, supra note 33.
members are welcome to attend all SEALS receptions, and SEALS offers ice cream treats to attendees and their families each afternoon.

Our research also led to discovery of a historical desire to stay in touch with former colleagues. For example, in discussing the SEALS breakfast at the AALS meeting, the 1962 minutes indicate that the Steering Committee approved a motion “that friends of the Conference who are not at present teaching in Southeastern schools be invited to attend the breakfast in Chicago.”

In recent years, many affiliate member schools joined SEALS in response to requests from faculty who had previously worked at institutional member schools.

Because SEALS functions without sections or section chairs, programming in specialized subject areas does not have to run through the gauntlet of section bureaucracy. Any faculty member can devise a program, choose the speakers or discussants, and have a reasonable chance of having that idea accepted for the annual meeting program. One limit, the Panel Participation Policy posted on our website, is designed to expand participation opportunities. Generally, each faculty member is limited to one panel; this gives more faculty an opportunity to participate. This rule does not apply to discussion groups, which do not have size limits.

Inclusiveness goes beyond attracting new faculty or being family friendly. SEALS defines “inclusiveness” broadly in its Harassment Policy to cover such categories as sex, race, color, religion, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, and it also emphasizes the importance of viewpoint diversity as an aspect of inclusiveness. The Program Participation Policy requires panel organizers to consider diversity, including viewpoint diversity, in organizing panels.

When SEALS inadvertently misses the mark, as occurred with respect to the 2016 meeting site, it acts to ameliorate the situation and take steps to prevent its recurrence. The Inclusiveness Committee, currently chaired by Margaret Hu of Washington and Lee University, is an important resource in this endeavor.

In discussing inclusiveness, we cannot ignore a belief held by some faculty members that SEALS was formed as an anti-integration organization. Two statements, one in the 1985 minutes and another in the published proceedings of the 1948 meeting, are troublesome in this regard. The incoming Chairman in 1985 is quoted as saying “that he attended the Conference in 1950 when Southern Schools were concerned about integration.” The 1948 meeting proceedings include this statement by a faculty member at the University of Mississippi:

66 The Steering Committee minutes report attendance at that breakfast in 1959 (eighty-two attendees), 1960 (fifty-six attendees), and 1961 (sixty-two attendees).

65 The policy lists gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, viewpoint, seniority, and school affiliation.

67 Program and Proceedings, supra note 33, at 91.
We have been told this morning that we have a responsibility in this section to give the Negro a legal education. We have been told that we don't know what the answer is. I am quite certain that as far as my law school is concerned we have answered that question. We have never had the opportunity to answer it publicly, but I can only say that if a Negro presented himself to the University of Mississippi, it is my confident belief that the faculty would accept him immediately. We do not like that, but we think that is the answer we have adopted.

We found no other documents that stated or implied that Dean Prince formed SEALS as an anti-integration organization, and the presence of AALS Presidents at SEALS meetings belies that notion. That said, the then-existing segregation in the South, and the later mention of programs for wives, indicate that SEALS primarily attracted white, male faculty members during its early years.68

5. The Gavel and the Seal

Several early minutes refer to the passing of the “mythical,” “mystical,” or “imaginary” gavel from an outgoing Chairman or President to the incoming leader. Rather than a mythical gavel, we now present gavels to all outgoing officers and Board members and do so in a ceremony at the Steering Committee lunch. Beginning in 2007, outgoing President Michael Floyd added a new twist to the passing of the torch. He handed a stuffed seal (the “Presidential Seal”) to incoming President Vincent Cardi. Outgoing Presidents are now responsible for transferring the Presidential Seal to the incoming President at an appropriate time during the annual meeting. The transfer was originally made at what was formerly referred to as the “Gala” (now the closing reception), but now occurs at the Steering Committee lunch.69

68 One woman served on the Steering Committee in 1956, 1962, 1966, 1969, 1970, and 1971; two women served in 1967, 1968, 1972, and 1973. Those women were all law librarians. The 1972 minutes, in a break from earlier minutes, referred to them as Miss and Mrs., while referring to the other attendees as Dean or Professor. A woman became SEALS President for the first time in 1988; an African-American, also a woman, in 1990. From its inception through 2017, SEALS has had Presidents who were women in nine years and Presidents who were members of minority groups in two years.

69 The Presidential Seal is an appropriate symbol now that our acronym is SEALS. Indeed, the stylized S in the SEALS website logo slightly resembles the silhouette of a seal.
B. Innovation

Although SEALS meetings occur at resort hotels, these meetings have a serious purpose. A glance at the panels and discussion groups listed in the meeting programs indicates how far SEALS has come from the limited topics discussed for much of its history. Its ability to rebound from the close-in-time disasters of the Homestead meeting and the embezzlement are attributable to the programmatic initiatives discussed in this section and to the structural changes described elsewhere in this article.

1. Scholarly Profile

SEALS has undertaken several initiatives to enhance its overall scholarly profile and to support and recognize individual faculty scholarship. Much of SEALS’ progress on this front can be traced to individual members who suggested scholarship-oriented committees and programs and to committee chairs and members who brought these suggestions to fruition. These endeavors reflect the SEALS spirit of innovation coupled with the willingness of many capable individuals to donate substantial amounts of time.

Perhaps the most important innovation came from Kent Syverud, former Dean at both Vanderbilt University and Washington University and now Chancellor of Syracuse University. Kent fervently believed that SEALS should create special programming for younger faculty. His idea led to the development of what became the New Scholars Workshop, which gave newer faculty the opportunity to present a work-in-progress. This innovation was extremely well received by both newer faculty and their Deans. It has helped newer faculty develop their ideas and their scholarship in a relatively warm and accepting environment. The workshop is administered by the New Scholars Committee, initially chaired by Professor Linda Jellum of Mercer University and currently chaired by Professor Missy Lonegrass of Louisiana State University.

Shortly after SEALS developed the New Scholars Workshop, it added a mentor component. Each New Scholar receives a mentor, who is asked to read the mentee’s paper in advance, attend the presentation, and offer insights and commentary after the fact. The Mentor Committee, which was initially developed and chaired by Professor Linda Jellum of Mercer University, was eventually chaired for many years by Professor Ben Barton, University of Tennessee, and Professor Nancy Levit, University of Missouri-Kansas City. It is now chaired by Professor Kathy Cerminara of Nova Southeastern University.

A second major addition was the Call for Papers. The Call is open to both junior faculty and more senior faculty, who submit their work to a committee of reviewers. The committee selects the best three or four papers for

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70 Many published articles include an acknowledgement that the author presented the paper at a SEALS annual meeting.
presentation at a luncheon held at the SEALS meeting. All presenters are listed on the SEALS website, and each receives a plaque. The Call for Papers Committee has been chaired by Professor Ron Rychlak of the University of Mississippi for many years.

A few years ago, SEALS added a Works-in-Progress series, which allows any faculty member, newer or more senior, to present a work-in-progress and receive feedback. This series, which has been chaired by Professor Lou Virelli of Stetson University, has also been very successful.

Most recently, SEALS has begun promoting the idea of having published symposia result from its annual meetings. This effort is currently spearheaded by Professor Colin Marks of St. Mary's University and Gary Simson, former Dean at Mercer University and currently that university's Senior Vice Provost for Scholarship and Macon Chair in Law. Thanks to their efforts, two sets of papers from the 2017 annual meeting will be published, one in the Kentucky Law Journal and the other in the Mercer Law Review. In addition, at the 2016 annual meeting, Professor Arnold Loewy of Texas Tech University did a dry run of his annual Criminal Law Symposium (held at TTU). The participants in that dry run were asked to participate in the TTU symposium, which will result in published papers. Development of such publication opportunities is one of our long-term objectives. Professor Roger Fairfax of George Washington University originally proposed the committee responsible for these efforts, Scholarly Research; its past-chairs are Professor Fairfax and Professor Ron Krotoszynski of the University of Alabama.

2. "Professional" Moderators

Although panels always had moderators, their effectiveness varied. Some moderators hesitated to enforce speaker time limits. Others started their panels late, which resulted in time shortages for some panelists or for the next program scheduled for that room. Professor Jellum suggested that SEALS begin a Moderator Committee and served as its initial chair. Professor Jancy Hoeffel of Tulane University now chairs the renamed Moderator and Coordination Committee. The committee is charged with finding moderators for the many panels/discussion groups that need them. Its mission statement indicates a moderator’s duties. In addition, its website includes links to two documents, the SEALS Moderator Guidelines and the SEALS Guidelines for Moderators of New Scholars Panels. Professionalizing the moderators has resulted in a better experience for all participants.

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71 To the best of our knowledge, proceedings of only two SEALS annual meetings have been published. See Program and Proceedings, supra note 33; Local Versus National Law Schools: A Report of the Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Conference of Law Teachers, 10 ALA. L. REV. 290 (1958).
3. International Programming

In the post-1991 era, SEALS has made a strong effort to involve foreign scholars in its meetings. SEALS believes that international and comparative perspectives enrich discussions and help further deepen attendees’ international contacts. Participants regularly come to SEALS from such places as Australia, Canada, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Russia, and Turkey. For 2017, SEALS jointly hosted an annual meeting panel with IMODEV, an institution from the University of Paris I (Sorbonne). As noted in the discussion of member schools, SEALS has established strong links with ELFA, the European Law Faculties Association. SEALS annually sends some of its members to the ELFA meeting, and ELFA sends representatives to the SEALS meeting. This relationship was a product of activity by our International Committee and its then chair, Pat Hugg of Loyola University New Orleans, and of Greg Bowman, currently the Dean at the University of West Virginia. The committee is now chaired by Professor Rich Meyer of Mississippi College and has been renamed the Global Outreach Committee.

4. Discussion Groups

Another important innovation came from Professors Weaver and Partlett. They had been hosting international discussion groups outside of SEALS for several years. Subject areas included Administrative Law & Procedure; Criminal Law & Procedure; Free Speech; Privacy; and Remedies. They believed, correctly, that the discussion format (as opposed to the speaker format that is used for normal panels) might work well in the SEALS context. Over the years, the discussion group format has become steadily more popular, and more than half of recent programs involve discussion groups.

5. Programming for Deans

Deans have many concerns in addition to teaching, scholarship, and service. These include relations with students, faculty, staff, and the law school’s governing body; finances, including fundraising and budgeting; and responding to changes in accreditation standards. Recognizing that deans’ time is limited, SEALS offers programs specifically addressing their concerns. Fortunately, several present and past deans have taken the initiative to schedule such programs. These include Professor Hannah Arterian of Syracuse University, Professor Steven Smith of California Western, Professor Larry Dessem of the University of Missouri, and Dean Mark Brandon of the University of Alabama. The Deans Workshop gives them an opportunity to come together to discuss matters of common interest. For 2017, Dean Luke Bierman of Elon University stepped in to assist with and coordinate the programming, and Professors Smith and Dessem arranged a program on law school financing with the AccessLex Institute.
6. Programs for Newer and Prospective Law Teachers

SEALS includes an array of programming for new law teachers, including discussions of innovative teaching techniques, scholarship, service, and other issues that affect new faculty. These panels, the product of the Beginning and Newer Law Teachers Committee, chaired by Professor Steve Friedland of Elon University, are in addition to the New Scholars Workshop panels discussed above.

SEALS also offers a “boot camp” for prospective law teachers. This innovative program, originally established by Professor Luke Milligan of the University of Louisville, helps prepare participants to apply for law teaching jobs. Participants give mock job talks, do mock interviews, have individual curriculum vitae review sessions, and perform other tasks designed to prepare them to apply for law teaching jobs. Because participants can attend the entire SEALS meeting, they gain access to programming in their subject areas and general programming on the profession of law teaching. They also gain the ability to network with prospective employers. Professors Bradley Areheart of the University of Tennessee and Leah Chan Grinvald of Suffolk University currently chair the Prospective Law Teachers Workshop Committee.

7. Responding to the Applicant Downturn

The increase in meeting time from the original two–three days to the current seven days vastly increased the number of speaking opportunities. But the downturn in law school applications, and the resultant decline in many schools’ faculty hiring and travel funds, left many faculty members unable to afford travel, meals, and lodging for a meeting of that length.

Several SEALS actions have helped maintain our overall attendance level, even though individual faculty members may attend for fewer days. The discussion groups discussed above give faculty in less “popular” areas of the law an opportunity to get together without having to worry about drawing an audience. The workshop format allows SEALS to group panels and discussion groups with a common thread together over one to three days, thus allowing faculty members to limit their travel outlays. SEALS also tries to assist newer faculty members by grouping New Scholars panels by topic and scheduling them as closely as possible to the related topical workshops.

SEALS occasionally collaborates with other organizations, adding their meetings to our program. The 2017 annual meeting, for example, included sessions of a Mindfulness Conference. Previous meetings included a 2011 program presented by the Society of American Law Teachers (SALT) and a 2009 workshop for Southeastern clinicians.

The most recent SEALS innovation involves resource teams; Professor Caprice Roberts of Savannah Law School, currently the Vice-Chair of
Programming, works with faculty in distinct topic areas to ensure that those areas are represented on the program.

X. CONCLUSION

Since its founding in 1947, SEALS has grown in size and changed in many ways. It is no longer simply a small regional association of law schools, but now includes schools from the Northeast, the West Coast, and all points in-between. It also has foreign law school members, and SEALS programs regularly benefit from international and comparative perspectives. SEALS has also become more formal in its governance structure, a necessity following the catastrophes associated with a sparsely attended annual meeting and a subsequent embezzlement. As this article indicates, SEALS continually strives to meet its members’ intellectual and informational needs, while maintaining the openness and intimacy of its early years.