
AP-LS Student Committee

Career Corner

Content Editor: Katherine P. Hazen, 2017-2018 Student Committee Chair-Elect

The Career Corner is intended to highlight the individuals who work at the intersection of law and psychology, where they come from, how they got there and how their experiences influence their research, teaching, and/or practice. This edition of Career Corner profiles Eve M. Brank, J.D., Ph.D. the Director of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln Center on Children, Families, and the Law and an Associate Professor of Psychology with a courtesy appointment at the University of Nebraska College of Law. Dr. Brank's research focuses on the way in which the law intervenes, and sometimes interferes with, family and individual decision making including issues about raising children, adult children caring for aging parents, and Constitutionally-protected rights within the criminal and juvenile justice system. Dr. Brank is serving as the 2017-2018 President of the APA Division 41 American Psychology-Law Society. Katherine P. Hazen, a 5th year Ph.D./J.D. student at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln and the 2017-2018 Student Committee Chair-elect, interviewed Dr. Brank.

AP-LS Student Committee: How did you become interested in law and psychology?

Dr. Brank: I first became interested in criminal justice when I was 14-years-old and on a long road trip with my family. I was reading two books from my mom's bookshelf: *The Scarlett Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorn and *Life Sentence* by Chuck Colson. The books explored the application of criminal law and punishment in historical and modern society. These books and the sights and experiences of the United States brought me to consider a career that focused on law and policy. I studied sociology and psychology in college and for graduate school, I was fortunate to attend the Law-Psychology Program at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

AP-LS Student Committee: Dr. Brank, could you briefly describe your career trajectory?

Dr. Brank: I began my career as a lecturer in statistics and then became an assistant professor in Criminology, Law, & Society at the University of Florida. After several years at UF, I moved back to the Law-Psychology Program at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln with my tenure home in the Psychology Department and a courtesy appointment at the College of Law. In August of 2016, I became the Director of the UNL Center on Children, Families, and the Law.

AP-LS Student Committee: What part of your job is most satisfying and most challenging?

Dr. Brank: The most satisfying part is getting to work with graduate students. The most challenging part is that it feels like there is always more I can be doing.

AP-LS Student Committee: What do you hope to bring to AP-LS during your term as President?

Dr. Brank: My presidential initiative is two pronged, with an internal focus and an external focus. Internally, I am focusing on the way in which AP-LS governs our committees and officers. I am hoping to see more fluid transitions within the committees to avoid replacing entire committees in the same year. This will help ensure the committees are as productive as possible. And externally, I am focusing on doing good in the cities we visit for conferences. Psychology and law are both professions of service that impact the community. I would love to see members using their expertise to improve the communities we visit to advance our profession.

AP-LS Student Committee: What are the biggest challenges facing AP-LS and the field of law-psychology today?

Dr. Brank: One challenge for AP-LS is navigating how to remain relevant given the drastic changes in the world since AP-LS was formed. A big opportunity I see, which is tied to my externally focused initiative, is actively introducing new and younger people to the field. A lot of people stumble into law-psychology, and there are opportunities to let people know about the field and the good work being done.

AP-LS Student Committee: What can students do to address the challenges?

Dr. Brank: Be thinking creatively about how to share our science and provide our expertise to the world. Students can be recruiting promising students from classes and organizations to participate in research and cultivate a passion for the intersection of law and psychology.

AP-LS Student Committee: You recently transitioned from being faculty in the psychology department and law school to the director of a 30-year-old policy center. What do you see as differences between being department faculty and being the director of a center or policy work?

Dr. Brank: The primary difference is that I have less independently directed time. I spend more time on personnel and administration issues than I did as a faculty member. And there are more meetings. It is exciting though because I am getting to do policy relevant and applied work and helping colleagues do that work, which results in a much quicker turn around and impact.

AP-LS Student Committee: Could you tell us a little bit about the research you are working on right now?

Dr. Brank: I have a variety of different research streams, but one I have been working on for several years is with a colleague and friend I met in graduate school, Dr. Jennifer Groscup. We have been working on a series of studies that focus on people's willingness to consent to a police search and other issues related to privacy and privacy leakage.

AP-LS Student Committee: What advice would you give students interested in taking on a leadership role in the future – such as president of AP-LS or in their departments?

Dr. Brank: I think it is important to be involved and start small. Begin by getting involved at a low level – on a committee or as a representative. Learn about the organization and the positions, get to know the people in the advanced positions. Learn the organization and connect with the members. Move through the organization and growing into more responsibilities. But start by getting involved, becoming a member, and learning what the organization is about.
