Joseph Shaneyfelt
Candidate for Chair of the ABA Law School Division

The truth is, all of you reading this are in some sort of leadership role today. And, you will be called to lead this country tomorrow—in big ways and in small. Some will be elected to Congress, some will be appointed as Judges, some will open their own practice, but all of us will be leaders. Whether you hail from an adorned Ivy-League institution or count the tumbleweeds with me here in Waco, Texas, we all have the same goal as law students—to succeed in making the world a better place. So, here is how I plan to achieve this goal.

I am confident that though communication, cooperation, and commitment we can grow the Law Student Division and have a lasting impact—not just on future lawyers, but on the 3L’s about to graduate this May, the 2L’s who will take their spots, and the 1L’s who still don’t know what’s going on.

I am running for Chair of the Law Student Division because I have the character and competence to foster an environment of cooperation with any and all student leaders through amicable dialogue. My job will not be to dictate but to listen and then to act with your help. My unique background and leadership experiences have prepared me to learn from, and listen to, the diverse body of leaders that is the Law Student Division.

So, what will we do? As a team, we will continue the great work already started by the current and past Chairs of the LSD, Thomas Kim, and Kareem Aref, and then we will take the next step in growing our impact from within the ABA. Over the next year, I intend to address and take action on topics such as:

- **Mental and physical health** concerns of current students and future lawyers;
- Allowing qualified students to take Bar examinations earlier, as they do in New York, to better prepare recent graduates and make them more marketable;
- Encouraging the expansion of facilities for the growing number of mothers in law school;
- Require law schools to better alert students about the amount of debt we will incur, the jobs we are likely to obtain, and our odds of passing the Bar before we invest;
- **Lobby Congress to expand Student Debt-Forgiveness** to help those of us crippled with student loans;
- Expand and grow the number of Caucuses in the Law Student Division to streamline cooperation and maintain accurate representations of the diversity of thought in the Division.

I am confident that through communication, cooperation, and commitment, we can achieve all this, and much more. But, who am I and why am I qualified to represent you and the other 120,000+ law students?

Born in the ‘burbs of Chicago, my family moved to Southern California when I was a child. I grew up about an hour north of Los Angeles in the small city of Santa Paula—semi-famous for its avocados and citrus orchards. With two bedrooms and
six siblings, I learned the importance of sharing and cooperating or else I’d get beat up by any of my three older sisters. Currently, more than half of my Little League baseball team are either in or have been incarcerated. My high school was comprised of 1/3 students from South Korea, China, Kenya, Myanmar-Burma, Vietnam, Taiwan, Japan, Iran, Turkey, Spain, and Mexico, and 2/3 from the United States. I have always been very involved wherever I go with whomever needs my help, so when the international students needed a place to stay over breaks, some would stay with me. When they needed a friend who spoke English in a new country away from their families, I was there to help. I brought this attitude with me as I left for college.

On a duel academic-athletic scholarship, I left the beaches of Southern California for middle-of-nowhere, Kansas. At Benedictine College, a small liberal-arts school, I excelled. As a two-sport athlete, playing football and lacrosse, I learned the meaning of hard work in a different way than most other students. In addition to practices and film every day, I also was heavily involved on campus. This involvement shaped who I am today.

By the time I graduated, I was the Lead Admissions Office Worker, in charge of almost 40 students. Here, I learned how to communicate and delegate to keep the office running like a well-oiled machine—or tractor since there were a lot of those in Kansas. I also was heavily involved in Student Government, being elected as Class President, and then Class Speaker. I was appointed to Chair two different committees. One committee was created to build the relationship between the many students of diverse backgrounds—something that is needed in as Chair of the Law Student Division. Additionally, I was the founding-president of Benedictine’s Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha—the National Political Science Honors Society. This was no easy task, but it taught me to bring both students and professors together—something that seems to be lacking at many Law Schools. Now this isn’t the whole story of who I am and why I am qualified to be Chair, but you don’t want an autobiography, and I don’t think I could write one just yet. So I’ll fast-forward to after I decided to enter law school, because you know how the story goes—the process, applications, and LSAT—that was your story too.

I entered Baylor Law School because my undergraduate’s motto was that “the world offers you comfort, but you are not called to comfort, you are called to greatness.” As an aspiring U.S. Attorney who wants to bring justice through White Collar Crime, prosecuting big-business fraud and tax evasion (think Enron), I chose to drop all my scholarships to enter Baylor. I know what debt feels like. I also know what this job entails, and I know it will be hard, but I don’t want comfort. I want to work with you, so we can help the students sitting next to you in class. Together, we can have the impact we always dream about having—to be the hero and to be the helper, because we are leaders. So, let’s lead.
Education

Baylor Law School • Waco, TX
Candidate, Juris Doctor, expected July 2019
Order of Barristers
2018 Frank a. Schreck Gaming Law Moot Court Competition hosted by UNLV
2018 Show Me Challenge: Voir Dire, Mock Trial Competition hosted by UMKC

Benedictine College • Atchison, KS
Bachelors of Arts in Political Science; Minor in Business Administration
Dean’s Honors for Academic Excellence
NAIA-Daktronics Scholar-Athlete Award | NAIA Div. I Football, Men’s Lacrosse
Published 2016 Iowa Caucus Polling Data in Research Results U.S.A.

Experience

U.S. Magistrate Judge Jeffrey Manske, Western District Texas
Legal Intern
Waco, TX
Spring 2018

Denton County District Attorney
Appellate Division | Legal Research Intern
Denton, TX
2017-2018

Kansas Governor’s Office, Boards and Commissions
Special Assistant to Deputy Chief of Staff; Lt. Governor;
2014-2016

Benedictine College Office of Admissions
Lead Student Worker
Atchison, KS
2013-2016

United States Tennis Association
Coach for youth in at-risk communities
Santa Paula, CA
Summer 2013

Concerned Resource and Environmental Workers (CREW)
Team Hand
Ventura County, CA
Summer 2012

Leadership

ABA | Student Representative
Baylor Law School | SBA At-Large Member | Student Ambassador of the Quarter
Benedictine College | Chair, Residence Life Committee | Chair, Raven Unity Committee | Sophomore Class President | Junior Class Speaker | Raven Orientation Camp Leader | Tour Guide
Federalist Society | Executive Vice President | Vice President of Membership
Pi Sigma Alpha (National Poli. Sci. Honors Society) | Chapter’s Founding President, Chair

Service

Boy Scouts of America | Eagle Scout
Many Meals of Santa Paula | 140+ Hours
JMJ Youth | Leader of Univ. Notre Dame, Univ. Portland to Krakow, Poland, 330+ Hours
Christian Legal Society
FOCUS Varsity Catholic | Student Leader
Atchison Clean-Up | 2012-16
Mission Trip | Chiquilá, Yucatán, Mexico

Activities

Camping | Sports | Surfing | Fly-Fishing | Espresso | History | Napping