Lee Burgess: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we are joined by Professor Dawn Young from Loyola University Chicago School of Law, and we are talking about law review write-on competitions and legal writing in general. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. We're the co-creators of the Law School Toolbox, the Bar Exam Toolbox, and the career-related website CareerDicta. Alison also runs The Girl's Guide to Law School. If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can reach us via the contact form on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we'd love to hear from you. And with that, let's get started.

We would like to take a moment to thank Themis Bar Review for sponsoring this podcast. Let's be honest, being a 1L is overwhelming. Between the endless reading and the looming threat of a cold call, it's easy to feel like you're just treading water. That's why I want to tell you about a game changer from Themis Bar Review that helps you win 1L and plan for the future. So first, let's talk about right now. Themis offers a completely free Law School Essentials program. Whether you're grinding through torts, contracts, or civil procedure, they've got you covered with bite-sized lecture videos from top-tier professors, comprehensive outlines, and practice questions. It's designed to help you actually understand the material before you walk into your midterms and finals. Get your free resources directly by visiting ThemisBarSocial.com/lawschooltoolbox. While you are using their free 1L resources, you should also be looking at the finish line. Themis has a proven track record preparing students to pass the bar exam with pass rates that consistently beat the state averages. Only until this Friday, April 3rd, 2026, you can save up to $1,100 on your 2027 or 2028 bar review course with just $25 down. Simply visit ThemisBar.com and select "Pay Partially" when opting for a 2027 or 2028 bar review course. The $1,100 discount will automatically apply at checkout. Don't wait, set yourself up for success and save big with Themis Bar Review.

Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today I'm excited to have Professor Young from Loyola, coming to join us today to talk about law review write-on competitions. Very exciting. Most people don't think about this until it's right time to do it. So I'm really glad that we're talking about this today. But before we dive into that important topic, can you share a little bit about your journey to be a law professor – what you do, what are your passions, and why are you interested in talking about this?

Dawn Young: Sure. Thanks so much for having me, Lee. I'm really glad to be here. I'm actually a big fan of the Law School Toolbox, so I was honored to be asked to do this with you. Well, after law school, I practiced law for a bit. I worked in private practice, I did family law, and then I worked in-house at a real estate marketing developing company for condo developers. And I eventually found my way to academia through the administrative side. So, I spent a little more than a decade at Chicago-Kent College of Law and I directed a number of projects. I advised on accreditation, I did a lot of grant work. And I asked the dean, I said, "You know, I'd really like to teach. Can I get an adjunct position?" And so he was gracious enough and allowed me to teach 2Ls and 3Ls, a Legal Writing Contract Drafting class. And that brought me great joy and it was very clear to me that this was something that I wanted to do. I really wanted to be student-facing, rather than doing a lot of the ghost writing behind the scenes. So, that gave me my taste of what it was like to teach. And then after that I moved to Boise, Idaho.

Lee Burgess: Is that colder than Chicago?

Dawn Young: Not really.

Lee Burgess: Not really? Okay, because I was like, "Is the weather getting worse?" I don't know.

Dawn Young: It's better than Chicago. That's all I can say.

Lee Burgess: Okay. Alright, sounds good. The coldest I've ever been in my whole life is in Chicago, so that's what I use as my threshold.

Dawn Young: It's pretty cold here. Yeah, so then I started teaching academic success courses that are required for 1Ls at University of Idaho. And then I had to move back to Chicago, and I am now at Loyola where I teach Legal Writing to 1Ls. And so that's where I am right now.

Lee Burgess: Well, I love a good meandering career path.

Dawn Young: It's definitely meandered.

Lee Burgess: So, as you mentioned, you have spent much of your career focused on legal writing, academic support, and success offerings. So, I know that you said when you got in the classroom, it really struck you that that's where you wanted to be. But what is different about following a path of kind of academic support or legal writing support, versus more doctrinal classes? What excites you about this type of teaching?

Dawn Young: I think what excites me about this type of teaching, and the reason why I didn't go down the doctrinal route was because it was just remembering what it was like for me as a 1L. And it was just a really hard transition to go from undergrad to that first year of law school. And it was a hard time, and it took me a while to figure out how to study strategically, how to study efficiently. And I really can relate and identify and feel for students that are finding it difficult to make that big transition. So, I think working with students at Chicago-Kent in that academic success world was instrumental for my passion, because I saw the same struggle. And I always want to emphasize this – it's not ability; it is the approach to the studying, right? And so, it really drew me to academic success and now legal writing, because I get to really make a tangible difference in students' trajectory, because I am with them, giving them the feedback, paying attention to their legal analysis, their organization, how they're communicating their arguments orally and in written form. So it really brings me a lot of meaning in what I do. And so that's kind of why I wanted to stay in this realm. Yeah.

Lee Burgess: I mean, for those who are maybe 0Ls listening to this, it is just a humbling experience. Legal writing is a humbling experience when you start. It was humbling for me, it's just humbling for almost everyone, even if you consider yourself a solid writer. People paid me to write for them, and then when I started law school, I was like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. What do you mean I have work to do?"

Dawn Young: Yeah.

Lee Burgess: I thought I had skills. And it is just humbling. I had jobs where they counted on me to write things, and then you move over and you're like, "Well, those are great skills. Please put them in the backseat, because you don't really know how to do this sort of work."

Dawn Young: It's a completely different type of writing.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And talk about growth mindset, right? You've got to have a growth mindset and really engage with your professors. And I think so often as 1Ls, there's a fear if you're struggling to go to your professors. But Legal Writing professors, as you can tell on this podcast, they're all really nice, because they really want to work with students. They teach small classes, you typically have lots of office hours, you grade lots of papers. You don't do that unless you want to talk to the students.

Dawn Young: Yeah, and sorry to interrupt, but one of the things we do as Legal Writing professors, we have required conferences, so they have to meet with me one-on-one, and so they don't really have a choice. But I think that's a good thing, because you get to have full access to your professor, and all that intimidation that starts to dissipate as you get to know each other.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, yeah. Okay, well, we wanted to talk about this thing called the "write-on competition". And it's possible that some listeners may not even know what this is, or have just heard about it in passing. What does it actually look like? What do students get? Why are you even asked to do this? So, can you give us a bit of a primer about the write-on, and what it is and what it means?

Dawn Young: The write-on competition is really the primary way students get on what we call "law reviews", or some schools call them "law journals". And they're really student-run academic journals. They're prestigious in the sense that they signal to employers that the student has strong writing and analytical skills and Bluebook citation skills. And sometimes BigLaw and clerkships look for whether or not the student's on a journal on the resume. So, it's a prestigious credential to have. But the write-on competition, it varies depending on the law school, but typically after 1L finals, sometimes within a very short time, like right after...

Lee Burgess: I think it was the day after for me.

Dawn Young: Yeah.

Lee Burgess: I think I had cheese and bread for dinner, and then got up the next morning to go start working on mine.

Dawn Young: Yeah. I mean, immediately right after, when you're so exhausted, you're so tired, it was like the most important academic endeavor in your life as a 1L. You've got this thing, and it's a packet. And in the packet, there're usually a number of sources, and it's a lot. It's a closed universe packet with a prompt, probably a fact pattern, directions, one major case, and maybe some other secondary sources, statutes, articles and so forth. But it's not something... When I say "closed universe", it's not something you can go out and do your own research. Everything that you need is right there in the packet, and you can't go outside of the packet. So basically, students are asked to do two things – write a short analytical piece, and it's analyzing a specific legal issue. I mean, you'll get directions on this. And then the second part of it is some type of citation exercise or footnote exercise. So you are really using your Bluebook skills in that sense. And some law schools require a GPA to be taken into consideration. But I would say for the most part it's the written article, and then there's that footnote exercise. As soon as you open the packet, at least at Loyola, I think

that's when the time starts ticking and you have a very short period of time – I'd say seven days to maybe 10 days to write this really in-depth article. And it is critiqued or it's graded or reviewed by an upper-level student who's already on law review. So, it's blind graded, but it is a requirement to get on law review that you go through the process.

Lee Burgess: Oh, I remember grading those packets when I was on the law review. Woo!

Dawn Young: Those packets are something else, yes. But that's the write-on competition in a nutshell, yeah.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think it is important to realize that it is usually, I think at least in my school, it was 3Ls who were the incoming board of the law review, who did those packets. And I just remember thinking how much I could learn from these packets. You could really tell if someone had proofread carefully, you could tell if someone had mailed it in, you could tell if someone had spent the week on it or had not spent the week on it. I mean, it really did communicate quite a bit. And I think sometimes we forget that when we create documentation like that, but I sat with a stack of those and you're reading one after another, trying to put them in different piles. And there were some of them where I'd just be like, "What? What happened?" You don't know who it was, but you're just like, "What happened?" And then you could really see when folks put in effort. I think sometimes you forget how much your papers communicate. I know as a Legal Writing professor, you see that all the time when you're grading papers, right?

Dawn Young: Of course. Yeah, for sure.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Alright, so, let's say you're a 1L right now. You've taken Legal Writing, you're in Legal Writing right now, you want to do the write-on competition. I also think that law review is a great experience if you have the opportunity to do it. I definitely learned things. It's not always super fun. You spend a lot of time with the Bluebook, which is not the most exciting book of your life, but I learned a lot, it made me a better lawyer. And so, what are the skills and what are the connections between the work that you're doing in Legal Writing and what you're going to be asked to do in this write-on competition?

Dawn Young: I often say that the skills that the students are developing in their fall and spring semester 1L legal courses, I would say write-on is like an extension of that in a way. In my opinion, and I'm a bias, but I do think that students should really be taking their Legal Writing courses seriously just because every student wants to get a good grade in whatever course they're taking in law school, but to actually internalize what they're learning, because what they're learning in Legal Writing

1 and 2 are important skills that directly transfer to the write-on competition. For example, what we're teaching in Legal Writing 1L year is how to read cases carefully, how to extract the rules – in other words, the legal principles from the cases. We are synthesizing multiple sources, and that's exactly what students are going to be doing when they're reading the packet, right? And just organization, just on the macro scale, as well as the micro scale. You probably remember CREAC, CRuPAC, CRAC, IRAC.

Lee Burgess: So many acronyms.

Dawn Young: There're so many acronyms. But the acronym is really in essence the analytical framework, and that is what the board members are going to be looking for. They're going to be looking for organization on a large scale and organization on a micro scale. And so, those are things that students are learning and developing in their 1L courses, Legal Writing courses. They're learning how to self-edit, they're honing their revision skills, they're getting familiar with the Bluebook, obviously, for their citations. And importantly, they're learning how to write in a very clear and concise way, getting rid of all those "throat clearing" sentences. I always tell my students, "Get rid of the throat clearing." It is important to note like, "Edit. Let's delete that. Let's get to the point." But it's the same skills that are tested on the write-on, in my opinion.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think that attention to detail too is something that legal writing really, really, just makes you focus on the tiny details. Like you were saying, you have to edit out these filler words, you do have to cite, you have to cite to the correct thing with the correct page number. When I started practicing, I got a huge stack – it was like my first couple of months practicing at BigLaw – of motions in limine, and I was just supposed to churn through them and look for the mistakes in plaintiffs' motions. And it was like this really twisted law review game, where I was just like, "They cite to the wrong page. That's not what that says." I was just in my office with a red pen or on my computer and slashing everything. I was just like, "That's not how you do this." I probably had more fun than I was supposed to have with that project, but at that point, I'd been an editor on my law review, I'd done well in law school, but I'd spent so much of my time basically looking for errors. That was my main job, reading everything that was published in the law review, that you get a little quirky about it. But it is a skill, and I still have great attention to detail and I think that that really honed that skill for me.

Dawn Young: You probably know when a period is italicized or not.

Lee Burgess: I know, and people don't realize that's a thing.

Dawn Young: For sure.

Lee Burgess: This is what law school does to us, folks. Italicized periods. Oh my goodness.

Dawn Young: Get those insights right.

Lee Burgess: I know, I know. So, let's go into the Bluebook since we're talking about italicized periods. So, different schools put different amounts of weight on this Bluebook proficiency as part of this. I think it can be part of the write-on. Some schools have a full exam that is just a Bluebook exam. There are really a couple of extremes. But how much weight do you think bluebooking, especially in this kind of modern age, should really carry in part of a law review evaluation?

Dawn Young: I think that Bluebook citations matter if you are thinking about...

Lee Burgess: I love a good Bluebook citation. I mean, I'm just telling you.

Dawn Young: I know. Actually some students say, "Well, do they really matter?" I mean, it seems like in terms of weight, at least at Loyola, there's a larger percentage with the actual legal analysis. And then some of it is the footnote exercise, and then the GPA. But it's still important, right? And it's important for the write-on, because that is what you'll be doing. You're going to be getting articles that are submitted from professors or practitioners in the field, and you're going to be editing, and you're going to be checking the sources, and you're going to be checking the citations. So, I'd say that the law review board members are looking for exactly what you were saying, Lee – attention to detail. So, I would say it matters. In practice, I'd say it still matters. But I always tell my students... I remember like the first semester I was teaching, everybody was so intimidated by the Bluebook, and I was like, "It's kind of like a reference, it's a source, except it's really important." But it's not like you're expected to memorize all of those citation rules, right? So, I think that that is the same approach that students should have and not getting intimidated by it, but just understanding that that is a bulk of what you're going to be doing, right? So, I do think for the write-on, it does matter.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And I think it shows that you have the patience. It takes a lot of patience to do bluebooking. And you need that patience, because especially when you are a new staff member, that is what you are doing in the beginning. And they need to know that you will have the patience to sit there and do it.

Dawn Young: They do.

Lee Burgess: It really is just part of the role, but that itself is a skill, and I think that's why judges like to see it on a resume, BigLaw likes to see it on a resume. I actually remember one of my senior partners that I worked for saying how pleased it made him that I didn't have citation errors. I was so well trained by the time – I had been editing on the law review for years – that he was just like, "Oh, it's so nice." I was like, "Whoa, it matters. What I do matters." He knew he could copy and paste my work and wasn't worried that it was wrong. This is not something we had talked about talking about, but I do want to mention AI. Are the law reviews talking about in this closed universe whether or not students can use AI, as far as editing or proofreading or anything like that? Because I know that some Legal Writing departments are starting to incorporate AI into even some of their curriculum, but I would assume that for most of this, it's going to not be allowed, because it seems to be not the point of the exercise.

Dawn Young: I don't think that it is allowed, but I can speak to what's prohibited for sure, what's allowed for our journal. But even at our law school, there's a policy where they cannot be using AI on anything. So, I don't know how to answer that question. I'm not sure.

Lee Burgess: Well, I would definitely at least say you should check before you use it. I mean, make sure it's not an accidental honor code violation. But also I do think it is important, and I always think about this with any sort of AI, and AI in the legal profession especially, is you are still responsible for the output. And so, even if AI proofreads your work, you're still required to make sure that it is perfect. It's your name on it, they're your citations. If AI pulls something incorrectly, it's on you. Lawyers are getting into massive trouble in courtrooms about this, people. It's like a twofer – you can't really check AI's work if you don't know how to do the work yourself. And these kinds of exercises while you're in school, I think at least, are where you gain those skills. So, if you can work faster and more efficiently with AI support and practice – bravo, if you're still able to do high quality legal work. But the only way to do high quality legal work is to know how to do it, and then use tools to make yourself more efficient.

Dawn Young: Oh yeah, a hundred percent. And like you were saying, they should definitely double-check the output. I mean, I think that's one of our responsibilities as attorneys – we have to double-check. So yeah, for sure.

Lee Burgess: It's your name on it, your bar number.

Dawn Young: Yep. Yep, yep, yep, yep.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, we were talking about how these competitions usually land right after finals, right after 1L. It can take five days to a week, depending on the school.

Students are exhausted, nobody really wants to do this. It's pretty tough. So, I was thinking about this and I was thinking about how this really affects students who may be navigating law school and family responsibilities, or are working and going to school, who may just go right back to work after finals. They might not have as many resources to take another week of school. Have you seen that in any of your teaching? Have you been able to help students kind of navigate this balance between wanting to do a competition like this and have other responsibilities?

Dawn Young: Yeah, I was just thinking about this the other day in terms of fairness and equity, and I do think that in some ways the write-on is relatively fair in the sense that there's typically the blind grading, the blind writing competition process. But it's not a perfect process. Like you said, there're some students that are entering already understanding what law journal is, whether they have an attorney in their family, or they maybe in their prior academic experience had exposure to academic type writing. And then there are those, like you were saying, that have family obligations and they have other challenges in life, where they may not know about law journal culture. To that, I would say, and it is a quote from my high school English teacher, Mr. Monahan.

Lee Burgess: Love that.

Dawn Young: Yeah. Mr. Monahan would say, "Knowledge is power." And I thought, "What does that mean?" And he said it is one way to close that gap. And what I mean by "Knowledge is power" is that students that listen to the Law School Toolbox...

Lee Burgess: Well, thanks.

Dawn Young: You're welcome. Shout out! Students that go the extra mile by finding out what is law journal, going to the informational sessions. I was just talking to my Legal Writing tutor – she's on law journal – she was saying that they provide workshops on Bluebook citations, like a refresher. Why would you not go to that? It's like an hour of your time, it's a lunchtime talk. Go there, find out what the law journal process is. Talk to a 2L, talk to a 3L who's on the board, pick their brain. I mean, these are things that you can make the initiative to do that, and you can do it while you're already at school, right? You're already there. So one of the things that I do to sort of equal the playing field is that I have my, we call them tutors or equivalent of teaching assistants, but I have three of my tutors are on Law Journal, and I had them talk about it, talk about their experiences. And I had other students talk about the other activities they're on, like moot court and other journals, other than the law review. And so I think that, back to Mr. Monaghan, that rings true: "Knowledge is power." I don't want students to

feel like they can't find the information themselves. They can plan and get ready for it if that's something they want to do.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, and I think the planning is a big piece of that. The more complicated your life is outside of law school... If you're in law school and you have family responsibilities, if you're working, depending on what you're doing, you've already had to realize the juggle is real, right? And you've got your coping mechanisms. But I think that when you're looking at that May timeframe where you would add on, you just need to look at your summers, not starting until that.

Dawn Young: Oh yeah, that's a really good point.

Lee Burgess: Make the calendar and just continue whatever support system you'd put in place to make it through finals. I think it's just got to continue as long as possible.

Dawn Young: Yeah, I wouldn't start work during that write-on time. And I'd let your loved ones know that you'll be out of commission. I mean, it is a heavily involved process.

Lee Burgess: Like, it's not over. Finals aren't over.

Dawn Young: Just think of it as an extension.

Lee Burgess: Oh, I know. I remember, I think I was a 2L when this happened, and I was dating somebody new – not my husband, who I met after 2L, so it must have been before I met my husband, so I guess I must have been at 2L. But it was funny because I said to him, "I'm going into finals, so I'm not going to hang out. I'm probably not going to call you. I'm going to see you in a few weeks." And we were walking back from dinner and he's like, "So can we go get brunch on Saturday?" I was like, "No. No, man. I told you that I'm starting finals, and I go dark for a couple of weeks and I'll come back up for air. But this is just what I have to do. I have to focus and I have to do this." And it was just so funny because I just remember how puzzled he was looking at me. It ended pretty soon after that. I don't think we really came back together after finals, but that's okay.

Dawn Young: So, did you meet your husband in law school? Your now husband.

Lee Burgess: I met my husband in the summer between 2L and 3L year, but he was not associated with law at all.

Dawn Young: Oh, okay.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So we did not meet in law school, we didn't meet at work. We just met in the summer when I was doing my summer associate position. And so, then I would hang out with him and then have to go to work very early in the morning the next morning. The things you do when I was younger than I am now.

Dawn Young: Yes.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. But life still is going on while you study for these tests. But I guess that's my dating advice – no one will leave you alone to do your final exams or your write-on competition, but have a talk about everybody's goals.

Dawn Young: Yes. Yeah.

Lee Burgess: So, I bet you're going to have a student from your classes come to you or come to your tutors and say, "How do I prepare? What do I do, other than make sure that I'm not working and I've got my life in order?" So, what can folks do to get ready?

Dawn Young: Yeah, there're two parts to this. The first one is what they should be doing before the write-on. So this is important. Get an idea of what a note or a comment looks like, because that's kind of like the end product, right? So, I would go to your law school's law review or law journal page and open up some recent issues and take a look at the structure, take a look at the common Bluebook citations. I do have to say – I want to backtrack, I should have said this before. Legal Writing 1 and 2 is different in terms of the citations in what they will be doing for journal. And the difference is that the Bluebook citations that they're learning during their 1L year is more practice-oriented. So, regular case cites, "Id.", and so forth. Whereas on law review, it's a little bit more complex. You're doing lots of footnotes, you're citing to other sources, citing to other articles, statutes.

Lee Burgess: The Internet.

Dawn Young: The Internet, oh my gosh.

Lee Burgess: Treaties. Oh my gosh, so many wild citations.

Dawn Young: Right. And lots of parentheticals. And so, all of those are more complex. So, what I would do is take a look at the structure of the article, look at the citations, and then open up your Bluebook and start just getting familiar with it.

Maybe tabbing – tabbing the cases, the statutes, Internet sources. Get yourself familiar with even your Bluebook.

Lee Burgess: Makes me want to dig for my Bluebook.

Dawn Young: I know, where's my Bluebook?

Lee Burgess: Where is it? I know. Mine is covered in tabs. I just moved offices not long ago. I don't know where it is, but I feel like I should. This is the moment where I should hold it up in the video and be like, "Look at my tabbed Bluebook."

Dawn Young: And with the new edition, you know.

Lee Burgess: Oh, new fancy edition.

Dawn Young: Yeah. So, I would get comfortable with the different citations. And then another thing I would do is this: I would refresh yourself with all the things that you've learned in Legal Writing 1 and 2, especially organization. So, get comfortable with the CREAC, the CRuPAC, in terms of the framework. And then another thing that I would do is create a plan. Create a plan for that week. Like you were saying, map out what you plan to accomplish. Let everyone know you're going to be out of commission that week. And I would put the dates in the calendar. I would do it even now. I would put dates in the calendar of like, when there's a write-on information session. If there's a Bluebook session that's given by the board members, I would go to that. I would put in my calendar, "Talk to a 2L or talk to a 3L." Right now we're on spring break. I mean, these are things that you can do when you have a little bit more free time. I mean, it's not like they have a ton of free time, because they're still outlining.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Dawn Young: But I think that's what they could do. The other thing that I wanted to say is tips on what they should do when they actually have the packet in their hands. Here are my tips. I would say the first thing you should do is open the packet.

Lee Burgess: Check.

Dawn Young: Open the packet, because it might just sit there. No, open the packet and I would get the lay of the land, get kind of an overview by just reading through the materials, read the instructions carefully. And then I'd say, outline your major points that support your thesis, your overall conclusion. And as you start writing, I think headings can do amazing things, in terms of organization headings. I would also make sure that you carve out some time, actually put it in

your calendar like, "These last", I don't know, three days or last two days, "I'm just going to focus on that citation exercise", because you really want to get that down and be precise in the footnote exercise. And then definitely carve out some time to proofread. I mean, you've got to do that double check, right? So, those are my tips, I would say.

Lee Burgess: I love those. When you think about the calendaring and you think about how many hours you want to work, I want to make a call out for any of our ADHD listeners, for whom this very abstract project that may take five to seven days with no structure, may be a really big challenge. I think it's even more important that when you are clearheaded and you're not exhausted, that you sit down and say, "Okay, these are my goals for day one. These are the blocks of time I'm going to work. I'm going to take breaks every 30 minutes." If you're a 30-minute break person or a 20-minute break person, you know what you need. But I think you've got to be really structured and create a lot of scaffolding for yourself so you have time and focus, because bluebooking especially takes an immense amount of focus. So, if you struggle with focus, you may only want to do bluebooking for 20 minutes at a time without taking at least a two or three-minute break of like getting a glass of water and staring outside and moving your body. So just being really honest with yourself about that and create that structure, I think it's important for everyone. But if you are someone who needs that scaffolding and you're not going to get it from anywhere because it's an open-ended assignment with a very, very long runway, I think you really have to be kind of more aggressive with that structure. And although you typically can't talk to anybody else about it, you could have an accountability buddy. You could meet somewhere at the same time. If you need help with that structure, you know yourself, but you're not going to be at your best at the end of two weeks or three weeks of final exams. So, you're going to need even more structure than maybe you would need on a regular week of school.

Dawn Young: That's a really good point. Yeah, couldn't agree with you more. Oh, yeah.

Lee Burgess: Alright, hopefully everyone listening does the write-on, gets on law review. Done, easy peasy. But let's say that things don't go as planned, and unfortunately you do not get onto a journal. And we've talked about the fact that journals are important and looked at by employers or for clerkships, things like that. So what do we tell folks who aren't necessarily getting the outcome that they want? What should they do now?

Dawn Young: I would tell them that law review, it can be helpful. Like we were saying, it can be helpful for certain career paths, but it's not the only path. Many students opt out for a variety of reasons, whether it's just deciding that they want to try a different journal. Maybe they want to try a journal that's more focused on

employment law or health law, because they know that they want to go into that field. Well, then that makes sense. They may want to do other things, like if they're interested in advocacy, like I was saying before, they could join a moot court, they could do a mock trial. But they can also participate in clinic, they can do an externship. Maybe they have this great opportunity doing part-time legal work. And these are all equally impressive to employers. So, I want students to really understand that this can be helpful, but it's not going to make you or break you. One thing I wanted to say is I was on LinkedIn just earlier this morning and I came across a post, and it just so happened to be from a Loyola alum. It was so weird. And it really resonated with me. And I wanted to read, if you don't mind.

Lee Burgess: Oh, please do.

Dawn Young: It's from an alum. He's a practicing attorney, Donald Nathan. He said, "I'm pretty sure no one will even notice my comment, but I'm going to post it anyway. I went to a grade B law school. My class of 136 included a bunch of grade A students. I was not among them. In fact, I was the valedictorian of the bottom half of my class. During law school, I worked an average of three nights a week as a cab driver in Chicago. I worked an average of 20 hours a week as a law clerk at the same time. There wasn't a lot of time to study. I graduated in three years, and like 134 of us, I passed the Illinois bar the first time around. Fifty years down the road, most people would agree that I've done okay. I've been selected by Thomson Reuters as a super lawyer 13 times. No one of my 15,000 clients over the years ever asked me where I graduated or what my class rank may have been. They just don't care. The only thing that counted to any of them was whether or not I was able to be a champion for them. The rest of it just didn't matter." So, I just wanted to leave it with that.

Lee Burgess: Oh my gosh, I love that. And that is so true.

Dawn Young: Resonates. And it should speak to students, or soon to be law students, because this profession and the culture is, unfortunately it's the ranking and the prestige and whether you're doing this or that. And at the end of the day, even when I was in practice – and it's the same thing this alum was saying – I never had a client ask me if I was on law journal. I never had a client ask me what my GPA was or what I got in Civ Pro. If this is your passion and this is what you want to do, look at law school as a way to build the skills that you need to be an effective lawyer, and a lawyer that clients would want to come to. And that should generate your joy. Because the prestige and all of that other stuff – that can dissipate, that can be taken away in a day. But the skills that you're developing in law school – those are the things that should really drive you, because that helps you do what you really want to do.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And your job is to just be excellent at being a lawyer, to be a great advocate. And yeah, even we talk about this with the bar exam. One of my favorite posts we have on the Bar Exam Toolbox – I think the title is "The Question No One Ever Asked Me", and it's someone who had failed the California bar once. And so many folks think that if you have failed the bar, it's just this taint on your career forever. And the whole point of the article is, once you have a law license, nobody asks you, maybe except if you do apply to work for me. I do ask what bars you took, so maybe I'm the outlier. But generally speaking, that is not a question that comes up in your professional life. You're allowed to not be on the law journal. I have friends who were not at the top of their class who are exceptional lawyers. I would refer them when people need references to lawyers, a hundred percent. And it's about how to make yourself the best lawyer you can be, so you can be the best advocate. And there're so many paths to that. That does get lost in the law school space, I think.

Dawn Young: It does. It does.

Lee Burgess: Well, I'm really feeling for everyone who's going to spend their week after finals. I had not dusted off these memories in a while, I'll be honest – the law write-on memories. It's coming back. I'm remembering what it was like and what my topic was. It's all flooding back through this conversation. But this has been really interesting. Do you post on LinkedIn? If students are interested about your work or writing around academic support, where can they learn more about what you do?

Dawn Young: Yeah, no, I'm kind of all over the place. I mean, they can definitely reach me. They can just look up my information on the Loyola website, on the faculty side. I'm on LinkedIn, I'm on Instagram. I often post about legal writing and academic success on my Instagram, so they can follow me there. I have published works on SSRN. I think you just type in my name and it'll come up. But I like to write on pedagogy and learning, and that's kind of my scholarship. But my heart is for law students. So, if you ever feel like you want to ask additional questions, or I don't know, need some encouragement – I'm your girl.

Lee Burgess: Amazing. Well, thanks so much for the conversation today and for spending time with us. I really appreciate it.

Dawn Young: Not a problem. Thanks for having me.

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