

**FOR ASIL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**  
Meeting of March 30, 2016

Annual Interest Group Report  
from

**Disaster Law**

Current Elected Officers:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Originally Elected to Current Position in (Year):</b>	<b>Last Elected to Current Position in (Year):</b>	<b>Elected Officer of Any Type in This IG Since (Year):</b>
Kirsten Bookmiller	Co- Chair	2014*	2014	2014
David Fisher	Co- Chair	2014*	2014	2014

*\*The interest group was formally approved by ASIL in February 2014; as co-founders we were asked by the Society to serve as its inaugural co-chairs.*

Please fill in or correct above any missing information.

Please fill in or correct below any non-elected IG leaders (e.g. advisory body members or newsletter editor):

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Since (Year):</b>
Arnold Pronto	Advisory Board	2014
David Caron	Advisory Board	2014
Mike Newton	Advisory Board	2014
Gabriella Venturini	Advisory Board	2014
Jiri Toman	Advisory Board	2014
Don Anton	Advisory Board	2014
Doug Cubie	Advisory Board	2014
Anastasia Telesetsky	Advisory Board	2014
Judge Kenneth Keith	Advisory Board	2014

Name of Person Completing this Report:

**Kirsten Bookmiller**

Email of Person Completing this Report:

**Kirsten.bookmiller@millersville.edu**

Phone of Person Completing this Report:  
**717-872-1884**

Number of IG members as of Feb 4, 2016 = **76**

Year group established: **2014**

## **Disaster Law Interest Group**

Annual Report -- 2016

### **Governance**

1) Please describe how your IG is governed, the allocation of responsibilities, etc.

**At this early juncture in the Group's development, the governance structure consists of two co-chairs and an advisory board.**

2) By what means and how often do IG officers communicate with IG members?

**We utilize the tools available through ASIL's "Online Community" platform.**

**We are in periodic contact to promote upcoming IG co-sponsored activities and address other program matters. In addition, we meet during the ASIL annual IG business meeting and during co-sponsored events throughout the rest of the year.**

### **Interest Group Mission**

1) What are the purpose and direction of the IG? Please reply with particular attention to the following objectives: fulfilling the educational and public awareness mission of ASIL; providing additional opportunities for active participation by ASIL members; making a contribution to the development and use of international law.

**Given the embryonic state of scholarship in this area, ASIL's International and Comparative Disaster Law Interest Group serves as a central catalyst for debate and reflection. The group will initiate and facilitate a global knowledge exchange among academics, policymakers and practitioners from a variety of disciplines who share a common belief that law can--and must--serve an important role in alleviating human suffering caused by natural hazards, in all of its aspects. In addition, it is the organizers' hope that the group's existence will spark new interest among legal specialists in other but related fields, including human rights law, environmental law, administrative law, space law, maritime law, and rule of law, to name just a few.**

**The group's activities include the organization of panels and side events at the ASIL annual meeting, as well as less formal in-person gatherings throughout the rest of the year. It maintains an on-line presence to share and discuss the latest legal developments and promote professional opportunities pertaining to this new but growing field. This may**

**include periodic “webcasts” on pertinent issues in the field. Group members are also encouraged to contribute views on relevant international processes, such as the current project of the IFRC and UNDP to develop a checklist for lawmakers on disaster risk reduction, the ILC’s “Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters” and the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016.**

2) Please indicate if and where this marks a change from the Interest Group’s previous statements of purpose and direction.

**No changes at this time.**

3) Please indicate what process of consultation was undertaken within the IG to determine IG agreement with the above stated purpose and objective.

**The co-founders informally circulated the draft IG’s purposes and objectives to scholars, practitioners and policymakers working in the Disaster Law field over a period of 18 months before the group was established in 2014. Many of those individuals consulted now sit on the IG’s Advisory Board.**

### **The Year in Review**

1) Please share some of the successes and challenges faced by your IG in the past year.

**DLIG played a significant role in several programs and initiatives advancing the disaster law field’s growth since last year’s report submission. They include:**

- a) ***Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*’s Special Issue “This is Not a Drill: Confronting Legal Issues in the Wake of International Disasters” was published in December 2015. VJLT hosted a symposium of the same title in February 2015, co-sponsored and co-organized with the Disaster Law Interest Group. Several DLIG members who presented at the symposium subsequently had their studies published in the “This is Not a Drill” special issue.**
- b) **DLIG was also co-sponsor and co-organizer of the workshop “How Can International Environmental Law Reduce Disaster Risk?”, held at Stanford Law School from May 21-22, 2015. Co-organized with the International Environmental Law Interest Group and Stanford’s Environmental and Natural Resources Law Program, it was also co-sponsored with the *Stanford Journal of International Law*, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the United Nations Development Programme. An edited book containing papers from the meeting is scheduled to appear in Summer 2016.**
- c) **DLIG successfully concluded the first annual “International and Comparative Disaster Law Essay Contest” round in April 2015, co-sponsored with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Disaster Law Project (IDL) of the Universities of Bologna, Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna, Roma Tre and Uninettuno and with support from the International Institute of Humanitarian**

**Law.** The contest was open to students enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program at any university (anywhere in the world) at the time of submission. DLIG members served as both first round evaluators and final stage judges. The first winner was Giovanni Sciacaluga, a student at the Università degli Studi di Genova. Mr. Sciacaluga's essay focused on international law approaches to climate change related displacement. The contest winner received a fee waiver and support for travel and accommodation in order to attend the week-long "International Disaster Law Course" organized by the IDL and IFRC and hosted by the International Institute for Humanitarian Law in Sanremo, Italy, on 27th April to Friday 1st May 2015; a free annual membership in the American Society of International Law and waiver of fees for attendance to the ASIL Annual meeting.

- d) DLIG also submitted an accepted roundtable proposal on "Pandemics and International Law" for the 2016 Annual Meeting.
- e) Lastly, the DLIG co-chairs and several IG members were invited to provide feedback to the University of Reading, U.K.'s new Disaster Law L.L.M. program, the first of its kind in the world. This new program is being developed by IG member Katja Samuels, and will be formally launched in September 2016.

- 2) Are there things that ASIL could be doing to enhance the interest group program and your experience with it?

**None at this time.**

#### **Anticipated Program of Activity**

- 1) **Short-term.** Please detail programs and activities planned for 2016, with particular emphasis on how IG members will be involved. Also include what measures, if any, your group plans to take to supplement its \$600 allotment from ASIL for this year.
  - a) **In the immediate time frame, DLIG will host the "Pandemics and International Law" roundtable at the 2016 Annual Meeting.**
  - b) **DLIG will also shortly announce the second round of the "International and Comparative Disaster Law Essay Contest".**
  - c) **An edited book emerging from the Stanford Environmental Law workshop will be released in Summer 2016.**
- 2) **Long-term.** Please describe any objectives beyond 2016.

**DLIG is in the early stages of co-sponsorship discussions related to an "International Law of Disaster Risk Reduction" Symposium to be held at the University of Reading, U.K. in June 2017. Cambridge University Press has already agreed to publish an edited book containing the studies presented at the conference.**

## **Additional Comments**