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NEUROSCIENCE AND LAW RESEARCH WORKSHOP AT THE MAQSUT NARIKBAYEV UNIVERSITY

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26 March 2026 the ***Research School of Legal Theory and Legal Philosophy*** organized an academic event for students at the **Maqsut Narikbayev University** – *Neuroscience and Law Research Workshop* with participation of **Dennis Patterson**, famous legal philosopher, ***Professor of Legal Philosophy in Rutgers University (USA) and School of Law of Surrey University (UK).***

The basic purpose of the research workshop was to explore how brain science can and cannot help the legal theory and legal practice. It is inspired by Michael S. Pardo and Dennis Patterson's book *Minds, Brains, and Law: The Conceptual Foundations of Law and Neuroscience* (Oxford University Press, 2013). Their main idea is that we should be careful and precise when we use neuroscience in legal contexts. Brain images and experiments can be useful, but they do not automatically answer legal or moral questions about guilt, responsibility, or punishment.

In recent years, interest in "neurolaw" has grown quickly. Researchers study how brain activity relates to decision-making, impulse control, addiction, mental illness, and risk of reoffending. Courts sometimes see brain scans or other neuroscientific evidence in criminal and civil cases. Some authors claim that neuroscience will "revolutionize" law, change how we think about free will, and transform criminal justice. They argue that the mind is not simply the brain, and that legal ideas like person, intention, and responsibility cannot be reduced to neural data alone.

The workshop explored how Patterson's conceptual critique of "neuro-reductionism" and over-optimistic neurolaw claims engages with current empirical research on responsibility, evidence, prediction, and punishment.

In *Minds, Brains, and Law* and on the workshop meeting Dennis Patterson argued that many influential neurolaw proposals rest on category mistakes: they wrongly identify the mind with the brain, conflate neural causes with legal responsibility, and assume that neuroscientific data can directly answer normative legal questions. He criticized "neuro-reductionist" approaches for confusing part and whole, neglecting culture, history, and lived experience, and drawing invalid inferences from group-level findings to individual cases.

Current debates discussed on the workshop include several domains. Scholars analyze how neuroscience is introduced in criminal trials, including sentencing, mitigation, and insanity defenses, and how it may reshape doctrines of responsibility, competence, and prediction of recidivism. Others explore neurolaw in torts, human rights, and injury litigation, where brain-based evidence is used to substantiate previously "invisible" harms such as for example traumatic brain injury. Some enthusiastic claims that neuroscience can "revolutionize" the law connects with growing scientific literature urging conceptual clarity, epistemic modesty, and careful translation of neuroscientific findings into legal field.

The workshop offered a space for scholars and students to discuss these issues in clear and accessible terms. Students preparing their graduation theses on the influence of neuroscience research results on jurisprudence had the opportunity to discuss their findings and analyze scientific sources on the subject with Professor **Dennis Patterson** and leading professors of the Research

School — Professors **Anton Didikin, Vitaly Ogleznev, Aigul Nauryzbay** and **Asiya Komekova**. As a result of the workshop students’ diploma theses became more justifying in their conclusions.

References

Minds, Brains, and Law: The Conceptual Foundations of Law and Neuroscience. Ed. Michael Pardo, Dennis Patterson. Oxford University Press, 2013.

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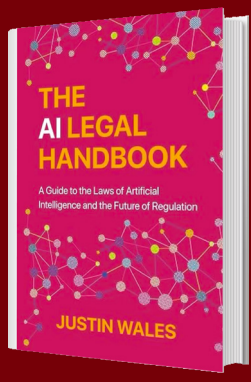

НОВЫЕ КНИГИ

Justin Wales. The AI Legal Handbook: A Guide to the Laws of Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Regulation. Publisher: Electric Connected LLC. 2026. – 282 p.

ISBN-13: 979-8990471931

In The AI Legal Handbook, Justin Wales offers a clear and practical guide to the law of artificial intelligence, covering everything from the origins of modern AI to generative models, autonomous systems, and the outer edges of emerging machine intelligence. Drawing on real-world experience, the book serves as an accessible introduction to the core technologies, legal frameworks, and policy developments shaping one of the most important fields of our time.

The book explains the legal issues that matter most, including intellectual property, liability, privacy, bias, disclosure, regulation, and the growing tension between innovation and oversight. It also explores fast-moving developments in federal and state policymaking, the rise of large language models, and the broader legal and societal questions raised by AI’s expanding role in business, government, and everyday life.

Written for law students, attorneys, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and business leaders, this is an essential resource for understanding and navigating the rapidly evolving landscape of artificial intelligence law.