

# From the Dean

## Dear Alumni and Friends,

Having just completed my first semester at this wonderful law school, I take this opportunity to thank all of you for your warm welcome, support, and advice as I have settled into my new role as dean. I have come to appreciate what a strong and vibrant community we have at Duke Law School. The members of our faculty are superb teachers and scholars. It is a great learning experience to hear about their scholarship and various projects. The alumni are accomplished and have pursued a variety of different career paths. We have alumni in all corners of the country and the world. Their loyalty to the Law School, their enthusiasm, and their high expectations both set a high standard and help us to achieve it. Finally, our students are just delightful. They are impressively smart, nice, and idealistic. They want to use their law training to make the world a better place.

Like so many organizations, a law school thrives on leadership. We have been blessed with able leadership from deans, faculty, and alumni. Because of this history of strong leadership, we can and should have ambitious goals for this school. Our overarching goal, supported by the faculty and our alumni leadership boards, is simply stated: We want Duke Law School to be the most exciting place in the country to study law, whether as a member of the faculty or the student body. To do that, and in keeping with the Law School's most recent five-year plan, we must focus on 10 areas:

- 1. Faculty enhancement:** We should expand our exceptional faculty with new hires in the areas of law and business, international and comparative law, law and economics, jurisprudence, criminal law, and legal history. (See Page 34 for a story about our two most recent hires, Ernest Young, a top federalism scholar, and Jack Knight, a renowned political scientist who studies the judiciary, among other topics.)
- 2. Scholarship funding:** To compete for the very best students in the country and the world, we need to offer better scholarship assistance and strengthen our Mordecai Scholars program, which provides full-tuition grants to the very top applicants.
- 3. Endowment for clinics and support for centers:** Our clinical programs offer our students the experiential opportunities an excellent legal education demands. Our centers fuel the vibrant intellectual life of this law school. Both require consistent and ongoing support to flourish.
- 4. Alumni enrichment:** Duke Law should be an institution of life-long learning and engagement. We want to expand opportunities for alumni to share their experience and expertise through participation in conferences and symposia and service as mentors, teachers, and advisers. We also want to provide continuing opportunities for our alumni to learn about legal scholarship and developments in the law, particularly as they contemplate new career directions and possibilities.
- 5. Curriculum:** We will continue to strengthen our legal writing program and expand opportunities for practical skills training, leadership, interdisciplinarity, and creative problem-solving as we prepare our graduates for law practice. We also are seeking ways to help them consider what it means to have a satisfying career in the law.
- 6. Service and leadership:** Our curriculum must give students the skills they need to become effective, ethical leaders, while instilling in them a desire and sense of obligation to serve the community and profession. We will explore permanent funding sources for public interest fellowships and creative new partnerships with community organizations.



**7. Diversity:** Expanding the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of the legal profession is important to the profession's ability to lead and serve. Efforts to further diversify our student body and faculty should be coupled with the development of "pipeline" programs to provide academic support and generate interest in legal careers among young minority students. A more diverse student body also will translate — over time and with the right kind of support — into a more diverse faculty.

**8. Special projects and centers:** Our new center on criminal justice and professional responsibility was announced by Duke President Richard Brodhead last September; we also are exploring options for new clinics, a judicial institute, and a "Duke in D.C." externship program, among other possible initiatives.

**9. The international law school:** We must respond to the increasing importance and centrality of international law and institutions by working to "internationalize" the Law School. Other parts of the university are establishing new degree-granting campuses abroad. We should consider whether to join in such endeavors. We should increase the number of visiting faculty from foreign institutions and expand upon our summer programs in Hong Kong and Geneva.

**10. Joint degrees and interdisciplinarity:** We want to ensure that our students can take full advantage of Duke's unique strength in collaborative research across disciplines by reducing financial and administrative barriers to joint degrees and increasing interdisciplinary opportunities more generally.

We can maintain our unique Duke culture while striving for excellence and service across a broad range of activities and study. With the help of our alumni, faculty and many friends, we can accomplish these goals and help Duke Law achieve its full potential.

Thank you, again, for your support and good wishes. I look forward to working with you in the months and years to come.

Sincerely,

David F. Levi