

## From the Dean



DEAN DAVID F. LEVI

### Dear Friends,

**D**UKE LAW SENT ANOTHER CLASS of talented, young lawyers into the world this past May. They are among the most accomplished students this Law School has ever seen. They have had the benefit of studying under a remarkable faculty and, equally important, they have had the benefit of learning from one another. They now join our distinguished alumni body and look forward to fulfilling careers in the law.

Even as we admire their accomplishments and ability, we are somewhat concerned for them and the classes behind them. They are launching their careers during a time of great uncertainty. None of us knows whether the changes and contractions in the legal economy are permanent. But we and they must be prepared for a period of continued disruption in the legal profession — just as the Law School and Duke must be prepared for a period of declining endowment revenue.

One way we are meeting this challenge is by working harder than ever to open up the broadest range of career opportunities for our students. We are encouraging them to think expansively about places and positions they may not have previously considered. Through our Bridge to Practice Program, funded in part by alumni, we have created internships for graduating students, many of which have led to permanent employment.

Alumni all over the country, under the leadership of our Law Alumni Association and its chair, Kodwo Gharthey-Tagoe '88, sprang into action this spring to find employment possibilities for our graduating class. As a result of these efforts, all of our 3Ls had jobs by the time they graduated, even though many have been told to report to work months later than expected. I thank all of our alumni who help to mentor and place our graduates; you have made a difference. We will continue to need your help in the years ahead.

Of course, the most important way to meet the challenge of a weak legal economy is to make sure that our graduates are ready on "Day One." Duke graduates are still in high demand. These troubled times serve to emphasize the value of a Duke Law degree and an education that integrates the interdisciplinary study of the law with skills training in an intellectually rigorous setting.

We continue to strengthen our skills training and our practice curriculum. We have nine clinics, each offering excellent experience with real cases and clients. Our moot court and mock trial programs are among the best in the country. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito will teach a weeklong intensive course this fall, further expanding our programs in appellate litigation. We have one of the strongest legal writing programs in the country, thanks to the addition of more full-time writing faculty and new upper-level writing courses. We also have added to the ranks of our professors of the practice, who are now offering an array of courses to students seeking the most challenging coursework in specialized areas, including transactional work and litigation. And we continue to develop our curriculum to further unite the study of substantive law with the problem solving, organizational, writing, and speaking skills needed for practice.

Our interdisciplinary approach will become ever more critical. Throughout Duke University, our students' future clients are receiving their education. Through collaboration with those in other professional fields, we have the opportunity to teach our law students how their future clients will think and what their goals will be. Through new courses in the Law School, we are teaching the basics of business, accounting, and finance. Through joint ventures with our counterparts, such as our Environmental Law and Policy Clinic, we are bringing law students together with colleagues across campus to problem solve. We are part of a great university that allows us to draw upon the knowledge and teaching of faculty who are leaders in the fields of business, environmental studies, public policy, medicine, engineering, and more. What a huge benefit this is to our students — and to their future employers.

One example of how fully integrative a Duke Law education can be is our new Duke in D.C. program. During the spring semester, eight Duke Law students worked full time in congressional offices, the judiciary committee, and lobbying organizations. They worked on legislation by day, and by night studied their work from an academic perspective under the tutelage of two scholar-practitioners, Sen. Ted Kaufman and Professor Chris Schroeder. We are expanding Duke in D.C. this fall and spring to include the regulation of financial institutions and the making of environmental policy.

Difficult times call for new ideas and new approaches. At the Law School, we have tightened our belt, but we remain focused on recruiting and retaining the strongest possible teaching and research faculty and on helping our students with scholarships, internships, and other opportunities. We have been successful this year on both fronts — we have hired remarkable new faculty and at the same time have expanded our financial aid. We see opportunities for growth amidst the challenges we face. I have every confidence that with the help of the entire Duke Law community we will emerge stronger than ever, with graduates who are prepared for the most demanding and fulfilling kinds of law practices and who will take their place within the leadership of our profession.

I am grateful for the support of our friends and alumni and look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David F. Levi". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

David F. Levi  
Dean and Professor of Law