Message from the Dean

Dear Alumni and Friends:

A new dean is always experiencing firsts: the first official event presided over, the first meeting with alumni, the first holiday party or CLF Auction or Law School Musical or graduation as dean. A substantial part of a dean’s first few months is learning the inner workings of the Law School, such as how large events are run behind the scenes or the details of fundraising.

Being involved in the creation of the Law School Record for the first time has been very interesting—working with our team to decide what topics to dive into deeply and share with all of you, and, of course, writing my first Dean’s Message. As you will see inside, this issue is full of content that shows why I am so pleased to be your new dean and why I am justifiably confident about the future of our Law School.

I am getting to know students in a whole new way in this role and enjoying how they interact with all parts of our educational endeavor. Two stories in this issue showcase different aspects of our extraordinary clinical programs. One focuses on our newest clinic, which is working at the forefront of legal issues with start-ups in Chicago and elsewhere. The Innovation Clinic gives our students the experience of working with entrepreneurs and early-stage investors from across campus and across the country. The other story looks at a new program from our long-established Mental Health Advocacy Clinic that engages with complex issues of blame and punishment that are at the heart of our legal system. The range of topics covered in our clinics astounds me, and I am very proud of the practical experiences and strong belief in pro bono work that our students take with them into their legal careers.

Our faculty continue to be the most active and influential legal scholars in the country. It has become almost a cliché to talk about their exceptional intellectual engagement with the most important legal issues of our day, but cliché or not, it is our core strength. As you will see in this issue, our faculty members—across many legal disciplines—continue our long tradition of dialogue with other parts of the University in their interdisciplinary work, which we celebrated at the Law School’s panel for the 125th anniversary of the University. You can also read about how we bring scholars from all over the University to the Law School in certain areas of research, such as our housing-focused Kreisman Institute.

As I’ve been settling into this deanship, I’ve greatly enjoyed traveling the country and introducing myself to our alumni and friends (for those I have not met yet, you can read a bit about my priorities and background in the Q&A on page 2). I have been struck by the closeness of the network formed by our community—I have enjoyed hearing stories from alumni about the professors who danced at their weddings, the classmates who are godparents to their children, and the bond they feel with the UChicago Law attorneys they work with in their practices. I hope you will also enjoy reading, as I did, about our many current students who have familial connections with alumni—some for three or four generations! These stories give me a wonderful perspective when I read the Class Notes, a feature of the Record that so many alums tell me that they read first.

There is so much to celebrate at the Law School, and also so much more that we can do together. I look forward to meeting you on the road or at the Law School and sharing many more issues of the Record with you.

Warmly,

Thomas J. Miles