

Message from the Dean

Dear Alumni and Friends –

The legal profession, if you can believe the regular breathless reports in the media, is behind the times. The profession is accused of resting on old methods and practices, and law schools are thought of no differently. I have two responses to these accusations. The first is that I proudly respond that there are many ways in which the same old thing is good—how can one complain about excellent scholarship being produced by an extraordinary and hard-working faculty, about students of the highest caliber learning from professors who place high value on both teaching and collaboration?

But I also respond that there are many ways in which law schools need to change with the times. As the practice of law evolves and our graduates take ever more varied career paths, the Law School must continually ensure that our graduates



leave here with the skills to enter practice and to become leaders in whatever field they choose. We have a long history of this kind of evolution, such as the introduction of Elements of the Law to the curriculum (now imitated at some other law schools), the first comprehensive legal research and writing curriculum in the country, pioneering innovations in interdisciplinary approaches to law, and our role in the emergence of clinical legal education as a critical part of the law school experience and pioneering the development of new kinds of clinics for emerging areas of law.

In this issue, you will read about how we are continuing this long-standing practice by even further enmeshing the doctrinal and the experiential parts of our curriculum. Our entire faculty—which now includes two full-time Professors from Practice—works together to ensure that we continue to engage our students in deep analysis of theory in conjunction with the application of that theory in practice. I hope you will enjoy reading about the courses and initiatives that build on our long-standing commitment to graduating well-rounded and highly prepared alumni.

Part of this faculty-wide commitment involves our core value of close relationships between faculty members and students. In this issue you can also read about how faculty are bringing to the students the long-standing practice of workshopping their papers with their peers. These so-called “Mini WIPs” train students in critical thinking, expose them to cutting-edge scholarship, and educate them in how scholars wrestle with both theoretical and empirical topics. Both students and faculty enjoy these Mini WIPs, with faculty reporting they get as much (or more!) out of them as the students do.

The marriage of theory and practice is exemplified by my colleague Nick Stephanopoulos, whose work on a test for courts to use in gerrymandering cases is showcased in our cover story. Nick’s ideas have quickly proven influential, so much so that he has become heavily involved in the Wisconsin gerrymandering case that will reach the Supreme Court this fall. I hope you will join me and our students in following its progress.

I know that no one better understands this relationship between theory and practice than our alumni. Nearly every time I speak with alumni I hear stories of how some nugget they picked up in class or Green Lounge conversation with a professor was critical to how they approached a real-world problem years (or even decades) later. I am delighted that this issue showcases six of our newest alumni putting their Law School training to use in the public sector fellowships made possible by alumni generosity. In addition, I hope you will read this year’s inspiring graduation speeches, especially the one by Lisa Monaco, ‘97, who brought her Law School training all the way to the Oval Office.

This coming school year is shaping up to be both exciting and engaging. I look forward to talking with you soon about all that is old and new at the Law School.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Miles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas J. Miles