



# SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

September 13, 2023

L'Shana Tovah!

As we approach the Days of Awe between Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), I would like to extend my warmest wishes to all of you for a Blessed New Year!



In this sacred season, we are called to express our profound gratitude for the creation of our common home by renewing our vows to care deeply for each other, repenting for our transgressions, repairing the harm done to others, returning to our best selves, and reconciling our personal paths with the greater good.

In this same spirit of re-creation, our law school community continues to design innovative ways to live out our Jesuit, Catholic mission and the Universal Apostolic Preferences, which call us to collaborate in the care of our common home, to walk with the poor, the marginalized, and those whose dignity has been violated in a mission of reconciliation and justice, and to accompany each other in the creation of a hope-filled future.

At the recent Faculty Awards Ceremony, the University honored members of our Law faculty for their curricular innovations, sustained excellence in teaching, and interdisciplinary work to advance justice. Professors Eric Goldman and Laura Norris received the Brutocao Family Foundation Award for Curriculum Innovation for their development of both the Tech Edge J.D. and the Privacy Certificate; Professor David Sloss received the University Award for Sustained Excellence in Scholarship for his monumental work in the field of international law and justice; and Professor David Ball was recognized for his influential and collaborative cross-disciplinary work in addressing racial disparities in the criminal justice system. Congratulations to our colleagues who exemplify our collective dedication to use our talents and tenacity to innovate for the greater good!

We have also innovated for the greater good by launching our path-breaking [Flex J.D.](#), which makes our outstanding legal education more accessible to extraordinary

students from all walks of life, whose working or family commitments might have otherwise prevented them from going to law school. Delivered in a hybrid format, our Flex J.D. provides the same world-class education and networking opportunities offered by our top-ranked Silicon Valley-based law school, with greater flexibility to serve the holistic needs of our students.

And we have renewed our commitment to reconciliation and justice for all. Through a collaboration with [Billie Mizell](#) and other champions for justice, we have been able to give all of our first-year students the unique opportunity to journey to San Quentin Rehabilitation Center and sit with incarcerated persons in a communal transformative justice circle. [In his recent brilliant and beautiful commencement address at Santa Clara, Father Greg Boyle, S.J.](#), inspired us to go to the margins of society “because that’s the place you need to stand in order to erase them.” In answering Father Boyle’s urgent call, we will go to those margins, not to move them to the middle, but to encircle them with new centers of deep love for the infinite dignity and worth of every human being.



We are particularly grateful to be supported in our mission by Father Boyle, as well as by our colleagues at other Jesuit law schools and universities. On September 8, I had the honor of speaking at a conference with other Jesuit University leaders and law school deans about how best to advance our mission in the wake of recent Supreme Court barriers to our efforts to expand access and opportunity to students from all walks of life. I reflected on the important work that we will need to do as a community—at Santa Clara and throughout the broader Jesuit network—to strive to advance our Jesuit, Catholic mission, which compels us to work even harder to achieve affordable access, inclusive excellence, and a genuine sense of belonging for all of our students.

In keeping with our commitment to engage in reflection and renewal, the Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center is hosting its 2023 [Annual Celebration](#) on September 29, honoring the Community, Commitment & Courage that has gone into its work over the past year. On October 5th, our Northern California Innocence Project will be hosting its annual [Justice for All Awards Gala](#) at the Julia Morgan Ballroom in San Francisco.

I hope that you will all be able to join us at these upcoming events, and I pray that in this New Year, each of you will be inscribed for blessing in the Book of Life.

With warm regards and great gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael". The lettering is cursive and fluid, with a large initial 'M'.

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