



SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

January 8, 2024

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year to you all!

I hope you had a wonderful holiday break, and I wish you a very happy, healthy, fulfilling, peaceful, and loving new year!

As we enter this New Year, let us resolve to embrace our challenges and opportunities as one community, knit together by our enduring Santa Clara Law values: academic excellence, professionalism, justice-building, service to others, empathy, mutual respect, gratitude, and loving-kindness.



In the first few weeks of the spring semester, we have so many special events that manifest these enduring values, including our luncheon on January 11th recognizing our terrific first-generation students; our Martin Luther King Jr. Day programs on January 16th honoring a true champion for racial justice, economic justice, and peace; our Law School Basketball Night on January 25th proclaiming our shared school spirit; our Diversity & Inclusion Celebration on February 9th, lifting up Carlos Rosario and the Elevate Community Center for their inspiring work to pursue equity and justice for all; and our WCC Silicon Valley Law Fair on February 10th, expanding access to legal education for aspiring law students.

Our fundamental communal values also empower us to work together to address the serious conflicts that plague our common home. I am so proud that during the fall semester, in which so many universities were riven with vile slurs, hate, and division over the horrors in the Middle East, virtually all members of our law school community used their words to heal rather than to harm and used their formidable legal skills to engage in respectful discourse and professional persuasion rather than thoughtless theatrics and counter-productive calumny. Throughout the coming year, we will continue to address the very difficult issues in the Middle East through reflective and responsible dialogue and analysis, guided by our expert faculty and administrative team.

In the new year, we will also work with our university partners to develop a series of enlightening forums dedicated to upholding our precious democracy. As a Jesuit law school, we have a special obligation to model and advance democratic values, including the rule of

law, self-governance, voting rights, power sharing, judicial independence, diversity of thought, and peaceful dispute resolution.

In his major address to the International Association of Jesuit Universities, Arturo Sosa, S.J., Father General of the Society of Jesus, recently called on Jesuit institutions of higher learning “to better contribute to the deepening and expansion of democracy, which is threatened today even in those countries in which democracy has a long tradition...” Father Sosa powerfully reminds us that, “[a]s universities whose identity includes the commitment to the mission of reconciliation and justice, we have the enormous responsibility of helping to distinguish the truth from the falsehoods used to justify autocrats who present themselves as the only authentic defenders of the people. As exponents of democratic culture, we know that it is citizens who are aware, free, with contrasting ideas, capable of dialogue and of taking decisions within the horizon of the common good, who make possible the politics that lead to justice and fullness of life for all human persons, in harmony with the environment.”

In this glorious new year, may we answer Father Sosa’s call to come together as a beloved law school community, engage in communal discernment for democratic principles and the common good, pursue justice and reconciliation, and foster the fullness of life for all humankind.

With warm regards and great gratitude,

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

Michael J. Kaufman (He/Him/His)
Dean and Professor of Law
Santa Clara University School of Law
mjkaufman@scu.edu