



SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

November 1, 2023

Dear Friends,

The terror, atrocities, and bloodshed in the Holy Land have caused unimaginable pain, grief, and loss to our Palestinian and Israeli sisters and brothers. I know that so many of us in our own law school community are suffering deeply, not only from the traumatic events in the middle east, but also from the heinous anti-semitism, Islamophobia, blood libel, and unadulterated, hate-filled violence at home. The School of Law and the University have unequivocally condemned, and will always unequivocally condemn, all such abhorrent conduct. Please see the [President's message](#), which we strongly support.



Although it is tempting for us to feel hopeless and helpless in the midst of this ongoing tragedy, I am truly heartened by the love and support which our students, faculty, and staff-educators have given to each other. On other campuses throughout the country, the events in the middle east have exacerbated expressions of hate and acts of division, but the members of our law school community have chosen instead to lift each other up and to embrace our ethic of loving kindness.

In my last message, I mentioned our dedication to cura personalis, which is manifest in countless ways, including our trauma-informed practices. Those practices, which call us to build strong relationships with each other based on trust, are more vital now than ever. I am grateful that so many of our faculty, students, and staff-educators understand and expertly respond to the long-term and intergenerational impact of traumatic experiences.

We also have incarnated our commitment to cura personalis by creating a culture of restorative justice community circles. Many of our faculty, staff-educators, and students are trained to be leaders of these circles, which offer all of us an opportunity to sit together and really listen to each other. The ability to sit in circles with each other during this difficult time has been uplifting. The members of each of our community circles develop their own shared norms for their dialogue, but those norms include the overriding belief that each member of our community acts with the utmost good faith and respects the thoughts, feelings, intentions, and life-experiences of all other members. It is clear that those powerful norms permeate our law school community, even outside of the circle setting.

I am also so grateful that our students in our various law student organizations have engaged in respectful dialogue with each other across their differences and have shown each other tremendous grace even when the discussions might become difficult.

Our incredible student leaders, like Noel Ben Salam, the President of our Middle East North Africa Law Student Association, and Karina Vals, the President of our Jewish Law Student Association, have lifted all of us up through multi-faith vigils, collaborative professional networking events, and large and small gestures of empathy and compassion. In the midst of all of their challenges, our extraordinary students also joined with faculty and administrators to volunteer at Second Harvest of Silicon Valley to package food for families in need, as the culmination of their many community service activities throughout our Center for Social Justice and Public Service's Pro Bono Week.

Inspired by our caring faculty and staff-educators, our students have chosen to use their words--the clay of the lawyer's craft--to heal rather than to harm, to repair rather than to rent, and to pray rather than to prey. We are all truly blessed to be members of a beloved law school community, which always strives to be a great source of light, hope, healing, and love to each other and to our very broken world.

With warm regards and tremendous gratitude,

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

Michael J. Kaufman (He/Him/His)
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