



SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

April 9, 2024

Dear Friends,

We are rising together!

We have made great measurable progress in advancing our mission, building on our distinctive strengths, achieving our strategic objectives, and promoting exceptional student outcomes. Although we don't need the various commercial publications engaged in the rankings business to validate our progress, it's always nice when they do so.

In the latest law school rankings released today by US News, as well as in additional rankings provided by publications like PreLaw Magazine for National Jurist, Santa Clara Law:

- Significantly improved its overall reputation ranking among academic peers, judges, and attorneys, including jumping up 10 spots to #70 in the country in its stature among jurists and lawyers;
- Retained its title as the #1 part-time JD program in Northern California and rose to #18 among all part-time JD programs in the country;
- Continued to be at the very top of all intellectual property programs throughout the nation—now ranked alone as # 4 in the country by US News and honored with an A+ grade for Technology Law by PreLaw Magazine;
- Markedly improved its already high ranking as a “best international program” to #33 and received an A+ rating for international law from PreLaw Magazine;
- Improved its ranking for “best legal writing program” to #51;
- Dramatically improved 31 spots in its ranking for “best clinical training program” (now #58);
- Was honored in the new category of “best dispute resolution program” as #64 in the country;
- Jumped 23 places to become #61 in “best criminal law programs”;
- For the first time, was named one of the very best law schools for practical training, receiving an A- ranking from PreLaw Magazine;
- Was ranked #36 in the nation for its success in placing a high percentage of its graduates into the world's 100 largest law firms, anchoring it within the coveted Top 50 Law Schools of Choice for AmLaw 100 firms;

- Continued to be honored as one of the most diverse and inclusive law schools in the country, including earning an A+ ranking as the best law school for Asian students and an A ranking as the best law school for Latinx students; and
- Achieved strong rankings for additional specialty programs, including business and corporate law (#73), tax (#81), environmental law (#88), and health law (up 16 places to #97).

I can assure you that we will not rest on these laurels. As detailed below, we are working very hard together to further strengthen our law school, particularly our student credentials and student outcomes, including our bar exam and employment success.

Santa Clara Law’s successful steps to advance our mission, build on our distinctive strengths, achieve our strategic objectives, and promote exceptional student outcomes.

Promoting Student Access and Success

With the support of the university and our loyal and generous alumni, we have begun to dramatically increase financial assistance and scholarships for incoming and continuing students, empowering us to reach our shared goal that every student admitted to our law school will be able to enroll and successfully graduate regardless of their financial circumstances.

In addition, we have implemented effective strategies for expanding career placement opportunities for all of our graduates and alumni, including by providing wrap-around, individualized career support, coaching, and mentoring for our students, strengthening relationships with law firms of every size and practice area, diversifying the positions available to our graduates, leveraging our unique pathways to in-house counsel and industry positions, and ensuring that public service positions, judicial clerkships, and fellowships are attainable and affordable options for every one our students.

We have also incorporated into our curriculum proven bar exam success programs so that every student will have access to bar exam preparation support throughout their law school experience and be able to take advantage of a premier bar exam preparation course at no cost upon their graduation.

Although these forward-looking concrete improvements have not yet been included by US News into its lagging overall ranking of #158 for our full-time JD program, they will ultimately have a positive long-term impact on that ranking in the next few years as our outstanding students graduate and find increasing bar exam and employment success. In the interim, our improvements already have provided a great benefit to all of our students and the clients and communities that they are called to serve.

Building on our Distinctive Strengths

We will also continue to build on our many additional distinctive strengths, strengths which may not be captured in any single ranking, but which matter greatly, including:

- The extraordinary overall diversity of our students' backgrounds and life experiences (57% of them identify as students of color and 26% as first-generation students), making Santa Clara Law one of the most diverse and inclusive law schools in the nation;
- Our innovative programs, particularly our often-imitated, but never duplicated, game-changing Flex JD, TechEdge JD, and Public Interest JD;
- Our unmatched global impact, including our enviable record of offering the most accredited study abroad programs of any law school in the country, our exceptional externship placements for our students throughout the world, and our growing partnerships with the world-wide Jesuit law school and university networks;
- Our impactful clinical programs, including the Katharine and George Alexander Community Law Center, Northern California Innocence Project, Entrepreneurs' Law Clinic, International Human Rights Clinic, Ninth Circuit Immigration Appellate Practice Clinic, and our new Mediation Clinic;
- The comprehensive credentials of all of our incoming full-time and part-time students, which (in addition to carefully contextualized authentic assessments and prior academic success) are key indicators that they will be outstanding law students and leading legal professionals, including their work experience, first-generation journeys, hurdles overcome, lived experiences, and strength of character;
- The complete evidence of our students' successful outcomes, including the return on their investment; social mobility; exceptional degree of placement into in-house counsel positions, the world's largest law firms, and public service organizations; high rate of becoming law firm partners; recognized and uncommon ability to engage in design thinking, perspective-taking, active listening, and respectful discourse across difference; leadership in industry, government, and private practice; enduring ethical compass; life-long devotion to democratic values and community service; and proven dedication to serving their clients and communities with competence, conscience, and compassion;
- The work of our growing superstar faculty of prolific scholars and award-winning teachers, and our dedicated staff-educators, in advancing the common good through their impactful research, transformative clinical programs, and dedication to whole-student success, belonging, and well-being;
- The engagement and support of our intensely loyal and prominent alumni;
- Our beautiful state-of-the-art law school building and campus;
- Our presence within an outstanding University;
- Our prime location and strong network within the world's center of innovation and economic opportunity; and
- Our vital social justice mission, which calls us all to care deeply for each other and to use our legal education to do well and to do good, particularly for those in greatest need.

With warm regards and tremendous gratitude,

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

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