Welcome back to our returning students -- and a very special welcome to our entering 1L class. We know you will make your mark as others you follow have done. You are 255 in strength and have in aggregate the highest median undergraduate GPA in USD law history! You come from diverse backgrounds (34%) and slightly more than a quarter of you (26%) are the first in your family to achieve a four year college degree.

Most important of all, you are resilient and flexible, as evidenced by your fast adjustment to this most unusual of semesters. We look forward to working with you in person as soon as we all can safely do that.

I am pleased to report that the ABA reviewed and approved our request for a variance for 2020-2021 from the in-person class requirement. We do not yet know if we will be completely remote in spring 2021 or offer a combination of hybrid and remote courses. The remote option will be available to all law students as previously discussed (with possibly a few exceptions for some experiential courses). Information will be forthcoming.

- **Academics: Spring 2021**
  1. We will be offering two new upper level classes: American Indian Law and Consumer Law.
  2. As promised last summer, all law students will be able to opt for 100% remote courses. (Note this excluded a very small number of experiential electives that professors believe must be in person. Information on the option process will be sent to all law students in the next couple of weeks.

- **Academic Success Resource Center (ASRC).** The ASRC is physically closed at this time. However, there are a number of study aid resources available through the LRC [here](#). Additionally, the Academic Success and Bar Programs team is still here to support you! If you need to schedule an appointment for any reason, including advice on effective study aids and tactics, you can do so via Calendly. You can make an appointment with Director Kevin Sherrill by clicking [here](#) or with Assistant Director Jennifer Dean by clicking [here](#). Email [lawacademicssuccess@sandiego.edu](mailto:lawacademicssuccess@sandiego.edu) if you have any questions or would like additional guidance on seeking out resources.
● **Dean Search Update.** As many of you know, the School of Law is in the process of searching for our next dean. The university retained an executive search firm to handle the overall process and appointed an Advisory Committee with membership from the School of Law faculty, administration, and alumni, the Student Bar Association (SBA) President, and other university representatives. A good number of candidates applied for the dean position; for reasons of confidentiality, the identity of the candidates cannot be disclosed publicly as to do so will mean that some candidates will opt out (per the search firm’s communications with them). The Advisory Committee conducted first round interviews to determine a small group of finalists who have been invited for virtual visits this fall. As part of each visit, candidates will be interviewed by the School of Law faculty and senior administrative team, the SBA Executive Board and student leaders, and other institutional representatives and leadership. The Advisory Committee will gather information from the interviews and provide input to President James T. Harris III and Provost Gail F. Baker for their final decision. Depending on the candidate that is selected, it is possible that a new dean may join the School of Law in January 2021 or in time for the 2021/2022 academic year.

● **Exam Administration.** All exams this semester (mid-term, interim assessments and final exams) will be open book, open note. We have purchased an enhanced platform from Examplify, which will put some additional controls in place. Every student will be required to sign an Honor Code Acknowledgement and Affirmation document. More information will be forthcoming.

● **Legal Research Center (LRC).** In order to help students prepare for their exams during the COVID-19 crisis, the LRC recently secured online access Wolter-Kluwer’s online study aid package, which includes such popular titles as *Examples and Explanations, Emanuel Law Outlines & Crunchtime,* and the *Glannon Guides,* to name a few. The expense is not insignificant, so this is a year-to-year decision based on available funds. We were fortunate last year (along with other law schools) in having one no-cost year. Wolter-Kluwer is now charging law schools, based on the number of students (not the number of students using it).

In addition, as a reminder, students can access popular series such as *Gilbert Law Summaries, Sum+Substance, Nutshells,* and others through West Academic Study Aids, and titles from Lexis, such as *Questions & Answers and the Understanding* series. All of these resources can be accessed through the LRC’s Remote Services & Resources page. The titles in the Wolter-Kluwer package will be accessible by students by September 8th.

● **Office of Career and Professional Development (OCPD).** Be sure to read the regular communications and newsletters from OCPD to stay updated on recruiting and other fall programs being presented by OCPD. Virtual events spotlighting both law firms and public employers are now in the planning stages.
Spring 2020 Credits. USD School of Law requires a minimum of 70 letter-graded credits for graduation. However, due to the pandemic, our law school moved to a P/NC system last semester for all courses in Spring 2020 (except short courses already completed and grades posted). Any courses originally designated as letter-graded in Spring 2020 and graded Pass/No Credit will count as letter-graded for the purposes of meeting the minimum of 70 letter-graded credits. Students are still required to take a minimum of 88 total credits.

Student Town Halls. We will be continuing the practice of Town Halls that we initiated last year during the early COVID-19 pandemic challenges. The first Town Hall is scheduled for Tuesday, September 22, 4:30 p.m. via Zoom. Details will be forthcoming.