MEMORANDUM

TO: All Law Students
FROM: Stephen C. Ferruolo, Dean and Professor of Law
DATE: April 3, 2020
SUBJECT: Updates on Law School Classes/Events for Remainder of Spring 2020 Semester

This Memorandum provides an update from the Memorandum I sent you last Friday, March 27.

Knowing that the grading issue has been weighing on many of you, I want to start by informing you that at a meeting that concluded earlier this evening, the faculty approved a mandatory Pass/No Credit grading policy for Spring 2020 courses. I want to thank all those students who provided their views, opinions, and suggestions about grading and related issues. We are working on finalizing a memo describing the grading policy and providing information about how class ranking, academic standing, scholarship retention and renewal, and other matters will be impacted. This memo will be sent to you early next week prior to the Town Hall meeting. We will be prepared to address your questions about the grading policy during the Town Hall.

Thank you to the many students who joined our second Town Hall on April 1. For those who were unable to participate, you can access the recorded version here. The next Town Hall has been scheduled for Wednesday, April 8 from 12:00-1:00 pm PST. I expect there will be many questions about the grading policy. Given the challenges of effectively answering questions sent via chat during the Town Hall, and to do our best to address as many of your concerns as possible during the Town Hall, we are asking that you submit your questions in advance using this form.

The following covers only information that has been updated since March 27 and is again organized alphabetically. If you do not see a topic covered below, please refer to my prior memoranda:

- **Admissions and Financial Aid.** Any student who has not borrowed their maximum loan eligibility for the academic year 2019-20, may submit a loan request form no later than April 17, 2020. We encourage students seeking assistance to cover COVID-19 related emergency expenses (e.g., noise-cancelling headphones, additional WIFI or printing costs, etc.) to first apply for funding through the Law Student in Need Fund (see Law Student Affairs below) before pursuing additional student loan eligibility.
- **Bar Exam.** As of today, four states have postponed the July 2020 bar exam: New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Hawaii. California has not made a decision, nor provided any update on when and how such a decision will be made or what options are under consideration.
NCBE. As a reminder, the NCBE develops the Multistate Bar Exam (MBE) for administration by various jurisdictions. As of today, the NCBE website states that “[t]o provide needed flexibility for jurisdictions and candidates, in addition to preparing materials for a July bar exam, NCBE will make bar exam materials available for two fall administrations in 2020: September 9-10 and September 30-October 1. Each jurisdiction will determine whether to offer the exam in July, in early September, or in late September.”

Letter from ABA Law School Deans. As I mentioned during the last Town Hall, on March 29, I, along with the deans of all California ABA-accredited law schools, urged the Supreme Court of California and the State Bar of California’s Committee of Bar Examiners (CBE) to include us in any discussion about the fate of the July 2020 bar exam. A copy of that letter is attached. Today, we received word from the CBE that they plan to meet once more on April 10 to continue discussing how to proceed with the California bar exam. In anticipation of that meeting, they are surveying all California law school deans to gather feedback on all of the current options on the table.

Student Petition. Law students from across California, including many from USD Law, have signed a letter requesting that the State Bar of California consider a diploma privilege for students, a copy of which is attached. During an emergency meeting of the Committee of Bar Examiners on March 30, many students spoke in support of the petition and advocated for the diploma privilege. However, I am not aware that there has been any formal response.

California Moral Character Application. There is a possibility that pending Moral Character applications will be abandoned if the applicant does not submit their fingerprints in a timely manner, which is not currently practicable given the closure of LiveScan and fingerprinting locations and/or applicants’ shelter-in-place status. We have reached out to the State Bar of California for information and, if necessary, will request that they consider offering applicants a blanket temporary extension.

Career and Professional Development (OCPD). As discussed in this week’s Town Hall, OCPD continues to closely monitor developments with summer and graduate employment and persists with its employer outreach efforts. Students are urged to contact their career advisors with any employment related questions or concerns as they arise. Teleconference appointments are readily available for booking in #HireUSDLaw.

Commencement.
- As President Harris announced on April 1, all May 2020 commencement ceremonies have been postponed to Homecoming and Family Weekend, October 16-18, 2020.
- Students who already rented regalia for the May 2020 ceremony will be eligible to receive a refund. Students will receive communication directly from the Torero Store with information regarding the regalia options available to them.
- The University Commencement Committee is meeting next week to confirm further details and the School of Law will provide more information about the rescheduled Law Commencement as soon as it is available. The School of Law is mindful of the possibility for conflicts if the bar exam is rescheduled and has alerted the University accordingly.

Course Evaluations. Evaluation Week is April 6-10, during which you may provide anonymous feedback on your courses via online course evaluations; see the upcoming edition of Sidebar for more information. We are aware that the University’s evaluation software sends out numerous reminder emails about evaluations. We are unable to override that automated system and apologize for any inconvenience.
● Exams and Grading.
  ○ **Exams.** All students should have received an email from the School of Law Registrar’s Office this week regarding the administration of exams.
  ○ **Grading.** Earlier today, the faculty approved a mandatory Pass/No Credit grading policy for Spring 2020 courses. We are working on finalizing a memo describing the grading policy and providing information about how class ranking, academic standing, scholarship retention and renewal, and other matters will be impacted. This memo will be sent to you early next week prior to the Town Hall meeting. We will be prepared to address your questions about the grading policy during the Town Hall.

● Law Student Affairs (LSA).
  ○ **Law Student in Need Fund.** USD Law, through the generosity of donors, has established the Law Student in Need Fund (Fund) to provide direct support for currently enrolled law students who are facing emergency circumstances that place their ability to complete their legal education in jeopardy. Administered through the Office for Law Student Affairs, the Fund is available to provide limited, temporary financial assistance to students who are unable to meet immediate, essential expenses due to unexpected hardship from an emergency situation. We expect to have the Fund and an online application process up and running shortly; LSA will send all students an email with more information next week.

● Pardee Legal Research Center.
  ○ In order to help students prepare for their exams during the COVID-19 crisis, the LRC has secured online access to Emanuel’s Law in a Flash. 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; series such as Examples & Explanations, Crunch Time, Glannon Guides, and Case Notes can be accessed through Wolters Kluwer. All of these resources can be accessed through the LRC’s Online Study Aids page on the LRC’s COVID-19 LibGuide.

**ATTACHMENTS:**
● Letter from ABA Law School Deans
● Student Petition