MEMORANDUM

TO: All Law Students
FROM: Stephen C. Ferruolo, Dean and Professor of Law
DATE: March 27, 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 20. As a reminder, you should expect to receive updates like this one each Friday. You may also receive interim communications to provide timely information on any major changes and developments.

Let me begin by addressing an important issue, acknowledging some of the great work being done by student leaders, and let you know how to submit your questions for the next Town Hall on Wednesday, April 1.

In recent weeks, we have seen increased anti-Asian behavior and rhetoric across our country, and I know that this has been especially hurtful to the Asians and Asian-Americans in our law school community. Let me ardently reaffirm, speaking for myself and the law school community, that we all have an obligation to speak out against the racism that has been sparked due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This tragic epidemic does not distinguish between race, religion, or socio-economic status, and we all must come together in solidarity to support all the members of our community, especially those who are experiencing racist incidents or discrimination. Let me also remind you that Counseling services remain available to all of our students; please contact Law Student Affairs if you need assistance accessing these resources.

I am so proud of the exemplary leadership that we have seen among law school students in this crisis. Many of you have truly risen to the occasion. I especially want to thank the members of the Student Bar Association, who have been both strong advocates for student interests and true partners in working with me and other administrators to address the important issues we face. I also want to acknowledge and express my appreciation for those student organizations, such as Pride Law, law journals, and advocacy programs, which have continued to hold programming remotely. These activities are important to our entire community. I, along with the entire faculty and administration, will continue to encourage and support student organizations and activities in any way we can.

I want to thank the nearly 300 students who joined the Town Hall on March 25. For those who were unable to participate, you can access the recorded version here. The next Town Hall has been scheduled for Wednesday, April 1 from 12:00-1:00 pm PST. Given the difficulties 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 20 and is again organized alphabetically. If you do not see a topic covered below, please refer to my March 13 and 20 Memoranda:

- **Admissions and Financial Aid.** There is still time to accept any remaining federal loan eligibility you may have for the current academic year. Please do this before April 17, 2020 to allow the Office of Financial Aid sufficient processing time. If you have questions about your remaining eligibility, please email lawaid@sandiego.edu.

- **Bar Exam.** Unfortunately, as much as I have been trying, I have been unable to get you any helpful information about the July 2020 bar exam, either in California or other jurisdictions. Despite a request that I (along with the deans of UCLA and UC Hastings) made last week for specific information about planning, we have not been told anything about the process or timing for making a decision. Today, we were told by the California State Bar that they have no “solid plans”. As indicated below the NCBE, which provides the MBE, has posted its need for a go/no go decision from state bars by May 5. Given that it is likely to be May before you know one way or the other, my advice is to stay on course and prepare for a July 2020 bar exam administered in the specified location in your jurisdiction until you hear otherwise. In the meantime, keep tracking the following websites for further information.
  - As of today, March 27, the State Bar of California’s website indicates that “[t]he impact that the ongoing COVID-19 crisis will have on [...] the July 2020 California Bar Examinations is not certain at this time. [The State Bar] is in close contact with the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) and other jurisdictions as it considers possible options for the July exam in the event that State Bar admission office closures or prohibitions against large gatherings remain in effect.” July examinees should check the State Bar of California’s website frequently for updates.
  - On Thursday, March 26, the NCBE provided a list of options to jurisdictions that administer the MBE, the MEE (Multistate Essay Examination), and MPT (Multistate Performance Test). This information can be found on the NCBE website. The NCBE will make its decision about whether to deploy the MBE, the MEE, and the MPT for a July administration by Tuesday, May 5.
  - **JUST ANNOUNCED AFTER ABOVE DRAFTED**
    New York has postponed the July 2020 bar exam to a TBD date this fall. See www.nybarexam.org for info.
    There is no indication yet about New York’s decision might affect the NCBE or decisions in other states. though I expect it will accelerate the process, especially in other UBE states.

- **Career and Professional Development (OCPD).**
  - As promised in this week’s Law Student Town Hall, attached is a memo from OCPD providing updates and current information on employment matters for all students.

- **Classes.** Any concerns about remote classes, including recording or Zoom capability, should be sent directly to lawdean@sandiego.edu.

- **Commencement.** The University will be communicating a decision about Commencement early next week. The School of Law continues to actively work with the SBA to explore possibilities for celebrating this important event appropriately.
Communications.
  - The School of Law wants to keep you connected to each other and supported by our community in the face of this unprecedented situation, so weekly publication of Sidebar will resume on Monday, March 30. For the latest institutional updates related to COVID-19, please regularly check the University and School of Law web pages.

Exams and Grading.
  - **Exams.** All exams will take place remotely as take-home exams on the originally scheduled dates. As a reminder, essay exams will be administered via TWEN and multiple choice exams will be administered via Blackboard. All exams will be open note/open book. The Honor Code will remain in full effect. More information about exams, closer to the exam date, will be forthcoming from the School of Law Registrar’s Office.
  - **Grading.** I have heard many different views expressed about grading during Wednesday’s Town Hall Meeting, as well as in the many emails you have sent before and since then. I have also been closely following what other law schools have done, are doing or are considering with respect to grades and related issues. All of your input has been shared with the faculty Task Force considering the grading issue. The Task Force began its deliberations today with a mandate to provide recommendations for discussion by the faculty on Friday, April 3. I anticipate a faculty vote and our ability to make an announcement of the grading decision and related issues within a few days thereafter. Let me make a few comments and provide you with some assurances about the decision process:
    - Your voices and concerns have been heard and will continue to be heard. I encourage you to use the Law Student Town Hall link provided above or lawdean@sandiego.edu for your questions and comments. I assure you all your input will be made available to the Task Force and the faculty and considered carefully by us all.
    - Please disregard any rumors trying to surmise what the decision will be. No recommendations or decisions have been made. What has occurred so far is a great deal of thoughtful discussion and deliberation about different options, their impact and their consequences, including consideration of what if this extraordinary situation lasts for more than one semester.
    - While we will, of course, continue to consider and be informed by the actions taken by other law schools, the outcome will not be dictated by what others have done but by what we believe is right and best for our students and law school.
    - As I said during the last Town Hall, my guiding principles are for a decision that is fair for all, motivates you to stay as focused as possible on your legal training under these extraordinary circumstances and does not put you at a competitive disadvantage relative to other students and law school graduates.
    - That being said, even though this issue has kept me (and likely many of you) awake for several nights, I do not yet know what the decision should or will be. I can simply assure you that we are listening and will then be doing our best to lead and get this right for all of you.
● **Law Student Affairs.**
  ○ *Graduating Students.* May 2020 graduates should be aware of the upcoming March 31 deadline to complete the Application to Graduate. Please refer to the email which you received on March 1 (Subject: *Important 2020 Commencement Information, Application to Graduate, and Checklist*) for additional information and instructions. August 2020 graduates will receive information regarding the Application to Graduate over the summer. All graduating students should continue to [refer to the graduation checklist](#).
  ○ *Live Well @ USD Law.* The Live Well @ USD Law newsletter with wellness resources and tips will be sent with increased frequency for the remainder of the semester, as we recognize the stress and anxiety facing law students in these uncertain times.
  ○ *SilverCloud Health.* SilverCloud Health is now available for all USD students through August 2020. SilverCloud is an online platform which offers programs that build resilience, help manage anxiety or depression, and develop skills to manage stress and sleep issues. To sign up, students can visit [gsh.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/](http://gsh.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/) and choose USD from the dropdown list to get started. In order to confirm eligibility, students will need to use their USD email address.

● **Pardee Legal Research Center.**
  ○ The LRC is working to get students online access to most of the highly used study guides in time for finals. Currently, students can access popular series such as the *Gilbert Law Summaries*, *Sum+Substance*, the *Nutshells*, and others through West Academic Study Aids. In addition, students can access series like *Examples & Explanations*, *Crunch Time*, *Glannon Guides*, and *Case Notes* through Wolters Kluwer. LRC staff is also currently working with Lexis to secure access to their study guides, which include series like the *Understanding* titles and *Question & Answers*; the hope is to have access set up in the next week or two, but in the meantime, students can get limited access to these titles through VitalSource. All of these resources can be accessed through the LRC's Online Study Aids page on the LRC's [COVID-19 LibGuide](#). Updated access information will be posted there.
  ○ The LRC was also able to secure online access to the Bluebook for our students, who can contact lrcrefer@sandiego.edu to get an individual registration key.

**ATTACHMENTS:**
● OCPD memo