Greetings Colleagues!

Congratulations on a great start to Orientation!

So many of you have worked incredibly hard to prepare for this event, and so many of you participated in the Orientation activities yesterday and today (and also last week, for those of you involved in the LLM/MSL and LEOP orientations). There is, of course, much more for us to do over the next several days, but I want to take a moment and acknowledge that we have been able to make Orientation possible only because of the efforts of people from every College department. The J.D. Orientation is spearheaded by Assistant Dean of Student Services Rupa Bhandari and the rest of the Student Services team (Flor Mesquita, Mike Stonebreaker, Leeja Patel, and Camillia Suson), but Orientation requires a College-wide effort. Thus, I thank all of you—staff and faculty—for your contributions.

I also want you to know that your efforts are enabling us to provide a significantly enhanced J.D. Orientation program that (I hope) will do a better job than ever before as we seek to provide our new 1Ls with the foundation that they will need in order to succeed in law school and in the legal profession. As you may recall, we (with your help) improved Orientation last year by adding more academic readiness programming, by increasing the emphasis on professionalism, by reimagining faculty advising, by incorporating more fun and community building, and, in order to have time for all of the additional programming, by expanding Orientation from two days to three days. I am proud to report that, this year, we are doing even more.

Thus, I would like to highlight for you the key new things that, with your help, we are providing for our 1Ls during this year’s five day (not three day) Orientation program. Both new initiatives add personalization to Orientation in order to help each student, individually, with what he/she needs for success in law school and beyond. The major new initiatives for our 2015 J.D. Orientation are as follows:

- **Individualized Writing Feedback Meetings**
  - On Thursday and Friday of Orientation, every incoming 1L will have a 25-minute one-on-one meeting with an ASP Orientation Leader to review and get feedback on a writing exercise the student will complete during the “Legal Reasoning” academic success workshop on Wednesday. We hope that these individual writing feedback meetings will give each student a better understanding about his/her strengths and weaknesses, will provide actionable feedback that the student can use to tailor
his/her efforts in law school, and will encourage each student to take advantage of ASP programming throughout the year (e.g., workshops in PREP, discussion group leader sessions and office hours). We also hope that providing this feedback to incoming students will give us, as an institution, more insights into the skills of our incoming students and into the types of support our students need for success in law school and in the legal profession. Special thanks to Laurie Zimet, Director of Academic Support, who played a critical role in implementing this new program (including by training select 2Ls and 3Ls to be ASP Orientation Leaders).

To provide some context, please note that the individualized writing feedback meetings on the fourth and fifth days of Orientation build on the academic success programs held during the first three days of Orientation. That programming has become much more robust over the past few years, and it now includes an “Introduction to the U.S. Legal System” session (reviewing the foundational structure of the U.S. legal system, introducing students to the wide array of ways in which lawyers utilize the law, and previewing for students ways in which they will encounter the legal system during their studies), an "Introduction to Legal Writing & Research" program, sample classes provided by Civil Procedure professors, a workshop on “The Classroom Experience” (helping students to understand how to prepare for, engage in, and learn from class), and an extended “Legal Reasoning” workshop (helping students begin to develop legal analysis skills and involving a writing exercise intended to introduce students to what will be expected of them on assignments and exams).

- **Orientation Electives**
  - Also on Thursday and Friday of Orientation, each incoming student will have the opportunity to participate in the elective sessions that each student believes are most relevant and useful to him/her. Faculty, staff, and upper-class students will lead a huge range of electives from which our incoming students can choose. Electives include programs that help students with academic/law school planning, professional development, health and wellness, getting to know the school, and getting to know San Francisco, the courts, and the neighborhood around UC Hastings. There will also be community-building and social activities.

Each of these new initiatives has a lot of moving parts and, thus, presents great logistical challenges. I am greatly appreciate all of the hard work that it has taken to implement these new ideas.
One last note – The Class of 2018 is an amazing group. During one of our sessions yesterday, students were asked to write down why they came to law school. Their answers were collected and posted on the bulletin board in 200 building (1st floor) in the hallway leading to the interim student lounge. Here is a picture:

I encourage you to walk past, read some of the cards, and learn a little bit about what brought our new students to UC Hastings. The short answer is that our students want to change the world, and they want to make a difference in their communities. We have reason to be very proud of them. Together, we will help them move forward toward their goals.

Thank you very much for the time and effort you have put, and will put, into the 2015 1L Orientation.

Keep up the great work!

Heather