

# MESSAGE *from the Dean*



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Kenneth B. Davis, Jr.

**E**arlier this Fall, I was pleased to welcome the Class of 2004 to their first few hours of Law School, as part of our extensive slate of Orientation activities. I wanted not only to greet them, but to congratulate them on having the good sense (or good luck) to join our ranks. Whatever factors brought you here, I told them, you now find yourself in a very special place. Wisconsin is NOT just another law school.

My words to the students echoed in my head as

I sat down to communicate with you, the readers of the *Gargoyle*. I realized that I wanted to extend the congratulations to you, our alumni and friends. You, too, have cause to be proud of this nationally preeminent law school. I do not have space here to enumerate all the reasons, but I want to focus on two: our world-class faculty and our commitment to diversity.

### CUTTING-EDGE FACULTY

One of the top reasons why we are nationally recognized is that we have a faculty who are on the cutting edge. Our faculty includes prolific scholars in all subject areas who are sought after by countless other universities, but who have chosen to come to Wisconsin and to stay here. Why Wisconsin? The answer is clear: it is because of the special work that we do here. Our research emphasis of *law & society*—looking beyond the law in the books to the interdependence between legal institutions and social institutions—is one of the common themes that unites our faculty, our students and our alumni.

Yes, being on the cutting edge is part of our birthright here. A great number of important ideas and proposals have come out of our building. Often we have been a bit out of the mainstream in our thinking—and when that has happened, more often than not, the mainstream has come to *us*.

If you are interested in learning more about the work of our faculty, I encourage you to go to our Web site (<http://www.law.wisc.edu>) and peruse the faculty biographies. I believe you will come away impressed.

### COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

Another great strength of our Law School is our strong commitment to diversity. Our students differ widely with respect to age, race, gender, life experience, sexual orientation, work experience, skills and talents, and particular interests for the practice of

law. This diversity is a benefit to *all* our students, who receive the valuable opportunity to share their learning experience with colleagues bringing different perspectives to their study of the law. Our entering classes in the last few years have included approximately 25% students of color—a statistic of which we are extremely proud, and which is the highest of any division within the University.

In this issue of the *Gargoyle*, we bring you an in-depth look at the major program that has contributed to our School's diversity for more than a quarter of a century: our Legal Educational Opportunities (LEO) Program. We look at how the program started, and what it looks like today, and we hope you will share our pride in this major success story.

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As we look to the future, I want to share with you the news that the Law School is soon to embark on a major capital campaign as part of a university-wide initiative. While our last campaign was necessary so that we could renovate our building and bring it in line with our current needs, this new effort will focus on people. For our remarkably capable faculty, we need research fellowships so that they can concentrate their summers and other available time on scholarship, and also raise their compensation to levels closer to those of our peer schools. For our impressively bright and diligent students, we need funding for scholarships, based not only on need, but also on merit.

Over the next few years, we will be communicating with our alumni and good friends, talking with you about the ways in which your gifts can have a huge impact on our ability to keep our place as one of the nation's preeminent law schools.

As you page through this latest issue of our *Gargoyle*, we hope you will agree that special things are happening here at your School. We thank all our supporters—past, current, and future—for your part in maintaining the quality of our endeavor. ♦