



**MARQUETTE**  
UNIVERSITY

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**LAW SCHOOL**

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Dear Future Marquette Lawyer,

Welcome to a new academic year. I extend the good wishes of my faculty and staff colleagues, and indeed the entire Marquette Law School community, including our distinguished adjunct faculty, countless volunteers and donors, other Marquette University employees, and the vast network of Marquette lawyers throughout the region and the world. You are part of a great tradition and community.

My purpose here is to provide an update concerning the Law School. Because this is appropriate in a professional school whether any particular bit of information is happy or less so, such a letter has been my custom each semester for the past decade.

**1. New Students.** Certainly it is a happy thing to welcome our new students, the vast majority of whom are beginning their legal education. Specifically, joining us this academic year are slightly more than 200 new law students, including 192 full-time first-year students and 18 part-time students (the corresponding numbers last year having been 203 and 23). We have maintained the 155 median LSAT of last year. While the median undergraduate GPA of matriculating students (3.28) is down slightly from last year (3.40), it is within a tenth of a point of our median over the past decade. In short, there can be little doubt that the decision by this talented group of first-year students to study at the Law School reflects well on our past achievements and their laudable ambitions. Please join me in welcoming also the small handful of other new students, whether here as transfers (7), visitors (2), on exchange from Copenhagen or Madrid (3), or in pursuit of an LL.M. in sports law (1).

I want to extend my thanks to our admissions team at the Law School, led by Assistant Dean Sean Reilly, Director of Admissions Stephanie Nikolay, and Professor Rebecca Blemberg, the last of these being the chair of the admissions committee. To their efforts this past spring we added the leadership of Matt Parlow, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. As the second-in-command in the administration, Dean Parlow is helping us marshal all of the Law School's resources as we move forward on admissions. His work, together with that of many other faculty members, underscores that there is *nothing* more important than our enrolling a class whose students possess the intellect, values, and diversity to suggest that, as Marquette lawyers, they will make lasting contributions to their—our—communities.

**2. Goings and Comings.** Changeover among students is the natural order of things at a school. The same is true, for rather different reasons, with faculty and staff. In any event, let me begin with the departures. Professor Gregory J. O'Meara, S.J., has been reassigned to Omaha, Nebraska, where he will serve as the rector of the Creighton University Jesuit community (with Creighton's law school being an incidental beneficiary

as he assumes some teaching duties there). Only the vow of obedience that a Jesuit priest takes to his superiors could separate Father O'Meara from a tenured faculty position here: he misses us—you—greatly. Andrew Faltin, director of student affairs for the past five years, departed earlier this month for a Ph.D. program at the University of Nebraska–Omaha. In his case the geography of Omaha may have been an *attraction*, as Andrew is a Nebraska native (and a graduate of the state law school). Letissa Reid, who worked for a year and a half with Assistant Dean Paul Katzman and Director of Career Planning Erin Binns, also left us this summer, as did Cath Pfeffer, a longtime administrative assistant to the faculty, who retired this past May.

Let me begin the other side of the ledger with our most prominent addition: Charles Franklin joins us as professor of law and public policy and director of the Marquette Law School Poll. Professor Franklin has held the latter position since 2012, a year in which he joined us as a visiting faculty member. Now he has resigned from his professorship in the political science department at the University of Wisconsin–Madison to join our full-time faculty. To call him our community's most prominent addition is no slight to anyone else: The frequency of appearances in the media by Professor Franklin (and, not incidentally, by Marquette University Law School) over the past year and a half has been a remarkable phenomenon—exceeded or even matched at the University only by the basketball program. Yet political polling is only part of Professor Franklin's work, and I have especially appreciated the integration of the Marquette Law School Poll with the research of faculty throughout the University, including our own Professor Michael O'Hear in the area of criminal sentencing. We anticipate great things for the University from Professor Franklin's appointment, and I am grateful to Rev. Scott R. Pilarz, S.J., president of Marquette University, for his support of the appointment, and to our alumni and other benefactors whose support of our Annual Fund has made possible the Marquette Law School Poll and numerous other aspects of our public policy initiative. Lest my point be too subtle, this last sentence reflects that we use none of your tuition money in these respects.

Additional welcomes are in order. Deborah Darin joins us as student services librarian and adjunct faculty member, filling a position that became vacant last fall. She is a member of the Wisconsin bar with extensive experience in the practice and the academy, most recently as a reference and instructional law librarian at Loyola University in Chicago. More recently—indeed, within the past week—Amy Rogan-Mehta began service as director of student development and academic success. Ms. Rogan-Mehta was scarcely gone, having graduated *summa cum laude* in the Class of 2012 and practicing during the past year at Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren in Milwaukee. Her professional background includes work as a licensed therapist and a master's degree in social work from Columbia University. She recognized the unique opportunity that this position, succeeding in part to Andrew Faltin's work, would afford her to bring together her various professional skills, and we appreciated that her combination of talents would enable us to associate academic success (I am told to avoid calling it “academic support,” for reasons to which I am generally sympathetic) with this administrative position. Ms. Rogan-Mehta's appointment is implausible only in the sense that she managed to avoid my Advanced Civil Procedure course during her time as a student and yet to achieve professional success. (It is becoming more difficult as the years go on *artfully* to plug my course.)

Other appointments are of shorter duration. Craig Gilbert of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* is here this semester as a Lubar Fellow for Public Policy Research. Mr. Gilbert is the chief of the paper's Washington bureau and an especially well-regarded reporter and observer of the Wisconsin political scene. His project will concern voter polarization in the Milwaukee metropolitan area (which he has characterized “as the most polarized part of a very polarized state in a very polarized nation”) and will explore not

only how the area came to be this way but what our stark political divisions mean for the political process and public policy in the region. Shuli Guo, a professor of law at Xiangtan University, China, is a visiting scholar at the Law School during this academic year. Professor Matt Mitten will be his primary host, but I hope that all will make Professor Guo feel welcome as he conducts a research project on sports arbitration in the United States and provides us in a number of ways the opportunity to learn about another legal and regulatory system.

Finally, while these next are neither comings nor goings, permit me to extend my warm congratulations to Matt Parlow and Paul Secunda, faculty colleagues who by university promotion are now professors of law, and Melissa Greipp, promoted to associate professor of legal writing.

**3. Events This Coming Semester.** So much is available to you in Eckstein Hall beyond the classroom. Our Boden Lecture is a flagship annual event (and not merely because it is named after a former dean, the late Robert F. Boden, who served in this position from 1965 to 1984). Heather Gerken, the J. Skelly Wright Professor at Yale Law School, will deliver this year's Boden Lecture on Monday, October 7, at 4:30 p.m., having assigned herself this provocative title: "Dark Money and the Future of Political Parties: The Real Problem with *Citizens United*." Nancy King, the Speir Professor at Vanderbilt Law School, will deliver our Barrock Lecture on Monday, November 18, at 4:30 p.m., addressing "Once a Criminal . . . ? Recidivism and Punishment in the 21st Century."

Our "On the Issues with Mike Gousha" series opens this year on September 12, with Craig Gilbert and Charles Franklin discussing polarization and politics in Wisconsin, and follows up on September 16 with NCAA President Dr. Mark Emmert (12:15 p.m. in each case). The "On the Issues" series will feature many other programs this semester, including one in combination with the annual Marburg Lecture of the business school's economics department: Raj Chetty, professor of economics at Harvard University, will return to Milwaukee (where he spent his high school years) to describe his path-breaking research on economic mobility. This joint program will occur on Tuesday, November 5, at 4 p.m.—in Eckstein Hall, as is true of all these events.

You can both learn something—as will I—and support the Law School by participating in events of this sort. The same is true of numerous other programs at the Law School, including those of the Office of Public Service and student organizations. In this last respect, you should exploit—in the positive sense of the word—Eckstein Hall for less formal events: the personal interactions engendered by the building and your access to it should benefit you both socially and educationally. For a much more specific point, you should consider forming a study group that meets in Eckstein Hall—whether you are a first-year or an upper-level student. The Law School's faculty blog also merits your attention. In short, it is never too late to rely on others to help you learn about the law or life. I hope never to stop.

**4. Strategic Planning.** The University's board of trustees approved a new strategic plan for the University at its most recent meeting, this past May, and the Law School both before and since has been working internally and with university officials to play its indispensable part in Father Pilarz's (and the board's) vision for Marquette University: "to be, and to be recognized, among the most innovative and accomplished Catholic and Jesuit universities in the world, promoting the greater glory of God and the well-being of humankind." The development of the Law School's public policy initiative, since Mike Gousha joined us as distinguished fellow in law and public policy in 2007 and now with the appointment of Professor Franklin and the prospect of an expanded Marquette Law School Poll, is certainly an innovation that has brought the University national attention. At the same time, it has connected us with Milwaukee, and the larger

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region of which we are part, in ways going beyond anything previous. This is a substantial complement to our public service work, led by Angela Schultz as pro bono director and undertaken in particular by so many Marquette law students each year, at the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic and multiple other venues.

Strategic planning involves budgeting. In these economic times, it is especially important that we be good stewards of your tuition dollars and our other resources. With any personnel departure, we assess whether the Law School should replace the person or contract the position, at least for the immediate future. Thus, in the case of some of the departures mentioned, we have elected to go without a replacement: for example, the faculty now will share three administrative assistants, down from four (and from five before our move to Eckstein Hall). There are other ways to proceed: for example, funding for Professor Franklin's appointment comes from the action of the University's president. And sometimes the program *requires* a replacement: for example, Assistant Dean Jane Casper will retire midyear—a large loss, indeed—and it is this retirement, combined with Andrew Faltin's departure, that prompted us to hire Ms. Rogan-Mehta. That appointment is a two for-one scenario on the budget front and will help ensure that we continue to provide you good service and support, in the tradition of Dean Casper and others.

I will not detail here all the other strategic decisions on the table because I wish to make a more general point. The Law School exists in a dynamic environment, and strategic planning reflects our effort to advance with changes insofar as possible. This can require difficult decisions, including where budgets should be cut and grown and (for a considerably more specific matter) whether part-time education should continue in the same form (i.e., in an evening program) as during the past decade and a half or is better offered in another way. We will consider that specific question during the coming year (any change would be phased in over time and would not affect the evening curriculum provided to anyone already admitted into the program). The mission of Marquette Law School will continue to guide us in all these strategic decisions.

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Thank you for reading this letter. Each year I exhort our graduating students always to remain readers. One otherwise has little hope of learning. My own reading includes poetry, and I recently happened upon this characterization of the great poet, William Butler Yeats: "Driven by this conviction that good art is 'composed' art, Yeats was always contemptuous of the sloppy expressionist who values his emotion more than the shaping of it. The bastard art this man produces, 'All out of shape from toe to top,' is in Yeats's eyes symptomatic of our chaotic world. Opposed to this man, the good poet must 'Sing whatever is well made.' As anyone knows who has stopped to examine closely any one of his poems—even the earliest ones—Yeats was lifelong a man who practiced absolute integrity of craft." *Yeats: A Collection of Critical Essays* 5 (John Unterecker ed., 1963). I note it here because this seemed to me also a good description of the craft or art of the lawyer and generally worth embracing. There is something to be learned in and from everyone, even if one must be judicious in the lessons taken (Yeats was scarcely admirable in *every* respect). I look forward to the coming year and to our learning from one another.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joseph D. Kearney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Joseph D. Kearney  
*Dean and Professor of Law*