

October 1, 2024

Mitchell Hamline School of Law
875 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105-3076

Dear Mitchell Hamline family,

I am excited to share that the 2024-25 academic year for Mitchell Hamline School of Law is underway! Our 361 first-year students have joined our returning students, and classes are in session.

Most of you know that I began my tenure as president and dean on July 1. Thanks to past Interim President and Dean Jim Hilbert, this transition has been easier, faster, and more productive than I would have dared hope. As part of that transition, I have had listening sessions with faculty and staff, as well as with current and former members of the board of trustees, and faculty emeriti, staff, and administrators. I have also met many of our students, alumni, and other community stakeholders. As someone coming to this marvelous and consequential institution with a newcomer's perspective, I have benefited greatly from those conversations, and they have helped me form an initial impression of Mitchell Hamline.

If I had to describe us, I would say that we are solid, and we are sound. Solid in our commitment to excellence. Sound in our mission to provide opportunities to those who might not otherwise have had them. Solid in our resolve to prepare the next generation of legal professionals. Sound in how we are positioned to meet that challenge.

Mitchell Hamline has a proud legacy spanning almost 125 years and a proud tradition as a beacon of opportunity and excellence; I am thrilled to have this opportunity to add to that history. From our founding days as the St. Paul College of Law to the establishment of the Mitchell Hamline School of Law we know today, we have been committed to the idea that the legal profession is an essential and even noble calling and that a legal education—the key to that profession—should be accessible to those who seek it regardless of their background or circumstances.

Our mission is more important now than ever. Our motto, “Great in theory. Even better in practice,” is not just a slogan. It is a guiding principle that shapes everything we do.

We recognize that education is more than just passing the bar exam. It is about developing the knowledge, skills, values, and resilience that will carry our graduates through their careers. We are not just preparing students to enter the profession; we are preparing them to thrive in it.

We have been successful for 124 years because this institution has been—and remains—a living organization that has always adapted and evolved. Almost 10 years ago, two schools merged. Almost 10 years ago, we embarked on a new modality to deliver legal education—hybrid learning, which evolved to blended learning, to accompany the in-person day and evening programs. We are Minnesota's law school with more than 23,000 alumni.

This year we introduced the Office of Culture and Inclusion. Like many other schools, at Mitchell Hamline we want to see our students engaged and passionate. In a world of polarization, that is sometimes difficult. We must recommit that we are a community of respect and empathy and come together as a community that does not condone bigotry of any kind. We will continue to improve our dialogue with one another, which began during orientation this year with a session titled *Difficult Conversations*.

As the leader of the institution, it is my goal to help us stay true to our purpose of training attorneys. You will not see official announcements from me about events or matters that do not directly affect our core mission.

Our focus is providing students, faculty, and staff with tools and skills needed to embrace diverse perspectives and experiences while promoting a culture of empathy, accountability, and mutual respect. We are an institution of ideas where competing ideas, theories of the law, and public policy can be heard. We are not afraid of ideas. We are not conflict-averse—we are a law school after all—but those debates must happen within a context of respect, tolerance, and freedom from intimidation.

I envision a Mitchell Hamline that is responsive to today's students' needs and anticipates the needs of tomorrow's legal profession. A school recognized nationally for its innovative approach to legal education while remaining a pillar of the Twin Cities community. We are a school that continues to attract students from all walks of life, not just because of our excellent academic program but because of the culture of support, collaboration, and respect that defines us.

Mitchell Hamline profoundly impacts the region, whether through our clinics, our partnerships with local organizations, or the many of you who serve in public office or represent clients from all walks of life. You are an integral part of this community; you embody the ideals of Mitchell Hamline in the legal community. As we move forward together, I ask that you join us with your support and partnership. That support can take many forms: hiring students to serve as clerks or interns, mentoring our students, teaching a class or seminar, providing crucial financial support, attending events, networking with recent graduates, or recommending students for admission. To thrive as a law school, we must all work in concert for our common purpose.

I am excited about the future we will build together. Here's to the next chapter in our storied history.

Camille M. Davidson

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Camille M. Davidson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President and Dean