Dear Friends,

I am convinced that we all have the capacity to be social justice workers no matter where the law takes us. Why? Because every legal field intersects with questions of power, privilege, and equity, from immigration to intellectual property. Those of us who'll work at law firms are wonderfully positioned to consider the least powerful and least visible among us. So, too, are the Berkeley Law graduates who open businesses, enter academia, prosecute crimes, defend suspects, join non-profits, hold political office, fight in the trenches with the oppressed, or, we truly believe, work in any other field of law.

Of course, you don’t have to graduate from Berkeley Law to be in our social justice cohort. If you work at this school, study here, or are otherwise connected to us, then I hope we’ve helped you ask questions about the policies, practices, and beliefs that shape our lives: Who benefits? Who suffers? Who’s at the table? Who is missing? What can I do? This year’s programs sought to push these questions to the front of our classrooms and community.

Serving Berkeley Law is a pleasure each day. Our students, staff, faculty, and alumni are bright, ambitious, and kind. This year brought excitement, joy, disruption, challenges, fresh ideas, growth—and no shortage of things to talk about beyond and within our walls. Our work continues in the 2016/2017 year, and we can’t wait to work with you.

On behalf of the Henderson Center for Social Justice team, thank you for another terrific year! We hope you enjoy reviewing the highlights.

Savala Trepczynski
SOCIAL JUSTICE PROGRAMS

This year, we produced and co-produced 36 programs to inspire and challenge our J.D. and L.L.M. candidates. Here are a few of our favorites.

We proudly sent 11 Berkeley Law students to the Law4BlackLives conference. Comprising the legal arm of BlackLivesMatter, this trailblazing summit convened lawyers, law students, jailhouse lawyers, and legal workers. Our students returned moved and galvanized. They then headlined a Henderson program where they reviewed the lessons and questions that grew out of this experience.


Hon. Mario G. Olmos Law and Cultural Diversity Memorial Lecture. In October 2015 we welcomed Zachary Norris, Executive Director of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, to deliver “Restructure, Restore, Reinvest: The Need for Family Centered Solutions to End Mass Incarceration.” Norris passionately reminded us that reforming the carceral state requires not just policy changes, but “a process of truth and reinvestment” in communities of color.


Ending Jim Crow for Workers in the Restaurant Industry. This installment of our Ruth Chance Lecture Series explored pilot policy interventions designed by Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC) United and the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights to assist food workers laboring under occupational segregation.


Social Justice at Berkeley Law, our newest series, exposes students to social justice scholarship happening at Berkeley Law that doesn’t make its way into the classroom. Most recently, Professor David Oppenheimer shared his research with 50+ students, describing how Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., lobbied Congress for financial reparations and supported “Operation Breadbasket,” the multi-state affirmative action employment initiative for black Americans.


From the Classroom to the Courtroom is a speaker series which invites an outside practitioner and a Berkeley Law professor to debate a local social justice issue. Most recently, Professor Bertrall Ross and EBCLC attorney Ubaldo Fernandez (Class of 2011) spoke to a diverse group of 30 students about how gentrification impacts the Bay Area’s poor residents.

From the Classroom to the Courtroom Series / Mar. 1, 2016
"Social Justice and the New Cannabis" convened leading lawyers, activist, scholars, and more than 80 students for a lively conversation about how local, national, and international drug policies thwart racial justice. Our fantastic speakers included lawyer Deborah Peterson Small of the Drug Policy Alliance, UC Berkeley lecturer Dr. Amanda Reiman, lawyer Sunshine Lencho of Supernova, community organizer Manuel La Fontaine, and activist Ngaio Bealum.

Henderson Center Co-sponsored Event / April 12, 2016

2016 PUBLIC INTEREST AND PRO BONO GRADUATION

Each year, the Henderson Center, Clinical Program, Career Development Office, and Pro Bono Program host a ceremony honoring graduating law students who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to public interest, pro bono, and social justice work.

This year we celebrated 150 J.D. students and 23 L.L.M. students who completed the Pro Bono Pledge (50 or more hours of pro bono work), did two summers of public service work, met the requirements for the Public Interest and Social Justice Certificate, or served as leaders for Student-Initiated Legal Services Projects.

HONORING THE FIRST COHORT OF "PUBLIC INTEREST AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CERTIFICATE" RECIPIENTS
Beginning this year (2015-16), the Henderson Center administered a new and long-awaited certificate program for J.D. and L.L.M. students that recognizes successful completion of a specialized course of study focused on public interest and social justice.

69 students from the Class of 2016 received the Public Interest and Social Justice Certificate. During the Public Interest and Pro Bono Graduation we asked them to stand for recognition of their accomplishment.

COMING THIS FALL...

- **Core in Context**, where we give 1L students concrete ways to interpret their core curriculum through a social justice lens. For many students committed to working for the marginalized, the first year of law school can be alarming and the law’s path-dependency and hierarchy stand in shocking relief to the “good fight” they’ve dreamt of. This series offers a welcome touchstone for our community’s newest members.

- **Critical Foundations** will build on Core in Context by introducing students to feminist legal theory, critical race theory, and the history and sociology of law— that is, essential concepts that critique the status quo. Students will leave these talks with a deeper understanding of how to bring social justice insight and energy to any legal question.

- Save the date for the Robert D. and Leslie-Kay Raven Lecture on Access to Justice, “The Supreme Court and the 2016 Election: Access to Justice at Stake” with esteemed litigator Arthur H. Bryant, Chairman of Public Justice. This event will be held on Wednesday, November 2, 2016.

- We are also delighted to welcome an array of phenomenal Ruth Chance Lecture Series speakers. They’ll give you a glimpse into starting your own legal apprenticeship program, advocating for women of color in California’s drug policy maze, working at a firm while logging thousands of pro bono hours to free a wrongfully convicted man, and more.

CELEBRATING DONORS

Our generous donors make a difference! Thank you to each person who invested in the Henderson Center with a financial gift during the 2015/2016 academic year. Your contribution to us becomes our contribution to Berkeley Law.
CONTACT US

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ABOUT US

The intellectual home of the law school’s vibrant social justice community, the Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice trains the next generation of lawyers to represent underserved communities with expertise and passion.

GIVE BACK

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