Dear Graduates and Friends,

It is no secret that the legal landscape looks dramatically different from just a few years ago. Economic forces have made clients more conservative about paying for legal services, resulting in widespread firm downsizing and a daunting job market for law school graduates. Technology has connected people like never before and offers opportunities to access legal knowledge without the assistance of lawyers. For some clients, "do-it-yourself" tools obviate the need for a lawyer. In short: The game is changing.

After a year as Dean, I am more convinced than ever that UMDLaw is a remarkable place, equipped to face the challenges and opportunities that this changing world presents, and committed to sending out new lawyers, ready to compete even as the rules of engagement change before their very eyes.

What makes us unique? Four qualities that infuse nearly every aspect of our work.

Problem-solving. We train students to solve problems, practically —by offering diverse experiential learning opportunities—and conceptually, through classroom-based theoretical constructs. This conscious linking of the theoretical and the practical is a long-established, nationally known distinction of our Law School. Our faculty pose and examine some of the most difficult questions in the law today through cutting-edge scholarship and classroom teaching. And our requirement that students gain practical experience grounds this thinking in the real world.

Global reach. Today's global community demands lawyers who understand the interconnections of multiple legal systems. In response, faculty incorporate comparative approaches to legal questions in their scholarship and teaching, and we are expanding international course offerings. Numerous externships and foreign study programs are available to students, and we have developed an international clinic that is unmatched by other law schools. Last semester, faculty and their students worked on three continents, expanding access to clean drinking water, advancing microcredit programs that helped citizens without access to banks borrow money for their businesses, and addressing deplorable working conditions of migrant workers.

Leadership. Our LEAD Initiative helps students develop cross-cultural competency, leadership skills, and reflective habits to strengthen professional values and develop their capacity for moral reasoning. Students interact with public and private leaders who share their experiences and explore what it means to lead in a range of professional contexts. Through hands-on work, students confront problems of marginalized citizens and noncitizens and reflect on what it means to lead without replicating the hierarchies that have disempowered many of these clients. Our students are developing the collaborative skills and strong moral core that will be essential in this changing economic environment and global reality, no matter where their career paths take them.

A public calling. We recognize the concept of law as a public calling—the notion that in addition to their responsibility to any one client, lawyers have a responsibility to foster the greater good, to ensure access to justice for all, and to strengthen the quality of justice itself. Indeed, this responsibility sometimes creates the greatest questions and conflicts lawyers experience in their careers, when their calling reaches beyond the requirements of the Rules of Professional Conduct, to the operation of their moral conscience. Teaching students to recognize these sometimes competing obligations and giving them the tools to work through conflict is a hallmark of our Law School.

This issue of *JD* outlines the changing landscape of the legal profession and the steps that UMDLaw is taking to respond. We remain committed to staying ahead of the game, especially in uncertain times. With your continued support, we can continue not only to respond in the face of change, but also to be game-changers ourselves.

Best wishes,

Phoebe A. Haddon
Dean and Professor of Law