Message from Dean Jennifer Rosato

“The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.”

— Alan W. Watts

As we are all well aware, the changes occurring in the legal profession and legal education are deep, far-reaching, and likely permanent. At NIU College of Law, we are moving with these changes gracefully and in double-time.

For example, even in a time of diminishing resources we are expanding opportunities for our students, including an innovative partnership to fund a post-graduate fellowship, with half of the support coming from the Illinois Bar Foundation and half by NIU College of Law (through this year’s fundraising efforts). Responding to change will need more ambitious and transformative collaborations like these that achieve the trifecta of employing our students, enhancing their skills, and improving access to justice.

As the reputation of NIU College of Law continues to grow, and others see the great potential we have always seen, so will its opportunities to “join the dance”. I will need all of you as our able and committed partners. So put on your dancing (or running) shoes and join me!

All the best,
Dean Rosato

Anonymous Donor Makes $25,000 Matching Gift Challenge

Following last month’s announcement of the matching gift challenge from an anonymous donor to match up to $25,000, we are just over halfway to reaching our goal thanks to your generous support! New and increased gifts made by December 31, 2013 will be matched by the donor. Funds raised in this campaign will be used for key efforts to increase student success, with the ultimate goal of enhancing their experiences, their preparedness, and their marketability.

This campaign will directly benefit law students in three important ways: through our summer internship initiative; by providing bar prep assistance for graduates; and by awarding post-graduate fellowships to enhance the career opportunities for our graduates in their first year of practice.

Your support is needed to help continue to provide these invaluable opportunities for our students and young alumni at a time when they most need it.

Please join us in our efforts and make your online gift today before the December 31st deadline!

Visit www.niu.edu/law

NIU Launches Accelerated Law Degree Program

NIU Law and the Political Science department have partnered to create a new accelerated degree program. This integrated program will put some undergraduates on the fast track to earn a bachelor’s in political science and JD degree in only six years.

The program is a natural collaboration between Political Science and the College of Law and is beneficial to both programs in attracting and retaining high-quality students. Also, in an era where students often leave college with substantial debt, this collaboration will provide an even greater opportunity to lighten both the course and debt loads. The program will enable students to begin on their professional journey one year earlier and save nearly $35,000 in tuition.
NIU Law was ranked among the top forty-five public law schools in the nation based on value by the National Jurist magazine. The 2013 Best Value Law Schools study took into account bar passage rate, average indebtedness, employment rate, and tuition for in-state residents. NIU Law was the only Illinois school to make the list.

NIU Law Ranked Among Top 5 Regional Schools for Black Law Students

NIU Law was named a Top 5 best regional law school for black students in the Lawyers of Color 2014 Black Student’s Guide to Law Schools. NIU Law was the only Illinois law school to make the list.

Dean Rosato Named Among HispanicBusiness 50 Influentials & Received Distinguished Leadership Award

In October, Dean Rosato was named among the 2013 HispanicBusiness 50 Influentials list which showcases the diversity that characterizes the American socioeconomic landscape. The list features senior executives at Fortune 500 companies, judges and attorneys, athletes and musicians, key members of government, and advocates and educators.

On September 25, Dean Rosato also was presented with the Distinguished Leadership Award from Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White. She was honored during the Secretary’s 2013 National Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration for her career in law and in legal education, her legacy as a professor and scholar, and her many leadership roles.

Distinguished Speakers Present at Murer Professionalism Lecture Series

Distinguished speakers presented as part of the Murer Professionalism Lecture Series for first-year students sponsored by Cherilyn (’78) and Michael Murer. Professor Reynolds kicked off the series with an introduction to the legal profession and ABA Model Code. Illinois Supreme Court Justice Thomas L. Kilbride spoke to first-year law students on professionalism and ethics, including civility and action toward justice. Jeff Colman, partner at Jenner & Block and Chair of the Illinois Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission, concluded the fall semester series by sharing his experiences of representing several detainees at Guantanamo.
Members of the Class of 2016 are settling in to their new home for the next three years. During their first week of orientation, students were introduced to law school through mock courses and exams, student and alumni panels, and were educated on the importance of financial planning and networking in the legal profession.

NIU Law Welcomes the Class of 2016

Kenneth (’84) and Ellen Chessick (center) shared a special moment with colleagues from the NIU Law Board of Visitors following the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the Kenneth and Ellen Chessick Practice Center. The new indoor training center, located just north of Huskie Stadium, opened on October 26. The beautiful 83,500 square foot facility houses a full-size football practice field, four-lane track, batting cages, and other features to allow for multi-sport use throughout the winter.

NIU Law welcomed six distinguished individuals to its Board of Visitors (from top left):

Kelli M. Childress
Kane County Public Defender
St. Charles, IL;

Vincent F. Cornelius (’89)
Law Office of Vincent F. Cornelius
and Third Vice President of the Illinois State Bar Association
Wheaton, IL;

Hon. James F. Holderman
U.S. District Court,
Northern District of Illinois
Chicago, IL;

Leanne Ebert Murphy
Commercial Services Director/Law Department, Walgreens
Deerfield, IL;

Janet A. Pioli (’84)
Shareholder, Brinks Gilson & Lione
Chicago, IL; and

Dr. Denise Schoenbachler
Dean, NIU College of Business
DeKalb, IL

Top: Justice Joseph E. Birkett, Second District Illinois Appellate Court, administered the “Pledge of Professionalism.”

Middle: First-year students enjoy lunch at Davis Fountain.

Bottom: First-year students met alumni during a reception held at the Zeke Giorgi Legal Clinic in Rockford, IL.
Hon. Patricia M. Martin ('85) was appointed by President Obama as a member of the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities. Martin is Presiding Judge of the Child Protection Division of the Circuit Court of Cook County, IL, a position she has held since 2000. She has introduced innovative new programs that have received media attention and that jurisdictions across the country have duplicated. During her tenure as Presiding Judge, the Child Protection Division’s caseload has declined from over 27,000 cases to fewer than 7,000 cases, a reduction of over 56%.

Michael M. Oswalt joined the NIU Law faculty this fall and teaches in the areas of labor and employment law.

Oswalt was most recently a law fellow for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in Washington, D.C., where he provided legal counsel to a variety of low-wage workers organizing campaigns. Prior to joining SEIU, Oswalt clerked for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, who was then a judge on the United States Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

NLLSA Team Places 2nd in National Competition

Kathryn Guensburg ('14) and Manar Zayed ('14) placed second at the national moot court competition held during the 17th Annual National Latina/o Law Student Association Conference in New Mexico, which took place September 26-27. Kathryn and Manar were also awarded Best Respondent’s Brief and Kathryn was honored as the best oral advocate for the preliminary rounds of the tournament. They were coached by Professor Jones.

NIU Law, Criminal Law Society Host Illinois Innocence Project Panel on Wrongful Conviction

Exoneree Bennie Starks discussed his case of having spent more than 20 years in jail wrongfully convicted for the 1986 rape of a woman in Waukegan, IL. Although DNA testing established his innocence in 2001, Starks remained in prison until 2006 and was not fully exonerated until 2013 when the newly-elected Lake County State’s Attorney took office and dismissed all of his charges.

NIU law students serve as externs each semester with the Illinois Innocence Project, which allows them to directly assist those who are wrongfully convicted. They conduct investigations and prison visits, submit FOIA requests, draft DNA motions and post-conviction petitions, and interview witnesses.

Obama Appointed Law Alumna to Key Post

Third-Year Law Student Argues in Front of Third District Appellate Court

Third-year law student Lindsey Claeyssen argued the case of People v. Moren in front of the Third District Appellate Court in Ottawa on August 27, 2013. After taking Appellate Advocacy in Fall 2012, Lindsey interned with the Third District Office and worked on this case, in which the defendant had been convicted of violating an order of protection. With the guidance of Assistant Appellate Defender Jay Wiegman ('91), Lindsey researched, drafted a brief, and a reply brief. It was a perfect opportunity and perfect timing for Lindsey, with the Supreme Court amending Rule 711 in order to allow senior law students to argue cases before the Appellate Court and the schedule being released to include this case.
**Milestone Class Reunions: “Forever First” Graduating Class Celebrates 35 Years**

The NIU Law Alumni Council held its Awards Reception on September 19, 2013 at the University Club of Chicago, celebrating alumni and friends who are in the public and private sectors and are dedicated to the communities they serve. These honorees were recognized for their career accomplishments, devotion to the public good, and continued service to the law school.

The Classes of 1978, 1983, 1993, 1998, 2003, and 2008 celebrated their class reunions on November 15, 2013 at Harry Caray’s in Lombard, IL, where everyone enjoyed a festive evening of reflection and connection. The day was of significant importance as it was the anniversary of when the College of Law first received accreditation thirty-six years ago. The reunion also was particularly notable for the Class of 1978, who will always carry the title of “Forever First” as the first graduating class of NIU Law (formerly known as Lewis University College of Law when it began in Glen Ellyn, IL).

**Awards Reception Honors Alumni and Friends**

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Back row (from left): James J. Alfini, Honorary Alumnus; Hon. Mark Lopez ('83), Outstanding Service Award; and Adam Vaught ('05), Young Alumnus of the Year.

Front row: Kate McCabe ('01), Mentor of the Year and Richard Lenkov ('95), Alumnus of the Year.

Pictured below (from left): Alice Johnson ('02), Distinguished Service Award; Hon. Joseph McGraw ('85), Distinguished Service Award; and Robert Mangan, Public Service Award.
Fall 2013 Snapshots

1L Reception in Rockford, IL August 14, 2013

University of Bordeaux (Agen, France) law students visited Chicago on September 9, 2013 as part of a three-week *Introduction to the American Legal System* foreign exchange program hosted by NIU Law.

Kane County Bar Event for NIU law students, September 12, 2013

Alumni Awards Reception in Chicago September 19, 2013

Casino Night at NIU Law October 12, 2013

Mentor Kickoff Reception at NIU Law October 12, 2013

Homecoming at NIU Law October 12, 2013

Peoria County Bar Diversity Luncheon, October 23, 2013

Swearing-In Ceremony in Elgin, IL October 31, 2013

Legal Prep Academy (Chicago, IL) visits NIU Law November 13, 2013
Alumni on the Move

1978
Louis G. Apostol was inducted into the United Hellenic Voters of America’s prestigious “Hall of Fame” for his many contributions to the practice of law and government service.

1983
Hon. Mark Lopez was honored with the NIU Law Outstanding Service Award for outstanding service to the College of Law.

1985
Ingrid Lehnert was named Vice President & General Counsel, NAM Region, for Alstom Grid, Inc.
Hon. Joseph McGraw was honored with the NIU Law Distinguished Service Award for outstanding career achievements and devotion to the public good.

1989
Hon. Robert Russell was elected a Lincoln Circuit Court Judge in Branch II of Lincoln County, WI.

1994
Hon. Thaddeus Wilson was elected Assistant Treasurer of the Illinois Judicial Council.

1995
Richard Lenkov was honored as Alumnus of the Year for outstanding career achievements and dedication to the College of Law.

1996
Blake Stone was named Staff Judge Advocate for the US Army Medical Readiness & Training Command at Ft. Sam Houston, TX.

2001
Kate McCabe was honored with the NIU Law Mentor of the Year Award for extraordinary dedication as a mentor.
Julie Angelakos joined the Addison, IL-based Stewart Legal Services team as State Counsel for Illinois.

2002
Mike Denning, partner in Heyl Royster (Rockford), was named as one of “40 Illinois Attorneys Under Forty” to watch.
Ian Linnabary was named to the Top Lists of Leading Lawyers magazine in the areas of Closely & Privately Held Business Law; Election, Political & Campaign Law; Governmental, Municipal, Lobbying & Administrative Law; and Land Use, Zoning & Condemnation Law.

2003
Julie Proscia, partner at SmithAmundsen (St. Charles, IL), was named to Chicago’s Daily Herald 2013 Business Ledger list of Influential Women in Business.

2005
Adam Vaught was honored as Young Alumnus of the Year for outstanding early career achievements and devotion to the public good.

2007
Clay Kawski was named as a 2013 Up and Coming Lawyer by the Wisconsin Law Journal. He is an Assistant Attorney General for the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

2009
Cynthia Edwards is a Senior Contract Buyer at Pace Suburban Bus responsible for conducting complex public procurements, negotiating contract terms, and leading public bid openings.

2010
Brad Fuller (second from left) received the 2013 Outstanding Young Attorney Award from the Illinois Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

2012
Tricia Chokshi is the operations coordinator for Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth.
Mickel-Ange Eveillard is an attorney with the New York City Administration for Children Services - Family Court Legal Services Division.

2013
Joanna Panici (left) was sworn in as a newly appointed Cook County Assistant State’s Attorney.
Emmet Fairfield was appointed staff attorney at the Illinois Appellate Court for the Fourth District in Springfield, IL.
February
TBD  Minority Reception, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

March
1  Moot Court Finals  
DeKalb, IL
21  ISBA Standing Committees on Women and Minorities Program & Reception  
3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
DeKalb, IL

April
4  Riley Lecture & PILS Auction  
3:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m., DeKalb, IL
11  Law Review Symposium  
DeKalb, IL
12  5K Run/Walk & BBQ  
DeKalb, IL

May
19  U.S. Supreme Court Swearing-In  
Washington, D.C.
24  Commencement  
DeKalb, IL

June
6  NIU Law Golf Outing  
DeKalb, IL

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