

# UNIVERSITY *of* PENNSYLVANIA

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### THE ETHOS OF PUBLIC SERVICE AT PENN LAW

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We live in a rapidly shifting world where legal rules, and the institutions that frame and apply those rules, are directly connected to almost all aspects of the human experience. No matter what area of practice they enter, lawyers embarking on careers today will be called upon to help find creative solutions to economic, social, and political challenges. Many of these challenges that will arise in the future cannot even be imagined today, and the law will struggle to keep pace as it has in other eras of rapid social and technological change. In this milieu, lawyers need to be prepared with the analytic skills to assess the root causes of problems that transcend categories of law, business, and government. The law is connected to these other fields as never before.

The University of Pennsylvania Law School has, from its very beginning, played a role in preparing lawyers to play these kinds of positive roles in adapting to new developments and attending to society's fundamental goals. Our institutional history grows directly out of the prodigious efforts of the nation's founders, during the summer of 1787 here in Philadelphia, to confront what was broken with government at that time and to forge major compromises that established a new foundation for government of the United States. That founding of the nation also marked the founding of this law school, as jurist James Wilson, one of the drafters of the Constitution and then one of the first justices of the Supreme Court, delivered a series of lectures to President George Washington and other leaders of the fledgling republic. Penn Law was born of government service in our inception, and this deep connection continues to this day.

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Today, Penn Law continues to keep alive the spirit of public service that infused its beginning. It continues to inculcate the ethical values that we hope will sustain our graduates as they serve as leaders of the bar and of their communities, nation, and world. One can see the ethos of public service alive throughout Penn Law today. This symposium issue exemplifies that ethos. So too does our interdisciplinary curriculum where our students gain the ability not only to analyze law but to think outside the box to tackle both persistent and emerging problems. Our clinical, experiential learning, and pro bono opportunities allow our students to start applying their professional skills while still in law school and help make a difference for their clients.

Thanks to generous support from the Leo Model Foundation, we have launched a new initiative on government and public affairs that, among other things, supports student internships with legislative committees and government agencies as well as brings public leaders to the law school to engage with our students. I am pleased that this inaugural issue of the *Journal of Law & Public Affairs* grew out of a major symposium sponsored by the Model Government and Public Affairs Initiative that was organized last spring by Professor Cary Coglianese with the help of the students involved in this journal.

In addition to initiatives like these and those sponsored by our Toll Public Interest Center, Penn Law's eleven major research centers and institutes contribute vitally to bridging that historically wide gap between academic research and real-world issues confronting government. Let me name just a few of these programs. Our Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice serves as a catalyst for bringing together prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, and advocates and finding tangible ways to improve the quality of criminal justice across the nation. Our Center for Technology, Innovation and Competition forges research and dialogue to inform cutting-edge transformations in telecommunications and intellectual property law. The Penn Program on Regulation serves as a world leader in research and policy advice about regulation, whether through its immensely popular online publication, *The Regulatory Review*, or through research projects like one it recently completed for a Canadian energy regulator to develop a global framework for improving regulatory performance. And our Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law brings together government leaders, military officials, and leading academics to discuss topics of foremost importance at the intersection of security, technology and law and ethics.

Penn Law's extraordinary research accomplishments, its curricular opportunities combine, and its deeply valued collegial culture combine to make it an eminent learning institution where future leaders can prepare for a life of service to law and society. It is fitting that our students have thought to organize this *Journal of Law & Public Affairs* and to begin their first issue

with a symposium issue dedicated to the question, “Is Government Broken?” This question may seem to call out for an easy, and affirmative, answer in a time that many have marked as cynical. Admittedly, the challenges facing government and our legal system are enormous today, and, yes, in some ways government can be said to be broken. But then again, these things have always been the case. Our nation and world have never been perfect, but both leaders and members of the public alike have also always striven to create a world that can be “*more* perfect.” It is that striving, that aspiration for improving not just our own lot in life but the lives of others, that matters most of all. It is that striving that I saw motivating the students who have launched the process to create this journal and who have produced this important inaugural issue.

I applaud Miriam Archibong, the Editor-in-Chief for this issue, and her entire team, for in them I see alive and well today that same spirit that brought the founders together in this city nearly two hundred and thirty years ago. The work that this team of students has undertaken, and that all of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni are doing every day in many different ways, should bring hope to anyone cynical about the future. We can, through legal, social, and economic change, make the world better and more just for all.