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Cardozo Welcomes the Class of 2024 at In-Person Orientation



Cardozo School of Law opened its doors to the newest group of J.D. students on August 16, to welcome the Class of 2024 – the first time since March 2020 that a large group of students could be together in the building, due to closures and social distancing restrictions that were implemented during the pandemic.

The class has 324 students and is the highest credentialed class in the school's history.

In order to continue with a cautious approach to distancing as the Delta variant shows cause for concern in New York City, the class was divided into two groups for their orientation activities. Sections A, B and C began their sessions in the morning and Sections D, E and F arrived at 11:30 a.m. for an afternoon of programming.

Dean of Admissions Jeanne Estilo Widerka welcomed the class: “you now all have one thing in common. You’re ready to get started on your journey as a Cardozo student! Be proud of everything you’ve accomplished – we’re here to help you with your struggles and cheer your accomplishments!”

Dean Widerka cited the class members’ accolades and geographic diversity, noting that the group hailed from 34 states and numerous countries around the globe including Australia, Brazil, Panama, Ukraine, Zimbabwe and Singapore, among others. Approximately one-third of the class finished their undergraduate degrees in the past year, and the top feeder institutions include NYU, Yeshiva University, University of Michigan and Tulane University.

She praised the students' accomplishments to date, such as those who had already earned masters' degrees in other disciplines including music performance, business and education. The group includes athletes such as a marathon runner and a former US figure skater. One student is a Fulbright scholar. Many students, Widerka said, have long histories of volunteerism with various causes including working with terminally ill children, volunteering for the Special Olympics, manning crisis hotlines and building homes with Habitat for Humanity.

Dean Melanie Leslie addressed the group and reflected on her own 1L year at Cardozo. She quoted Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo who in writing of the value of steady, plodding perseverance said, "There is joy in that success, and a distinction can come from courage, fidelity and industry."

"Don't forget to be joyful," Dean Leslie said. "What an opportunity this is; embrace it! You are going to learn so much. Enjoy the journey."

She encouraged the students to get to know one another and create their networks which will support them over the coming years in law school.

Dean of Students Jenn Kim and her team also addressed the group and reminded them that Student Services offers support in all areas of student life, including academics, diversity and inclusion issues and mental health support.









