

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL

Los Angeles, CA

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Related policies: None

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Protocol for Community-Wide Messages from Southwestern Law School's President & Dean

Southwestern Law School, via the President & Dean, regularly receives requests to issue statements about specific issues. The voice of the institution's leader is a powerful tool for communicating, and the President & Dean will use that voice when appropriate and in the institution's best interest.

While Southwestern recognizes the importance of engaging with current events and societal issues, we also understand that not every issue warrants an official stance from the law school. Doing so could impact free speech and expression or silence the diverse viewpoints that thrive in our academic community. In addition, Southwestern as an institution does not have the resources or expertise to respond to the myriad events and injustices that occur daily. Instead, consistent with our core values, we encourage open dialogue, ongoing reflection, and respectful debate among our students, faculty, and staff.

Noted below are examples of when the President & Dean might choose to speak, but even in these situations, statements typically will focus on how Southwestern supports its community members and provide information about resources related to the matter.

- When a crisis or event that directly affects the law school's internal constituencies (students, faculty, and staff), campus, campus safety and security, or campus operations, such as a natural disaster, significant public-health emergency, or act of violence on or near campus.

- With the permission of the family, when a student, faculty member, emeritus faculty member, staff member, staff member emeritus, or trustee passes away.
- When the law school is legally required to provide notice to community members.

The President & Dean will not issue a statement in the following situations:

- When the President & Dean or school lacks specific or special expertise, particularly when the matter concerns complex world or international affairs.
- When it would be challenging to issue a statement that remains nonpartisan.
- When due process or individual privacy is at issue, such as when an alum, student, or employee is involved in a publicized incident or suspected of wrongdoing.
- When an educational program with experts is the better option (e.g., when the U.S. Supreme Court issues a case about a matter of national concern).

Even when the President & Dean decides to speak on a matter, preparing a thoughtful and appropriate message requires time to verify factual information, seek input, draft, and revise the statement. In some situations, the President & Dean may issue a holding message before releasing a full statement.