

Dear Penn State Law Community,

I am delighted to announce that after a selection process that involved a unanimous recommendation by a committee that included faculty, students, and administrative leaders, Professor Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia has agreed to serve as our incoming Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Penn State Law beginning July 1, 2020. She has been a leader for years in efforts at Penn State Law to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, and is playing an important leadership role currently as we listen to our Black student leaders, develop concrete action steps, and work to implement them.

I also would like to thank Dean Dara Purvis for serving as our inaugural Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion. She had advanced a number of important efforts in this role, from a climate survey to valuable programming to new partnerships across the university and nationally. She also has been serving in a key leadership role in our efforts to listen to Black student leaders, develop concrete action steps, and advance them. Her service has made an important impact on our community for the better and I am grateful for her leadership.

Professor Wadhia is the Samuel Weiss Faculty Scholar and Clinical Professor of Law at Penn State Law in University Park. She is a first generation American and lawyer who began her career as an immigration attorney in private practice, where she represented individuals and families from all over the world seeking a benefit or fighting deportation. After 9/11, she spent six years as a lobbyist for a non-profit in Washington D.C., using her legal expertise to advance immigration reforms or react to policies that harmed immigrant communities. For the last twelve years, equity has informed Professor Wadhia's teaching, service, mentoring, and scholarship at Penn State Law. At Penn State Law, she teaches doctrinal courses in immigration and asylum and refugee law. She is also the founder/director of the Center for Immigrants' Rights Clinic (CIRC), where she supervises students in three areas: 1) community outreach; 2) legal support in individual immigration cases; and 3) policy work for institutional clients. CIRC is mission driven and has earned a national reputation for its high-quality work product and impact in the community. In 2019, Professor Wadhia received the Elmer Fried Excellence in Teaching Award from the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Professor Wadhia's work in diversity and inclusion at Penn State Law has been significant. She chaired the faculty diversity committee for five years which under her leadership, benchmarked racial and ethnic diversity at Penn State Law (students, staff, faculty) against other academic institutions to assess representation; hosted programs on diversity and inclusion in the legal profession; organized a training on implicit bias for faculty members; and conducted a survey of LLM students about classroom climate. Wadhia also innovated the idea for and helped launch the Minority Mentor Program at Penn State Law, where students who belong to a racial or ethnic minority are paired with a minority alum and faculty mentor throughout their law school career. The program is five years old and was launched through a seed grant from the Office of the Vice Provost. Professor Wadhia has twice received the Faculty Diversity Award from the Student Bar Association at Penn State Law and thrice spoken about diversity in the legal profession during student orientation. In 2019, Professor Wadhia helped to organize an event at the law school called "Welcoming the Other" in collaboration with Penn State Hillel, Penn State Latino/a Studies and President Eric Barron. In 2019, President Barron appointed her to Penn State University's Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity (CORED). Informally, she has mentored scores of minority students facing challenges or with questions navigating law school and the legal profession.

Professor Wadhia's commitment to equity in the law is also illustrated by the principles, designs, and solutions in her research, which focuses on the role of prosecutorial discretion in immigration law and

the intersections of race, national security and immigration. She has been a prolific scholar in both of these areas. Her first book, *Beyond Deportation: The Role of Prosecutorial Discretion in Immigration Cases*, was published by NYU Press in 2015, and named an honorable mention for the Eric Hoffer Book Award. Her second book, *Banned: Immigration Enforcement in the Time of Trump*, was released on September 10, 2019 by NYU Press, and combines accessible law with the voices of immigrants affected by changes during the Trump administration.

Please join me in both thanking Dean Purvis for her leadership and service and welcoming Professor Wadhia to this important leadership role. I look forward to collaborating with Professor Wadhia and our faculty, staff, students, and alumni to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion at Penn State Law and make progress on our concrete action steps.

Best,
Hari

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