

CLEVELAND-MARSHALL COLLEGE OF LAW

Cleveland State University

June 11, 2020

Dear Students, Staff, Faculty, and Leaders-in-Residence,

CSU C|M|LAW is committed to an inclusive, welcoming environment and to actively working on antiracism. In the words of C|M|LAW BLSA, “there is no room for silence.”

Below is an initial list of proposed actions we intend to actively explore over the coming days, weeks, and months. We also have developed a *Resources Guide* for learning more about racism and what we can do to fight and eradicate it, and a *No Room for Silence* webpage for keeping a record of relevant messages and statements.

These actions are just a beginning and the *Resources Guide* and *No Room for Silence* webpage are continual works in progress. We commit to spending the upcoming academic year deepening our collective understanding, identifying possible solutions, taking effective action, and expanding and enhancing our resources.

We welcome your feedback and involvement and will continue to listen and refine these action steps and resources over time as we work together to fulfill our mission to Live Justice. Please send me and **Associate Deans Carolyn Broering-Jacobs and Jonathan Witmer-Rich** your feedback, thoughts, and ideas. We also look forward to partnering with the university, and other CSU Colleges on a number of initiatives.

Social Justice/ Antiracism Resources / Statements

We have created a [CSU C|M|LAW Social Justice and Antiracism Resources Guide](#). This is a continual work in progress. Please send suggested submissions to C|M|LAW Library Research Services at research.services@law.csuohio.edu

We also have created a [CSU C|M|LAW No Room for Silence](#) webpage that includes relevant messages and statements.

Implementing our 2018-2021 Strategic Plan: Work with students, faculty, and staff to update and implement Goal #5 in the CSU C|M|LAW Strategic Plan “*Foster Diversity and Inclusion Throughout the Work of the Law School, and Promote Social Justice.*”

Our current strategic plan, developed as a law school community, provides us with initial steps that we will continue to pursue:

- Assess and enrich the law school climate of diversity and inclusion for both faculty and staff.
- Increase the diversity of both applicants and enrolled students while maintaining academic quality.
- Attract and enroll a student body diverse in gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, income, and life experiences.
- Explore the creation of a Diversity and Inclusion Certificate curriculum for students, staff, faculty, and citizens.
- Support the law school’s efforts to recruit and retain diverse students.

- Increase the representation of people of color and women as speakers, honorees, Leaders-in-Residence, visiting faculty, invited guests, and participants in law school functions.
- Create a more welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment for minority and women students, faculty, staff, alumni, and prospective students at C|M|LAW.
- Build partnerships with the bar, law firms, professional associations, and larger university community to work together on our shared and intersecting diversity goals and initiatives.
- Raise awareness, deepen understanding, and empower students to acquire and utilize skills to strive for and achieve social justice.

Programming: Develop comprehensive law school-wide programs to educate, advocate, and provide a forum for discussion.

- Plan regular Community Town Hall meetings on issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, racial and social justice, police reform and accountability, protest and the First Amendment, and other related issues.
- Devote the 2020-2021 Criminal Justice Forum lecture series to issues of police violence, police accountability, and racial justice in the criminal justice system.
- Plan a school-wide book discussion and hold a series of events/discussions regarding the book.
- Sponsor a film festival in partnership with the CSU Film School and the university on social and racial justice-related films.
- Hold an art exhibit focused on Black Lives Matter.

Training, Transparency and Accountability: Involve our entire law school community in ongoing work to create a more inclusive environment.

- Incorporate diversity and racial justice programming into the August Orientation Program.
- Develop and implement bias training for faculty, staff, and students.
- Host a series of allyship trainings/panel discussions in collaboration with our culturally specific organizations at Cleveland-Marshall, such as BLSA, HLSA, OUTLaw, ILSA, and WLSA.

Curriculum: Prioritize curricular offerings that address the interface of law, race, racial and social justice, and policy reform.

- Fall 2020 Semester Interdisciplinary Course on Race, Racial and Social Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion –explore the development of an interdisciplinary course that deals directly with the issues being debated throughout the country in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd. This would be a course co-taught by faculty and staff from a variety of CSU disciplines and colleges. There would be a number of modules including, but not limited to:
 - systemic racism
 - police accountability
 - health disparities

- equity, diversity & inclusion
- first amendment issues related to protests and hate speech
- Establish a course, pop-up practicum, and/or workshop that creates opportunities for pro bono work to assist efforts by nonprofits and others to address racial violence, police brutality, and racial profiling.
- Explore ways to incorporate exploration of structural racism and discrimination throughout the curriculum.

Student Inclusion & Support: Ensure our academic, bar prep, career, professional, social, and community support systems for students are effective, inclusive, and welcoming for all.

- Continue to create physical and virtual spaces for members of communities within the Law School to gather around their shared experiences, and to intersect and collaborate around inclusion.

Messaging, Communication, and Public Action: Develop consistent and clear communication about our commitments, and engage in action in the community to create change.

- Support and advocate for legislation and resolutions that advance the cause of racial justice.
- Collaborate with leaders in the legal community to challenge hiring, retention, and advancement practices that disadvantage minority law students and attorneys.
- Deepen our involvement and leadership with the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association's Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Louis Stokes Scholars Program, and other related CMBA programs, Norman S. Minor Bar Association, Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, Ohio Access to Justice Foundation, Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio, and other social and racial justice organizations.

Lee, Carolyn, and Jonathan

Dean Lee Fisher
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