

Dear Stetson Law Community,

Nationally, this has been a difficult past week. Many are mourning the loss of loved ones to COVID-19, living in constant worry about the danger it poses to them, or suffering daily heartbreaks at the toll this virus has caused. No one is left untouched by the pandemic, and vulnerable communities are still reeling from its disproportionate impact.

As if these challenges were not difficult enough, national tensions are at their highest and race relations are strained. Black and brown communities are specifically vulnerable in all aspects. Times like these can challenge hope even in the most optimistic person. If you feel despondent and are seeking comfort or support, you are not alone. My source of hope is deeply tied to our collective mission to train global citizens and our specific calling to implement social justice in all we do.

In law school, we teach that our system guarantees due process, as well as freedom of speech and assembly. Lawyers on all sides work to protect these rights. And, our own College of Law's mission of social justice and inclusion makes these legal guarantees priority. We are a learning institution, thinking and engaging in work that will benefit society. As we examine what is happening in our nation, I call on our students, faculty and staff to re-commit to strengthening our beloved community, to engaging with one another in loving and edifying ways, and to manifesting our mission of social justice through all our actions, internally and externally.

Beyond mere observers, we are all called to a measure of service. Our students are an integral part of the justice work, and they along with our faculty and staff, are called to uphold our core values. Those specifically state that we are committed to, among other things, ethics, civility, mutual respect, and integrity. I am proud of Stetson's values and of the fact that we train leaders and change agents. What students do here and learn here will make a difference.

As Dr. King noted, "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Despite our unsettled times, opportunities to effect positive change abound. This requires awareness, commitment, and deliberate work from all of us. I am confident that we are up to the task. And, above all, we at the College of Law are in this together.

Warmly,
Dean Alexandre