



Beasley School of Law

Dear Temple Law School Community,

I hope that this message finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe.

We are living through an extraordinarily difficult and tumultuous moment. You have already received a [message](#) from President Englert and Provost Epps, but I also wanted to write to you directly. While I know that the combination of challenges we are facing now may feel overwhelming to some, I also know that we will get through this, together.

We are already all managing through the coronavirus pandemic, a crisis that has disproportionately impacted Black communities in its health and economic effects. We have witnessed the senseless deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, the latest in a long line of lives lost to violence rooted in systemic racism. Many of us were, or have loved ones who were, on the front lines of the recent unrest in Philadelphia and elsewhere – as peaceful protestors, members of the press, first responders, and law enforcement. This is a harrowing time for our community, fraught and painful for each of us in both personal and collective ways.

I recognize that these events can take an immense emotional toll, and I recognize that the burdens of these events are not felt equally. I write today to specifically acknowledge the pain, frustration, and anger that many in our community feel, particularly our Black students, colleagues, friends, and alumni, and to state unequivocally that as a community, Temple Law School stands in solidarity to work to identify and dismantle systemic racial injustice. “Equal protection under the law” means something both specific and personal to lawyers. The legal system, at its best, can make our society fairer and more just. If our society is to continue its pursuit of our highest ideals, it will be in part because of our collective commitment to fulfilling the promises guaranteed by the Constitution to all.

In addition to the work before us as a community, I commit myself to listening, reflecting, learning, and making space for Black voices and truths to be heard in our community. I hope each of you will consider making a similar commitment as well.

One place where I find hope in these times is in our mission. Providing legal education to our diverse student body, some of whom come from marginalized communities, and in that way changing the face of lawyering and justice in the Philadelphia region and the country, is one thing that we do to foster systemic change. I am deeply honored by the choice of many of our students to attend Temple Law precisely to improve our legal system and our society, and I am proud of the work that they do during law school through their clinical and pro bono work, and later in their careers as lawyers, advocates, and judges, to pursue these goals. The road ahead is challenging, but I look forward to walking it together.

I want to call your attention to several opportunities in both the short- and long-term to engage in the work before us. I am grateful for the leadership of the Temple Law Black Law Student Association and know that BLSA has organized student town-halls today and Monday, June 8 at 7PM. Additionally, I have asked a group of faculty and staff to work with students to plan an opportunity in the near term for open dialogue for all members of the law school community and to provide ideas for us to explore regarding longer-term responses. More information on this will be sent out shortly.

At this difficult time, I ask that you take care of yourselves and your loved ones, and hope that we can draw strength from our law school community and continue to support each other with extra caring.

Warmly,

GNM