



School of Law

University of Missouri

Dear Hulston Hall,

I accept the invitation [of our BLSA President Brionna Pratt to join her and all of our BLSA students as an ally], and I hope you will, too.

Like many of you, I am saddened deeply by the senseless deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor.

Our country's long history of racism continues to manifest in the failures of our justice system (and public health, education, economic systems, and many others). As attorneys, future attorneys, and citizens, we have a duty to uphold equal justice under law, and this means at the barest minimum that being black in America should not mean living in the constant fear that Brionna poignantly described in her letter below. We must condemn the senseless and heartless killings of African-Americans but also work toward social transformation and enact legal reforms to make our society live up to its highest ideals. Stopping racist violence is a necessary first step toward fulfilling our Constitution's promise of racial equality, and we have the capacity to help end the cycle of senseless violence and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Within our law school, we also can do more to create an environment where students who are black feel fully embraced by our community. Associate Dean Mitchell, Professor Scales-Ferguson, and I began discussions with a diverse group of students last semester shortly before we left campus about how to improve our law school culture for students of color, LGBTQ students, non-traditional students, and others. A number of good ideas came out of those discussions, and since then, we've also been exploring additional ways we might work to advance equality and justice in conjunction with other colleges. Just as Dean Mitchell and I have been having a series of conversations to frame the issues around reopening and learn from the wisdom of diverse stakeholders, I plan to appoint an advisory group this week to further my understanding of how we as a community can advance equal justice together.

In the meantime, I want to extend my sympathy for the grief our black students, faculty, and staff are experiencing. I pray that your burdens may be lightened by our support.

Please be safe.

Sincerely,

Lyrissa Lidsky

Dean and Judge C.A. Leedy Professor of Law
University of Missouri School of Law