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Dear College of Law Community:

His name is George Floyd and he said “I Can’t Breathe.” I recognize him, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and Tony McDade—to name but a few who are the most recent victims of ingrained racism and violence toward people of color in our country. These killings have prompted a massive ongoing effort to force a reckoning with the reality of structural racism in America.

Embedded within that reckoning is the reality that, although we seek to provide equity within our community, the inequalities of the world remind us that there are those who are feeling this pain more acutely than others, and we must—we will—surround them with love, allow them space to grieve, and stand firmly in our commitment to strengthen access to the legal profession alongside our overarching desire to do our part to be better—for them, for our school, and for our nation.

To be sure, real change is necessary. Facilitating that change highlights for us the importance of educating the next generation of problem-solving lawyers in a nimble manner, but one that is focused on both expanding and enhancing access to justice. I join the chorus of protesting voices in our country who are rightfully condemning a long history of systemic racism. I do not have all the answers, but in my leadership role I can promise that I will work toward change.

As a school that cares deeply about the value of community, we must commit ourselves to inclusion and challenging ourselves and our students to the idea of social responsibility—service in action. That cultural foundation provides us with a strong platform on which to focus not only on this moment and our emotional response, but also what it takes to change our society for the better. And we all have a part.

I am confident that we as an institution are committed to—and up for—that task. After all, we share a responsibility to educate the future lawyers and leaders of our state and nation. The challenge is broad, it will require hard work, and it will take generations of hard work to make progress. I ask you to do your part by sharing this solemn commitment, by serving as a voice for those who do not have one, and to be a safe and non-judgmental place for anyone to express their pain and frustration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Gallini'.

Brian Gallini  
Dean & Professor of Law