

## May/June Statements From the Dean

From: Rosato, Jennifer

Sent: Sunday, May 31, 2020 3:00 PM

Subject: Dean's Update

Dear College of Law community:

I'm sure you have all been watching the news reports of the protests, violence and looting throughout the country and in our great city. And last night that damage came to our own home at the law school. I just received a briefing that, last night, a number of the front and side windows in Lewis were broken into on the Jackson and Wabash sides: the University facilities workers have been working there since early morning, and all has been cleaned and boarded up. Fortunately, no one entered our building and nothing was taken or damaged inside the building, and no one was hurt. I will be heading over to the law school tomorrow morning, but there is nothing that can or needs to be done. I ask you not to come down to help or to check out the situation, especially as there is limited access downtown. If you do need to do work in the building this week, it will be accessible as it was last week but only come in if you really need to so that the essential workers can do their work. There is a good bit of damage throughout the South Loop.

The Lewis windows will be replaced and not show the scars of the damage of these events. But that is not true for members of our community whose hearts and minds have been affected deeply by the senseless death of George Floyd and its aftermath. I have felt this especially communicating with our students who are deeply feeling pain, anger, and frustration at our legal system and their ability to make a difference. We all grieve for the unnecessary loss of life, and identify with or empathize with the families and communities who continue to experience the damage and trauma caused by racism.

Especially in a law school community, we know how law and its processes can be powerful ways to effectuate change but also to perpetuate structural racism and other inequalities. Please continue to reach out to each other during this time, and know that there are resources available to help, such as the University's Employment Assistance Program [<https://offices.depaul.edu/human-resources/benefits/Pages/counseling.aspx>], University Pastoral Care [<https://offices.depaul.edu/mission-ministry/religious-spiritual-life/Pages/spirituality.aspx>]. If you reach out to students, make sure that they know about all the resources available to them. [<https://law.depaul.edu/student-resources/Pages/COVID-19-Resources.aspx>]

As a community, we will continue to keep diversity, inclusion and equity a priority, as the pandemic has underscored (in life and death terms) the impact of racism and poverty on our most vulnerable communities. Instead of cleaning up the damage of broken glass, we need to work together fix our broken system of justice, in whatever small way we can.

I will continue to provide you updates, and please let me know if you have any questions in the meantime.

Stay safe and hold your loved ones close, Jenn

**From:** Rosato, Jennifer

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 9, 2020 6:03 AM

**Subject:** From Dean Jenn: Working together for racial justice

Dear COL community:

The College of Law stands with SBA, BLSA and other student organizations in supporting the protesting of racial injustice by Black Lives Matter and other organizations throughout our city, nation, and the world. Too many lives have been lost through violence against people of color-- by police officers and others -- for far too long. George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and so many other lives taken. These protests shine a light on injustice that has plagued our systems for centuries and provide an "inflection point" for action that I hope will truly transform those systems.

As the SBA stated in their letter to the College of Law community, we need to speak out and have uncomfortable conversations. We must take action, guided by our Vincentian values. We need to work together, as allies, to eradicate racial injustice in all systems that we interface as lawyers – including criminal justice, health care, housing, and voting rights. As I included in last week's message to the community, "we know how law and its processes can be powerful ways to effectuate change but also to perpetuate structural racism and other inequalities." We need to work together to "fix our broken system of justice, in whatever small way we can." All of us have a role to play in protesting oppression, inside and outside of the system.

As a start we had been working on some of the following initiatives:

- \*faculty and staff have continued to self-reflect on issues of diversity, inclusion and equity, and will undergo additional training during the Fall semester;
- \*two community conversations are being planned so far for the Fall semester on race and policing, and COVID-19 inequities;
- \*issues of diversity, inclusion, equity and professionalism will be integrated into 1L orientation;
- \* we are working with community partners and our alumni diversity council on other programs and initiatives related to racial justice.

I look forward to working with our students, faculty, staff and alumni to address racial injustice. I will listen to the needs of our Black community, especially the ways these recent events have deepened the hurt and trauma that is felt every day. I will continue to call on community members to collaborate with the law school to make the reality of racial justice possible – one act at a time.

With hope, Dean Jenn