



Dear Duquesne Law Family,

I know you all share in the deep anguish gripping our nation over the death of George Floyd. In recent weeks, we have also seen the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor. And these are just the most recent entries in a centuries-old ledger of inequality that stretches back to our nation's founding.

As part of a Catholic and Spiritan University Founded in 1878, our Law School's Mission since our very inception in 1911 has been (and steadfastly remains) built upon a pursuit of justice that advances the values of human dignity and mutual respect. Regardless of race or creed or any form of individual identity, the Law School community embraces these values. Today, I am writing to remind each and all of the reality that we are not a finished product.

As an academic community grounded in the Catholic intellectual and spiritual tradition, we teach that truth is one, that faith and reason are complementary, and that all persons are equal in dignity irrespective of their attributes and accomplishments. As a law school, we are uniquely positioned to foster inclusive excellence and we are obligated to be powerful agents of change in our community. As a legal profession, we are committed to justice and we know that being treated differently on account of these differences between and among us strikes at the very heart of our core values.

We must hold on to the common humanity that bonds all of us and work tirelessly to foster a community that respects the value of human dignity. To this end, the Duquesne Law family must use its voice. Although this time of social distancing complicates our efforts, we are committed to creating opportunities for action, conversation, prayer, and healing.

Duquesne Law is committed to crafting cognizable initiatives, in the form of open and honest forums and increased learning opportunities for students, faculty, and staff. As a law school, we are distinctively suited to provide such opportunities and pledge to do so. Racism affects all of us, and we must work as a community to eliminate it.

I am currently in discussions with student and faculty leaders and will soon have a plan for a series of forums that I will share in the upcoming weeks. I invite you to communicate your ideas

with me directly (lawdean@duq.edu), so that I can share them with members of our Dean's Diversity Advisory Committee.

I continue to pray for God's healing and strength over our entire Law School community.

With love and concern for all,

April Mara Barton
Dean and Professor of Law
Duquesne University School of Law