



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

College of Law

June 1, 2020

Dear College of Law Faculty, Staff and Students,

I'm writing as a follow up to President Freeman's message regarding NIU's commitment to confronting racism. The killing of George Floyd was horrific and murder charges are now pending. Sadly, we know this was not an isolated incident in our society. Recent news headlines have highlighted African Americans confronting racism when engaging in activities most of us would not view as risky—such as jogging and bird watching. While most of us put on masks fearing only a virus, people of color have written about fears that wearing homemade masks will subject them to racial profiling. The global pandemic has also served to once again bring into sharp focus racial inequalities with food security, economic security, and access to health care—just to name a few areas.

I want the people of color at the College of Law to know that we want our community to be a place where you have allies and where you feel heard. As our nation finds a way toward healing, we at the College of Law will have a role in contributing to positive change. Our mission statement explicitly states that among our goals we want “to counter the effects of societal discrimination” and to encourage students “to maintain a deep concern for social justice.” We are all part of a law school because we believe that the rule of law is a powerful tool that can be harnessed for positive change. While I feel sadness and anger right now, I also feel hope because I know the commitment that the people in the College of Law have to working toward a better and more just society. While we are physically apart right now, in this spirit we stand together.

We also want to let you know that your deans (me, Dean King and Dean Coles) are here for you if you would like to talk about recent events and what you are experiencing at this time. I also want to remind you about the availability of [counseling services](#) on campus for students, the [employee assistance program](#) for employees, and the [Office of the Ombudsperson](#), which provides confidential assistance to all members of the NIU community.

Laurel Rigertas
Interim Dean and Professor of Law

Your Future. Our Focus.