

Faculty Resolution of June 11, 2020

WNE Law has previously acknowledged and continues to recognize the reality of pervasive structural racism in U.S. society. WNE Law has taken steps to combat racism in its teaching, mentoring, programming, faculty scholarship, student support, community outreach, pro bono work, and, most recently, the work of the Center for Social Justice. We can and must do more.

The faculty recognizes the ongoing, systemic, and long-standing racial and societal injustices in this country, and that neither the legal system nor the training of law professionals is immune to this national heritage.

The faculty recognizes that these injustices have existed since the occupation of this land by European settlers and the inception of the transatlantic slave trade in 1619, and has been furthered by Jim Crow laws and the unequal treatment of African Americans in all aspects of U.S. life, including our criminal justice and judicial system.

The faculty especially notes and is appalled by the killings and pervasive terror inflicted on African Americans under the color of law and with a lack of accountability for these injustices.

The faculty recognizes the senseless brutality sometimes committed by individuals employed to serve and protect, who too often operate under a pattern, practice, and culture fostering unequal treatment.

The faculty recognizes and feels the sadness, anger, outrage, frustration, pain, and grieving caused by extrajudicial killings and the constant fear for the personal safety felt by African Americans and other people of color. The faculty recognizes the need to engage in peaceful protest and constructive acts to make a meaningful difference towards societal change.

The faculty recognizes that racism is an incessant malady and anathema to the principles of justice and the rule of law that lawyers are bound to uphold by oath and moral imperative.

The faculty recognizes the need to have uncomfortable discussions and honest and transparent conversations directed towards addressing these injustices.

The faculty recognizes that we have an obligation to fight ignorance and intolerance, model inclusivity, and embrace our differences and the power that diversity represents; we must do so in the law school, the university, and in our local, regional, and national communities. We recognize the need to stand strong—as persons of color ourselves, or with African Americans and other people of color as effective allies.

The faculty recognizes the need to stand in ongoing support of our students, staff, fellow faculty, and their families who are persons of color, and to be better listeners and supporters of those who are the victims of racism.

The faculty acknowledges that not being racist is not enough. We commit to being active antiracists, identifying and challenging systemic prejudice wherever it exists, and being held accountable for doing the work necessary to effect policy changes that dismantle structural systems of oppression that perpetuate racial inequities in our society. We will strive to be better,

and we will abide by the goal of providing respect and equal treatment to all in upholding the rule of law.