

CLEVELAND-MARSHALL COLLEGE OF LAW

Cleveland State University

June 5, 2020

Last evening, over 50 of our students, staff, and faculty had a 90-minute conversation in what we called a virtual Town Hall about the pain, anguish, and outrage all of us are feeling. We recognize that this has impacted our brothers and sisters of color in our law school community, especially our Black students, faculty members and staff in ways that those of us who are not Black or of color, cannot fully understand.

But we do know one thing. We are with you.

We thank each of you who participated. A number of our Black students described being devastated, overwhelmed, and exhausted. Some noted that George Floyd or Ahmaud Arbery “could have been me.”

Our goal last evening was to create a safe space to share feelings and emotions without apology and to share ideas and recommendations for actions to be taken by our law school community in the short and long-term future. We are committed to creating a community where all feel supported and valued. I encourage our students, faculty, and staff to engage in difficult conversations on equity, diversity, inclusion and racial justice with empathy. Let’s listen, truly listen, to the lived experiences of each other.

To our students: we value your voices—you challenge us to live up to our mission to not just "Learn Law" but also "Live Justice." Today those words are a call to each of us—students, faculty, and staff—to use our voices and the power of our institution to accomplish lasting change to end racism and end police brutality against communities of color.

Everyone who spoke last evening emphasized that this must be more than just a moment. It demands sustained individual and collective action.

We commit to spending the upcoming academic year deepening our collective understanding, identifying possible solutions, and taking effective action. Early next week, I will be sending an initial list of concrete actions we intend to take over the coming days, weeks, and months. These actions will be just a beginning, and we will continue to actively engage with our students, faculty, staff, and alumni, to listen and together determine the actions we must take.

As James Baldwin stated, *"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."* Together we will face the racial injustice plaguing our society, and together we will pursue meaningful change.

Thanks.
My best,
Lee

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