

Dear Members of the Penn State Law Community,

I am grateful for the leadership of BLSA and SBA, and for our Black students, faculty, staff, and alumni sharing their experiences, concerns, and insights. We have been listening and hearing with the goal of allyship and amplifying voices.

The BLSA and SBA leadership, Dean Ferguson, Dean Purvis, Professor Wadhia, the Diversity Committee, and other student, faculty, staff, and alumni leaders have helped us translate that listening into concrete action steps (below and attached). We have already begun moving forward on all of them, and are committed to making progress.

We welcome feedback and will continue to listen and refine these action steps over time. We are committed to an inclusive, welcoming environment and to actively working on antiracism and on addressing racist violence, police brutality, and racial profiling.

Best,
Hari

Messaging and Communication

- Improving Penn State Law Website: Reworking PSL webpage on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to include information and resources; creating a prominent link to those pages on the PSL website front page; updating News and Events; listing diversity scholarships on Admitted Students page. Also, adding information to Facebook pages
- Developing an open letter that can be signed by students, faculty, staff, and alumni, and also exploring a faculty resolution

Training, Transparency and Accountability

- Following up on concerns raised about faculty, classroom behavior, and incidents in classes
- Exploring possibilities for greater transparency about discrimination complaints. I have heard the concern and am exploring with the university what, if anything, is possible given the legal and confidentiality constraints.
- Reworking orientation for the fall—shifting speakers based on feedback, adding implicit bias training, and creating a feedback process
- Developing and delivering survey for faculty, staff, and students to measure belonging in addition to climate surveys
- Developing and implementing bias training for faculty, staff, and students. We have received suggestions of potential trainers and are figuring out how it should be structured.
- Continuing to work on our processes around faculty and staff hiring to ensure equal opportunity and foster diversity

Curriculum

- Adding new courses and adding to existing courses opportunities for meaningful engagement with the interface of law, race, and social justice

- Creating a privilege simulation in collaboration with the College of Education using the Restorative Justice Initiative's reentry simulation as a model
- Establishing a course and/or workshop that creates opportunities for pro bono work to assist efforts by NGOs and others to address racial violence, police brutality, and racial profiling. We are collaborating to develop a new multi-law-school clinic/center on police accountability, and also to exploring other course/workshop opportunities at Penn State Law.
- Developing a Concentration in Race, Law, and Equity (currently before Curriculum Committee)

Student Inclusion & Support

- Establishing a George Floyd Memorial Scholarship. With gratitude to Dean Engle for committing to a gift to launch this scholarship, I am also committing to contribute to this scholarship and actively fundraise to build it. We are developing the details and will have more information in coming days.
- Expanding our faculty Diversity Committee (which will be headed by our Assoc Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) to include staff and students. Three rotating student representatives – including all affinity group leaders over the course of the academic year – will participate. Ad hoc meetings will be scheduled as needs arise.
- Establishing a monthly check in process with affinity group leaders with the Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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