Dear Members of the Penn State Law and SIA Community,

I join President Barron in anger and sadness over the police shooting of Walter Wallace Jr. I want to acknowledge that many people in our community and around the country and world are hurting, to reinforce our continued commitment to racial justice and police accountability, and to offer supportive resources.

It is important that we support our Black students, faculty, staff, and alumni. It is not ok that Black members of our community have to live in fear for themselves and their loved ones. The killing of Walter Wallace Jr. follows that of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and too many others, and we need systemic change to address these issues.

Lawyers and law schools have an obligation to help change laws and police practices. Penn State Law has helped lead the development of the newly-launched Legal Education Police Practices Consortium, a partnership among over 50 law schools and ABA "to advance the widespread adoption of model police practices and initiate other projects designed to support effective policing, promote racial equity in the criminal justice system, and eliminate tactics that are racially motivated or have a disparate impact based on race." This new Consortium will complement the important work of our Civil Rights Appellate Clinic in collaboration with the ACLU and numerous law schools and law firms to address racially discriminatory policing practices in Louisiana.

Penn State Law is also committed to increasing financial support for students from traditionally underrepresented groups and working to diversify our law school and the profession. Through collaborative efforts of our administrative leaders, boards, faculty, staff, and alumni, we have created four new diversity scholarships, which with the University match total over $300,000 in endowed support: The George Floyd Memorial Scholarship Fund at Penn State Law, the Congressman John Lewis Educational Equity Scholarship Fund at Penn State Law, the Congresswoman Barbara Jordan Educational Equity Scholarship Fund at Penn State Law, and the Professor Emerita Beth Farmer Educational Equity Scholarship Fund at Penn State Law. I am so grateful for the generosity of our community that made this possible.

As President Barron states, "We join with those seeking transparency and answers; we denounce the subsequent violence that has ensued in the city of Philadelphia; we call for an end to these tragic events; and we mourn with those whose hearts are breaking. We remain committed to our ongoing work to upend systemic racism and create a culture defined by equity and justice."

Student services in both Penn State Law and SIA are here to support our students. I also wanted to share other university resources that support our students and employees.

- Penn State CAPS has a specific page for racialized minority groups: https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/resources/resources-racially-minoritized-students.
- The Paul Robeson Cultural Center provides resources and programming: https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/cultural
- For employees needing support, the Penn State Employee Assistance Program (EAP), through the EAP+Work/Life program, offers short-term counseling from licensed EAP professionals, by phone, email, or in person to help employees better cope with personal, family, and work issues. EAP also offers access to Personal Health Advocates, who can help navigate healthcare and insurance systems, efficiently and dependably. More information is available at https://hr.psu.edu/health-matters/employee-assistance-program.

Warmly,
Hari Osofsky

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