



Statement of University of Detroit Mercy School of Law

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.” —
Desmond Tutu

We, as faculty, administrators, and staff of University of Detroit Mercy Law School, recognize that the brutal killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor that have recently come to light are a part of our painful history of racial oppression from the start of slavery 400 years ago through to the present day. Specifically, we recognize:

- That we all have a responsibility to address the intolerable institutional racism that infects our country;
- That the institutional racism infecting our society at every level must be addressed;
- That this institutional racism is rooted in the sin of slavery;
- That our legal system, including Jim Crow Laws, redlining, our criminal laws, and our justice system as a whole, has reinforced racism and oppressed Black individuals throughout our history;
- That the devastating impact of Covid-19 on our Black and Brown communities in Southeast Michigan is directly linked to this history of racism and oppression; and
- That silence and inaction in the face of this institutional racism and the brutalities inflicted on Black individuals in our country cannot be tolerated.

We recognize that the impact of this systemic racism and brutality is not only felt outside of our Law School but is a reality that our students bring into the classroom and our Law School every day. We are therefore committed to taking steps to ensure an inclusive learning experience for all our students that recognizes this reality. Specifically, we commit to:

- Finding ways to incorporate into our courses an understanding of racial justice and the role race has played in our legal system;
- Engaging in training about cultural competency so that we can effectively teach all of our students;
- Investigating all aspects of our program of legal education – including admissions, financial aid, bar success, career placement, curriculum, and alumni relations – to determine where institutional racism has an impact and to taking steps to eradicate that impact;
- Prioritizing the hiring of persons of color;
- Prioritizing the recruitment of students of color; and
- Providing space for students to share their experiences and concerns about our learning environment, and actively listening to those concerns.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reminded us, “In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.” We all have a role to play in dismantling the system of racial oppression that has infected our society and we commit to taking affirmative steps towards its eradication both within our own walls and in the world beyond. By signing below, we pledge our support for these efforts.

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