

STETSON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW
FACULTY & DIVERSITY COMMITTEE JOINT RESOLUTION*

2020

WHEREAS, the Stetson University College of Law (hereinafter Stetson Law) faculty and Diversity and Inclusion Committee (hereinafter Diversity Committee) recognize the ongoing, systemic and perpetual racial and societal injustices, which have been in place since the establishment of this country; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee recognize that these injustices were expanded by institutions such as slavery and furthered by unjust laws such as Jim Crow and the unequal treatment of Black Americans and other People of Color in our executive, legislative and judicial systems; and

WHEREAS, the United States criminal legal system traces back to slave patrols, Black Codes, and the convict leasing system, whereby Black people (including children, adults, and the elderly) were arrested for loitering and then leased out to be worked to death. That history has not yet been overcome; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee especially note and are appalled by the numerous unjust killings that have been committed against Black Americans and argued as being defensible under current law such as the killings of Tanisha Anderson, Ahmaud Arbery, Sean Bell, Sandra Bland, Rayshard Brooks, Michael Brown Jr., Philando Castile, George Floyd, Eric Garner, Maurice Gordon, Atatiana Jefferson, Charleena Lyles, Trayvon Martin, Tony McDade, Layleen Polanco, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Breonna Taylor, and many others, where the asserted justifications for their murders have roots in the false belief of White supremacy, and were the catalyst for the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter Movement; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee recognize the lack of accountability for these injustices; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee recognize the senseless brutality being committed by many acting as police officers employed to serve and protect who are operating under a pattern, practice and culture fostering unequal treatment; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee recognize the need to have uncomfortable talks and real, honest and transparent conversations directed towards addressing these injustices; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee recognize and feel the sadness, anger, outrage, frustration, pain and grieving caused by extrajudicial killings; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee recognize the need to understand how so many feel helpless, frustrated, invisible, disillusioned, and in constant fear for their personal safety, leading to psychological and emotional scars; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee recognize that racism and discrimination are an affront to our nation's expressed commitment to freedom, equality and aspirations for a civil society; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee recognize that systemic discrimination and unjust racial inequities continue to impede advancement for all in our nation; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee recognize that we should not accept apathy, indifference or silence to such ongoing violence and inequities, which otherwise allows hatred, prejudice and intolerance to fester and grow; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee recognize the right to engage in peaceful protest and constructive acts to make a meaningful difference towards societal change; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee recognize that we have an obligation to combat ignorance and intolerance, model inclusivity, and embrace our differences and the power that diversity represents; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee recognize the obligation to stand with our nation's Black brothers and sisters as effective allies; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and Diversity Committee recognize the need to stand in ongoing support of students, staff, faculty, and their families throughout our nation who are Persons of Color.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the faculty and Diversity Committee acknowledge that racism is an affliction that we must never enable, and that we should actively be antiracists and take responsibility to condemn and end racism. Further, that we need to identify and challenge systemic prejudice wherever it exists, that we are all accountable for doing the work necessary for policy changes that dismantle structural systems of oppression that perpetuate racial inequities in our society, that we will strive to be better listeners and supporters of those who are the victims of racism, that we will never rest until every American feels safe, free and accepted in our country, and that we will continuously abide by the goal of providing respect and equal treatment to all in upholding the rule of law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Stetson Law faculty and Diversity Committee are committed to dismantling all forms of oppressive power dynamics and challenging any assumptions that diminish human dignity, including those that rely on racist

assumptions. Stetson Law has heard the concerns of its student organization, the Black Law Students Association, on issues specifically concerning negative racial power dynamics and assumptions, and the impact on Black Students and other Students of Color on the Stetson Law campus.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Stetson Law faculty and Diversity Committee pledge to support the following Action Steps as a call to action in our community:

- Stetson Law Faculty will endeavor to incorporate race and the law topics into every class in the curriculum.
- Stetson Law’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee will continue to provide training for all law school faculty and staff on effectively managing difficult conversations about race. Stetson Law will ensure that all faculty and staff verify that they have viewed the video, “Difficult Conversations In and Out of the Classroom.”
- Stetson Law’s Office of the Dean has formed a new Conduct Code Committee to examine the student disciplinary process; ensure fair process to all students; uphold the directives of Stetson’s Statement of Policy on Free Expression; appropriately sanction discriminatory and harassing conduct, including conduct based on race; and ensure that the Conduct Code reflects the values of the legal profession.
- Through the Florida Law Schools’ Consortium for Racial Justice, Stetson Law will commit resources to train student facilitators who can foster dialogue and develop coalitions across differences.
- As part of the Consortium, Stetson Law will commit resources toward understanding the causes for and consequences of the dismal number of Black attorneys in Florida (3%) as well as nationally (4.4%).
- Stetson Law’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee will develop a Professionalism Education Panel, which will receive and address faculty, staff, and student concerns about professionalism issues, including issues related to inclusion and diversity on campus, and will identify opportunities for campus-wide education on issues of inclusion and diversity.
- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee will form a subcommittee of faculty, students, and staff to research Stetson Law’s history and monuments and their relevance to racial equity and recommend corrective action related to that history.
- Stetson Law’s Office of Development and Alumni Relations will continue its work to identify and recognize Alumni of Color who have contributed and continue to contribute to the law school, as well as the local, national, and global communities.

- Stetson Law’s Office of Admissions will continue its recruitment campaigns at historically Black institutions and provide more support for those campaigns.
- Stetson Law Office of Admissions will work with community partners on Pre-Law programs designed to increase diversity in the legal profession.
- Stetson Law’s Office of Student Affairs will include in its required first-year law student Orientation Program a ninety-minute “Inclusivity and Civility in Law School” training program.
- Stetson Law’s Office of Student Affairs will begin the process of expanding diversity and inclusion training in its required student organization leadership training.
- Stetson Law’s Career and Professional Development Office will expand its diversity outreach and build more productive partnerships with diverse employers; maintain active, intentional relationships with our local affinity voluntary bar associations and include them in the planning and development process. The office will monitor employment outcomes and departmental process measures to ensure parity and equity in our performance.
- Stetson Law’s Development and Alumni Relations Office will continue its efforts to endow scholarships for Black students.
- To foster transparency, the Diversity Committee will host bi-annual (once each semester) Round Tables with BLSA, and other identified student organizations, to promote a welcomed expectation of continued conversations, encourage feedback and provide updates about the progress of these and other initiatives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this resolution be preserved in the records and minutes of the Stetson Law Faculty and prominently displayed on the Stetson Law website.

Adopted this 9th day of October, 2020, by Stetson University College of Law Faculty and Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

* We stand in solidarity with Penn State Dickinson Law, where portions of this resolution originated, and all other institutions joining in the hard work of justice.