

Statement from Canadian Law Deans on anti-Black Racism

Members of the Council of Canadian Law Deans stand in solidarity with all who mourn and have denounced examples of systemic racism in Canadian and other societies, and, in particular, violence perpetrated against racialized people in Canada. We recognize and acknowledge the pain and anguish experienced by many of our racialized students, staff and faculty, and we are grateful for the leadership of BLSA chapters across the country.

We know that law schools can play a critical role in dismantling systems of institutionalized racism in our society. As legal educators we can contribute productively to the ways in which these issues are addressed in the curriculum and in the legal system more generally. We want all our graduates to appreciate that racism has no place in a society governed by the rule of law, and that as members of the legal profession they must play a role in ameliorating the damage caused by racist practices in the Canadian legal system. This goal is vitally important because we know that law is not inherently neutral or progressive; we are regrettably aware that graduates of our faculties – many of whom have held positions of leadership in Canadian society – have played significant roles in the development and perpetuation of colonial and systemically racist policy and practices. This is a history we must work to correct.

We commit to continuing the efforts in each of our law schools to focus on issues of racism, particularly anti-Black racism, and the role of law in maintaining those systems, as we teach and learn with our students and as we examine and develop our curricular offerings. We also commit to finding more opportunities to consider the ways in which law can be a force for change in unsettling embedded racism. We will seek to advance the goal of removing racism from the operation of the legal system through the clinical and extra-curricular opportunities we provide to our students, in our student recruiting and faculty hiring, in our support for the research communities examining these issues and in our engagement with the broader legal community.