

June 5, 2020

Dear Samuelson Clinic Community,

We hope you are healthy and safe during this difficult time. The Covid-19 pandemic was already a strain on many of us. The horrifying death of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis Police Department, yet another example of an unarmed Black man being killed by police, has inflicted further hardship on communities already suffering disproportionately.

In an email to the law school community earlier this week, Dean Erwin Chemerinsky wrote, “We, as a Law School, have a special role and responsibility to play in ensuring justice. We must loudly condemn the racism that is reflected in the much greater toll of COVID-19 on communities of color and the continued police brutality and violence directed at African-Americans. We must express solidarity with our students, staff, and faculty of color for whom this is especially difficult.”

We in the Samuelson Clinic stand in solidarity with American communities of color, and especially with our students, alumni, and staff and faculty colleagues of color. We condemn the continued violence directed at Black people and other people of color. We are acutely aware of how technology and the laws surrounding technology create harms that fall disproportionately on Black people and other people of color. We know that when technology is used to deprive Americans of their civil liberties, the harms fall disproportionately on Black people and other people of color. Sometimes these harms are shamefully apparent, as encountered consistently in our recent focus on criminal justice as a third core element of our docket, in addition to intellectual property and civil liberties. For example, we saw in our work on the use of GPS ankle bracelets on youth in the juvenile system the negative impact of this technology on youth of color. Sometimes the harms arise from less-obvious places, as we saw in our work to overcome copyright barriers to the SNCC Legacy Project’s goals of preserving and making accessible historic materials from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. But always they are to be condemned and ameliorated.

We will devote the summer to determining how to make racial justice a more explicit part of our work and our curriculum. We will continue building up our work in this area. We intend to more explicitly emphasize racial justice when teaching through our client work, from inception through completion. We also will look for more ways to integrate discussions of racial justice into our seminar curriculum.

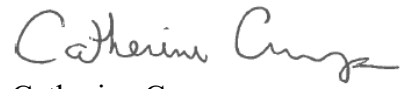
We are also acutely aware of the underrepresentation of Black people and other communities of color in the legal profession and especially in the technology sector, and will renew our efforts to ensure that the Samuelson Clinic is a comfortable space for our students of color and to work for systemic change in the technology sector.

We are inspired by the actions of our students and the many Americans protesting and demanding justice and an end to racist structures and actions.

Best wishes,

Catherine Crump
Erik Stallman
Jennifer M. Urban
Megan Graham

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine Crump". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent initial 'C'.

Catherine Crump

