

NORTHWESTERN PRITZKER  
SCHOOL OF LAW

DIVERSITY, EQUITY &  
INCLUSION

YEAR IN REVIEW

2020-2021

# INTRODUCTION

As we conclude the 2020-2021 academic year, we wanted to take a moment to provide updates on Northwestern Pritzker School of Law's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Since the tragic murder of George Floyd last May, institutions, organizations, and corporations across the globe have wrestled with the continuing legacy of racism, white supremacy, and other forms of systemic oppression. The Law School has not been immune from this self-reflection, and a key strategic priority for the Law School Senior Leadership Team this academic year focused on better understanding the ways in which the Law School may perpetuate inequities and also on supporting members of our community whose lives are touched by racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of systemic oppression.

While the Law School continues to take affirmative and principled action towards ensuring that we live up to our responsibility—and our institutional values—to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community for all constituents, we realize that our work is not finished. This Year in Review provides some updates on our efforts, as we look forward to continuing this important work.

James B. Speta  
Interim Dean

Shannon P. Bartlett  
Associate Dean of Inclusion & Engagement



# LEADERSHIP EFFORTS



The Law School Senior Leadership Team (“SLT”) recognizes that the work of promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism must begin at the top. All members of the SLT went through a 16-hour sustained dialogue program facilitated by experienced DEI professionals Dr. Kathy Obear and Dr. Dana Emerson. The program created a space for SLT members to better understand the different ways members of the SLT navigate the same community and physical space. After completing the facilitated dialogue sessions, all SLT members were charged with examining their administrative departments to ascertain the ways in which barriers to diversity, equity, and inclusion manifested, and to develop concrete action items to redress those barriers and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout their administrative work. Specifically, SLT members were tasked with developing initiatives and concrete, actionable goals that focus on: **reflecting** on barriers to diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism; **recruiting** diverse team members; **retaining** diverse team members; and **reimagining** the ways in which administrative departments do their work, to ensure that the Law School conducts itself in ways that minimize inequities and promote inclusion.



The SLT’s work is ongoing, collaborative, and involves the enthusiastic cooperation of all team members, the Associate Dean of Inclusion & Engagement, and the Interim Dean. Although still in the beginning stages, SLT members remain committed to **REFLECT, RECRUIT, RETAIN, and REIMAGINE.**

# ACTION COMMITTEE

Announced in October 2020, the Northwestern Pritzker Law Alumni ACTION Committee, a group of invested alumni assembled to address Accountability, Cultural Competency, Transparency, Inclusion, and Openness at Northwestern Law, has been working to fulfill its commitment to acknowledge and address the Law School's challenges and opportunities with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Committee has maintained ongoing communication with the Law School's administration and offered to support the Dean Search Committee in order to buttress their search for a dean with a record of commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The ACTION Committee's core work, to acknowledge and address on-the-ground realities of the institution's progress in fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive anti-racist institution, has begun with extensive institutional data gathering and a plan to report on four areas of interest in the coming months. These areas are informed by the issues raised by the Concerned Students: Faculty Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention; Professional Development and Support for Students with Marginalized and/or Underrepresented Identities; Recruitment Efforts for Students with Marginalized and/or Underrepresented Identities; and Reputation of the Law School in the Legal Academy.

The ACTION Committee will report on existing data that describes the past and present state of these four areas while also making pragmatic and actionable recommendations that are responsive to the realities reflected in the data and the lived experiences of Law School community members.

## CLIMATE SURVEY

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the Law School undertook a climate survey in partnership with Rankin & Associates. The climate survey closed on March 5th, with an overall response rate of about 50% of members of the Law School community. The climate survey will create a shared understanding of how members of our community perceive and experience the Law School. Climate survey results will be shared with the Law School community in the Fall 2021 semester. For additional information on the climate survey, including a timeline, visit <https://www.law.northwestern.edu/about/diversity/climate-survey/>.

44%

Response rate for  
Law School climate  
survey

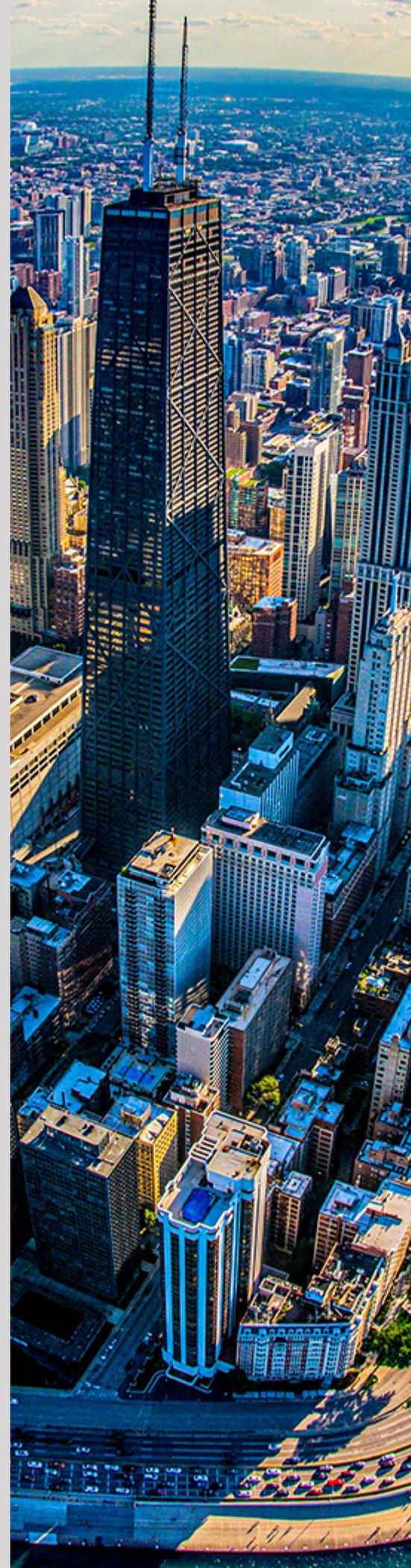
# INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

The Law School continues to promote innovative and inclusive pedagogy efforts in key concrete ways. In conjunction with the Associate Dean of Inclusion & Engagement, the Pritzker Library created a collection of [inclusive pedagogy resources](#) available to all faculty members. Over the summer, the Associate Dean of Inclusion & Engagement and the Associate Dean for Academic Programs hosted a webinar promoting inclusive teaching in an online environment. The Associate Dean of Inclusion & Engagement also recorded a webinar on inclusive teaching for faculty members teaching in the MSL program.

In addition to these efforts, the Associate Dean of Inclusion & Engagement, the Associate Dean of Academic Programs, and the Associate Dean for Intellectual Life all regularly consulted with interested faculty members about creating inclusive syllabi, addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in the classroom, and other topics related to creating inclusive and engaging classroom experiences for students.

To better understand both the student experience in the classroom and faculty members' efforts to forward DEI efforts within the Law School community, a question was added to the course teaching evaluation form in the Spring 2021 semester. The question focused on the faculty member's efforts to create a respectful classroom environment. Also in Spring 2021, a question inquiring about faculty members' DEI efforts was added to faculty members' annual Faculty Activity Report.

Finally, the Law School has partnered with Associate Provost of Diversity and Inclusion and Professor of Law & Sociology Camille Gear Rich from USC Gould School of Law for faculty-related programming over summer 2021.



# RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

## FACULTY

The Law School continues to focus its efforts on hiring excellent faculty members who represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives. During the 2020-2021 academic year, the Law School invited an impressive slate of candidates to campus to meet with faculty members and students. Although regrettably none of the candidates will be joining the Northwestern Pritzker Law faculty, the Law School continues to work to attract impressive faculty members who will contribute to the Law School's faculty excellence. The Law School has also prioritized inviting a diverse cross-section of visiting faculty to campus, as well as diversifying the Law School's adjunct faculty.

Retention of faculty also presents an opportunity for growth. The climate survey will help the Law School better understand the experiences of current faculty members of all backgrounds, allowing the Law School to develop concrete action items to curate an inclusive faculty culture.

## STAFF

Recruiting a diverse staff and administrative team is essential for Northwestern Pritzker Law's continued success as an institution. To ensure best practices in hiring for staff positions, all hiring supervisors must put together a search committee with diverse membership, and all members of the search committees must undergo unconscious bias training facilitated by University Human Resources. In addition, the Northwestern Human Resources team works with hiring managers on building inclusive job descriptions and inclusive interview processes. All hiring managers are given access to resources reflecting best practices in inclusive hiring and assisted with developing a strategy for expanding the diversity of the applicant pool.

Retention of diverse staff and administrators remains a top priority for the Law School. In addition to implementing exit interviews for all departing staff, the Office of Inclusion & Engagement and the University and Law School Human Resources teams have partnered to put together a training and resources for minimizing bias in the performance evaluation process.

## STUDENTS

Another key strategic priority for the Law School during the 2020-2021 academic year was recruiting and admitting a JD Class of 2024 that meaningfully contributes to the diversity of the Law School student body. In addition to the Office of Admissions' and Office of Inclusion & Engagement's launch of an innovative and robust virtual recruiting effort that included more than a dozen programs, alumni and current student outreach efforts have resulted in what looks to be one of the most diverse JD classes in the history of the Law School. The Law School is grateful to the hard work of the many staff members, students, student organizations, faculty, and alumni who participated in these history-making efforts.

# PATHWAY: PAVING THE WAY FORWARD



**Chloe Edmonds**  
Class of 2021



**Walter García**  
Class of 2021



**Natalie Guio**  
Class of 2021



**Ericka Martinez**  
Class of 2021



**Cyerra McGowan**  
Class of 2021



**Mariah Young**  
Class of 2021

Launched in 2016, [Pathway to the Legal Profession](#) is an annual legal admissions application conference founded by student members of the Black Student Initiative Fellowship and the Latino Law Students Association. The program is sponsored by and planned in conjunction with Northwestern Law's Office of Inclusion & Engagement and the Office of Admissions & Financial Aid.

The Pathway conference provides prospective law school applicants with a comprehensive overview of the law school application process and advice on how to successfully navigate that process from applicant to law student. Since its founding, several hundred potential applicants have attended Pathway conferences, and attendees successfully matriculated into law schools, including Northwestern Law.

During the unprecedented 2020-2021 year, the virtual Pathway series planned by Law School's Black Student Initiative and Latinx Student Initiative Fellows continued to provide future and current law school applicants with important information on their journey. Together, the Fellows organized a series of programs for high school students, college students, and working professionals on topics including navigating the profession as a first generation student, understanding character and fitness, and on financial aid. With their hard work, passion, and creative energy, the Fellows who blazed their own trail to the profession assisted hundreds of current and future law school applicants on their journey to a path to a legal career.

# NORTH STAR MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

During the 2019-2020 academic year, the Dean of Students and the Associate Dean of Inclusion & Engagement launched the North Star Mentorship Program (“North Star”), a cohort mentorship program designed to create meaningful mentor/mentee relationships centered on issues that disproportionately impact first generation, undocumented, and underrepresented students, as well as other students who may benefit from more individualized peer support. The North Star mentorship program fosters community among the mentees as a larger group, and creates a bridge between the students participating in the program and administrative support and resources.

For the 2020-2021 academic year, nine 3L students served as mentors and 32 first year students participated as mentees. The entire cohort of mentees and mentors met regularly weekly during the academic year, and the mentors checked in with their mentees on a regular basis. With the move to virtual, the mentors and mentees engaged virtually, and fostered relationships across sections.

**"I have gained so much from having a mentor to answer my questions and by simply having a social outlet with my peers."**

**-2020-2021 1L North Star Mentee**

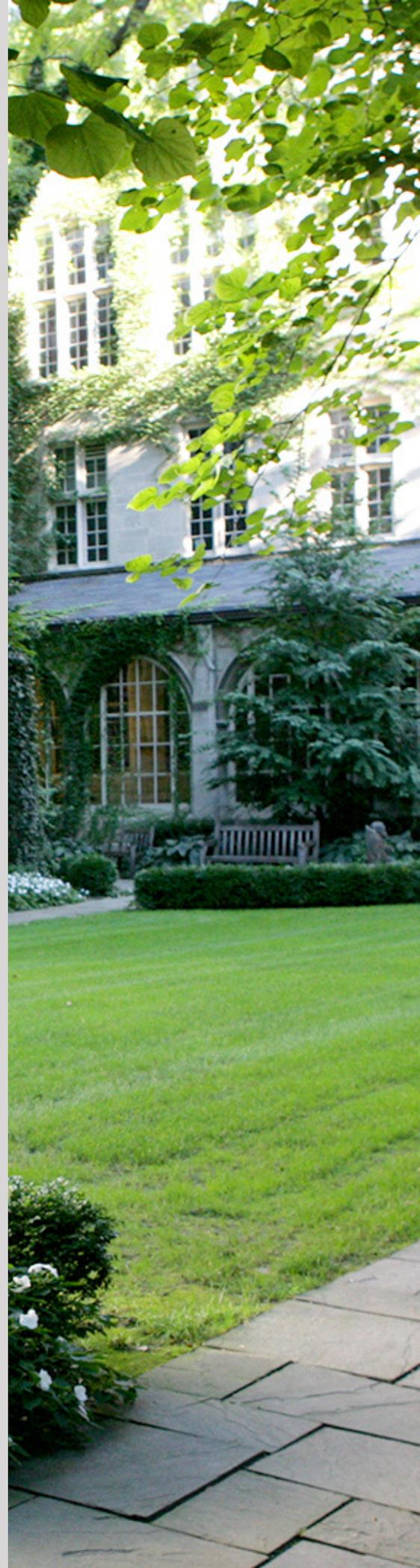


## DIVERSIFYING THE CURRICULUM

Over the past year, the Law School received significant feedback that its curriculum must offer a more robust slate of classes touching upon the ways in which laws, legal institutions, and legal actors intersect with systemic oppression, including racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and more. The Associate Dean of Academic Programs remains deeply committed to ensuring the Law School curriculum offers opportunities to explore law from various perspectives, including critical perspectives that focus on the experiences of those impacted by systemic oppression. The Law School anticipates a healthy assortment of classes on these topics in the 2021-2022 academic year and future years.

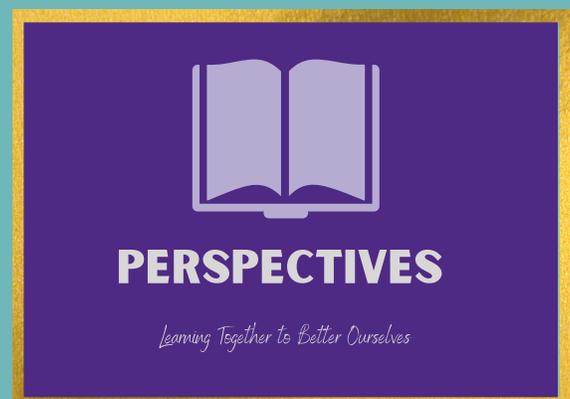
## ENSURING EQUITY FOR ALL

A strategic priority of the Law School SLT is to ensure that Law School community members have shared information on topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Shortly after the Law School announced a commitment to educational programming for all Law School community members last summer, President Schapiro announced a similar University-wide educational programming initiative that would be inclusive of all University students, staff members, and faculty. In an effort to avoid duplicating efforts, the Associate Dean of Inclusion & Engagement serves as a member of the University's Social Justice Training Committee along with members from across the University campus. The scope of the program is broad, and the anticipated timeline of a roll-out of programming is now Fall 2021. In addition to building out training opportunities, the Office of Inclusion & Engagement worked on initiatives across the Law School, including ensuring administrative departments use preferred names, developing bias training for moot court judges, working with student journals to ensure inclusive decision-making and recruitment strategies, partnering with the organization [Service 2 School](#), and implementing religious accommodations processes.



# ENGAGING STAFF

Northwestern Pritzker School of Law is privileged to have an active and engaged staff dedicated to diversifying the Law School and committed to growing the skill sets and competencies of staff members. Beginning during the 2019-2020 academic year, the Office of Inclusion & Engagement partnered with the Law School Staff Advisory Council (LSSAC) on the series, Perspectives: Learning Together to Better Ourselves. Each quarter, the Office of Inclusion & Engagement and LSSAC selected a book for a cohort of staff members to read and discuss together over a series of meetings. Several dozen staff members have participated in the series, which including titles such as Just Mercy, So You Want to Talk about Race, and the Fire Next Time. In addition to the Perspectives series, the Office of Inclusion & Engagement has hosted staff-directed programs touching on various topics, including the impostor phenomenon, difficult conversations, addressing microaggressions, and upstanding and allyship.



During the 2020-2021 academic year, Law School staff members also launched the Staff Equity Alliance ("SEA"), an organization focused on advancing equity initiatives among the staff and with the support and sponsorship of the Dean, the Office of Inclusion & Engagement, and the Associate Dean of People, Planning, & Infrastructure. This year's SEA efforts including putting together diverse vendor lists, a 21-day anti-racism challenge, hosting programming, and messaging to the staff community on important issues touching upon topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion.



# Office of Inclusion & Engagement Fellows

In Fall 2020, the Office of Inclusion & Engagement launched its inaugural fellowship program, which provides students with an opportunity to design and launch student-led initiatives that foster diversity, inclusion, and belonging within the Law School. This year's seven fellows worked on a number of innovative projects, including a mentorship program for high school students, a pro bono opportunity to support undocumented people, and a pipeline project for Chicago high school and HBCU graduates.



**Matthew Chang**  
Class of 2022

Matt's project during the 2020-2021 academic year focused on creating an immigration clinic partnership between Northwestern Law student volunteers and Asian Law Alliance. Volunteers helped low-income clients complete their Naturalization (N-400) and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Renewal (DACA) paperwork so their clients gain citizenship or temporary refuge. Over 40 student volunteers were trained over the course of the year.

Ishani's project during the 2020-2021 academic year focused on facilitating and sourcing student-led D&I projects for the upcoming school year, as well as planning several programs, including a well-attended discussion with Professors Calabresi and Gowder co-sponsored by several student organizations. As a result of Ishani's efforts, several student-led activities are in the planning stages for the 2021-2022 academic year, including the development of a first generation student toolkit.



**Ishani Chokshi**  
Class of 2022



**Hugh Ebb**  
Class of 2021

Along with Fellow Kiana Outen, Hugh's project during the 2020-2021 academic year focused on building a mentorship program that pairs diverse high school students, primarily from the Chicago area, with Northwestern Law Students. The mentorship program was built in partnership with JTB-A Pipeline Organization. Twenty high school students participated in the program, along with twenty current law students. Over the course of the year, Hugh and Kiana laid the foundation for the mentorship program to continue in future academic years.



**Mariah Levy**  
Class of 2022

For her project during the 2020-2021 academic year, Mariah interviewed 10 law students about their experience in the classroom with professors and peers. In particular, Mariah focused on ways the law school journey captures or fails to capture ideas and values and experiences of each person's non-law school life. As a follow-up to her project, Mariah hopes to share her findings with the Law School and interested faculty members so that they may better understand the ways in which students experience the law school classroom.

A native Chicagoan and an HBCU graduate, Blair's project focused on creating a cohort mentorship program for native Chicagoans and HBCU graduates interested in attending law school.



**Blair Matthews**  
Class of 2021



**Kiana Outen**  
Class of 2021

Along with Fellow Hugh Ebb, Kiana's project during the 2020-2021 academic year focused on building a mentorship program that pairs diverse high school students, primarily from the Chicago area, with Northwestern Law Students. The mentorship program was built in partnership with JTB-A Pipeline Organization. Twenty high school students participated in the program, along with twenty current law students. Over the course of the year, Kiana and Hugh laid the foundation for the mentorship program to continue in future academic years.

Caitlin's project was called the everyONE Project: Authentic, Resilient, Together. The project's goal was to foster unity and belonging by elevating and celebrating one story at a time. At a time when many are polarized, Caitlin hoped to take on a project that highlighted the many inspiring members of the Law School community in a way that had no agenda besides telling genuine stories.



**Caitlin Schumacher**  
Class of 2021

# PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

## FALL 2020 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

During Fall 2020, the Office of Inclusion & Engagement organized and facilitated a number of events, including the Racial Justice Teach-In and programs on police abolition with professors Paul Gowder and Sheila Bedi; anti-Asian discrimination in the time of COVID-19 featuring alumnus Andy Kang; and discussions on the 2020 election featuring professor Michael Kang. The OIE team also participated in JD Orientation, hosted workshops for students on the impostor phenomenon, and facilitated a staff reading group on the One Book One Northwestern book selection Just Mercy.

## SPRING 2021 EVENTS

The Office of Inclusion & Engagement planned a robust menu of programming, including events featuring USC Gould School of Law Professor Ariela Gross, impostor phenomenon workshops, a program on law school extracurriculars for 1Ls, a program on careers in legal academia, and a staff reading group on James Baldwin's The Fire Next Time. In addition, the Office of Inclusion & Engagement hosted two bystander intervention programs focused on stopping anti-Asian hate and discrimination, as well as a program on the Chauvin trial with Northwestern faculty members Sheila Bedi, Barnor Hesse, and Robin Walker Sterling.

## HONORING THE LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Each year, Northwestern University commemorates the life and legacy of Dr. King throughout the campus. In addition to a University-wide keynote lecture with Mariame Kaba, this year's Chicago Campus program included an oratorical contest, a conversation with Northwestern Law and Feinberg faculty about systemic racism in law and medicine, a discussion about the U.S. Capitol insurrection with Northwestern University Professors Barnor Hesse, Sheila Bedi, and Andrea Lewis, and a conversation about the United States Supreme Court American Indian tribal rights case McGirt v. Oklahoma with former Deputy Solicitor General and Jenner & Block partner Ian Gershengorn and University of Chicago Law School fellow and Lecturer Elizabeth Reese.

# 2020-2021 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Impostor Phenomenon and the Law School Student (Fall and Spring)**
- **Racial Justice Virtual Teach-In**
- **Police Abolition: What Does It Mean?**
- **First Generation Student Meet & Greet**
- **Bostock v. Clayton County and the Challenges of LGBTQ Advocacy featuring Pam Karlan**
- **Public Interest Meet & Greet for Diverse Students**
- **The 2020 Election: A Conversation featuring Professors Michael Kang and Joshua Sellers**
- **Anti-Asian Discrimination in the Time of COVID**
- **Navigating Difficult Conversations (MSL Program)**
- **Allyship and Upstanding: How to Be an Effective Ally (MSL Program)**
- **2020 Election: Northwestern Law Community Dialogue**
- **Injustice Anywhere Is a Threat to Justice Everywhere: The Impact of Systemic Racism in Law and Medicine**
- **Staggered by the Winds: Law & Order in Black and White**
- **Finite Disappointment, Infinite Hope: Race & Justice in McGirt v. Oklahoma**
- **Trailblazers: Northwestern Law African-American Alumni Panel**
- **What You Need to Know: Clerkships, Journals & Law School Extracurriculars**
- **Becoming Free, Becoming Black with Dr. Ariela Gross and Professor Paul Gowder**
- **The Path to Becoming a Lawyer for First Gen Students**
- **NU in Living Color: Black and Brown Faculty Discuss Racism on Campus**
- **Racism, Anti-Racism & the Public Interest Lawyer**
- **Standing Up to Hate: An Upstander Intervention Program**
- **Careers in Legal Academia**
- **Appealing for Change: Diversifying the Appellate Bar**
- **Faculty Perspectives on the Derek Chauvin Trial**



# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION RESOURCES & REPORTING DIVERSITY-RELATED CONCERNS

Better understanding the experience of all students, staff, and faculty within the Law School is crucial, and the Law School continues to develop initiatives and processes to promote inclusion. That said, we recognize that students, staff, and faculty members may still experience bias or other forms of discrimination within our community and the University. For information on resources on where to report, discuss or investigate your concerns, please visit <https://www.law.northwestern.edu/student-life/inclusion-engagement/reporting/>. All members of the community are also encouraged to explore the [diversity-related wellness resources](#) located on the Office of Inclusion & Engagement website.

