

**ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
STUDENT ORGANIZATION COMMITMENT TO RACIAL JUSTICE AND SOLIDARITY WITH
MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES**

THIS STUDENT ORGANIZATION COMMITMENT ("COMMITMENT") is made this day of September 7, 2020 ("Effective Date"), by and between the various represented and undersigned St. John's University School of Law Student Organizations ("STUDENT ORGS") at the forum of the St. John's University School of Law Affinity Group Alliance ("AGA").

I. THE AGREEMENT

In light of the killing of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police and the pattern of police violence against Black communities;

Recognizing the verbal and written commitments to solidarity with BLSA and the Black community made during the "*No More Talking, What are we Going to do?*" event on June 4, 2020 ("*Dialogue Day*");

And understanding that there are unique actions each student organization can take as a result of our individual areas of expertise to highlight and combat anti-Black racism and police brutality,

We, the STUDENT ORGS, resolve to make the following changes to our community:

1. The STUDENT ORGS shall acknowledge and challenge anti-Black racism in their fields.
2. The STUDENT ORGS understand the importance of diversity and inclusion and shall consider diversity as a criterion for speakers when planning events.
3. The STUDENT ORGS shall host at least one event or activity per year that addresses anti-Black racism in their field.
4. The STUDENT ORGS shall have an executive board position or committee dedicated to diversity and inclusion.
5. The STUDENT ORGS shall communicate to their incoming E-board each year the importance of maintaining the commitments made in this document.
6. The STUDENT ORGS acknowledge that this contract and the individual commitments made in Section II represent a minimum commitment to solidarity with the Black community and anti-racist work. For this reason, each organization shall, in the years following the 2020-2021 school year, continue to work to improve and increase its commitment to anti-racism.

We, the STUDENT ORGS, understand the magnitude of the COMMITMENT, and pledge to hold ourselves accountable for these commitments.

The STUDENT ORGS also agree to be held accountable to the COMMITMENT by the mechanisms and measures described in Appendix A.

II. INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS

Individual Organizations made the following individual commitments at Dialogue Day and agree to renew these commitments every academic year, beginning with the 2020 – 2021 academic year:

1. **ABI** shall undertake at least one volunteer or community service activity per year which benefits the underserved communities near St. John's University School of Law. ABI shall also, at least once per year, engage in activities that support Black businesses.
2. **APALSA** shall hold a panel discussing the model minority myth and anti-Blackness in the Asian community.
3. The **CDOLR** shall commit to creating an executive board position for a Director or Editor for Diversity and Inclusion; to helping raise awareness of federal and state legislative reform initiatives; to co-sponsoring events dedicated to raising awareness about issues of racism and discrimination throughout the legal field; to participating in movements with other student organizations to see that St. John's implements policies that reflect evolving social change; and to asking future guest speakers to discuss issues of racism and discrimination in commercial law and the legal profession, their own experiences with these issues, and the ways these problems can be solved
4. The **Children's Rights Society** shall incorporate at least one event or discussion per year that addresses racism as it relates to children in some aspect of the law.
5. The **Corporate and Securities Law Society** shall host at least one event per year that discusses racism and the lack of diversity within the field of Corporate and Securities Law. These events shall, at least in part, teach students how to discuss racism in corporate environments, and teach students how to directly speak out against racism in corporate environments.
6. The **Criminal Law Society** shall engage in community outreach efforts to educate New York City youth about their rights. The Criminal Law Society shall also host at least one event per semester discussing issues of racial inequality within the criminal justice system
7. **EASL** shall create a document highlighting Black media, including movies, books, TV shows, and other forms of media. This document shall be updated at least once per year and shared with all incoming and current students of St. John's University School of Law.
8. **The Forum** shall platform more diverse student voices and publish each year articles written by diverse students.
9. The **Historical Society** shall compile a list of resources on the legal background of racial injustice in New York courts, and shall make this resource available to all St. John's University School of Law students.
10. **HLS** shall hold a panel dedicated to healthcare disparities in the US each year. Included in that panel discussion will be information/comparison regarding the diversity education and training that takes place for students and professionals in the medical field- where it's lacking and what we can learn and how to bring that information into the legal field.
11. **ILSA** shall, every year, co-sponsor at least one event with BLSA regarding anti-racism in an international context. Further, ILSA shall host at least one event discussing systemic racism.
12. **IPLS** shall host at least one event per year relating to the role of Intellectual Property Law in the movement for racial justice. These events shall discuss topics including, but not limited to, the

developing relationships between intellectual property and protesters, challenging racist trademarks, identifying cultural appropriation and insensitivity in Intellectual Property, and promoting internet safety for protesters.

13. **JCRED** shall devote a portion of the Perspectives in Justice course to discussing racial justice. JCRED shall also have a call for papers that explicitly addresses the intersections of race and class. JCRED shall create a Short Reads blog, wherein students may discuss any unpublished student notes about race or adapt any academically researched paper into a blog post discussing how the issue addressed by the paper impacts race and social justice.
14. **JLSA** shall add a diversity clause to its by-laws to ensure future e-boards recognize the importance of supporting anti-racism in our community and to encourage members of our student association to stand in solidarity with the Black community. Annually, the e-board will review this language for needed updates. Additionally, during the 2020-21 school year, JLSA shall hold an event discussing the history of the Jewish community's work with the Black community to further civil rights.
15. **LALSA** shall expand its Street Law Program and create a partnership with the Puerto Rican Bar Association to represent people of color in all New York court systems. LALSA shall also hold an annual discussion of anti-Black racism in the Latinx community.
16. **Law Review** shall mentor students who author publications on racial justice topics. Additionally, Law Review will utilize their online platform, *The Commentary*, to publish pieces about criminal justice, policing & systemic racism. Law Review shall also raise awareness of and promote the use of Black authored legal sources. Finally, Law Review shall include a diversity criterion in its writing competition assessments.
17. **LRELS** shall spotlight work by students and faculty on racial justice topics and racial justice organizations on their blog.
18. **MLA** shall commit themselves to working with non-profits who aid BIPOC communities and raise awareness of the difficulties non-native English speaking BIPOC face within the legal system.
19. **Moot Court** shall create an E-Board position dedicated to facilitating outreach efforts in underserved communities of color.
20. **NACA** shall each year sponsor a series of events on the various instances of economic injustice that plague people of color in the marketplace. NACA shall also compile a set of resources on the possible avenues for combatting or reporting instances of racial discrimination against consumers, which shall be shared with the entire student body and updated periodically.
21. **NLG** shall, at least once per year, host legal observer trainings for St. John's University School of Law students. NLG shall increase mental health resources and awareness for students of color at St. John's University School of Law.
22. **NYILR** shall co-sponsor at least one event with BLSA regarding anti-racism in an international context. In addition, NYILR shall create blog posts, wherein students may discuss any topics relating to racism in an international context.
23. **OUTLAWs** shall highlight intersectional identities among their members and the LGBTQIA+ community, including Black Trans Women, and pledges to, each year, fundraise for organizations that support Black Trans Women.

24. **PILC & PILSA** shall place racial justice at the forefront of our initiatives and event series. Beyond this year, PIC & PILSA will actively work to further incorporate racial justice into the intersectional legal topics that we explore during Pro Bono Week and volunteer initiatives. PIC & PILSA commits to featuring a racial justice event during Pro Bono Week for each coming year. PIC & PILSA also commit to holding one panel event each year pertaining to racial disparities and harms within the justice system. PILSA also commits to adding a Diversity and Inclusion position on their executive board; this new position will be within PILSA's organization but will carry out responsibilities for PIC as well.
25. **PTAI** shall establish a recurring committee to promote outreach to communities of color, both at St. John's and beyond, as well as plan programming dedicated to exploring prosecutorial discretion in the justice seeking model.
26. **RPLS** shall, in partnership with the Mattone Institute, host at least one panel per year discussing racial discrimination issues in housing.
27. **SALSA** shall require each Executive Board member to complete a certain number of hours of volunteer or pro bono work that supports the Black community. SALSA shall also host a seminar on anti-Black sentiments within the South Asian Community and fundraise for at least one racial justice organization each year.
28. **SBA** shall build a partnership with BLSA to create a stronger support system for Black students at St. John's University School of Law. The SBA shall also create and maintain an alliance made up of E-Board members from all the affinity groups, which shall meet once a month during each academic year.
29. Transforming Justice Initiative ("**TJI**") in its founding year commits to keeping racial justice firmly within their scope of events every year, however that may manifest, as we call attention to the systemic inequalities that exist within the structure of prisons and intend to establish an organization that encourages law students to reimagine our justice system through alternatives to incarceration.
30. The **Women's Law Society** shall, in its book club program, include at least three books by Black authors each year, and at least one book that deals with the subject of systemic racism.

III. TERM AND TERMINATION

This COMMITMENT shall be in effect from the Effective Date until it is amended, revoked, or replaced upon formal agreement of the St. John's University School of Law Affinity Group Alliance ("**AGA**").

IV. NOTICE

The STUDENT ORGS shall put all new and joining members on notice of this agreement and their individual commitments at the start of every academic year, beginning with the 2020 - 2021 academic year.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto, through their duly authorized officers, have executed this COMMITMENT as of the Effective Date.

BLACK LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Name: Jasmine Johnson

Position: President

Date: 8/21/2020

LATIN AMERICAN LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Name: Loredana Miranda

Position: Vice President

Date: 08/24/2020

OUTLAWS AND ALLIES

Name: Paul Pastore

Position: President

Date: 8/24/2020

ENTERTAINMENT, ART, AND SPORTS LAW SOCIETY

Name: Nicole Cardascia

Position: Co-President

Date: 8/26/2020

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Name: Ellie Sheinwald

Position: Executive Director

Date: 08/24/2020

REAL PROPERTY LAW SOCIETY

Name: Brandon Auerbach, Heather Lewin

Position: President, Vice President

Date: 8/26/2020

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL LAW REVIEW

Name: Gia Fernicola

Position: Editor-in-Chief

Date: 08/24/2020

JEWISH LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Name: Ellie Sheinwald

Position: Co-President

Date: 8/26/2020

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW SOCIETY

Name: Rocco Recce

Position: President

Date: 08/24/2020

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE NEW YORK COURTS

Name: Eva-Maria Ghelardi

Position: President

Date: 8/26/2020

CORPORATE AND SECURITIES LAW SOCIETY

Name: Tiffany Heravi and Kayla Mistretta

Position: Co-Presidents

Date: 08/26/2020

PUBLIC INTEREST CENTER

Name: Sierra Fischer

Position: Executive Director

Date: 8/28/20

HEALTH LAW SOCIETY

Name: Caoimhe Stafford

Position: President

Date: 8/28/20

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS SOCIETY

Name: Tiffany Testa

Position: President

Date: 8/28/20

**INTERNATIONAL LAW STUDENTS
ASSOCIATION**

Name: Yalda Khwaja

Position: President

Date: 8/28/20

**POLESTINO TRIAL ADVOCACY INSTITUTE
(PTAI)**

Name: Emma Bausert

Position: Executive Director

Date: 8/28/20

MOOT COURT

Name: Bradley Jennings

Position: Executive Director

Date: 8/28/20

**JOURNAL OF CIVIL RIGHTS AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

Name: Ron Eniclerico

Position: Editor-in-Chief

Date: 8/28/20

WOMEN'S LAW SOCIETY

Name: Sam Gagnon

Position: Vice President

Date: 8/28/20

THE MULTILINGUAL LEGAL ADVOCATES

Name: Mouna Jaouad

Position: President

Date: 8/28/20

ST. JOHN'S LAW REVIEW

Name: Kimberly Capuder

Position: Editor-in-Chief

Date: 8/28/20

**AMERICAN BANKRUPTCY INSTITUTE LAW
REVIEW**

Name: Cameron Purcell

Position: Editor-in-Chief

Date: 8/29/20

CRIMINAL LAW SOCIETY

Name: Michael S. Dauber

Position: President

Date: 8/29/20

**THE COMMERCIAL DIVISION ONLINE LAW
REPORT (CDOLR)**

Name: Michael S. Dauber

Position: Editor-in-Chief

Date: 8/29/20

THE FORUM

Name: Michael S. Dauber

Position: Editor-in-Chief

Date: 8/29/20

SOUTH ASIAN LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Name: Aminah Ali

Position: President

Date: 8/30/20

**HUGH L. CAREY CENTER FOR DISPUTE
RESOLUTION**

Name: Rachel Harris

Position: Overall Coordinator

Date: 8/31/20

**ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN LAW STUDENTS
ASSOCIATION**

Name: Eric Dang

Position: President

Date: 8/31/20

**ST. JOHN'S CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL
LAWYERS GUILD**

Name: Jay Hedges

Position: President

Date: 8/31/20

**LABOR RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT LAW
SOCIETY**

Name: Elyssa Cislucyis

Position: President

Date: 9/2/20

TRANSFORMING JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Name: Gabriela Morales, Ridmila
Sudasinghe

Position: Co-Founders/Co-Presidents

Date: 9/2/20

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSUMER
ADVOCATES**

Name: Michael Ofori

Position: President

Date: 9/4/20

APPENDIX A
ACCOUNTABILITY AND ENFORCEMENT

Purpose.

This section will outline the system used to support and enforce the agreements made in the COMMITMENT. St. John's University School of Law and The STUDENT ORGS have made the commitment to create an anti-racist climate within the Law School. By committing to perform the promises made on Dialogue Day, organizations have also agreed to be held accountable for said promises. It is the purpose of this section to ensure real change for BIPOC individuals at St. John's University School of Law by supporting, guiding, and, when necessary, holding organizations accountable to their commitments.

General Process.

The SBA's Diversity and Inclusion Committee ("the D&I Committee") will maintain and oversee a Google Drive Account dedicated to housing each Organization's commitment progress. Organizations will be required to attend an Accountability Meeting at the end of each semester where they must present the results of their commitments to the D&I Committee. The D&I committee will take each organizations completion of these requirements into consideration when disbursing additional funding from the funds allocated to the D&I committee for the purpose of promoting diversity and inclusion at the law school. The D&I Committee always reserves discretion in the allocation of these additional funds.

Responsibilities.

- (a) Organizations must maintain and update a Google Sheet as a part of the larger Google Drive Account described above. Each organization's Google Sheet document must describe each commitment promised as well as progress related to each commitment. These Google Sheets will remain locked and only viewable by the organization and the D&I Committee

- (b) Organizations must submit to the D&I Committee by a date to be determined at the beginning of each semester a Mid-Semester Report outlining the organization's progress, issues, and questions related to its commitment(s).

- (c) Organizations must record all issues as they arise to be included in this Mid-Semester Report.

Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

In the case where an organization elects to implement the Diversity and Inclusion Officer (See Appendix B), this position will assume all responsibilities described above. Alternatively, where an organization declines the addition of a D&I Officer, the organization is still required to fulfill all of these responsibilities.

APPENDIX B
PROPOSAL FOR A DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OFFICER

Purpose.

The implementation of this new position will support future progress and ensure that the progress already made is properly built upon by the following year's Executive Board. While the work that will be achieved this upcoming year will be remarkable, it will not effectuate the degree of change described in the COMMITMENT. Furthermore, it is likely that the results of this work will only become evident after years of sustained effort.

Proposal.

Coalition for Social Justice ("CSJ") formally proposes that all groups implement a new Executive Board position dedicated to Diversity and Inclusion. This Diversity and Inclusion Officer ("D&I Officer") would serve as the point of contact for all commitment progress updates related to creating an anti-racist climate. Upon adoption of this proposal, D&I Officers will assume positional accountability for all of the responsibilities described in the COMMITMENT. Additionally, all D&I Officers will be invited as default members of the AGA.

Benefits.

1. The changing of Executive Boards from year-to-year serves as one of the largest challenges to sustained movement. The implementation of a D&I Officer best ensures this continuation between academic years by associating information related to Diversity and Inclusion initiatives with one person, as opposed to multiple. This will make the transfer of this information much simpler.
2. Moreover, with no singular contact, responsibility for these commitments will be dispersed among the entire Executive Board making it easier to justify failures in performance.
3. This singular point of contact guarantees a constant focus on issues of Diversity and Inclusion within each organization.
4. Additionally, the issue of racial injustice is systemic in nature. Thus, the removal of antiquated systems and the implementation of new ones is necessary. As these new positions become interconnected with one another via the coordination of various events and initiatives, organizations become reliant upon each other in a way that effectively maintains a focus on Diversity and Inclusion helping to create a self-reinforcing system.
5. Finally, each organization will be required to present the results of its commitment(s) to the D&I Committee. Appointing an Executive Board position dedicated to Diversity and Inclusion will ensure that these presentations are made by a person consistently engaged in such initiatives. This results in stronger presentations and more complete feedback and assistance.

For the reasons described above, CSJ proposes the permanent implementation of a D&I Officer position to all present organizations.

APPENDIX C
MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

To: CSJ Action Plan Committee
From: Jourden Taylor
Date: August 20, 2020
Re: Accountability and Enforcement General Purpose

Leaving Dialogue Day, there was a sense that real change was on the horizon for St. John's Law. For the beneficiaries of this change this sense of optimism was accompanied by a feeling of skepticism.

In this moment, support for our Black brothers and sisters is at an all-time high, but for those within this community we understand that to many people this is just a moment. Similar to Covid-19, many people just want to return to the days where everything operated normally. Even given the vast protests, seeing "Black Lives Matter" decals on NBA courts, and the new Diversity statements released from huge corporations, Breonna Taylor's killers still walk free, yet to be held accountable for the death of our sister. Words no longer mean anything to us. Action does.

As a Black man, racial injustice has always stemmed from people not within this group, yet we are the ones asked to educate and resolve. We cannot expect oppressors to discover the meaning of anti-racism on their own nor can we continue asking our Black brothers and sisters to be the sole teachers of their oppression. Instead, we must create a vehicle that helps guide these organizations along this process. This is the purpose of this contract.

This vehicle will contextualize this system of accountability with our institution's broader goal of creating an anti-racist Climate. Moving forward there will be a group of organizations that fail in their pursuit due to the real-life challenges of what they are being asked to do. These organizations will need support and structure, otherwise they will give up. On the other side there will be organizations that look forward to the first sign of resistance as this will serve as the end point for their participation. These organizations will need to be held accountable and their promises enforced, otherwise they will give up. Each organization will have different goals and will need to be supported differently. Thus, without a system intentionally designed to address these different types of issues we cannot serve our purpose in promoting social justice.

As I watched the video of George Floyd I was overcome with emotions. Emotions that spoke to many of my own experiences in today's America but more simply, it was difficult to comprehend how Derek Chauvin could sit on another man's neck for that length of time, as if he was an animal. We are not animals and our lives are worth no less than yours. So, as you return to your "normal" understand that without continued action from your community, my community's "normal" will consist of more George Floyds, Breonna Taylors and Ahmaud Arberys.

So, it is with these points in mind that CSJ presents this accountability contract.