



Stellenbosch

UNIVERSITY  
IYUNIVESITHI  
UNIVERSITEIT

Law | Eyezomthetho  
Regsegeleerdheid

20 May 2022

Dear Law student

The widely reported events of this past week have united the faculty and its students in condemning any degrading, discriminatory and racist conduct on our campus and in reaffirming our commitment to an egalitarian, socially just society in which every person may fulfil their potential and are treated with dignity. We are deeply distressed about the reported incidents at Huis Marais and the Law Dance, even more so because law students are involved. The ethos of the overwhelming majority of our law community is rooted in respect, compassion, accountability, equity and excellence. We therefore fully support the thorough and prompt investigation and finalisation of these matters.

The Faculty of Law recognises the role that it must play in fostering the ideals of transformative constitutionalism. Awareness-raising and a zero-tolerance of racism and ill-treatment of others are important elements of academic and civil society initiatives to end racism, sexism, and other social evils. We refer to the pledge that law students sign in their first year, the copy of our Constitution (that promises a better life for all and a decisive break from an oppressive past) that finds a place on your bookshelf or in your study bag and the opportunity to engage with substantive subject matter that, if properly internalised, all have the potential to positively change people's minds and lives. In the words of previous Chief Justice Pius Langa in a 2006 article in the *Stellenbosch Law Review*, "For me, this is the core idea of transformative constitutionalism: that we must change."

Academics, students, lawyers, prospective lawyers, and trained legal professionals have much to do to achieve the dreams and goals as set out in the Constitution. We recognise that the law was used as a tool to oppress during colonial-apartheid South Africa, but we decisively broke with that tradition. Considering our racist past, we must take to heart the centrality of human dignity in breaking with the old and forging a free and equal society. We, therefore, choose law - as law can restore, law offers hope, and this is what we are committed to do as a group.

As a community, we have made progress on this ongoing journey of transformation and would not like the recent shocking events to derail our steadfastness about attaining transformation in our faculty, our campus, our town, and the broader society. All of us should do some introspection and consider the role that we play on this ongoing journey in transforming our institutions and our society so that we can do better.

To conclude, our Chancellor Edwin Cameron wrote in his book *Justice A Personal Account*, our country's journey to democratic constitutionalism is one "full of ups and downs, but at its end there lie the practical possibilities of hope". This week we experienced several low points, however, we are asking that we continue to work together as faculty and students towards our shared ideals exactly so that we can do better.

Kind regards / Ngemibuliso emihle / Vriendelike groete

Faculty Management

Professors Smit, Pienaar, Stevens

Professors Boggenpoel, Broodryk, Karjiker, Slade, Wessels