

# Message from the Dean

Dear YSE Community,

We just learned that the Minnesota jury has convicted Derek Chauvin on three counts: murder in the second, murder in the third, and manslaughter. Although I find this historic verdict to be a crucial moment and one that will hopefully serve as the foundation for important and fundamental changes in our country, I also recognize that it will not resolve the continual injustices people of color experience in the United States — injustices we bear witness to every single day as evidenced by the recent deaths of Daunte Wright and Adam Toledo, and countless acts of Asian-American hate crime over the past year. I also know that reliving the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr. Floyd during the trial has increased the trauma many members of our community feel.

As I wrote to you when Mr. Floyd was first murdered, it is crucial at this time that we support one another, reaffirm our collective values of equity, inclusion, and justice, and remember the many ways in which we can engage, both individually and as a community, and work to lead this country toward a better future. It is our responsibility to drive our society to do better — our friends' and colleagues' lives are at stake.

There are many ways to find support and community right now, as well as to begin to do the necessary work to undo the systemic racism that is ingrained in our society. We are continuing to invest in initiatives both within and beyond our School — these include Dr. Dorceta Taylor's incredible New Horizons Conference and her work with the Doris Duke fellows celebrated just this week, Gerald Torres's new Center on Environmental Justice, and our own Office of Community and Inclusion led by Dr. Thomas Easley, but we cannot stop there — the work is just beginning.

To support the ongoing work and learning we have before us, we have arranged to co-sponsor a [teach-in at the Yale Law School](#) this Thursday and Friday. We expect this teach-in to consist of three panels featuring faculty and alumni of YLS directly engaged with this work. The panels will delve into the ramifications of the trial and discuss the legal and societal implications for the past, present, and future. At a time of significant unrest, uncertainty, and trauma that has disproportionately impacted our friends, students, and colleagues of color, this event is intended to bring together the Yale community for a period of healing, learning, and solidarity. [The event agenda is attached.](#)

In addition, we encourage anyone who would like to discuss, process, or brainstorm for the future to drop in to the Leadership team drop-in hours next Friday at 2 pm. Danielle, Melanie, Thomas and Sara all look forward to holding this space.

There is so much work left to do at our School, within the environmental field, and in our country. I am committed and invite you to join me as we stand firm as a community against racism and hate.

Indy Burke  
*Carl W. Knobloch, Jr. Dean*