

*A Message from Dean Cooley*

**Copied to:** DGSs, Chairs, Registrars

**In this message:** Responding to the Chauvin trial verdicts; related campus events.

April 21, 2021

Dear graduate students,

With the guilty verdicts in the Derek Chauvin trial yesterday, we can feel relief that an individual responsible for George Floyd's death was held to account. On this occasion, the defendant did not walk away without punishment for a despicable crime against a person of color. Perhaps we do not get to experience the full satisfaction of justice, as the result, while welcome, stops far short of signaling an end to systemic racism and racially motivated violence. As Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison remarked in his post-verdict speech, "I would not call today's verdict justice... because justice implies true restoration," he said, "But it is accountability, which is the first step towards justice, and now the cause of justice is in your hands."

To help process the news of the verdict, and to galvanize our community in healing, learning, and solidarity, please consider participating in these events:

**Today, Wednesday, April 21 4-5 pm**

Yale Poorvu Center is offering a discussion forum, [Teaching in Context: Troubling Times](#) for those of you who would like to find ways to connect your subjects to the events unfolding before us, or would like to support students within the community of your classroom.

**On Thursday, April 22 and Friday, April 23**

Yale Law School is offering a [virtual teach-in series](#) with discussions featuring YLS experts in the fields of racial justice, criminal justice, and police reform. The panels will delve into the ramifications of the Derek Chauvin trial and discuss the legal and societal implications for the past, present and future.

As always, if you could use extra support right now, please explore our [Health and Wellness](#) page. The GSAS Deans and I are always here for you – please contact us at [gsas@yale.edu](mailto:gsas@yale.edu). My thoughts are with the friends and family of George Floyd, as well as those whose cases never reach the courts.

Sincerely,  
Lynn Cooley

Dean, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
C.N.H. Long Professor of Genetics  
Professor of Cell Biology and of Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology