Dear Pitt Law Community,

We are reaching out to you in response to the horrific display of police brutality resulting in the killing of Tyre Nichols. We acknowledge that you may be reeling from the emotions that accompany bearing witness to the violent assault. Even if you, like some of us, have chosen not to watch the recording, just the knowledge that, yet again, state authority has been used as a pretext for actions that debase the humanity of another is wrenching. As Vice Provost Bonner has said in his important message to all Pitt students, “Police officers have enormous power and privilege. Seeing images of the shocking abuse of that power—against the very citizens they are sworn to protect—can and should be disturbing.”

The utter disregard for Tyre’s life, evidenced by the Memphis police officers involved in his attack, is emblematic of an ethos that devalues the lives of all Black people and people of other marginalized communities. It is our ongoing charge as members of the legal profession and as participants in an educational community to expose not just systemic racism but the mindsets that uphold it as morally bankrupt and as the preeminent barrier to justice.

We, too, are angry. We, too, are tired. And we, too, are resisting that which would numb us to the shock of this and every instance like it.

The endurance needed to stay invested in the pursuit of inclusion, civility, and justice cannot always be cultivated alone. It is okay to need to be in conversation and fellowship with others who share your feelings and are working to redouble their commitment to the values that lead them to Pitt Law. In a separate message, the OEIE will share information on an upcoming community dialogue which will offer a collective opportunity for processing. As always, Vincent, Dean Pierson-Brown, and Dean Linsenmeyer are available by email to schedule meetings with students who would like to meet one-on-one. Mental health supports for students are available through the University Counseling Center at (412) 648-7930. Faculty and staff seeking mental health resources are encouraged to contact Life Solutions at 1 (866) 647-3432.

Together, we will continue our fight to turn our legal system into a justice system that serves the interests of all, not just the privileged and powerful.

Sincerely,

Dean Pierson-Brown, Vice Dean Hamoudi, and Dean Allie