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Subject: Incident in Criminal Law Class

Dear Western Law students,

At Western Law, we aim to provide a respectful learning and working environment. We want everyone in our community to feel included, valued and safe. This week we stumbled.

On Tuesday, a professor used the n-word in the context of a case that was read in a criminal law class, an action that caused profound hurt to our students. We have worked swiftly to face this issue head-on.

First, I want to thank the Black Law Students Association for their message to the student body last night. Their message was a powerful one, and will help us to further these conversations as a community.

I went to the criminal law class this morning to share my concerns about what happened and my support for our students. I also affirmed my commitment to work with BLSA and the entire student body to improve racial diversity and inclusion at Western Law. I will be working with BLSA to address their Calls to Action.

In addition, our Anti-Racism Working Group will be releasing its final report this fall. It will echo several of BLSA's Calls to Action and will also include other recommendations to provide education about anti-racism and allyship in our academic, professional and personal lives. When we receive the final report, we will work to implement the ARWG's recommendations – an effort that will involve the collaboration of BLSA and other student groups here at Western Law.

I understand that what happened on Tuesday caused significant distress. If you need personal counselling, you can contact our Student Wellness Counsellor at lawwell@uwo.ca. If you prefer to speak to a Black or racialized counsellor, you can contact Western Student Health and Wellness at 519 661 3030 and request that service.

Finally, I am here to listen to your thoughts, feelings, or experiences. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me, and I will make myself available.

You'll be hearing more from me and from student leaders in the days and weeks to come. I want to make sure that each and every member of our community feels safe and supported.

Take care of each other.

Prof C

Erika Chamberlain, LL.B., Ph.D. (Cantab.)

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