

William & Mary Law School

## William & Mary Law School Scholarship Repository

---

Law School Experiences with Racial & Social  
Justice Issues

Equity & Inclusion at William & Mary Law School

---

9-2022

### Why We Can't Wait: An Agenda for Equity & Justice

A. Benjamin Spencer

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/rsjexperiences>

---

Copyright c 2022 by the authors. This article is brought to you by the William & Mary Law School Scholarship Repository.

<https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/rsjexperiences>

# Why We Can't Wait

## *An Agenda for Justice & Equity*

As the first law school in the country, William & Mary Law School must lead the way toward racial and social justice. We are committed to training citizen lawyers to lead in their communities, motivated by the desire for progress and by the knowledge that members of the legal profession have a special responsibility that comes with their degrees, no matter the field in which they work.

When I arrived at the Law School in 2020, I launched "**Why We Can't Wait – An Agenda for Equity and Justice,**" a 12-part action plan for real and fundamental change. Building on the recommendations of the Law School's 2019 **Inclusion Task Force** Report and on conversations with faculty, staff, students, and alumni, "Why We Can't Wait" outlined necessary actions to further equity and justice for all.

Since 2020, we have accomplished many of the items on that agenda, as shown below, with others well under way. We cannot, however, be satisfied with progress but must consistently strive to make improvements within our communities, whether at the Law School or around the world. I invite you to explore those initiatives below and to revisit this page to learn more about new initiatives.

This is but a starting point, an important milestone in what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., referred to as the "long stride towards freedom." As Dr. King wrote, "The mere fact that we live in the United States means that we are caught in a network of inescapable mutuality. Therefore, no American can afford to be apathetic about the problem of racial justice."

I welcome your ideas and feedback. Together, we will help craft our collective future so that William & Mary Law School faculty, staff, students, and alumni are recognized as advocates for change and leaders in the continued quest for social justice and inclusion.



A. Benjamin Spencer  
Dean & Trustee Professor



### **CENTER FOR RACIAL & SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Created with support from the Provost and Dean Spencer, the Center leads the university's efforts on research, education, and engagement on equity and inclusion. Established 2021.



### **COMMUNITY LAW CLINIC AT WILLIAM & MARY**

Launching a clinic that serves the most vulnerable members of our community and prepares students to practice and serve as engaged advocates for justice. In progress.



### **EQUAL JUSTICE & NEED BASED SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Lemon Legal Scholars Program for distinguished HBCU graduates is among initiatives to provide even more support to first-generation and underrepresented students. Established 2021.



### **SUPPORT FOR FIRST GENERATION & UNDER-REPRESENTED STUDENTS**

A new student organization debuts and is among recent efforts to rally social, academic, and professional support for first-generation & underrepresented law students. Established 2020.



### **PUBLIC INTEREST AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CONCENTRATION**

This new academic concentration of coursework and experiential learning enables upper-class students to prepare for careers as public interest advocates. Established 2021.



### **EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADMINISTRATOR**

A new senior administrator oversees services for students of all backgrounds. Her portfolio of responsibilities includes leading school-wide equity and inclusion initiatives. Established 2022.



### ACADEMIC SUCCESS POSITION

We've appointed a full-time faculty member to coordinate integrative programming to support students' success in coursework, experiential learning, and on the bar exam. Established 2020.



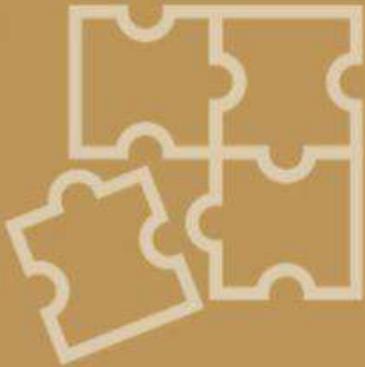
### CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM LECTURE SERIES

Creating an annual series of lectures and panels on police accountability, corrections reform, and topics essential to an equitable and fair criminal justice system. In progress.



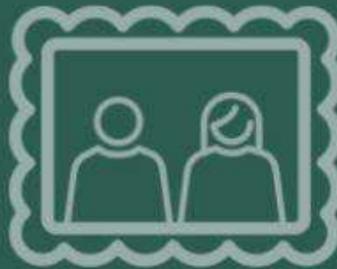
### INCLUSIVE HIRING

Living our commitment to an inclusive search process to recruit exceptional candidates from all backgrounds. We expect employers of our students to also be committed to inclusive hiring. Ongoing.



### INCLUSIVE LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Creating a more inclusive environment by recognizing the contributions of all those who work and study here and providing opportunities for learning and dialogue. Ongoing.



### INCLUSIVE SPACES AT THE LAW SCHOOL

Recognizing that portraiture, photography, artwork and exhibits at the Law School create spaces where we all can experience a sense of pride and belonging. Ongoing.



### STUDENT DIVERSITY & INCLUSION SPECIAL INITIATIVE FUND

Created to fund student-organization initiatives that reflect all perspectives and bear on issues of equity, inclusion, and social justice. Established 2022.