

THE RPL EFFECT

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The Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place & Law (RPL) is unique among law school organizations. Formed by professors at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law (Sturm),¹ RPL is “a group of Colorado legal academics and administrators working together to identify and address racial inequities in the U.S. and around the globe.”² Through teaching, scholarship, and activism, RPL members work to reveal and “challenge the law’s role in perpetuating inequities based on race, class and gender and other sources of disadvantage.”³ Other law schools do not lack progressive social justice-oriented faculty, but it is rare for law school community members to coalesce formally around social justice values: instead, many law schools have subject-based organizations (such as the Center for Constitutional Governance) or affinity-based groups (such as the Women’s Law Group).⁴ RPL is different. RPL draws law school community members together based on principles and values.⁵ This unique framework has allowed for stability and flexibility. While the individual members of RPL have changed over the years, our core principles remain the same, and as a result, RPL’s mission remains consistent. Even as the faces change, the sense that we are moving in the same direction remains. My goal in this short Essay is to discuss what RPL is, how it began, what makes it unique, and the difference it makes for faculty members and administrators to belong to a group like this.

In fall of 2012, several legal academics gathered at Sturm to discuss how to offer support to one other in our scholarship and in meeting our goals. We wanted to showcase scholarship focused on social justice and scholarship uplifting the voices of women, immigrants, people of color, people living below the poverty line, and so many others who do not have

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1. *Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place & Law*, STURM COLL. L., <https://www.law.du.edu/content/rocky-mountain-collective-race-place-law> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024).

2. *Id.*

3. *Id.*

4. See, e.g., *Center for Constitutional Governance*, COLUM. UNIV. L. SCH., <https://constitutional-governance.law.columbia.edu/> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024); *The Byron R. White Center for the Study of American Constitutional Law*, UNIV. OF COLO. L. SCH., <https://www.colorado.edu/law/research/byron-white-center> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024); *TAB- Student Group: WLC*, UNIV. OF COLO. L. SCH., <https://www.colorado.edu/law/student-group-wlc> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024) (describing the Women’s Law Caucus, a national organization with chapters at a variety of law schools. Although this is a student-run organization, faculty are also permitted).

5. See *Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place & Law*, *supra* note 1 (enumerating RPL’s Statement of Principles).

a voice in the law. I remember looking around the table and being surprised to count ten of us. I had not thought that the open call to other social-justice-seeking scholars would have garnered more than a handful of people. Despite having already been at Sturm for a decade, I had not known that so many of the colleagues right in my own building shared my views on the purpose and power of legal scholarship. And yet the table was full.

The people around the table came from different backgrounds and had different areas of expertise. Some were senior faculty, who had already been at the law school for over twenty years. Some were untenured junior faculty. Many, though not all of us, were people of color. A wide range of specialties were represented, including torts, women's rights, criminal law, and environmental law. In many ways, we were exceedingly different, but what we did share was a belief in the power of the law to make the world better, and a belief that we could and should act on that belief. We wanted to further the work done by us and by so many progressive scholars across the country and around the world.⁶ We knew then, and still know, that this kind of work can make a difference. That feeling was, I suppose, the thing that brought most of us to law school.⁷

Before we could decide exactly how we would achieve these goals, however, we needed to articulate who we were and what we believed. We are critical legal scholars who understand that the law can heal but also hurt, that the law can erect inequity and prejudice even as it has the power to undo those things. Being a critical legal scholar means understanding the darkness the law contains and embracing our obligation to call it out.

Our shared fidelity to Critical Legal Studies values led us to arrive at our own Statement of Principles, a common set of beliefs and values that

6. See generally DERRICK BELL, *FACES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL* (1992) (arguing racism is a permanent, integral part of American society); DERRICK BELL, *SILENT COVENANTS: BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE UNFULFILLED HOPES FOR RACIAL REFORM* 5–6 (2004) (arguing racial policymaking is undercut by unfulfilled social agreements); KIMBERLÉ CRENSHAW, *ON INTERSECTIONALITY: ESSENTIAL WRITINGS* (2015) (defining the concept of intersectionality); RICHARD DELGADO, *THE RODRIGO CHRONICLES: CONVERSATIONS ABOUT AMERICA AND RACE* (1996) (addressing the role race, sex, class, and the economic conditions of the West play in law and society); MARI J. MATSUDA, CHARLES R. LAWRENCE, III, RICHARD DELGADO, & KIMBERLÉ WILLIAMS CRENSHAW, *WORDS THAT WOUND: CRITICAL RACE THEORY, ASSAULTIVE SPEECH, AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT* (1993) (using Critical Race Theory to develop a First Amendment interpretation for regulating racist hate speech); Charles R. Lawrence, III, *The Id, the Ego, and Equal Protection: Reckoning with Unconscious Racism*, 39 *STAN. L. REV.* 317, 321–24 (1987) (proposing a new Equal Protection test for racial discriminatory intent premised on the connection between unconscious racism and cultural meanings of racial significance); Cheryl I. Harris, *Whiteness As Property*, 106 *HARV. L. REV.* 1707, 1709 (1993) (positing racial identity and property are interrelated concepts); Mari J. Matsuda, *Voices of America: Accent, Antidiscrimination Law, and a Jurisprudence for the Last Reconstruction*, 100 *YALE L.J.* 1329, 1330 (1991) (drawing on work of Critical Legal Studies, feminist jurisprudence, and Critical Race Theory to apply antidiscrimination law to accent-bias); PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS, *THE ALCHEMY OF RACE AND RIGHTS* (1991) (using critical and legal theories to analyze the law's role in perpetuating racism).

7. This feeling persists among students today. When I talk to new students, most still say that they want to make a positive change in the world, and they feel the law is the way to do it.

remain our core today.⁸ In our principles, we recognize our history, and the current racial, gender, and economic inequities that exist locally and globally. We also commit ourselves to effecting change.⁹

Our principles and identity as an organization are reflected in our name, The Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place & Law. First, the Rocky Mountain region is our environment—it is where we work and live. It affects what we see and how we think. The history of colonialism and dispossession of Indigenous peoples of the region—the Cheyenne, the Ute, the Arapahoe¹⁰—affects how we act. We act with respect for the historical Indigenous ways of looking at the earth and our place on it.¹¹ The history of our environment includes the experiences and stories of Latino families who have lived here for generations, and the painful scars of Japanese internment.¹² It includes the struggle of immigrants from all over the world, but especially from nations south of the United States, and their ongoing experience of discrimination and exploitation.¹³ We remain aware of the way that history informs the present, including ongoing water disputes between farmers in the Rocky Mountain region and growing cities to the West.¹⁴ We wrestle with the wealth disparities and the varied political landscape of our environment.

Second, we chose the word “collective” rather than institute, center, or program—words that perhaps belie a top-down directive or formality that was not a good fit for us. Our principles reflect a wariness of traditional hierarchies and roles, which often come with unspoken but socially understood obligations and measures of control that can lead to power

8. See *Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place & Law*, *supra* note 1 (enumerating RPL’s Statement of Principles).

9. Katherine Steefel, *From Whiteboard to Statement of Principles: The Development of the Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place & Law’s Principles*, 101 DENV. L. REV. 457, 459 (2024).

10. See SALLY CRUM, *PEOPLE OF THE RED EARTH: AMERICAN INDIANS OF COLORADO* (2009) (discussing the history, adaptability, and tenacity of Colorado’s Native peoples); CHARLES C. MANN, *1491: NEW REVELATIONS OF THE AMERICAS BEFORE COLUMBUS* (2005) (discussing the technological impact of Native peoples on the Americas); CLAUDIO SAUNT, *UNWORTHY REPUBLIC: THE DISPOSSESSION OF NATIVE AMERICANS AND THE ROAD TO INDIAN TERRITORY* (2020) (exploring the forced migration of Native people from their land in the 19th Century).

11. See generally *The Indigenous Period of Colorado*, MUSEUM OF BOULDER, <https://museumofboulder.org/time/the-indigenous-period-of-colorado/> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024) (describing Native peoples’ long history in Colorado, their deep respect for the land, and how the landscape shaped their social interactions).

12. During World War II, approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans were sent to live in internment camps based on stated concerns about national security. *Japanese American Incarceration*, THE NAT’L WWII MUSEUM, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/japanese-american-incarceration> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024). Colorado is home to one of those camps. *Granada Relocation Center*, CO, NAT’L PARK SERV., <https://www.nps.gov/places/granada-relocation-center.htm> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024). Amache, or the Granada Relocation Center, near Granada, Colorado, was one of ten incarceration sites nationwide. *Id.* Over 10,000 people, most of whom were American citizens, were incarcerated at Amache from 1942–1945. *Id.* This site is currently a Colorado historic preservation site run and managed by the National Park Service. *Id.*

13. Kevin R. Johnson, *An Essay on Immigration Politics, Popular Democracy, and California’s Proposition 187: The Political Relevance and Legal Irrelevance of Race*, 70 WASH. L. REV. 629, 641 (1995).

14. Tom I. Romero, II, *The Color of Water: Observations of a Brown Buffalo on Water Law and Policy in Ten Stanzas*, 15 U. DENV. WATER L. REV. 329, 343–44 (2012).

imbalances.¹⁵ Collective seemed to be the right word to signal that we came together from different backgrounds with different areas of expertise to achieve our goals and work together without preconceptions of what each member might be capable of or contribute. Collective reflects our chosen approach of acting through consensus, building allyship, and our deep-seated belief that there is strength in numbers.

The final three words, “race,” “place,” and “law,” represent the fundamental values and priorities at our center. We came together around our desire for racial equity, with the knowledge that race permeates so much of what is unfair and unjust in the United States and around the world.¹⁶ We came together around our place, *where* we were in the country, the world, and history.¹⁷ And finally, we came together around our commitment to the law, which has always been our focus. Our training in the law, and our role as scholars and educators meant that we would always be committed to examining the law, questioning its efficacy, and uncovering what it has wrought. We still believe in the power of the law to do great things, to help make the world a more just and equitable place, to right wrongs, and even achieve peace. And we will always be committed to demonstrating that potential.

Race, place, and law thus formed our acronym, RPL (pronounced ripple). The Oxford English Dictionary defines a ripple as: “A light ruffling of the surface of water, esp[ecially] as caused by a slight breeze or by an object dropping into it; (also) a small wave or series of small waves.”¹⁸ That is exactly what we wanted to do—disturb the stillness of the status quo and make a series of small waves that keep going and going, eventually having a larger circle of impact.

After we established our name, our ambitions expanded almost immediately. What could we do, we wondered, with all this drive and expertise? What difference could we make in the community, inside and outside the law school? Here, too, a ripple seems to define us best. We did not plan to make a big splash or a tidal wave of change. We did not rely on models from other law schools, though there were other schools with race focused organizations at the time. The University of Virginia Law School, for example, had a Center for the Study of Race and Law, formed in 2003.¹⁹

15. Such as president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary.

16. See, e.g., RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE UNITED STATES (Thomas F. Pettigrew ed., 1975) (discussing an American perspective on this history). It is well recognized that race also plays a pivotal role in power relations and subordination worldwide, due in part to the racial aspects of colonialism. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, in CAN THE SUBALTERN SPEAK? REFLECTIONS ON THE HISTORY OF AN IDEA (Rosalind C. Morris ed., 2010); EDWARD W. SAID, ORIENTALISM (1978); FRANTZ FANON, BLACK SKIN WHITE MASKS (Richard Philcox trans., 1952).

17. Colorado represents not only the gateway to the West, but that time in American history, and the confluence of many peoples and forces both geographic and political.

18. *Ripple*, OXFORD ENG. DICTIONARY, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3613316138> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024).

19. *Center for the Study of Race and Law*, UNIV. VA. SCH. OF L., <https://www.law.virginia.edu/academics/program/center-study-race-and-law> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024).

Stanford Law School's Mills Legal Clinic program offered several clinics serving minoritized and underprivileged communities, and had done so for years.²⁰ The University of California, Berkeley, School of Law had some well-established affinity groups and a law review focused on race.²¹ These ambitious, outward facing, and well-funded programs were all making great impact. While we admired them, it was not our vision. We needed something that worked for our collective model and connected to our original purpose of supporting one other in scholarship.

We initially had no funding. We did not even have a school mandate.²² All we really had was our common belief in the power of the law to do good, and our obligation to make it so. We thus set out to accomplish three important things: first, to showcase and support one another's scholarship focused on issues of social justice, especially issues of race; second, to support students, particularly minoritized students, in the difficult undertaking of law school, especially a law school in the Rocky Mountain region;²³ and third, to educate the community within the law school and beyond by providing a critical legal and social justice lens on a variety of topics.

While the programming may change slightly from one year to the next, a decade later we are still working to accomplish these three things. Our principles keep us centered, and we welcome members from every stratum in the law school—podium faculty, clinical faculty, lawyering process faculty, staff, visitors, and administrators.²⁴ That enlargement in membership ultimately allows us to accomplish a lot.

First, we continue to support and further one another's scholarship by hosting Works-in-Progress dinners, where one member will share a draft of their current project and other members will provide feedback. Because our membership includes many areas of expertise, the discussions had and suggestions made at these dinners often lead to more nuanced and multi-layered scholarship. We also host reading groups where we discuss new work in Critical Race Theory, Critical Legal Studies, or civil rights scholarship. On occasion, we have been fortunate enough to host the authors

20. *What We Do*, STAN. L. SCH.: MILLS LEGAL CLINIC, <https://law.stanford.edu/mills-legal-clinic/> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024).

21. *Combating Bias: What We're Doing*, BERKELEY L., <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/racial-justice/> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024). See, e.g., BERKELEY J. OF BLACK L. & POL'Y, <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/library/ir/bjblp/> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024).

22. A school mandate would have been an order or commission to address a particular issue. This could have come from an administrative order, a decanal decision, or a faculty vote. RPL was independently created, and we had no order or directive to study or solve any particular thing. As a result, we are free of those limitations, but also have to chart our own path.

23. While racial diversity is only one measure, it is notable that Colorado is not a particularly diverse state. The latest census reports that Colorado is 66.5% white, 22.5% Hispanic or Latino, only 4.7% Black, and 1.7% Native American. Figures at the law school reflect significant variation from year to year. For instance, our current 3L class is 25% minoritized students, and our 2L class is 30% minoritized students. But our current 1L class is only 18% minoritized students. Forming community and feeling like one belongs can be particularly challenging when the numbers are so small.

24. *Rocky Mountain Collective on Race, Place & Law*, *supra* note 1.

themselves.²⁵ This helps to promote and maintain our network of critical legal scholars beyond Sturm.

Second, we support students in their law school journey in two ways. First, by creating a sense of community: every September, we host a welcome reception to connect students—including a virtual reception in 2020. In the spring, we host another reception to connect minoritized students with Sturm alumni. We host exam preparation sessions and talk-back sessions. During the pandemic, we led discussion groups and provided opportunities to connect after the murder of George Floyd.²⁶ We held a community gathering titled Joy as Resistance in response to the presence of a controversial speaker, who many regarded as a threat, at the law school.²⁷ We even rented out a movie theatre and took over one hundred students to see Black Panther!²⁸ RPL also provides opportunities for students to engage with critical legal scholarship on issues that affect their communities. We host panels on current topics, including elections, the Supreme Court, reproductive freedom, and anti-DEI initiatives.²⁹ In this way, RPL creates safe spaces for law students to connect with one another and a ready cadre of allies. We also work to ensure inclusive teaching at the law school by hosting workshops and trainings on inclusive teaching practices to law school faculty.

25. For instance, on April 22, 2014, RPL hosted a lunch and lecture with Professor Ian Haney López, John H. Boalt Professor of Law at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law and author of *Dog Whistle Politics*, open to the entire University of Denver (DU) community. Earlier that year, on February 27, 2014, RPL hosted a faculty luncheon with Professor Osagie Obasogie, University of California-Hastings College of the Law, author of *Blinded by Sight*, on the connection between the doctrinal and empirical aspects of race in the law.

26. George Floyd was murdered by officer Derek Chauvin in New York on May 25, 2020. *How George Floyd Died, and What Happened Next*, THE N.Y. TIMES (July 29, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/article/george-floyd.html>. Officer Chauvin kept his knee on Floyd's neck for over 9 minutes despite bystanders' attempts to intervene and the obvious fact that Floyd could not breathe. *Id.* For many Americans, this opened their eyes to the reality that racism is alive and well in America. The video, which was ultimately used to bring Officer Chauvin to justice, is physically gut-wrenching. Floyd's murder led to nationwide protests, including protests in Denver, Colorado. *Id.* In response to these events, and in the middle of the pandemic, RPL responded by hosting three online discussion groups: July 1, 2020, Session #1: Teach-In: What it Means to Be an Anti-Racist; July 14, 2020, Session #2: Teach-In: Why Prison Abolition? Why Defunding the Police? Exploring the Racial History and Current Landscape of Policing and Incarceration; and July 29, 2020, Session #3: Fruitvale Movie Viewing and Discussion.

27. Ilya Shapiro, a senior fellow and director of constitutional studies at the Manhattan Institute, *Ilya Shapiro*, MANHATTAN INST., <https://manhattan.institute/person/ilya-shapiro> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024) (Scholar Profile), was invited by the Sturm chapter of the Federalist Society to speak at the law school on March 7, 2023. Given his abolitionist stance on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts, his controversial remarks regarding Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, and the political climate, several students expressed concern and apprehension about Shapiro's visit. In response, RPL hosted a counter-event to center joy as a form of resistance.

28. BLACK PANTHER (Marvel Studios & Walt Disney Pictures 2018). Black Panther, part of the Marvel franchise, features a Black superhero set in the fictional nation of Wakanda. RPL sponsored an outing to the movie on February 26, 2018.

29. Anti-DEI initiatives are widely promoted by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. See Jaelyn Diaz, *Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis Signs a Bill Banning DEI Initiatives in Public Colleges*, NPR (May 15, 2023, 5:46 PM), <https://www.npr.org/2023/05/15/1176210007/florida-ron-desantis-dei-ban-diversity>. Governor DeSantis argues that efforts to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion, such as those that RPL frequently sponsors, actually promote division and afford special treatment to minorities. *Id.*

Third, we work to connect with the community, educating people within and beyond the legal field about Critical Legal Studies and the ways in which the law can create positive change. RPL members testify in front of the Colorado legislature.³⁰ We speak on the radio and at conferences.³¹ We write amicus briefs for the Supreme Court of the United States.³² We speak at conferences and on panels. We provide expertise on boards and in trials.³³ We serve as a bank of experts for media inquiries on numerous areas of law and culture, paying special attention to social justice.³⁴ This trifecta of activity that engages us as scholars, teachers, community members, and activists, is how we work to achieve our goals of holding the law accountable and using it to accomplish greater things.

Maybe RPL started a trend. More schools today have centers focused on race, law, and social justice than a decade ago,³⁵ many of which were founded in the last few years.³⁶ We applaud them. There needs to be more attention paid to these issues, not less.

30. For instance, Professor Catherine Smith, a founding member of RPL, testified on February 24, 2020, in support of the Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act (CROWN Act) of 2020 before the Colorado Senate Judiciary Committee. *Professor Catherine Smith Testifies in Support of the CROWN Act of 2020*, STURM COLL. OF L. (Feb. 28, 2020), <https://www.law.du.edu/about/news/professor-catherine-smith-testifies-support-crown-act-2020>. The CROWN Act is designed to address discrimination on the basis of hair, a particularly pernicious form of race discrimination against African Americans, especially African American women and girls. *Id.* Black men and boys, and people of Jewish, Latinx, and Native American descent have experienced similar struggles. *Id.* The CROWN Act prohibits this kind of race discrimination. *Id.*

31. For example, Professor Rashmi Goel frequently attends the International Academy on Law and Mental Health and has presented on Dementia and Police Brutality; Attention Deficit Disorder and Juvenile Justice; and Insanity Law. Other conferences where RPL members frequently present are the Annual Law and Society Association conference, the American Association of Law Schools conference, and the LatCrit conference.

32. See generally Brief of Amici Curiae Scholars of the Constitutional Rights of Children in Support of Petitioners, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644 (2015) (No. 14-556, 14-562, 14-571, & 14-574), 2015 WL 1088972 (Brief authored by Catherine E. Smith, Lauren Fontana, Susannah W. Pollvogt, & Tanya Washington).

33. For example, Professor Tom Romero acted as an expert witness on the legal, social, and political history of racism in Colorado in *Citizens Project v. City of Colorado Springs*, No. 1:22-cv-01365-CNS-MDB (D. Colo. 2022) (active case), on the legal history of segregation in *Tennyson v. CoreCivic*, No. 18-cv-00680-RBJ-MEH (D. Colo. 2018), and was retained as an expert on the history of Latinx peoples in Colorado in *Moreno v. Gessler*, No. 11CV3461, 2011 WL 8614878 (Denv. D. Ct. Nov. 10, 2011), and the history of Education Clause, Article IX of the Colorado Constitution in *Lobato v. State*, No. 05 CV 4794, 2006 WL 4037485 (D. Colo. Mar. 2, 2006), *aff'd*, 216 P.3d 29 (Colo. App. 2008), *rev'd*, 218 P.3d 358 (Colo. 2009). His testimony and expert report were cited by the dissent in *Lobato*. Professor Romero makes reference to this work in his article. Tom I. Romero, II, "Of Greater Value than the Gold of Our Mountains": *The Right to Education in Colorado's Nineteenth Century Constitution*, 83 U. COLO. L. REV. 781, 788 n.25 (2012).

34. See, e.g., Lindsey Webb, *Why True Crime is a White Woman's Genre and the Impact it's Having on Society*, NPR: HERE AND NOW (Oct. 01, 2021), <https://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/npr/1042453167/why-true-crime-is-a-white-woman-s-genre-and-the-impact-it-s-having-on-society>.

35. See Ilana Kowarski, *How U.S. Law Schools Are Preparing Students For Racial Justice Work*, U.S. NEWS (Oct. 21, 2022), <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-graduate-schools/top-law-schools/articles/how-u-s-law-schools-are-preparing-students-for-racial-justice-work>.

36. For example, the Stanford Center for Racial Justice was founded in 2020. Sharon Driscoll, *New Stanford Center for Racial Justice*, STANFORD LAWYER (Dec. 1, 2020), <https://law.stanford.edu/stanford-lawyer/articles/new-stanford-center-for-racial-justice/>. Columbia University Law

Yet, RPL remains unique. Many centers on race and law across the country are restricted to faculty; RPL is not.³⁷ Many centers across the country focus on a single field of law—like constitutional law or environmental law—and their membership is made up exclusively of scholars within that field. RPL is different.³⁸ Our membership includes scholars and experts from every imaginable legal field.³⁹ Some organizations are open only to senior members of the faculty who have experience running an organization.⁴⁰ RPL welcomes those who are new to legal academia as well as those who are experienced in legal academia.⁴¹ The biggest difference between RPL and other organizations is that we are not a group of people who have come together because of our identities—women, faculty, or people of color. Nor did we come together because of our shared legal expertise. We are a diverse group of people who have come together because of what we believe—and that sets RPL apart. Our differences make us stronger, more varied in our approach, more capable of responding to events, and, we hope, more able to weather the changing political winds that seek to snuff out voices like ours.

And we know we have made a difference. RPL members are bolder in the choices they make in their scholarship.⁴² The larger law school community is thinking more critically about its policies and how they affect the voiceless.⁴³ RPL students are more audacious when they graduate.⁴⁴ This all has an impact on the status quo; it is a steady push towards change. A little wave that becomes a series of waves. That is the RPL effect.

School created the Anti-Racism Coordinating Committee in 2020 to help establish new antiracism initiatives and to track and advance the Law School's anti-racism agenda. *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*. COLUMBIA L. SCH., <https://www.law.columbia.edu/community-life/diversity-equity-and-inclusion> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024). NYU Law School started the Center for Race, Inequality, and the Law in 2017. *Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law Launch Features Trio of Leaders in Civil Rights Law*, NYU SCH. OF L. (NEWS) (Mar. 8, 2017), <https://www.law.nyu.edu/news/Center-on-Race-Inequality-and-the-Law-launch-Loretta-Lynch-Sherrilyn-Ifill-Bryan-Stevenson>.

37. For example, the NYU School of Law's Center for Diversity Inclusion and Belonging, University of Virginia School of Law's center for the Study of Race and Law, and Stanford Law School's Center for Racial Justice all consist exclusively of faculty members. See *Leadership*, N.Y.U., <https://www.law.nyu.edu/centers/belonging/leadership> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024); *Center for the Study of Race and Law*, *supra* note 19; *New Stanford Center for Racial Justice*, *supra* note 36. RPL includes all types of faculty (lawyering process faculty, clinical faculty, podium faculty, visitors, and fellows) and also law school administrators and staff. *RPL Members*, STURM COLL. OF L., <https://www.law.du.edu/content/rpl-members> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024).

38. It is RPL's organization and longevity that sets it apart.

39. See *RPL Members*, *supra* note 37.

40. See *Leadership*, *supra* note 37.

41. *RPL Members*, *supra* note 37.

42. See, e.g., Lindsey Webb, *Legal Consciousness as Race Consciousness: Expansion of the Fourth Amendment Seizure Analysis Through Objective Knowledge of Police Impunity*, 48 SETON HALL L. REV. 403 (2018).

43. *What We Do*, UNIV. OF DENV.: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION COMM., <https://www.du.edu/freedom-expression-committee/what-we-do/index.html> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024).

44. Consider Olivia Mendoza, a recent DU Alum (2019) and a DU Law Star honoree. Olivia is the Director of Litigation and Policy for the National Redistricting Foundation. *DU Law Stars*, STURM COLL. OF L., <https://www.law.du.edu/our-community/alumni-friends/du-law-stars> (last visited Feb. 20, 2024). Some of her pioneering work on eliminating and counteracting racial gerrymandering was first formulated and developed under the guidance of RPL members.