



## Institution for Social and Policy Studies

ADVANCING RESEARCH • SHAPING POLICY • DEVELOPING LEADERS

June 8, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As the incoming and outgoing directors of the Institution for Social and Policy Studies, we write to express our deep concern about the enormous and embedded problems of police brutality, structural discrimination, and racial inequality laid bare by recent tragic events. We want to express our solidarity with those peacefully protesting these injustices and our determination as academic leaders and as scholars to contribute to real solutions.

Just over fifty years ago, ISPS was founded in the wake of protests of a scale not seen until those of our day. Its mission, from that tumultuous beginning, was to illuminate problems in our society using social science, identify solutions grounded in evidence and understanding, and train the next generation of scholars and leaders who could pursue these solutions. At the center of this mission is the belief that innovative and deep research on the most important social challenges can be a powerful force for improving society. This abiding conviction has guided a wide range of important work related to current challenges, but we know we must do better at elevating voices not well enough heard, investigating topics not well enough studied, and illuminating paths to reform not well enough lit.

We must also do better at listening to those within our own community whose voices have not always penetrated our consciousness or informed our actions: Yale College students and graduate students, postdocs and visiting scholars, junior and senior faculty, our amazing support staff and the communities in which all these partners and stakeholders in our work are embedded. As part of the leadership transition, in the coming weeks the incoming director will engage in broad consultation and identify concrete steps that manifest these commitments. Already, we have plans to reinvigorate the Center for the Study of Inequality under new leadership and broaden the work of our Policy Lab, which is deeply engaged in issues of racial and criminal justice within New Haven and beyond. We welcome your thoughts, no matter how critical they are of our present practices or ambitious they may seem relative to those practices.

At this moment of transition at ISPS, we are also at a moment of transition in our society. ISPS will always be dedicated to the pursuit of truth. We must redouble our efforts to speak that truth to power.

In solidarity and with humility and determination,

Jacob S. Hacker & Alan S. Gerber