

Professor Atinuke O. Adediran, Fordham University School of Law
**“Corporate Disclosures as Governance Infrastructure:
Race, Risk, and Private Regulation”**



Description: In 2020, when it was economically beneficial to do so, companies proclaimed the importance of equity and diversity. But as Fordham Law Professor Atinuke Adediran shows in her book *DISCLOSURELAND: How Corporate Words Constrain Racial Progress* (Cambridge University Press, January 2026), five years later and with Trump back in office, those recent promises have significantly softened or been eliminated altogether. Adediran examines why this type of lip service surged, why the commitments crumbled, and what their unraveling means for shareholders, employees, customers and for the future of racial fairness in the corporate world.

Analyzing data from more than 2,000 companies—including Amazon and Walmart, the two largest corporate employers in the world—Adediran explores the issue from three angles. First, she illustrates how business pledges are opportunistic when they’re not grounded in historical facts about past corporate inequality. Second, she reveals how companies use public statements to deflect accusations of racial inequality in their businesses. And third, she highlights how under the Trump administration, many companies choose one of two paths: softening their progressive language or scrubbing race from their messaging entirely. All of these approaches reflect the same calculation: how to protect their reputation with politicians, shareholders, customers, and employees today, while hedging against financial and reputational risks down the road. Nowhere in this equation are genuine concerns about how race intersects with their business practices and the lives of the employees and customers they depend on.

Atinuke O. Adediran, a legal scholar and sociologist, is a professor at Fordham University School of Law. A recipient of a Ford Foundation Fellowship, two Russell Sage Foundation Awards, and a Fellowship from the University of Michigan Policy School’s Center for Racial Justice, she has been studying DEI and racial equity issues in the private sector for over ten years.

Thursday
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12:30-1:50pm

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