



Statement of the American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity on the Events in Charlottesville, VA

Association of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Professionals Mourns the Lives Lost to Hate and Violence

For Immediate Release: August 15 2017

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Washington, DC, August 15, 2017 - The American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity (AAAED) joins the many higher education, social justice and civil rights organizations, as well as elected officials and individuals of good will, in rejecting all forms of hatred, racism and bigotry embodied in the actions and philosophies of white nationalist and supremacist organizations in last week's "Unite the Right" demonstrations in Charlottesville, VA.

More specifically, the Nazi Party and related organizations, the Klu Klux Klan and other members of the so-called "Alt Right" must be singled out as the purveyors of hate who precipitated the events that led to the death of Ms. Heather Heyer, the injury of 19 other individuals and the death of two state troopers. This is not what makes America great; it is what brings shame on this nation and to those of us who want to form a "more perfect union."

Hatred, anti-Semitism, racism, sexism and other forms of bias do not belong in 21st Century America. Moreover, hundreds of thousands have already given their lives to combat slavery and Jim Crow, the Klan, Nazism and Fascism since the 19th Century. We condemn any efforts to resurrect these philosophies of hate, division and fear, and to rain terror upon our fellow citizens.

We are one America and in 2017 our diversity and inclusivity is our strength. America will never be great by extirpating this diversity, born by the immigration - voluntary and involuntary - of people from around the world and by those who were here before the arrival of Europeans. The United States of America, which has always been a multi-racial nation, will become greater by embracing this diversity and making use of all of our talents and abilities.

Most importantly, our heartfelt condolences go out to the family of Ms. Heather Heyer, the young woman who lost her life in the tragedy of Charlottesville. She unwittingly gave her life to the cause of equal opportunity and justice when she chose to demonstrate her disapproval of hatred and bigotry. Like Viola Liuzzo, a white woman who was killed during the civil rights movement, Ms. Heyer will be a symbol for those who believe that equal justice is not a cause for only one group, but for all people of good will. *Thank you, Heather, for your sacrifice.*

Founded in 1974 as the American Association for Affirmative Action (AAAA), AAAED is a national not-for-profit association of professionals working in the areas of equal opportunity, compliance and diversity. The longest-serving organization of individuals in the equal opportunity and diversity professions, AAAED has 43 years of leadership providing quality professional training to practitioners and promoting understanding and advocacy of affirmative action and other equal opportunity laws.

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