



**American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity
Announces Preliminary Results of Equal Opportunity Professionals' Survey**
*Association of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Professionals begins to examine the state of
the profession, as well as the needs and challenges faced by EO professionals nationwide*

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Washington, DC, November 16, 2017- The American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity (AAAED), an organization of equal opportunity, diversity and affirmative action professionals, announced the preliminary results of a survey to examine the state of the Equal Opportunity (EO) profession. This is the most recent known survey of individuals in the equal employment opportunity, diversity and inclusion, Title IX and affirmative action professions.

The survey was conducted by Dr. Richard Anthony Baker, Assistant Vice President for Equal Opportunity Services at the University of Houston and former member of the AAAED Board, and Christopher Jones, Assistant Vice President and Director of Equity in the Office for Inclusion, Diversity and Equal Opportunity at Case Western Reserve University. Christopher Jones stated: "The purpose of this survey was to provide a way to assess the progress of those in our profession, and as we operate within the changing environment that has been brought by the current administration, we want to consider the direction in which the profession is headed."

The work of EO professionals is not without its challenges. Moreover, the EO profession has dramatically changed in recent decades, with the emergence of the diversity officer and the importance of Title IX enforcement at academic institutions. Dr. Baker added: "The years under President Obama brought changes that many did not anticipate in addressing sexual misconduct on campus, and many of us had to take on additional responsibilities. In addition, the focus by some political interests in dismantling programs like affirmative action has made the work more challenging but even more important, especially with the nation's changing demographics."

The survey was conducted online in July through September of 2017. An initial group of surveys was also distributed at the AAAED National Conference in Scottsdale, AZ in June 2017, prior to the construction of the on-line survey instrument. For the purposes of this survey, an Equal Opportunity Professional (EOP) was defined as "any official who serves in a position that has a diversity, equity (i.e., Title IX), inclusion, accessibility, affirmative action, or equal opportunity function." The survey was emailed to more than 3,000 professionals; 162 individuals provided complete responses. The questions in the survey included the demographics of the EO population; level and years of experience; institution/organization; title and number of staff; reporting structure of the institution; primary

concerns within the institution, *e.g.*, sexual harassment, affirmative action issues and discrimination; salary and budget; and overall happiness with the position.

Among the preliminary results of the survey are the following:

1. **The majority of those in the profession are women and the majority identify as either Black or Latino:** 73% of the respondents are women; 24% are men. 41% identify as Black and 10% identify as Latino; 37% identify as White.
2. **The profession is dominated by those who have some experience, with at least 11 years in the profession. It is also aging.** Most respondents had more than 21 years of experience (31%) or 11-20 years (26%); 45% are age 51-64; 35% are 36-50.
3. **The profession is highly educated.** Over 72% of survey respondents have a master's degree or higher (37% masters, 19% professional doctorate (M.D., J.D.), 17% Research doctorate (Ph.D., Ed.D.).
4. **Most respondents thought that if they would resign their position, it would be for better opportunities elsewhere or because of the lack of opportunities where they are, and if they would quit the profession, it would be because they are "tired of fighting the same old fights."** Such "fights" may include lack of budget and staffing, or support. For example, in recent years, many affirmative action positions have been relegated to the human resources office. The reason for resigning would be better opportunities or lack of opportunities (23% and 22%). Reason for quitting the profession altogether is tired of fighting the same old fights (29%).
5. **Nonetheless, the majority of respondents would say they are happy or very happy with being in the profession.** Most EOPs are happy with their careers and the overwhelming majority would recommend to a friend to be an EOP: Most are Happy or Very Happy (37% and 24% respectively). Overall happiness with career is also Happy or Very Happy (39% and 33% respectively). Yet, the overwhelming majority would recommend to a friend to be an EOP (72%).

Dr. Baker stated: "The survey is a reminder that the equal opportunity profession is healthy, educated and experienced. Moreover, EOPs need to occupy a critical seat at the proverbial compliance table. EOPs not only have the responsibility of internally addressing headline-worthy issues of discrimination and sexual harassment before they severely impact brands and bottom lines, but they also possess the competencies to resolve unlawful conduct, and perhaps prevent its occurrence, in the first place." In the next phase of the research, the authors will "take a deeper dive" into some of the questions that called for the respondents to rank their responses and to prepare follow-up questions for those who volunteered to provide further information.

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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