



February 14, 2022

Black History Month is a month of 28 and at most, 29 days when this country and its people are expected to dutifully attend to growing its awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the Black experience within the United States of America. Though it is not monolithic, it is an experience undergirded by a shared history. It is a history that contains innumerable stories of innovation, invention, resilience, creativity, and far too many unsung contributions and successes. However, it is also a history that seeks to acknowledge the horrific, violent tragedies experienced and still being experienced, structural oppression, and government-sanctioned exclusion of Black Americans from institutions, as well as, their centuries-long denial of access to resources that all human beings deserve.

Both the celebration and the scourge are deserving of an accurate truth-telling. The truth cannot be concerned with absolution. The truth cannot be revised or rewritten to ease the contemporary consciousness of man. The truth deserves to be told in all of its glory *and* pain, because truth is the ultimate teacher. Yet, it also has the potential to be a patient healer- when heeded.

As a nation, we have witnessed and continue to witness powerful truths that portend lessons not yet learned. However, our courage in confronting all the chapters of the past must be engaged with a consistent commitment to critical reflection. At the same time, our dedication to designing an equitable and just future in the now, demands the determination of a critical mass. In that, Black history will always be American history and can never be erased, censored, or reinterpreted with calculated omissions that acquiesce to serve the unresolved guilt of a few. This is not about assuaging guilt or discomfort. Rather, it's about using the illuminated testimonies of truth to enlighten and uplift as we forge forward.

Indeed, these voices, these stories, and these truths are and have been ever present in all 50 states and territories- waiting to be augmented, elevated, embraced, and united in the name of Justice, for all. Not just in the abbreviated month of February but every day, all year long. This month begs us to acknowledge complicated and beautiful truths. Yet, the remaining months of the year should insist that we be in active pursuit of reconciling them- for the good of this nation and the world.

TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF DIVERSITY OFFICERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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In Service and Solidarity,

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