

From the Editor.

Spoiler alert: DEI is not a fanged, horned creature lurking in the halls of Congress waiting to steal the soul of America. It is not, in fact, a boogiemani-like spirit waiting for an opportunity to suck the life out of America's democratic institutions. Unfortunately, the acronym DEI has become associated with the image of an unskilled, undereducated, undeserving non-white person waiting in the darkness to steal a job or an opportunity from an unwitting, well-deserving, skilled, classically educated white man. It even reads like a comic book storyline. This narrative just isn't true. Like all mythical creatures, the caricature of the "DEI hire" is an intentional fabrication created to elicit a specific reaction from a baited audience. Werewolves, trolls, Freddy Krueger, and the unqualified DEI hire are folklore created to incite fear.

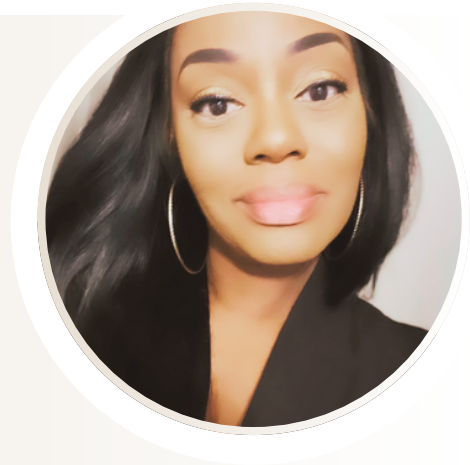
The truth, however, is that diversity, equity, and inclusion are simply policy principles that serve as guidelines to ensure an entity – be it education, business, government, etc. – accurately represents and equally serves each part of the whole. This concept is as old as apple pie, or better yet American democracy. In fact, it can be argued that America's first diversity, equity, and inclusion document is the *Constitution of the United States*. Think about it. If each state represents a component of the United States, and if the Constitution outlines how each state must be **represented** in the House (based on population) and Senate (equal representation), and if it outlines the powers **accessible** to each state, and if the 14th Amendment says, "No State shall... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the **equal** protection of the laws," then the Constitution is indeed a diversity, equity, and inclusion document.

Without the principles of diversity (accurate representation), equity (access to power), and inclusion (intentional incorporation) we would not have our democracy. Even while grasping in the dark and building the boat in the water, the founding fathers were intentional about creating a democratic republic, i.e. a government ruled by the people by way of representation. So, there you have it. Diversity, equity, and inclusion – cornerstones of American democracy.

DEI is not a person. Diversity, equity, and inclusion represent a set of centuries-old principles that have made our Constitution *the* blueprint of democratic institutionalization. Whether you are a Republican, Democrat, an Independent, or of the Green Party, you should be very concerned when rhetoric that chips away at democratic principles is amplified. It is dangerous, it is consequential, and it is quite un-American.

In Black,

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