

## Division 45 Statement to Council:

The mission of the Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity and Race is to serve as a means to promote: the development of knowledge and understanding of ethnic minority psychology; the application of psychological principles specific to ethnic minorities; consideration of how social concerns impact ethnic minority populations; and incorporation of the importance of diversity in society. It is from this perspective that Division 45 responds to the Hoffman report.

It was apparent from the Hoffman report that the Department of Defense had an overwhelming power differential that was exercised through influencing the President's Task Force on Ethics (PENS) and creating general consensus of decisions and language that had a detrimental effect in the drafting of language used for the Code of Ethics between the American Psychological Association and the Department of Defense. The influence was well orchestrated and resulted in the endorsement of such language leading to the ultimate end of allowing torture to be used with prisoners who are disproportionately individuals of Middle Eastern/Arab, Asian, African American and Latino descent. We, as People of Color, with our voices in APA have also experienced a history of undue influence, disappointment, pain and invisibility in working with APA's power differential with the ethnic minority organizations. These instances have occurred in reference to the development of policy, representation as delegates to Council, and being seated at the table of decision making with issues that impact the diversity of our populations. We strongly recommend that the Council of Representatives be inclusive, transparent and balanced with the addition of our diverse voices across these areas. As history has proven it is not to our benefit, nor do we have the luxury or privilege to terminate our membership with APA, nor do we threaten to engage in such a decision. However, Division 45 commits to accepting the responsibility to collaborate in the creation of the change necessary, not only for ourselves, but also for APA to become a place for all of us. The makeup of our Division understands the history of pain, invisibility and violence. We also understand the survival of our voices through resiliency, endurance and forgiveness leading to many of our successes today. Our cumulative experiences with such a history would prove to be very advantageous to APA in this time of turmoil, confusion and trauma. Again, we do not have the luxury or privilege to terminate our relationship with APA, but we do have the responsibility to help create the change for APA in developing a balanced, more inclusive system of decision-making that would be advantageous for us all. In promotion of positive reframing, we want to view this time of crisis in APA as an extraordinary window of opportunity to include our voices in decisions that will benefit all of us.

## Recommendations:

- 1) Structure a system that is transparent and independent of the current practice of choosing members by single individuals or chairs of committees to serve on task forces for APA. Include consultation with Division 45, in selecting members in general to serve on various task forces.

- 2) Learn, evaluate and develop a system that would prevent such a situation of deception as described from the Hoffman report from happening again in APA.
- 3) Develop a system of checks and balances to monitor power differentials of financial, political and individual status that have such an overarching influence on decisions to one party or another.
- 4) Instate a separate independent party with authority to implement clear and defined policies to evaluate and provide recommendations regarding conflicts of interest within the APA governance structure, personal relationships and financial endeavours.
- 5) Eliminate the current Ethics Casebook developed through the PENS task force and have a balanced task force to address the issues of psychologists working in environments with detainees, prisoners, and related areas, along with what their ethical responsibilities are in such positions.
- 6) Develop a system that would diversify the leadership in APA with ethnicity, race, career levels, research and practice.
- 7) Provide leadership training in relation to the responsibility within these roles, along with the ability to access independent support when competing situations of power differentials arise in such positions.
- 8) Consult the expertise and research in trauma, diversity and resiliency to develop an inclusive approach to evaluate policies and procedures under consideration in APA. Such as the requirements of impact statements in all major policy and proposals regarding human rights, diversity and other critical concerns related to APA and its members.
- 9) Establish and employ the position of Chief Diversity Officer in order to guide efforts in conceptualizing, defining, assessing, nurturing and cultivating diversity as an institutional and educational resource in APA. The overall mission of this position is to coordinate leadership for diversity issues across APA.