

ADEA Policy Statement on the Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Harassment, Discrimination and Bias in Dental Education

(As approved by the 2021 ADEA House of Delegates)

All health care professionals are committed to the basis of the Hippocratic Oath, which is to “do no harm.” Dental professionals are bound by the American Dental Association Code of Ethics Principles of nonmaleficence, beneficence, justice and veracity. In accordance with the ADEA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Framework, ADEA partners with its membership, strategic partners, and the health care community to advance access, diversity, equity, inclusion and the wellbeing of all constituencies as priorities in dental education.

Black Lives Matter and the Anti-Racism movements, the continued erosion of LGBTQIA+ rights, and the COVID-19 pandemic have further magnified the effects of social determinants of health and other related disparities on the health and wellbeing of vulnerable and historically underrepresented and marginalized populations. The #MeToo Movement has also highlighted the gender-based harassment and discrimination that continues to impact our communities. It is evident that the history of these ongoing social justice challenges has energized the movements and exposed the glaring inequities among marginalized populations.

As The Voice of Dental Education, ADEA recognizes the necessity for and benefits of a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment for all members of the dental, allied dental and advanced dental education communities, as reaffirmed in the Statement of ADEA Policy on Diversity and Inclusion (revised 2016). As a leader in health professions education, ADEA must acknowledge that our country’s painful history of racial and gender discrimination and bias—both conscious and unconscious—has played a role in the health and workplace inequities that plague our country today and that these destructive entities will not be tolerated in dental, allied dental, or advanced dental education.

This resolution supplements the Statement of ADEA's Policy on Diversity and Inclusion and will enable ADEA to:

1. Facilitate communication of ADEA’s commitment to combat hate, bias, harassment and racism in dental, allied dental and advanced dental education.
2. Lend support to ADEA’s mission and strategic plan to develop and sustain institutional environments within the dental education community that are inclusive and supportive of all diverse groups of students, faculty, residents, fellows, employees and patients.
3. Meet the current and expanded role of ADEA as an access, diversity, equity and inclusion leader in health care and health care education globally.

ADEA has recognized the need for a renewed effort to prevent and eliminate racism, harassment, discrimination and bias in dental education, meeting the current and expanded role of ADEA in promoting access, diversity, equity and inclusion now and in the future.

ADEA and dental education can show leadership in the following ways:

- Increasing the number of pathways and pre-professional programs to improve the diversity of the dental and allied dental student bodies;

- Expanding recruitment, retention and mentorship programs for new faculty and researchers from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups;
- Advancing and creating novel research initiatives focused on unconscious bias and racism in dental education and the profession at all levels; and
- Implementing effective inclusion practices necessary to fulfill the mission and enhance a humanistic environment and the quality of dental education.

ADEA stands firmly and unequivocally against all aspects and forms of hate, bias, harassment and racism and affirms its commitment to the reduction and elimination of these destructive entities in all aspects of dental education. Dental education recognizes racism as an urgent public health crisis that significantly impacts oral health and oral health education.

Together, with our counterparts in health professions education, ADEA is committed to collaborating on the development of policy to combat racism, harassment, discrimination and bias in health care and health care education globally. Additionally, ADEA recognizes that access, diversity, equity and inclusion are critical to the success of dental education and public health, such that faculty, staff, students, residents, fellows, patients, and ADEA Members must resemble the diversity so proudly reflected in the citizenry of our nation.