**2018 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Democracy: The Inconvenient Truths**

March 22, 2018 to March 24, 2018

The Westin Gaslamp

910 Broadway Circle

San Diego, CA 92101

**“We live in a time when merchants of division draw us away from mutuality and toward the undoing of democracy itself.”**

                 —Jeff Chang, *We Gon’ Be Alright: Notes on Race and Resegregation*

In 2009, the late Eric Dey [challenged educators](http://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/another-inconvenient-truth-capturing-campus-climate-and-its) to examine “the ‘real’ versus the ‘ideal’ view of campus environments and the inconvenient truth that these views are often dissimilar.” Dey encouraged us to engage in vigorous dialogue about the gaps between aspiration and reality in order to create “enhanced opportunities for students to cultivate a commitment to excellence and integrity, to engage across differences on and off campus, and to develop moral discernment and action in their public and private lives.” With a specific focus on developing students’ capacities for personal and social responsibility, Dey’s work aimed to help “campuses investigate how their climates can impede or facilitate student learning.”

Today, we still struggle to identify and address gaps between the “real” and “ideal,” not only in our campus environments, but also in our democracy. While great strides have been made in advancing equity, much work remains to ensure equal voice, dignity, and access to knowledge for all individuals.

*Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Democracy: The Inconvenient Truths* will explore the inconvenient truths that stand in the way of fresh and critical thinking about how institutions can prepare all students for success in work, in life, and as globally engaged citizens. The conference will provide a forum for campus practitioners, students, and stakeholders to compare current institutional frameworks and practices to the democratic ideals necessary to serve today’s nontraditional, technologically advanced, and equity-focused student population. It will examine and address the inconvenient truths experienced by faculty, staff, and administrators working to design learning opportunities that value students’ cultural wealth, recognize their lived experiences, and honor their exploration and critique of current democratic practice.

The conference will focus on key questions about our campus and community environments:

* How are educators interrogating the language of and assumptions about diversity, inclusion, and equity? Are educators prepared—and supported—to lead campus dialogues that engage and value diverse perspectives? How are these dialogues enhancing efforts to prepare students for work and civic engagement beyond campus?
* What is higher education’s role and value in the public sphere? How do our institutions function as members of their communities beyond their institutional boundaries?
* What are campus leaders doing to change structural frameworks and systemic inequities that impede student access, learning, and success, building on students’ assets and including all campus voices in constructive dialogue about the quality of educational experiences?
* How are campuses diversifying their faculty, staff, and administration to reflect current and emerging student demographics?
* What are evidence-based strategies for designing high-impact educational practices that value students’ lived experiences and prepare them to engage with contemporary issues?
* How do educators develop coherent learning pathways that encourage students to become intentional learners who have a sense of agency for advancing the public good

AAC&U invites educators and students from all campus sectors to participate in this reflective and action-oriented dialogue about the inconvenient truths that we must address to create campus environments that truly reflect our democratic principles. We look forward to engaging in this conversation about the curricular, cultural, and structural changes necessary to educate all students for a life of promise, purpose, and inclusion.