

Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education, Inc. August 17, 2017

Dear Colleagues:

In light of the recent violence on the campus of the University of Virginia, in Charlottesville, now more than ever, the Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education (PBCOHE) must continue to stand against bigotry, hatred and discrimination in all of its heinous forms and manifestations. As President, I condemn the cowardly acts by those so-called “white nationalists,” “white supremacist” and “alt-right” groups as nothing more than intimidation tactics meant to oppress Blacks, other persons of color, Jews and homosexuals. Their intent was and is to relegate us back to a time when Blacks were shackled in the bonds of servitude. I say, not so! We will never again be subjected to such. We will fight racism, xenophobia and all manner of discrimination with every fiber of our being.

Let me be clear, these hate groups are nothing short of domestic terrorists, in my opinion. This nation must treat these domestic terrorists like we claim to treat international terrorists. Terrorism, after all, whether domestic or foreign, is a threat to our national security. To this end, we must hold our elected officials, especially the President of our great nation, accountable. It is troublesome, yet not surprising, that President Trump has not taken a more definitive and decisive position against these “white nationalists.” The President must unequivocally and consistently condemn “white nationalism,” “white supremacy” and all such hate groups. He must stand up for what is right! Silence and ambiguity are not options. As a nation, we must speak up and speak out against this type of homegrown vitriol and bigotry. We need to show these racists that there are more people who stand against them than those who stand with them, as evidenced by the hundreds of people of all hues, races, religions, creeds and sexual orientation who staged and continue to stage counter-protests. Together we are mighty!

Virginia is just south of us. If we think this type of public display of hatred cannot or will not happen in Pennsylvania, we are sorely and sadly mistaken. We must ensure that on our college campuses, our students, faculty and staff know that the PBCOHE will continue to fight against bigotry and intolerance. So, I implore each of us to talk, in depth, with our students about these recent events in Charlottesville, VA. Let us empower them to stay strong in the face of adversity, seek refuge in our offices and homes when they feel the need to do so and call upon them to speak out with a loud voice when racism rears its ugly head on and around their respective campuses.

Finally, to the family of the young lady who lost her life when a cowardly white supremacist drove his car through the counter-protest in Charlottesville, we express our deepest condolences. Also, to the many others who were injured during that same incident, we wish you a speedy and full recovery. Let us continue to stay strong!

Yours in Service,
John B. Craig
John B. Craig, Ed.D.
President