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Statement After Charlottesville Violence

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Statement After Charlottesville Violence

This statement was posted on August 14, 2017 in reaction to a fatal weekend of violence in Charlottesville, VA.

It is with a heavy and sad heart I offer my condolences and prayers for those who lost their lives, and those injured, in the violence that erupted this past weekend in Charlottesville. Heather Heyer is a former student of Piedmont Virginia Community College. It is with strength and determination however, that I affirm that the racially motivated division, hatred, intimidation, and fear outsiders brought to the City of Charlottesville has no place on a Virginia community college campus, and are a violation of both the words and spirit of our community college mission.

Virginia's Community Colleges exists to give *everyone* the opportunity to learn and develop the right skills so lives and communities are strengthened. Our faculty, staff, and students should never question if that mission includes them because it always does. Higher education has been, and continues to be, an antidote to ignorance, bigotry and hatred. This past weekend is a painful and powerful reminder of how much work remains for us to do.

I am a passionate student of history. Throughout the extensive narratives that tell the Virginia story and the America story there is a clear and convincing pattern that regularly emerges: our progress and our success depend on our inclusivity. We move forward farther and faster when we move together. Community colleges were built to advance that purpose. I have dedicated my 36-year career to it, and remain steadfast to it.