



An Association of Professors, Practitioners,  
and Researchers in Religious Education  
1903-2019

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February 13, 2019

We, the 2019 Board of Directors of the Religious Education Association, are deeply distressed about and sincerely regret the pain felt by so many during and as a result of the 2018 REA annual meeting, "Beyond White Normativity: Creating Brave Spaces."

We made mistakes. They were unintentional but harmful to the fabric of our organization.

In the months since November, we as a Board have together begun to make concerted efforts to listen, face our mistakes honestly and prayerfully, seek assistance, and continue to engage our personal and systemic biases, paying particular attention to strategies to disrupt them.

As a beginning, the Board has taken a number of steps to try to prevent further harm and to seek deeper understanding and reconciliation.

We are forming a task force composed of REA members which will give us an immediate way to focus sustained attention, transparency and accountability in relation to issues of anti-oppression in the work of our Association. These issues include, but are not limited to, religion, race, ethnicity, culture, language, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. We intend this task force to become the first step in an ongoing process of reviewing our governance structures, REA nomination and election procedures, program planning and implementation, and our practices of evaluation. The Board is committing both time and resources to this process. This task force will work independently from the Board. If you have suggestions for members of this task force, or ideas for how it should function, please send them to Lucinda Huffaker, our executive secretary, by **April 1, 2019**. We hope that the task force will begin its work by the November 2019 meeting.

We also used a significant amount of time during our recent Board retreat to work with a diversity/inclusivity professional to examine our personal and organizational practices, and we commit to renewed attempts to conduct our routine Board business with a lens to perceiving the ways in which various oppressive systems intersect and function.

We are working on initiatives to increase equity around arrangements for the annual meeting (e.g., evaluation methods, less expensive venues, better attention to visual imagery, creating a more hospitable environment) and to bring greater transparency and accessibility to REA's governance structure. We believe that we are dealing with structural and systemic challenges, and thus we need procedures and vehicles for identifying leadership which will insure more equitable representation of our members.

We understand that we have -- both implicitly and explicitly -- fostered white supremacy even if our intent was to problematize and confront it. We continue to yearn for an Association that embodies all that we commit to in our mission statement.

We ask for your patience, we seek your creative wisdom, and we are grateful for your loyalty to this Association as we move forward in our efforts to create a more just and hospitable community of professors, practitioners, and researchers in religious educators. Please keep faith with us as we work to guide our own house to reflect the true ideals that have formed and shaped our Association.

The 2019 REA Board