

## **Statement from AAJA-Los Angeles, Aug. 27, 2016**

In response to recent complaints arising from a panel co-organized by the Los Angeles chapter of the Asian American Journalists Association at the organization's annual national convention in Las Vegas, we offer this statement to our members, to our many friends in the community, and especially to anyone who has expressed concern about the matter.

We applaud and encourage the work of all parties to promote diversity in entertainment and in the wider mass media. That was the inspiration for our panel and has been, and remains, a core element in AAJA-Los Angeles' traditional mission of 35 years.

The Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA) is a national nonprofit educational and professional organization serving the areas of print, broadcast and digital media. The Los Angeles chapter's mission is to offer support, provide resources, bring awareness and instill a sense of integrity and fairness in media coverage. We are solely run by volunteers.

Some members of the Los Angeles chapter of AAJA helped put together a one-hour panel on the lack of diversity in Hollywood as it pertains to Asian Americans as a part of the programming for our AAJA national convention held in Las Vegas on August 13, 2016. The title/description of the panel was:

### **#OscarsSoWhite and Whitewashing in Hollywood**

"When the #OscarsSoWhite controversy blew up, the conversation largely was around black and white racial lines. Where was the AAPI voice? And where are the AAPIs in Hollywood? A panel of AAPI influencers will discuss whitewashing in Hollywood and what we can do about it as a community."

<http://sched.co/7CA7>

We want to offer our sincere apologies for having used #oscarssowhite as part of the title of our recent panel discussion and for any misleading tweets that may have come across as taking credit for the #oscarssowhite hashtag or movement.

We should have credited April Reign as the creator of the hashtag in both the panel and in our tweets. The discussion itself focused mostly on the Asian American narrative as it pertains to the lack of diversity. However, our panelists spoke highly of the #oscarssowhite movement and applauded that it was actually inclusive of all people of color. Never did any of our panelists imply or state that they were in any way a part of the creation of the #oscarssowhite movement, let alone try to take any credit for it.

The misunderstanding there seems to stem from some inadvertently misleading tweets that came from our AAJA-LA Twitter account, @AAJAla. We asked some L.A. chapter members to live tweet the panel, and due to the fact that the title of our panel had the hashtag #oscarssowhite in it, it was being used interchangeably with the lack of diversity in Hollywood within the tweets. It is our fault for not pointing out the difference and referencing the hashtag without crediting Ms. Reign.

We truly regret and apologize that our tweets came across as though our panelists were somehow taking credit for #oscarssowhite.

We sent Ms. Reign an email on August 21, 2016, to apologize and offer her an opportunity to write a blog post for our website where we could introduce her and have her share her perspective and experience with the movement. We have yet to receive a response; however, our offer stands and we would be happy to connect with her at her convenience. We are grateful for Ms. Reign's diligent work in bringing about this movement and her tireless efforts on behalf of all people of color. We look forward to continuing this dialogue and pushing the movement forward.