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Denise Young Smith

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Apple's diversity chief is stepping down after only six months on the job — after causing an outcry by saying that being a minority or a woman are not the only criteria for diversity, according to reports.

Denise Young Smith, who was named vice president of diversity and inclusion in May, made controversial comments last month during a One Young World Summit in Bogotá, Colombia.

"There can be 12 white, blue-eyed, blond men in a room and they're going to be diverse too because they're going to bring a different life experience and life perspective to the conversation," the inaugural diversity chief said.

"Diversity is the human experience," she said, [according to Quartz](#). "I get a little bit frustrated when diversity or the term

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diversity is tagged to the people of color, or the women, or the LGBT.”

Her comments appeared to defend Apple’s overwhelmingly white and male leadership at a time when the company’s makeup is markedly uneven.

The 20-year Apple veteran, who previously served as the company’s head of worldwide human resources, later apologized for her remarks, telling the staff that they “were not representative of how I think about diversity or how Apple sees it.”

“For that, I’m sorry,” she said in an email. “More importantly, I want to assure you Apple’s view and our dedication to diversity has not changed.”

Smith will leave the company at the end of the year, [TechCrunch reported](#). Taking over as VP of inclusion and diversity will be Christie Smith, who spent 17 years as a principal at Deloitte.

“We deeply believe that diversity drives innovation,” an Apple spokesman told TechCrunch in a statement. “We’re thrilled to welcome an accomplished leader

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like Christie Smith to help us continue the progress we've made toward a more diverse workplace."

Unlike her predecessor, Christie Smith will not report directly to CEO Tim Cook, but rather to human resources chief Deirdre O'Brien, [according to Fortune](#).

In 2017, only 3 percent of Apple's leaders were black, and women held just 23 percent of tech jobs, according to Fortune. Female leadership stood at 29 percent, Apple said.

"Meaningful change takes time," the company said in its diversity report. "We're proud of our accomplishments, but we have much more work to do."