



SPEECH FIRST



APRIL 2024

**NO GRADUATION WITHOUT INDOCTRINATION:
THE DEI COURSE MANDATE**

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ABOUT SPEECH FIRST

Speech First is a membership association of students, parents, faculty, alumni, and concerned citizens committed to restoring the freedom of speech on college campuses through advocacy, education, and litigation. Launched in 2018, Speech First is dedicated to preserving the free and open discourse essential to a comprehensive education and counteracting the increasingly toxic censorship culture on college campuses.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Americans have long sensed that university campuses, once considered to be bastions of free inquiry, have become increasingly enthralled with an ideological orthodoxy that views spirited debate and diversity of opinion as unacceptable threats to “social justice.” These radical teachings go by different names, but recently its detractors as well as its champions have accepted the terms “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” (DEI).

Speech First is dedicated to preserving and promoting free speech on college campuses. To properly address the problem of DEI in higher education, we must first properly describe it. Parts of this problem are well known: e.g., college professors skew overwhelmingly to the political left, if not far-left, which can restrict the range of ideas students are exposed to as well as pressure and coerce students into espousing support for fringe ideas they disagree with. Other parts of this problem are just now coming into focus: e.g., the explosion in hiring DEI campus bureaucrats whose primary function is to police speech and thought on issues related to race, sex, gender identity, etc. But as we talk to students across the country, we have found substantial threats to free speech and open intellectual inquiry that have become facts of campus life without significant public recognition.

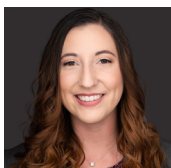
In our last report, published in 2022, “Freshman Disorientation: How Colleges and Universities Lay the Groundwork for Student Indoctrination,” we documented how colleges bombard students with mandatory DEI seminars the moment they step on campus. When students begin college, they often encounter a focus on DEI concepts that emphasize racial and sexual differences through critical theory exercises, all while being shielded from fundamental American principles like free speech and viewpoint diversity.

In this report, we document—for the first time—that in a vast majority of colleges, the DEI indoctrination is not simply a pill you must swallow before starting classes, but extends to academic credit hour requirements you must endure to graduate. By examining general education requirements at 248 colleges, we find that 165 require students to take a DEI-related class to graduate.

Obviously, a commitment to free speech on campus requires academic freedom for professors within their classrooms. But American universities are increasingly institutionally stacking the deck by requiring students to sit through classes that, rather than impart knowledge or build saleable skills, infuse an ideological worldview that is in many instances hostile to key tenets of the American way of life. Taxpayers may well wonder why they subsidize academic institutions that require training in a hostile ideology as a graduation requirement.

At Speech First, our commitment to restoring the freedom of speech on college campuses remains unwavering. We are actively working to address these challenges. Our approach involves a comprehensive strategy made up of litigation, education, and advocacy. We are putting colleges and universities on notice that Speech First will be there when they censor, coerce, or unjustly punish student speech. It is crucial now, more than ever, that we unite against the encroachment on free speech in our institutions of higher learning.

We call on legislators, educators, students, and parents to join us in abolishing DEI graduation requirements. Our proposed measures include prohibiting mandatory ideological courses, ensuring instruction in constitutional principles, and emphasizing the importance of free speech in orientation programs. By standing together, we can create an environment where students are supported by free speech advocates from all over the country, and where the partnership and support of an organization like Speech First provide the resources needed to fight back. Thank you for your continued support, and we hope you will join us in this critical mission.



Cherise Trump

Executive Director, Speech First

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

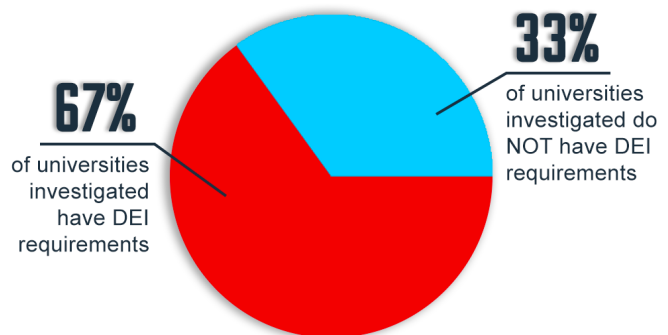
In American higher education, free speech faces a mounting threat. In previous reports, Speech First has documented how mandatory college orientation programs stigmatize the virtue of free speech and how so-called “bias-response systems” chill speech by establishing de-facto snitch-lines with a political agenda. Others have documented the explosive growth of DEI administrators, which many Americans are coming to understand serve effectively as bureaucratic commissars dedicated to radical, anti-American ideology that’s opposed to the principle of freedom of speech.

But what do these bureaucrats actually do? How is their influence felt in campus life? We have seen their initiatives on campus range from creating training programs, to enacting and managing disciplinary policies, to rewriting hiring practices, to influencing curriculum and learning outcome requirements. It is now clear that what these departments do, is everything in their power to entrench radical, far-left ideology into the university experience.

One aspect, however, of their influence has gone unnoticed. As the DEI bureaucracy has spread, colleges have come to administratively require students to take DEI-related coursework. Speech First investigated 248 colleges and universities across every state, including Washington, D.C., representing a diverse array of campus types. The findings indicate that a significant majority (67%) of these institutions mandate DEI academic courses to satisfy general education requirements. Among the 165 establishments we identified that enforce these requirements, 98 are public institutions, and 67 are private institutions.

Furthermore, our research team examined the learning outcomes of qualifying DEI courses within 51 of the aforementioned 165 universities—comprising one from each state, in addition to Washington, D.C. The inquiry revealed that students are subjected to courses advocating far-left ideological perspectives and pushing far-left political advocacy. This report details how DEI will remain entrenched in curriculum standards—even within

67% OF UNIVERSITIES REQUIRE DEI:



states that have officially prohibited or defunded DEI departments in an effort to eradicate its dogma from campuses. The report also encompasses an appendix enumerating all identified schools that impose DEI requirements.

As elucidated in this report, DEI mandates undermine the foundational principle of meritocracy, prioritizing identity over qualifications and competence. They go further to place students into identitarian groupings based on racial, sexual, and political characteristics to create a rigid framework amongst students where they only see each other as either the “oppressor” or the “oppressed.” Consequently, this erosion of merit-based principles and build-up of anti-American sentiment has had detrimental impacts on the quality of education and has fostered an environment where conservative voices are systematically marginalized, discredited, and silenced. As DEI departments have grown on campuses, we have seen an increase in campus policies that regulate, monitor, and restrict student speech.

Recently, we have seen a new wave of challenges to the abuses of power by DEI departments and officials. A handful of states have now recognized the detrimental effects DEI has on the learning environment and have taken steps to defund and dismantle them. The U.S. Supreme Court challenged Harvard and the University of North Carolina to explain how race-based policies actually benefit students’ education and they could not provide evidence. In fact, there is much evidence to the contrary.

Ultimately, our report found that even in states that have banned DEI departments at public schools, in many cases, students are still being required to take DEI courses to graduate. We believe that significant additional measures are necessary for state lawmakers to dismantle DEI initiatives. This will necessitate a combination of the following actions:

- Prohibit the mandatory inclusion of ideological activism courses, such as critical race theory and DEI, as a condition for obtaining a degree,
- Ensure that universities provide instruction in foundational principles of the United States that make up our legal system and governing structures, and
- Educate students on the principles and ultimate value of free speech, debate, open inquiry, and viewpoint diversity in orientation programs, with the goal of alleviating student self-censorship and administrative or in-class coercive practices.

“The next time
some academics
tell you how
important diversity
is, ask how many
Republicans there
are in their sociology
department.”

Thomas Sowell



DEI ON CAMPUS

WHAT IS DEI?

To its supporters, “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” (DEI) is self-evidently virtuous and just. To its detractors, it is divisive, corrosive to the human soul, and antithetical to merit. However, as American citizens become more acquainted with DEI, the more they realize the underlying issue: a specific far-left political faction has co-opted certain buzzwords that Americans naturally endorse, and are using those phrases and concepts to promote agendas and ideologies that Americans instinctively oppose.

Americans admire diversity but most do not subscribe to the notion that some groups are inherently morally superior or inferior. Americans value equity but most do not believe that demonizing merit and lowering standards is a path toward greater outcomes. Americans applaud inclusiveness but most are not convinced this requires stigmatizing common words like “mother.”

Unfortunately, a school of neo-Marxist thought known as Critical Theory has—through overproduction of substandard academics—gained an administrative foothold to advance its ideology under the banner of DEI. Other books and articles can tell this story—Speech First’s focus is on what these DEI administrators actually do. They promote campus-wide policies

that regulate and monitor student behavior in the name of identity politics, mandate “anti-racist” trainings that demonize “whiteness” and perpetuate a victim mentality, encourage students to anonymously report peers who express mainstream political opinions, and have demanded fealty from prospective hires to the DEI ideology through so-called “DEI Statements.”

These bureaucracies have exploded in size over the past decade. The Heritage Foundation reported in 2021 that the DEI bureaucracy has ballooned to an average of “3.4 people working to promote DEI for every 100 tenured or tenure-track faculty members.”¹ Of universities sampled in a survey cited by Heritage, “the average ... listed more than 45 people as having formal responsibility for promoting DEI goals.” The increase in DEI employees—whose initiatives often fail to improve an organization’s culture or diversify hiring—comes at a time when part-time faculty conduct nearly half of all instruction.² Moreover, an independent audit of the University of Michigan revealed a DEI bureaucracy comprising 126 administrators with a total compensation of \$15,567,305.³ Universities have thus expanded the DEI bureaucracy at the expense of their core function: teaching students.

The rise of the DEI bureaucrat has occurred at the same time as the professoriate has become even more significantly skewed to the left. Students increasingly understand that their professors tow a uniform ideological line, and that their job as students is to accept it. As conservative writer Coleman Hughes reported when he attended Columbia University, students feel pressure to parrot, but never challenge, their professors' ideas.⁴

Students are not intimidated by the powers of groupthink alone. Conservative students, in particular, have also faced the pressure of grade deflation for not succumbing to their progressive professor's views. In a widely reported incident in 2023, Olivia Krolczyk, a University of Cincinnati student, received a failing grade "for using the term 'biological women.'"⁵ An investigation into the matter involved the university's Office of Gender Equity and Inclusion—another form of a DEI office—which ultimately upheld the right of the professor, Melaine Nipper, to give Krolczyk a zero on her assignment, citing that the term "biological women" is "exclusionary."

Universities' culture of censorship leaves students ill-equipped to think critically or hear dissenting opinions. Colleges should function as "civic labs," in the words of University of Pennsylvania professor and author Sigal Ben-Porath.⁶ However, instead of exploring a variety of viewpoints, students learn that viewpoint diversity constitutes harm and requires swift punishment.

With their anti-democratic and anti-intellectual penchants, DEI initiatives are perversions of the goals they claim to have. Measures intended to create equality of opportunity now focus on equity, an idea that harms its supposed beneficiaries. Public policies promoted at universities, such as defunding the police and abolishing the traditional family construct, make critical theory a bleak reality for any Black American or other member of a minority group who lives in a crime-ridden neighborhood or has a child "out-of-wedlock"—the latter is a strong predictor of poverty.⁷ The adverse treatment of people based, not on their character, but on their skin color risks the same discrimination that Civil Rights leaders fought to dismantle.

SPEECH FIRST FINDINGS & METHODOLOGY

EXPOSING THE DEI ENTRENCHMENT ON CAMPUS

As Speech First engaged with students across the country, a common complaint emerged—one that has seldom been reflected in media coverage, even from those most critical of DEI. Students voiced frustration about being mandated to take DEI courses for graduation. To transition from anecdote to data, we embarked on a research effort to uncover the prevalence of this requirement. Our study surveyed campuses nationwide to identify those mandating not just brief online DEI training, but full-semester courses as a graduation prerequisite.

The results show a level of indoctrination and coercion that was far beyond what many of us thought. Not only do a majority of campuses require students to take DEI-themed courses to satisfy general education requirements, but there are many campuses that attempt to hide these mandates under the category of elective requirements. In reality, many of these “electives” create a perceived choice that results in the student having to take a DEI course regardless. In other cases, electives that satisfy DEI requirements have course titles meant to conceal or obscure their true goals.

Our research for this report involved an extensive and meticulous analysis to assess the prevalence and depth of DEI within American higher education. The findings provide quantitative insights

that shed light on the extent to which DEI-related requirements have become ingrained in the graduation criteria of various academic institutions.

Furthermore, our study reveals that DEI is not merely confined to specific courses; it permeates the learning outcomes of general education requirements as well. While not every course is overtly DEI-themed, there are unmistakable options with DEI focus that satisfy general education requirements. This nuanced integration of DEI principles underscores a broader issue within academia, where DEI has become a fundamental aspect shaping the educational experience for students.

SCHOOL SELECTION:

For this study, Speech First investigated schools that fell under at least one of these four criteria—Spring 2023 NCAA Division 1 Conference Membership, US News Ranking 2023 of Best National Universities, Endowment Over \$1 Billion, and Top 100 of Undergrad Enrollment—to ensure that all 50 states were represented. Had the study relied solely on one of these methods, not all 50 states would have been represented in the report. This selection method allows for including universities nationwide with consideration for athletic conference memberships, academic prestige,

financial resources, and large student populations. Using these criteria, the report reflects the educational landscape of the entire nation and gives individual citizens insight into the universities closest to them.

Spring 2023 NCAA Division I Conference Membership: This criterion ensured representation of schools with a robust athletic presence, which may not fall under the other three criteria, providing insight into institutions that may not be well-known to those less familiar with college sports.

US News Ranking 2023 of Best National Universities: This criterion captures institutions with notable academic reputations, which may not fall under the other three criteria, offering readers insight into the country's top-tier educational institutions and their standing in the broader landscape of higher education.

Endowment Over \$1 Billion: This criterion ensures that schools with substantial financial leverage, which may not fall under the other three criteria, are included. With endowments this size, a university wields significant influence in shaping public policy, influencing research agendas, and even affecting local economies.

Top 100 of Undergrad Population: Universities with substantial undergraduate class sizes, which may not fall under the other three criteria, were a necessary criterion for school selection as our research aimed to understand the reach and impact of DEI initiatives.

By including schools with larger student populations, we gain insight into the scale of DEI mandates.

WHAT ARE GEN ED REQUIREMENTS?

A general education requirement refers to a set of courses that undergraduate students must complete as part of their degree program, regardless of their major. These courses provide students with a broad foundation of knowledge and skills across various disciplines beyond their specific area of study.

General education requirements often cover English composition, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts. Specific courses within these categories can vary by institution. Apart from being called general education requirements, these courses may also be referred to by universities as core curriculum, liberal arts education, breadth requirements, or distribution requirements.

HOW ARE REQUIREMENTS SET?

Educational institutions establish general education requirements through collaborative efforts involving faculty committees, curriculum reviews, accreditation standards, and student feedback. Interdisciplinary teams may design courses to integrate various subjects, ensuring a well-rounded education. Institutions also compare their requirements with peers and seek input from community leaders and industry professionals. Governing bodies like Boards of Trustees oversee these requirements.

WHAT IS A DEI COURSE?

For the purposes of this report, DEI courses are courses that contain explicit DEI language in their titles, learning outcomes, and/or course descriptions. We also counted any campus that had a gen ed category that was listed as or similar to “Diversity Requirement.”

The DEI language we screened for in the above categories are:

- “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,” “Diversity and Inclusion;” and “Equity;”
- Social justice, activism, liberation;
- Power, power structures, intersectionality;
- Race, racism, and antiracism, systemic racism, institutional racism, white supremacy, white guilt, white fragility, white responsibility, critical race theory, black power, black liberation;
- Marxism, privilege, class, socioeconomic status, inequality;
- Sex, sexuality, sexual orientation LGBTQ+, queer, gender, critical gender theory;
- Feminism, toxic masculinity, male privilege, misogyny, gender roles;
- Minority, marginalized, disenfranchised studies;
- Ableism;
- Bias, implicit bias.

INTEGRATION OF DEI COURSES INTO GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS:

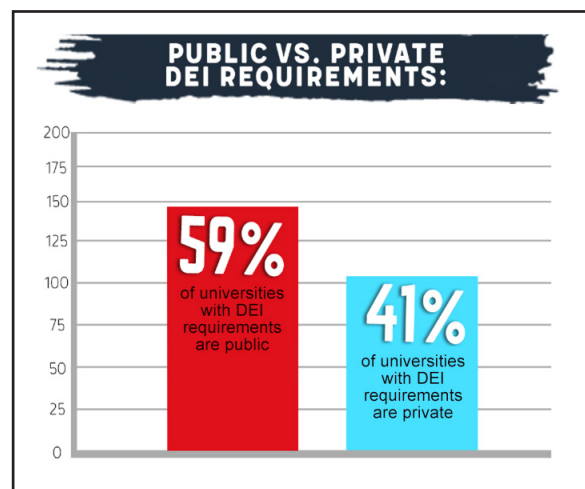
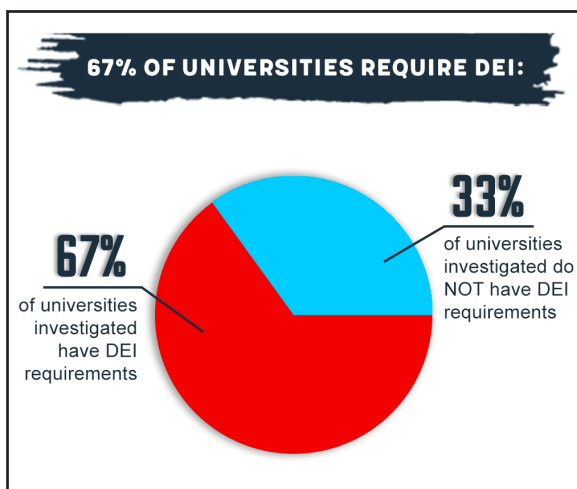
DEI courses are integrated into general education requirements through four approaches:

1. Mandating a specific course in DEI training or sensitivity training as a graduation requirement;
2. Providing a list of DEI electives from which students must choose at least one course to fulfill their general education requirements;

3. General education learning outcomes for the requirement category explicitly include DEI language;
4. Requiring a certain number of credit hours of electives to graduate, where DEI electives outnumber non-DEI options, making DEI courses inevitable.

RESULTS

Speech First investigated 248 colleges and universities across each state, including Washington, D.C. More than two-thirds include DEI academic requirements. Of the 165 schools requiring DEI, 98 are public institutions, and 67 are private.



EXAMPLES OF REQUIRED DIVERSITY COURSES:

1. *Diversity & Equity*, American University

Diversity & Equity

AU's Diversity & Equity—or DIV—requirement is a 3-credit course designed to be offered in the major or minor, in a Habit of Mind or as a free elective. These courses attend to issues of power, privilege, and inequality that are embedded in social, cultural, or economic hierarchies, including (but not limited to) those around race, ethnicity, class, ability, gender, and sexuality. This requirement aims to highlight our faculty expertise in these areas and underscore the university's commitment to engaging with the larger cultural and political conversation about social equity. Below you'll find information about completing the DIV requirement, as well as a list of major-designated DIV courses.

Completing the DIV Requirement

- Students satisfy the DIV requirement by completing an appropriately designated course with a grade of "C" or better.
- Use the course list below to learn what's been added or confirm which courses can be used to satisfy the DIV requirement. Prior iterations of approved courses will not satisfy the requirement.
- A DIV course may concurrently satisfy other appropriately designated AU Core, major, minor, or certificate requirements.
- Consult your own degree audit or your academic advisor to verify which courses have been used to satisfy requirements.
- Up to two appropriately designated courses taken abroad can be used to satisfy AU Core requirements. See our [Core Abroad page](#) for additional details.
- External credit may be used to satisfy this requirement. See our [Transfer Credit page](#) for additional information.

2. *Diversity*, University of Maryland

– Understanding Plural Societies (DVUP) - 3 to 6 credits

Understanding Plural Societies courses recognize that life in a globally competitive society of the 21st century requires an ability to comprehend both theoretical and practical dimensions of human difference. From that perspective, Understanding Plural Societies is the centerpiece of the University's Diversity requirement. Courses in this category speak to both the foundations—cultural, material, psychological, historical, social, and biological—of human difference and the operation or function of plural societies.

– Cultural Competence (DVCC) - 0 to 3 credits

Cultural Competence provides opportunities to gain an increased understanding of cultures and cultural practices, while learning to communicate effectively across cultural differences in a diverse society and world. This diversity category reflects a developmental, on-going process through which students learn about the lived experiences of individuals as members of socio-cultural groups and the complex interactions between groups. Cultural Competence courses emphasize acquisition of new knowledge, thoughtful consideration of issues of equity and justice, critical thinking, self-reflection, empathy, engaged global citizenship, and the development of skills necessary to work effectively with individuals, groups, and teams from diverse identities and perspectives.

“Eliminating racial
discrimination means
eliminating all of it.”

Chief Justice John Roberts,
*Students for Fair Admissions v. President and
Fellows of Harvard College*



EXAMPLES OF GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS WITH DEI IN THE LEARNING OUTCOMES AND/OR COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In these instances, the universities underscore the integration of DEI principles throughout their general education requirements, emphasizing their application across all disciplines. More than isolating DEI into individual courses, the entirety of the general education curriculum is designed to foster comprehension and interaction with these concepts. The articulated learning outcomes of the core curriculum stress dedication to DEI principles, manifesting the universities' commitment to incorporating them into the entire educational framework.

1. Washington and Lee University's entire general education curriculum is aligned with DEI principles. The revised curriculum includes a "[DEI] Passport," where students engage in experiences related to DEI to fulfill the school general education requirements.

New general education curriculum approved by the undergraduate faculty:

- A first year writing intensive seminar that replaces WRIT100 and is organized around a big question or wicked problem.
- A sophomore year course ("Perspectives seminar") that encourages understanding of the ways that various identities, including but not limited to, gender, sex, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or class have shaped experiences and systems in the United States and beyond. This course can also fulfill a required distribution area.
- A three-course concentration ("pathway") focused on a theme, in which each course fulfills a different distribution area.
- 9 credits of writing intensive courses. The first year writing intensive seminar will fulfill 3 of these credits, and the other 6 credits can simultaneously fulfill required distribution areas.
- A signature experience in which students participate in at least one of a series of high impact educational practices: community engagement (which includes community-based learning courses), community-based learning, undergraduate research, study abroad, internships, and performing in a faculty-led or faculty-supervised public artistic performance. This can be achieved while simultaneously fulfilling required distribution areas.
- A DE&I Passport in which students engage in experiences that include but are not limited to courses, lectures, panels, debates, organizations, trips, and projects related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Image: Screenshot of Washington and Lee University's General Education Requirements Guidelines

2. University of San Diego's general education learning outcome states that students will understand and be able to describe privilege and oppression—two key terms used in the teachings of Critical Theory.

Student Learning Outcomes

- 1. Critically reflect on and describe how you and others have experienced privilege and oppression with accuracy of information about privilege/oppression, depth and impact of self-reflection, relevance of personal experience and clarity and effectiveness of ability to communicate about self and self in relation to others. (Critical self-reflection)**

Image: Screenshot of University of San Diego's DEI Mandate Learning Outcome

3. Marquette University's learning outcome for its general education curriculum explains that students will understand racism, colonialism, classism, sexism, and prejudice against marginalized groups. It also states that students will understand their positionality, which refers to studying where one is located in relation to their identity—race, ethnicity, or gender—and how such identities intersect

- Collaborators Promoting Equity and Justice across Cultural Contexts

Marquette students will develop skills to understand how power, positionality, and privilege shape their own lives and those of others, locally and globally. They will be able to describe how racism, colonialism, classism, sexism, other forms of prejudice, and other oppressive forces have impacted and continue to impact the well-being of marginalized groups and to identify historical and structural barriers to equity and inclusiveness. They will also be able to recognize the innate human dignity shared across diverse groups and to apply skills learned in class to work within and across cultures to promote justice and equity.

Image: Screenshot of Marquette University's "Collaborators Promoting Equity and Justice Across Cultural Contexts" Learning Outcome

EXAMPLES OF FAR-LEFT COURSE OPTIONS THAT SATISFY UNIVERSITIES' DEI REQUIREMENTS:

The following examples illustrate various course offerings available for students seeking to meet the DEI mandate, drawing from an array of universities examined within this report.

1. *Psychology of Racism*, Marquette University

PSYC 3240 Psychology of Racism (3 credits)

An overview of the far reaching psychological effects of racism on the individual, primarily in the context of the United States and with a specific focus on anti-Blackness. Interrogates society's lay theories about race and racism. Explores how race and racism influences the psychological processes of groups who hold power and status, as well as how racism can shape and influence the beliefs, attitudes and behavior of marginalized low status groups (i.e., Black individuals and other non-Whites).

Prerequisite: PSYC 1001 and PSYC 3201.

Level of Study: Undergraduate

Marquette Core Curriculum: SSC Basic Needs & Justice

Last four terms offered: 2021 Fall Term, 2020 Fall Term

[Schedule of Classes](#)

Screenshot of Marquette University's "Psychology of Racism" Course

By concentrating solely on anti-black racism, this course applies a victimhood mindset that can discourage self-reliance and personal responsibility and promotes a particular political viewpoint rather than providing objective education.

2. *Philosophy of Race*, University of San Diego

DISJ Domestic, Level 2: PHIL 420 - Philosophy of Race

This course aims to provide a comprehensive overview of key themes in the philosophy of race. Areas of inquiry include: historical origins of philosophical accounts of race, the metaphysics of race, the social construction of race and racial identity, contemporary social issues concerning race both nationally and internationally, as well as feminism and race, among other topics.

Image: Screenshot of University of San Diego's "Philosophy of Race" Course

The Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice course at the University of San Diego examines philosophical perspectives primarily through the lens of race. Studying philosophy through a racial lens is intended to give insights into power dynamics, inequality, and social justice.

3. *Queering Childhood*, Pomona College in Claremont

GWS142 PO - Queering Childhood

When Offered: Last offered spring 2019.

Instructor(s): Staff

Credit: 1

This interdisciplinary course examines the figure of the Child and how this figuration is used by politics, law, and medicine to justify continued cultural investment in reproductive heteronormativity and productive ablebodiedness. In doing so, we examine the queer and crip children and childhoods against which the figure of the Child is articulated. This course draws on work in gender studies, childhood studies, disability studies, and queer theory, including Julian Gill-Peterson, Alison Kafer, Lee Edelman, and Katherine Boyd Stockton. Prerequisites: [GWS 026 PO](#) or equivalent.

Image: Screenshot of Pomona College's 'Queering Childhood' Course Description

This course explores topics like “reproductive heteronormativity and productive ablebodies.” Authors featured in the course’s reading materials include an array of queer advocates. Julian Gill-Peterson, now known as Jules Gill-Peterson following his transition, authored “Histories of the Transgender Child,” drawing out historical justifications for childhood transitioning and has challenged the need for parental consent for puberty blockers. Alison Kafer, an associate professor of feminist studies, introduced the term “crip children” in her book “Feminist, Queer, Crip,” which she argues to reclaim the word “cripple” to assert pride and agency in disability communities. Lee Edelman, in his book “No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive,” argues that heterosexual reproduction oppresses gay people. Kathryn Bond Stockton, an English professor at the University of Utah, specializes in teaching queer theory and literature and in her book, “The Queer Child,” Stockton argues that children are inherently queer.

4. *Social and Racial Justice: Advocacy and Action*, Boston University

HUB SJ 102: SOCIAL & RACIAL JUSTICE: ADVOCACY AND ACTION

HUB SJ 102 is a 4-credit elective course that builds upon HUB SJ 101 and focuses on developing knowledge and skills related to advocacy and action for social and racial justice issues. Students learn how to deliberate ethically and effectively across differences, developing skills in critical thinking, analyzing one's standpoint, and cooperative problem solving, and work in teams to create a podcast about a social or racial justice issue. Classes combine lecture and discussion with facilitated group work.

Additional details about the course:

- Fulfills Hub requirements in Social Inquiry I, The Individual in Community, and Teamwork/Collaboration
- Prerequisite: HUB SJ 101

Image: Screenshot of Boston University's "Social and Racial Justice: Advocacy and Action"

This Social and Racial Justice course instructs students on the methods and subjects of protest for social justice, and mandates participation in rallies or protests as part of the curriculum.

5. *Bad Catholics*, Loyola Marymount University

Bad Catholics (Prof. Layla Karst, Theological Studies)

MW 1:45-3:25pm (CRN 47720)
MW 3:40-5:20pm (CRN 48900)

The goal of this course is to explore contemporary voices of loyal dissent in the Catholic church. We will consider the role that dissent plays in the creative development of Catholic teaching/theology and the tensions that often arise between religious dissent and religious belonging. The course will begin by exploring questions of teaching and authority, belief and dissent, and belonging and "cancel culture" from theological and philosophical perspectives. We will then explore voices of dissent from Feminist theologians, Black and Latinx liberation theologians, Queer theologians, and Eco-theologians. These four areas of dissent demonstrate the plurality of discourse among contemporary Catholic theologians and the struggle over orthodox belief and right practice that take place under asymmetrical power relations. In doing so, this course explores various aspects of critical theory concerning gender, culture, race, sexuality, and environmental studies with which these theologians engage. The course will conclude by considering the relationship between religious belief and religious belonging.

Image: Screenshot of Loyola Marymount University's "Bad Catholics" Course Description

This course seems like a traditional Christian history class at first glance, but it delves into the writings of "Queer," "Black," and "Latinx" theologians. Through the lens of queerness and critical theory, students engage with theology to understand religious belonging.

6. *Body, Culture, Power*, Princeton University

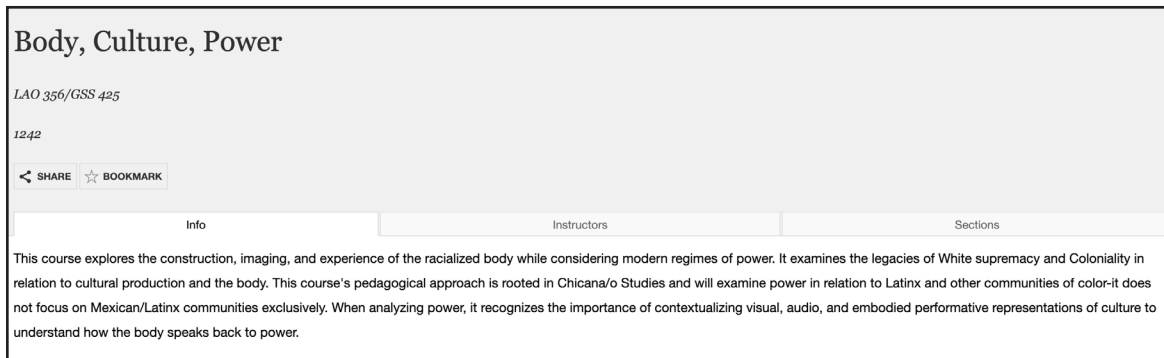


Image: Screenshot of Princeton University's Body, Culture, Power Course Description

This course delves into the enduring legacies of White Supremacy within societal structures, with a particular focus on the systemic nature of racism and oppression. It teaches that white individuals are imbued with inherent biases, contributing to pervasive racial inequalities.

7. *Queer Kinship: Undoing the American Family*, University of Minnesota—Twin Cities

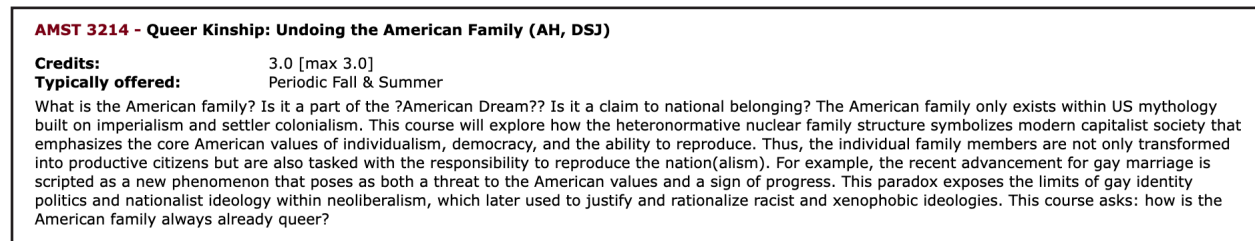


Image: Screenshot of University of Minnesota—Twin Cities' Queer Kinship: Undoing the American Family Course Description

This course analyzes the American family within the context of imperialism and settler colonialism. It examines how colonial ideologies have shaped and continue to influence familial norms and inequalities. Students are posed to learn about patriarchal, heteronormative structures and their impacts on marginalized communities and critique the family.

STATE LEGISLATION

CHALLENGES TO DEI

Propelled by concerns surrounding DEI programs, state lawmakers have introduced bills aimed at limiting the scope and implementation of DEI initiatives at public universities. To dismantle DEI, many state legislatures have eliminated university DEI offices and the use of DEI standards in hiring practices. More than 30 U.S. states have introduced or passed bills “targeting DEI funding, practices, and promotion at schools,” with Utah being the latest state to enact anti-DEI legislation to go into effect on July 1 this year.⁸

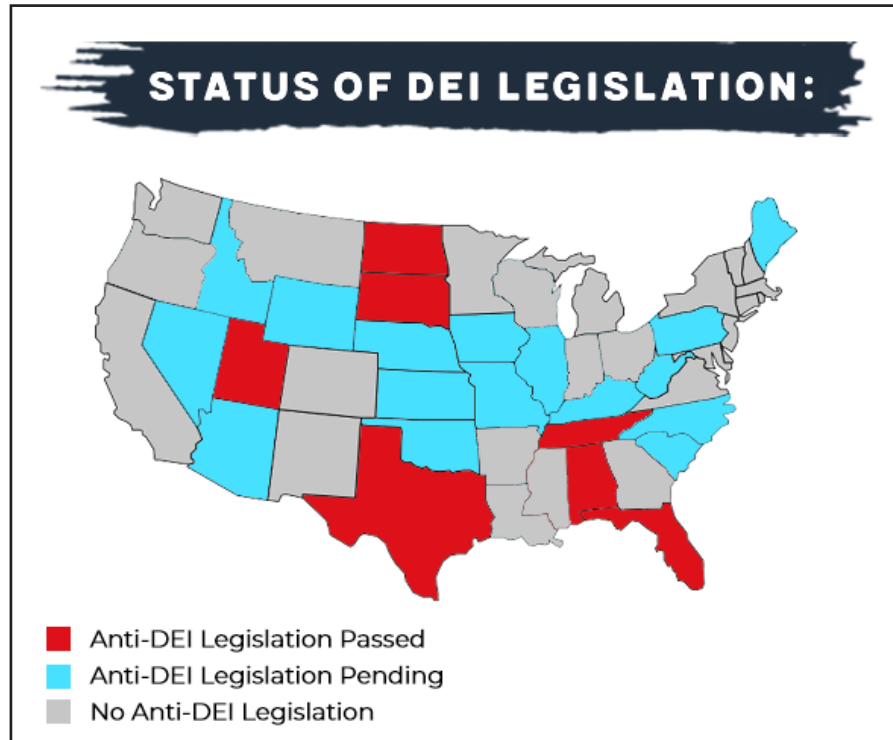
Florida, which has led on this issue, passed Senate Bill 266 in 2023, prohibiting the state’s public institutions from funding the promotion, support, or maintenance of DEI programs and offering any general education course that “teaches identity politics ... or is based on theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States,” among other things.⁹

Governor Ron DeSantis signed another bill targeting DEI initiatives at Florida colleges in May 2023. Under Senate Bill 958, the state’s public institutions are prohibited from giving preferential consideration for employment, admission, or promotion to those supporting “[a]ny ideology or movement that promotes the differential treatment

of a person, or a group of persons based on race or ethnicity, including an initiative or a formulation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.”¹⁰

Many states are introducing measures primarily directed at DEI bureaucrats themselves. While useful, it’s essential to have a proper problem definition before attempting a legislative solution. Universities could easily take advantage of the loophole wherein they retitle or relocate their DEI bureaucrats instead of firing them, as many are doing. And ultimately, these state measures wouldn’t disrupt the DEI course mandates because they are built into the academic department requirements. Furthermore, since DEI is elusive and deeply ingrained in every aspect of the student experience, legal action, donor engagement, and other tools are necessary to ensure academic freedom and freedom of speech.

The map below offers a broad look at anti-DEI legislation across the country:



CURRENT LEGISLATION ISN'T ENOUGH

Anti-DEI bills primarily target administrative offices or eliminate DEI statements from hiring processes for faculty and professors and do not necessarily directly impact academic curriculum, leaving room for universities to maintain DEI requirements for students.

Texas, for example, stands out with Senate Bill 17 and House Bill 5127.¹¹ Each of these bills have been signed into law, banning DEI offices, diversity training for students and employees, and “ideological oaths and statements” at public institutions beginning January 1, 2024. Texas Senate Bill 17 reads:¹²

In this section, ‘diversity, equity, and inclusion office’ means an office, division, or other unit of an institution of higher education established for the purpose of: influencing hiring or employment practices at the institution with respect to race, sex, color, or ethnicity, other than through the use of color-blind and sex neutral hiring processes in accordance with any applicable state and federal antidiscrimination laws; promoting differential treatment of or providing special benefits to individuals on the basis of race, color, or ethnicity; promoting policies or procedures designed or implemented in reference to race, color, or ethnicity.

It further clarifies that the universities and colleges in the state cannot “establish or maintain a diversity, equity, and inclusion

office” or “compel” or “require” any person to provide DEI statements.

However, the bill does not directly address curriculum standards. Hence, in the event that universities in the state abide by the law, DEI—with its emphasis on divisive curriculum—can still prevail within the state’s universities.

Florida is another example of where an anti-DEI law seemingly has not removed DEI mandates in curriculum at this time. Florida’s House Bill 999 and Senate Bill 266 are among the most well-known anti-DEI laws in the country.¹³ Florida’s law prohibits public institutions in the state from funding, supporting, or maintaining DEI programs. The law also prohibits “subject[ing] any student or employee to training or instruction that espouses, promotes, advances, inculcates, or compels such student or employee to believe” eight “concepts,” including that “[m]embers of one race, color, national origin, or sex are morally superior to members of another”; “[a] person, by virtue of his or her race, color, national origin, or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously”; and “[a] person ... bears responsibility for, or should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment because of, actions committed in the past by other members of the same race, color, national origin, or sex.” Fla. Stat. §1000.05(4)(a). The law permits discussing such “concepts ... as part of a larger course of training or instruction” if the “training or instruction is given in an objective manner without endorsement of the concepts.” Fla. Stat. §1000.05(4)(b).

The State Board of Education in Florida also passed a rule on January 17, 2024, to prohibit DEI programs, activities, and policies in the Florida College System (FCS). Specifically, this rule prohibits the use of state or federal funds for programs that categorize individuals based on race or sex for differential treatment. The Board also replaced the “Principles of Sociology” course with an American History course in the social studies general education core courses, aiming to provide students with a factual understanding of the nation’s history rather than exposing them to perceived radical ideologies.

Even so, Speech First still found five Florida universities—Florida Atlantic University, Florida State University, University of Central Florida, University of Florida, and University of South Florida—who at this time include explicit DEI mandates, per this report’s methodology. There are several potential reasons why these five universities continue to display DEI-mandated curriculum. One reason is that a federal district court has issued an injunction preventing Florida from enforcing key provisions of the Florida Educational Equity Act, although this legal matter is ongoing. Another possible factor is the timing, considering that the Board of Education’s rule has only recently come into effect. Nevertheless, despite the state’s commendable efforts, at least five universities have not yet removed their DEI-mandated curriculum.

UNIVERSITIES' UNLAWFUL TRACK RECORD

Recent history indicates that colleges and universities do not comply with state laws.

Some states, for example, have had bans on race-based practices—namely college admission practices—for years, yet the colleges and universities in those states appear to have or encourage race-based policies.

For example, the University of California (UC) system's faculty job applications demand a commitment to DEI despite the statewide ban on race-based employment and admissions policies since 1996. UC Davis—among the schools in the UC system—requires applicants to submit a statement detailing past, present, and future contributions to DEI, evaluating criteria such as awareness of inequities, a track record of barrier reduction, and alignment with UC Davis' mission. UC Berkeley's use of DEI statements in screening has resulted in fewer White and Asian hires and more Black and Hispanic hires.¹⁴ And, UC Irvine employs a Course Design Rubric emphasizing DEI recognition and value in syllabi and course design.

Further, in August 2023, Claremont Graduate University President Len Jessup endorsed the NAACP's "Diversity No Matter What" "pledge, publicly committing to DEI in enrollment, hiring, and campus culture."¹⁵ "I believe it's important for us to go on record, not

only by signing the NAACP pledge but by publicly sharing our belief in diversity, equity, and inclusion in all areas of university life: enrollment, hiring, and campus culture," she said.

Several more universities, including Johns Hopkins, Rice, Stanford, University of Richmond, and Columbia, have also intensified efforts to maintain race-conscious practices—including admission policies—though the Supreme Court overturned affirmative action.

Columbia University Law School, after the affirmative action ruling, in fact, announced a requirement for applicants to submit a 90-minute video statement. The announcement raised concerns about potential use for identifying an applicant's race. Screenshots obtained by the *Washington Free Beacon* show that instructions for the video requirement read:¹⁶

The video statement will allow applicants to provide the Admissions Committee with additional insight into their personal strengths and academic or other achievements. Through the video statement, the Admissions Committee may better understand the motivations behind the candidates' professional and academic goals.

David Bernstein, a professor at George Mason Law School, told the *Beacon* that "This looks like an insurance policy in case their lawyers say 'you're not allowed to ask about race'... I have never heard

* Florida has adopted laws and rules targeting DEI at Florida colleges, including as recently as January 2024. E.g., State Board of Education Passes Rule to Permanently Prohibit DEI in the Florida College System, Florida Dep't of Educ. (Jan. 17, 2024), perma.cc/6FCH-FZFA; Fla. Stat. §1000.05. As of the publication of this report, the five Florida universities listed above have information on their website indicating that they still have explicit DEI mandates in place. But given Florida's recent actions, these universities may already be in the midst of changing their requirements or websites or may decide to do so in the near future. Moreover, the ongoing litigation involving Florida's anti-DEI law may also affect these five universities. Thus, the full extent of cooperation by state universities with Florida's actions to address DEI in Florida public colleges is not entirely known at this time. The list above shows the present state of affairs at the time of this report and must be understood in that context.

of law school requiring video.” However, what is more concerning is that when the university was pressed to answer questions about the video requirement, it removed it from its website.

Moreover, it is imperative to recognize that the proliferation of DEI initiatives transcends traditional political divides, extending beyond blue states or liberal-leaning urban centers. DEI is not just happening in blue states such as California, New York, or Virginia—Virginia voted blue in the last two Presidential elections—or blue cities such as Baltimore where the aforementioned universities reside. The embrace and skirting of laws that seek to ban race-conscious practices, such as DEI, is evident in states widely recognized for their conservative stances.

For example, in Mississippi—one of the most conservative states in the country—which made headlines for banning critical race theory in 2022 with Senate Bill 2113, the state’s flagship university, Ole Miss, actively supports DEI endeavors by offering financial incentives to student groups. The university awards up to \$2,000 per semester for those student groups that offer “events, workshops, conferences, programming, or engaging opportunities that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion within the student organization or on the University of Mississippi campus as a whole.”¹⁷

An anonymous student told *Campus Reform*, which covered this story in September 2023, that he or she finds “it incredibly unjust for [Ole Miss] to persuade student organizations with

\$2,000 to promote a leftist ideology that ignores merit and promotes reverse discrimination because it relies on race instead of character.”

Everything discussed in this section serves as evidence that good legislative goals do not necessarily translate into actionable measures on a grassroots level. Thus, despite legislative efforts, our report makes clear that DEI initiatives need additional legislative action even in the most conservative corners of America.

“There can be no right of speech where any man, however, lifted up, or however humble, however young, or however old, is overawed by force, and compelled to suppress his honest sentiments.”

Frederick Douglass



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

In response to the growing concerns surrounding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) requirements within higher education, it is crucial to proactively address these issues by promoting academic freedom, safeguarding students' First Amendment rights, and fostering an environment where open dialogue and critical thinking can flourish. The principles of free speech, inquiry, and healthy debate have been foundational to our nation's democratic fabric, emphasizing the importance of free expression and intellectual exploration.

To safeguard these principles, Speech First recommends that states do more to take back control of their higher education system. There are **model policies** by the Manhattan Institute and Goldwater Institute that outline ways to eradicate the DEI departments and statements from campuses. But states must also identify the alternative means by which radical DEI ideology permeates throughout a student's campus experience. This includes targeting campus policies that chill student speech and punish viewpoint diversity such as **Bias Reporting Systems**. Speech First has provided **model legislation** on the issue of Bias Reporting Systems. To address the issues laid out in this report as well as in Speech First's report, **"Freshman Disorientation: How College and Universities lay the Groundwork for Student Indoctrination"** we worked with the Goldwater Institute to create a model policy called **"The Freedom From Indoctrination Act,"** which is summarized below:

1. Prohibit Mandatory DEI / CRT Based Course Requirements

- Ensures that students are not compelled to enroll in courses promoting ideologies such as critical race theory (CRT) or "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI) to obtain a degree.
- Protects the academic freedom of faculty by preventing mandatory infusions of DEI-related content into courses.

2. Ensure Basic Instruction in American Institutions

- Requires public universities and colleges to include the study of American institutions, emphasizing principles of constitutional democracy, in their general education requirements for undergraduate bachelor's degree programs.

3. Ensure Freshman Orientation Programs Promote Free Exchange of Ideas

- Mandates freshman orientation programs to include information on policies and regulations regarding free expression, consistent with the Campus Free Speech Act.
- Recommends programming that focuses on the principles and importance of free speech and viewpoint diversity.
- Permits programming related to DEI-CRT content only if offered alongside unrelated topics during orientation sessions.
- Encourages transparency by making orientation materials available on the institution's website.

The overall objective of this model policy is to strike a balance between protecting academic freedom, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of American institutions, and promoting a free exchange of ideas during freshman orientation while restricting the mandatory imposition of specific ideological perspectives on students.

Combining this policy with the others mentioned above is an important first step to holding universities accountable for the coercion and censorship taking place on their campuses in the name of DEI.

- **Freedom from Indoctrination Act** (Speech First and Goldwater Institute)
- **Protecting Students from Bias Reporting Systems** (Speech First and Goldwater Institute)
- **Abolish DEI Bureaucracies** (Manhattan Institute and Goldwater Institute)

CONCLUSION

In American higher education, the pervasive imposition of DEI academic requirements presents a concerning threat to free speech. Originating from the Civil Rights movement, the DEI machine has evolved into bloated and far-Left bureaucracies that undermine the very essence of education—with conservative viewpoints particularly hindered by grade deflation and censorship.

College administrators, many who are career bureaucrats, are in extraordinary positions of power. The current bureaucratic bloat of universities is at an unprecedented high—campuses like Johns Hopkins University and MIT have more administrators than professors and campuses such as Duke University and UC San Diego have more administrators than students—and their ability to enforce discriminatory and censorious policies gives the DEI dogma a significant edge over anyone who attempts to challenge it.¹⁸

With DEI initiatives and language being built into almost every facet of American higher education, from orientation programs to graduation ceremonies, identity politics and critical theory are regularly reinforced by campus communications and policies. Furthermore, many of the activities driven by the DEI dogma have been accepted as normal, par for the course, college experiences. Many students do not recognize how unusual or how tyrannical these initiatives are until they are reported or disciplined for expressing differing views. And even then, with the campuses' preferred form of sanctions often involving some sort of

re-education—aka, “sensitivity training”—students are intimidated into thinking that the tyrannical and unconstitutional policies they were reported under are actually for the greater good.

Our comprehensive investigation covering 248 colleges and universities reveals that more than two-thirds of these institutions mandate DEI academic requirements. To understand the nuanced and insidious ways students are being forced to study and accept critical theory and identity politics, Speech First analyzed how academic requirements are classified while thoroughly investigating how DEI language is used. Our research has led us to the troubling conclusion that a significant majority of students are being pressured to accept far-Left ideological perspectives while actively self-censoring and withholding any questions or dissenting ideas out of fear of reprisal. Furthermore, a number of courses promote political advocacy, even in states officially prohibiting such implementation on an administrative level. Despite ongoing legislative efforts in some states to curb DEI, these teachings and practices persist. Speech First, therefore, concludes this report with a call to action for lawmakers, educators, students, and parents to disband DEI, prohibit mandatory ideological courses, ensure instruction in constitutional principles, and uphold free speech in orientation programs. The path to eliminate DEI demands a comprehensive strategy, encompassing legal action, donor engagement, and an unwavering commitment to free speech.

APPENDIX OF UNIVERSITIES WITH DEI REQUIREMENTS

The following appendix enumerates all the universities surveyed in this report that were identified as requiring Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

<u>American University</u>	<u>Carleton College</u>	<u>Eastern Michigan University</u>
<u>Appalachian State University</u>	<u>Carnegie Mellon University</u>	<u>Elon University</u>
<u>Arizona State University</u>	<u>Case Western Reserve University</u>	<u>Emory University</u>
<u>Baylor University</u>	<u>Central Michigan University</u>	<u>Eureka College</u>
<u>Berea College</u>	<u>Chapman University</u>	<u>Fairfield University</u>
<u>Binghamton University</u>	<u>Clark University</u>	<u>Florida Atlantic University*</u>
<u>Boston College</u>	<u>Colby College</u>	<u>Florida State University*</u>
<u>Boston University</u>	<u>Colgate University</u>	<u>Fordham University</u>
<u>Bowdoin College</u>	<u>Colorado State University- Fort Collins</u>	<u>George Mason University</u>
<u>Bowling Green State University- Main Campus</u>	<u>Cornell University</u>	<u>Georgetown University</u>
<u>Brandeis University</u>	<u>Creighton University</u>	<u>Gonzaga University</u>
<u>Brigham Young University</u>	<u>Dartmouth College</u>	<u>Hamilton College</u>
<u>Bryn Mawr College</u>	<u>Davidson College</u>	<u>Harvard University</u>
<u>Bucknell University</u>	<u>Denison University</u>	<u>Indiana University-Bloomington</u>
<u>California Polytechnic State- University-San Luis Obispo</u>	<u>DePaul University</u>	<u>Iowa State University</u>
<u>California State University-Fresno</u>	<u>Drake University</u>	<u>James Madison University</u>
<u>California State University- Long Beach</u>	<u>Duke University</u>	<u>Kansas State University</u>
	<u>East Carolina University</u>	<u>Lafayette College</u>

<u>Loyola Marymount University</u>	<u>Purdue University-Main Campus</u>	<u>University of Akron Main Campus</u>
<u>Loyola University Chicago</u>	<u>Rice University</u>	<u>University of Alaska Anchorage</u>
<u>Marquette University</u>	<u>Rutgers University-Camden</u>	<u>University of Alaska Fairbanks</u>
<u>Marshall University</u>	<u>Saint Louis University</u>	<u>University of Arizona</u>
<u>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</u>	<u>San Diego State University</u>	<u>University of California-Berkeley</u>
<u>Miami University-Oxford</u>	<u>San Jose State University</u>	<u>University of California-Davis</u>
<u>Montana State University</u>	<u>Santa Clara University</u>	<u>University of California-Irvine</u>
<u>North Carolina State University at Raleigh</u>	<u>Seattle University</u>	<u>University of California-Los Angeles</u>
<u>North Dakota State University</u>	<u>Seton Hill University</u>	<u>University of California-Merced</u>
<u>Northeastern University</u>	<u>South Dakota School of Mines and Technology</u>	<u>University of California-Riverside</u>
<u>Northern Illinois University</u>	<u>South Dakota State University</u>	<u>University of California-San Diego</u>
<u>Newcomb-Tulane University</u>	<u>Southern Methodist University</u>	<u>University of California-Santa Barbara</u>
<u>Ohio State University-Columbus</u>	<u>Stanford University</u>	<u>University of California-Santa Cruz</u>
<u>Ohio University-Athens</u>	<u>Stony Brook University</u>	<u>University of Central Florida*</u>
<u>Oklahoma State University-Main Campus</u>	<u>Syracuse University</u>	<u>University of Cincinnati-Main Campus</u>
<u>Old Dominion University</u>	<u>Temple University</u>	<u>University of Colorado Boulder</u>
<u>Oregon State University</u>	<u>Texas Tech University</u>	<u>University of Connecticut</u>
<u>Pepperdine University</u>	<u>The University of Texas at Austin</u>	<u>University of Dayton</u>
<u>Pomona College</u>	<u>The University of Texas at El Paso</u>	<u>University of Delaware</u>
<u>Princeton University</u>	<u>The University of Texas at San Antonio</u>	<u>University of Florida*</u>
	<u>Trinity University</u>	

<u>University of Houston</u>	<u>University of Oregon</u>	<u>Virginia Commonwealth University</u>
<u>University of Illinois Chicago</u>	<u>University of Pennsylvania</u>	<u>Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University</u>
<u>University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign</u>	<u>University of Pittsburgh-Pittsburgh Campus</u>	<u>Wake Forest University</u>
<u>University of Louisville</u>	<u>University of Rhode Island</u>	<u>Washington and Lee University</u>
<u>University of Maryland-Baltimore County</u>	<u>University of Richmond</u>	<u>Washington State University</u>
<u>University of Maryland-College Park</u>	<u>University of San Diego</u>	<u>Washington University in St Louis</u>
<u>University of Massachusetts-Amherst</u>	<u>University of San Francisco</u>	<u>Wellesley College</u>
<u>University of Michigan-Ann Arbor</u>	<u>University of South Carolina-Columbia</u>	<u>West Virginia University</u>
<u>University of Minnesota-Twin Cities</u>	<u>University of South Dakota</u>	<u>Western Kentucky University</u>
<u>University of Montana</u>	<u>University of South Florida*</u>	<u>Western Michigan University</u>
<u>University of Nevada-Las Vegas</u>	<u>University of Southern California</u>	<u>William & Mary</u>
<u>University of Nevada-Reno</u>	<u>University of St Thomas</u>	<u>Williams College</u>
<u>University of New Mexico-Main Campus</u>	<u>University of Toledo</u>	
<u>University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill</u>	<u>University of Utah</u>	
<u>University of North Carolina at Charlotte</u>	<u>University of Vermont</u>	
<u>University of North Dakota</u>	<u>University of Virginia-Main Campus</u>	
<u>University of North Texas</u>	<u>University of Washington-Seattle Campus</u>	
<u>University of Northern Iowa</u>	<u>University of Wisconsin-Madison</u>	
	<u>University of Wyoming</u>	
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