



---

**Opening Statement of Rep. Burgess Owens (R-UT), Chairman  
Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development  
Hearing: “Divisive, Excessive, Ineffective: The Real Impact of DEI on College  
Campuses”  
March 7, 2024**

(As prepared for delivery)

Today’s hearing addresses a long-growing cancer that resides at the heart of American academic institutions. Unfortunately, it has spread through our foundational institutions and the whole of Western liberal society. It’s called "diversity, equity, and inclusion" or DEI for short.

Most Americans over the last two to three years have heard the term DEI but may not know exactly what it is.

There’s no better way to describe it than with a quote from one of DEI’s most famous proponents, Ibram X. Kendi:

“The only remedy to racist discrimination is antiracist discrimination. The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination.”

I can summarize this definition with two words: demeaning, racist.

Demeaning due to its total lack of intellectual or moral “common sense.” Racist because anyone who accepts this irrational mindset is guaranteed to become a bigot.

There are only two areas of measurement in which I believe that DEI can be considered roundly successful. It is an industry that has created multi-millionaires from previously unknown and non-peer respected authors. It is also an industry that

has successfully steered hundreds of thousands of our youth away from the vision of our Founding Fathers. That vision was one of becoming a more perfect union. One in which the citizenry improves with each generation, to judge each other based on the content of character, not by race, creed, or color.

Marxist-centered DEI on the other hand has a jaded view of America and Americans. It views our nation as a pyramid comprised of race oppressors and race oppressed. It attributes all of America's societal ills and flaws to whites, Judeo-Christians, and males. To remedy all past perceived racism and injustice perpetrated by this sector of Americans, DEI prescribes a healthy injection of black racism and black injustice.

DEI bureaucracies are hired not only to control conversations but to also stifle free speech and open discourse while asserting leverage on every aspect of university management—personnel, curriculum, policy, and college admissions. It proceeds to attack the foundational pillars of academic freedom.

DEI is not an abstract concept but is instead practical applications used on almost every college campus throughout our country, both public and private.

It's seen as universities use race as a "plus" factor in admissions. Instead of intellectual competition and meritocracy, it is skin color that is deemed the winner or loser, pitting races against each other.

The impact of DEI is seen in the indoctrination of students as they undergo mandatory racial bias education.

Based on race, each student is deemed an irredeemable oppressor or a member of the hapless, hopeless, and weak oppressed.

To my Jewish friends, if you wonder about the surprising outgrowth of antisemitism now raging on our college campuses, this is the genesis. DEI teaches that at the very top of the oppressor pyramid is the Jewish race. There is no empathy in the DEI space once identified as an oppressor, only disdain.

At the core of DEI is also the soft bigotry of low expectations. It teaches that black Americans, as members of an oppressed race, are weak and incapable of standing

and succeeding independently—that we must wait for a “success wand” to be waved over us by white Americans, or even better, that we should wait for the promised slavery reparations. DEI purports that black Americans, like myself, who can muster the tenacity and grit to succeed, are the exception and not the rule.

Once again, DEI is both demeaning and racist.

DEI is also heartless and unforgiving. Scholars who dare to publish research that challenges this liberal orthodoxy are often canceled and pushed out of the academic profession.

For professors who love teaching and seek to earn tenure, they are forced to take loyalty oaths in which they either promise to adhere to the principles of DEI or find another profession.

The DEI movement is to its core divisive. It judges others based on our immutable characteristics like color, race, and past ancestry which we have no control of. Instead of becoming a more perfect union, it turns our schools, communities, and cities into cesspools of divisiveness and hate.

I look forward to our discussion on DEI today, from its Marxist roots to the modern-day DEI industry that siphons millions of dollars from education and workforce budgets.