March 13, 2025

SJ 3 - UNF

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - The American Dream

Dear Chair Brian J. Feldman, Vice-Chair Cheryl C. Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs tend to exhibit a multiplicity of substantial problems. Instead of perpetuating what are too often fundamentally and deeply flawed implementations of DEI it would probably be better if they are dismantled. The problems are numerous and pervasive, include training that oversells implicit bias, overemphasizing the dangers of microaggressions, treating individuals as group representatives, expecting individuals to make amends for the crimes of others who look like them, demeaning white people etc. If it were feasible to avoid the many implementation problems then DEI could arguably merit being retained, but that appears to be unlikely. Hiring people based on use of DEI terminology and endorsement of DEI tenets, tenets which too often fall somewhere between counter-factual and factually disputable, turns DEI into an ideologically infused partisan basis for employment discrimination.

- Lack of Clarity and Measurement

The definitions of "diversity," "equity," and "inclusion" are vague, making it difficult to implement .and measure progress. Evidence for a lack of DEI achievement tends to be cited in an incomplete and biased way to avoid contradicting the preferred conclusions and this bias is overtly rationalized and excused.

- Divisive approach

The focus on identity categories (e.g., race, gender) foster divisions rather than unity by emphasizing differences over shared goals. DEI initiatives alienate individuals, particularly those from majority groups, who are negatively stereotyped based on group membership. The content of some DEI programs reflects a resentment fuled antagonism against some relatively successfully minority groups, such as Jews.

- Meritocracy Rejected

Prioritizing DEI frequently conflicts with meritocratic principles, promotes tokenism,

hiring/promoting less-qualified individuals, and devalues learning, knowledge, skills, effort, and competency. DEI detracts from performance and innovation by disputing the relevance of merit.

- Ideological Bias

DEI programs are utilized to advance particular political or ideological agendas, often those associated with progressive or left-leaning values. "Woke" manifestations of DEI rely on doxastically closed, circular logic. Expressions of dissent are deemed to be unacceptable wrong-think by virtue of their being in conflict with the DEI program content. Ad-hominem attacks are deployed against dissenters to shutdown expressions of dissent. Evidence that allegedly favors dubious DEI accusations of "systemic racism" is selectively cited while evidence that conflicts with DEI conclusions are ignored or denied.

- Economic and Operational Burdens

Implementing DEI programs can be expensive and resource-intensive, leading to concerns about whether the outcomes justify the investment. A strong focus on DEI detracts from other organizational priorities, such as productivity and profitability.

- Lack of Efficacy

DEI efforts result in "checkbox" compliance without addressing the deeper structural or cultural issues. They substitute for, and replace, the more difficult tasks of actually improving the education, skills, cultures, and behaviors that positively correlated with financial and social success and that require ongoing development of relevant competencies. Some studies suggest that traditional DEI programs, such as mandatory bias training, have limited or even counterproductive effects on organizational culture and hiring practices, see INSTRUCTING ANIMOSITY: HOW DEI PEDAGOGY PRODUCES THE HOSTILE ATTRIBUTION BIAS by Ankita Jagdeep, Simon Lazarus, Mendel Zecher, Ohad Fedida, Gidi Fihrer, Joel Finkelstein, Danit Sarah Finkelstein, Sonia Yanovsky, Lee Jussim, Pamela Paresky from Rutgers University's Social Perception Lab and the Network Contagion Research Institute at https://networkcontagion.us/wp-content/uploads/Instructing-Animosity_11.13.24.pdf.

- Overemphasis on Equity

Equity, defined by equal outcome rather than equal opportunity, is a misdirected goal. Group level outcomes often vary in societies that provide the most equality of opportunity, sometimes even more so than in societies that systematically deny equality of opportunity. This reflects a tendency of different groups to have different interests, preferences, experiences, and skills. Such disparate outcomes are not automatically an injustice that evidences bigoted discrimination in need of social engineering to remedy as claimed by DEI programs.

- Legal and Ethical Weaknesses

Companies and institutions face lawsuits when DEI policies are perceived to result in discriminatory practices, such as quota systems and unequal treatment. Required participation in DEI training or hiring that promotes specific viewpoints, with penalties for non-compliance, compels speech. Prioritizing some individuals over others based on over simplistic and unreliable group level generalizations, such as disputable rankings of oppressor versus oppressed rankings built on group categories of disputable relevance, is a too common characteristic of DEI programs that conflicts with broader ethical principles of individual centered responsibility, fairness, and impartiality.

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Respectfully,
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