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OPINION

Live free or DEI even harder

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Last week, I wrote about the need to defund Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) positions choking K-12 and higher education. Today's sequel discusses the bone-chilling institutional indoctrination manifesting in Arkansas' higher education through the requirement that

would-be professors provide DEI-conformity statements.

The compulsion is evident, for example, in a University of Arkansas journalism department job listing proclaiming that “applicants must submit” as part of their package “a diversity statement.” That’s no anomaly.

The advertisement for a professorship in modern British history, also at UA, states: “Applicants are requested to supply a c.v., a letter of interest, a one-page diversity, equity, and inclusion statement, and the names of three references.” That the overall paucity of requirements nonetheless specifically invites a DEI statement is frightening. No statement of teaching or research philosophy is even suggested. Who cares about those? Here’s your DEI-approved curriculum and research agenda. Kidding, not kidding.

An opening for a mechanical engineering professorship asks for “a diversity statement that includes their understanding of, prior and/or ongoing experiences engaging with individuals from a broad range of backgrounds, and plans to attract, teach, and mentor a diverse group of students.” Is that the new “bridge building” for engineers? Forgive my poetic license, given that actual bridge building is civil engineering, not mechanical. But isn’t this all just social engineering, anyway?

A “statement of the candidate’s contributions to a diverse and inclusive higher education environment” is required for the application to become an assistant professor of environmental archaeology. Frankly, I need a statement explaining what environmental archaeology is.

As a preferred qualification, a position for assistant professor of cultural anthropology lists “evidence of a commitment to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive milieu in teaching research and service.” (“Milieu,” really?) Required is “a statement describing your past, current, or planned future contributions to inclusive excellence in teaching, research, and service in anthropology.” After all that, should you nonetheless consider submitting a mildly critical—no less iconoclastic—response, read further to see that “an essential job duty ... is the ability to create and maintain collegial, harmonious working relationships

with others.” How do you think a contretemp with the loyalty-oath keepers plays out under that standard? Who wrote this, Mao Zedong?

A biology position at Arkansas State University at Jonesboro seeks “a cover letter, curriculum vitae, a statement of research experience and plans, teaching philosophy, a statement of commitment to increasing diversity within the field of biology, and contact information for at least three references with your application.” Is that the new “biodiversity”? Maybe I should ask the environmental archaeologist.

Seriously, though, how does a professor provided with pupils by the school increase the diversity of biologists? Is this code for “you better pass sufficient minorities irrespective of merit”?

A geography professor at Little Rock must have a “commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in an educational environment,” along with submitting a diversity statement. That’s one of the least offensive examples, albeit crediting the language in such a fashion is roughly comparable to characterizing someone as the most benign fascist. They’re all awful, aren’t they?

None of the system offices requires these statements. They’re creations of uncontrolled departments deep within the bowels of each campus. And they’re fruitful in multiplying. One system official told me: “Of the current 352 open positions, the statement is required [by the department advertising the position] for 25 of them.” While government can demand certain oaths by public employees—to survive constitutional muster—they must relate to a clear and present danger to a clear governmental interest. These corporate-compliance credos are precisely the opposite. They themselves are the danger. As the position postings make patent, these demanded declarations of devotion don’t invite opposition from the orthodoxy. Rather, these McCarthyite mandates seek public disavowals of colorblindness, equality of opportunity, and merit, all once hallmarks of the educational ethos.

What options are available to the applicant? Can one write that DEI is merely gossamer cover for Trotskyite tropes? Can you assert that “equity” is feeble euphemism for equality of outcome rather than opportunity? Can I state that while I believe that Black lives matter, I reject the leftist cabal Black Lives Matter? Can you dare claim that all lives matter? Is one permitted to espouse Martin Luther King’s iconic-colorblind virtue embodied in his “dream that [his] four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character”?

Oh sure, you’re told you have freedom of thought. Freedom of conclusion, that’s entirely a different matter.

We already hear that “colorblindness acts to perpetuate racism,” as contemporary race hucksters proclaim. Yet blind grading is aptly still required when reviewing exams. So race is critical in admissions and then somehow irrelevant after matriculation.

But wait, there’s more: Unequal outcomes in graduation and bar passage require us again to take off lady justice’s blindfold. Such adept flip-flopping is worthy of the carbon-neutral claiming, private-jet partaking, senatorial husband of the widow of the 57-flavor fortune.

Furthermore, the independent-thought-depriving bloom of these mandatory mantras demonstrates that the academy isn’t interested in the one diversity category that truly matters in education: diversity of thought. If the applicant isn’t reflexively genuflecting before the DEI golden calf, then he (uh-oh, another foul) shouldn’t expect to propitiate the progressive-pigment police.

Confused? Don’t worry, all this will make sense once you obtain the DEI-to-English dictionary, no doubt available at state schools’ bookstores along with the other pre-approved reading material that have gained

purchase on campuses.

In that little red book, you'll learn that "diversity," to the deacons of academia, means special, non-merit dispensation exclusively available to those in leftist-authorized categories. So, "yes" to entitlement for "underrepresented" peoples from cricket-cultivating island-nations in equatorial waters, but "no" to giving weight to hiring those with under-represented-conservative thought in social sciences, including law; doubly so if they're white men.

The latter—falsely labeled as inherently privileged, insufficiently pigmented and improperly plumbed beneficiaries of structural racism, and personally responsible for the exploitation of the downtrodden for millennia, irrespective of whether any individual candidate, say, grew up in a dirt-floored, toilet-less cabin in the Ozarks and is the first in his family to graduate from high school—have forfeited any claim to those afore-described meritocracy hallmarks, so command the regional governors captaining the academy's gates at this castle of perverted-postmodern morality.

To the left, denying white privilege is the best proof of its omnipresence. Thus, if you admit benefiting from white privilege, you should make amends. But if you don't confess, then you must make amends. Heads I win, tails you lose.

Don't cry foul, though. If you do, you're "fragile"—the exclusive frailty of the allegedly empowered. Wait, does that now entitle you to special treatment? Sorry, your hereditarily immutable characteristic cannot both serve as a scarlet letter and simultaneously garner accommodation. Redemption is not universal under these race-based rules. As Seinfeld's Yev Kassem decidedly declared, "No soup for you!" This is your right to know.

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