

## **IUB-AAUP Executive Committee Statement on the Closing and Erasure of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Indiana University**

10/23/2025

*"Issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion [DEI] have been very important to me for a very long time at all the institutions that I've worked at ... so it's nice to come into an institution where this is such a value to so many people."*

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IU President Pam Whitten

[Bloom Magazine](#), Nov. 30, 2021

The IUB AAUP, as the organization representing *all* IUB faculty, strongly denounces the termination and erasure of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs currently occurring at Indiana University. Since May 22<sup>nd</sup>, all DEI offices at the University have been closed and staff in those offices fired or reassigned. At the same time, the University has engaged in an extensive process of scrubbing all mention of diversity, equity, and inclusion from University websites and, in some cases, taking direct action to remove disfavored diversity, equity, and inclusion topics from the teaching materials of individual faculty members.

The scope and intensity of these changes is unprecedented, and begs a number of questions: *What is the basis for these dramatic changes--what laws and guidance justified these closings and scrubbing? Who has been harmed or at the receiving end of these closures and firings? How will the important support for students offered by these programs and offices be replaced?*

### **Basis for the Change**

The Administration claimed, in its [memo](#) announcing the end of diversity, equity and inclusion, that these actions were necessary in order to be "fully compliant with state and federal laws and guidance regarding diversity, equity and inclusion," a claim repeated by Provost Shrivastav at the [September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting](#) of the Bloomington Faculty Council. Yet it is important to note that there are currently no such laws or guidance in effect at either the federal or state level:

- Although such laws have been introduced, the U. S. Congress has not yet passed any law regarding DEI on college campuses.

- The most recent Indiana state law regarding DEI, [SEA 289](#), originally banned university diversity, equity and inclusion offices or programs, but that provision was removed from the bill before its passage.
- Federal executive orders on DEI in education since January 20<sup>th</sup> have applied to K-12 education, not higher education; a *Dear Colleague* letter from the Trump Administration that sought to ban DEI training at both the K-12 and higher education level has been blocked by the courts and is currently unenforceable.
- State guidance from Governor Braun prohibiting DEI [initiatives](#) and [trainings](#) in Indiana applied only to executive branch agencies. Higher education is not an executive branch agency.

### **Implementation of the IU Anti-DEI Initiative**

Despite the lack of a mandate for doing so, the Whitten Administration has proceeded to close diversity, equity and inclusion programs, including the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, virtually all DEI offices at the school level, and numerous offices within schools offering support to students and faculty. Some directors, staff, and students have had their positions terminated, while others have been reassigned to other programs.

Unwritten directives from the Administration have instructed schools and departments to remove all references to “diversity,” “equity,” “inclusion,” and “DEI” from official IU websites. These instructions were communicated informally to staff and teams responsible for maintaining websites, with no written policy or explanation provided other than a vague reference to “compliance with state law.” Units were told to use a specific computer application to scan their websites for these terms and erase them. Yet without state or federal law or guidance mandating these actions, such represent overcompliance, exceeding any legal mandate and contradicting our University’s commitments and values.

All these efforts have proceeded under cover of darkness. Repeated faculty and media requests for any information regarding the number of personnel and offices affected since May 22<sup>nd</sup> have gone unanswered. At the September 23rd meeting of the Bloomington Faculty Council, the Provost stated that he “could not” provide such information.

### **Part of a Broader National Attack**

The situation at IU and the actions of the administration are not isolated. Coordinated campaigns across the country have targeted DEI efforts and initiatives in higher education. Other states, including [Florida](#), [Texas](#), and [Ohio](#), have passed legislation banning DEI offices or training, and national organizations such as the Heritage Foundation and Manhattan Institute have explicitly advanced strategies to dismantle DEI infrastructure.

More than half the states in the U.S. have introduced [bills aimed at restricting](#) what can be taught, researched, or supported in colleges and universities. IU has chosen the path of compliance absent any binding requirement, placing it in the company of institutions that have prioritized appeasing political pressure over the protection of academic freedom or robust support structures for marginalized students and scholars.

### **Maintaining Needed Support and Services**

Prior to these attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion, Indiana University was justifiably proud of its work in this area. Through the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (OVPDEI), IU offered an expansive network of programs that supported first-generation college students, students of color, LGBTQ+ students, and faculty from historically excluded backgrounds. Until this year, the Whitten administration's \$30 million initiative to diversify the faculty was touted as one of [IU's proudest recent accomplishments](#).

Equally vital were the DEI offices within IU's schools and colleges—such as the College of Arts and Sciences and the O'Neill School—which provided direct support to students, faculty, and staff while advancing high-impact initiatives on inclusive pedagogy, equitable mentoring, scholarly series, and community engagement. These units translated university-wide commitments into everyday practice: building spaces of trust, facilitating difficult but necessary dialogue, and helping to create more inclusive classrooms and departments. As these programs have been rapidly dismantled, the consequences for those who relied on them are profound. Students who depend on equity and inclusion initiatives are likely facing increased isolation and barriers to persistence. Faculty who found networks of belonging and professional support within these programs may lose critical structures that enable their success and retention. While it is possible that new programs could eventually fill some of these gaps, no such plans have been made public. In the absence of transparency and sustained institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the outcome is a deep erosion of trust and opportunity—leaving those who most need support once again on the margins.

### **Our Commitments and Demands**

Despite the threats to a pluralistic society with which this administration is over-complying, the Indiana University Bloomington chapter of the AAUP remains firmly committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, fairness and non-discrimination at our university. We call upon the administration to

- Publicly explain the rationale for closing DEI offices in the absence of a legal mandate.

- Provide transparent data on the number and demographics of students, staff, and faculty terminated, reassigned, or otherwise affected.
- Identify what programs, initiatives, or services will replace those that have been cut to sustain IU's multicultural community and support those who need them.

We further ask that the administration reverse its efforts to purge diversity, equity, and inclusion, and allow units to maintain their current commitments to social justice on their websites.

Diversity, equity and inclusion are not simply a set of initials to be expunged in response to the latest political pressure. Rather, they are and have been bedrock principles, enshrined in the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, guiding the expansion of civil and human rights to all Americans. In accord with those principles, and in defense of our students and colleagues, the Indiana University Bloomington AAUP will continue to strongly oppose any and all attempts to reverse course on civil and human rights. We are fully committed to cultivating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community at our university and in our state.

*IUB-AAUP Executive Committee*

[iubaaup.org](http://iubaaup.org)