

Viewpoints

Higher Ed Ponders Fate Of DEI Initiatives In Light of Executive Actions



An article by Insider Higher Ed captures the anxiety and contemplation taking place at colleges and universities throughout the country following the recent Dear Colleague letter by the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) that took aim at campus DEI programs and policies.

For years, colleges and universities carefully crafted initiatives to increase diversity, equity and inclusion on campus within the evolving limitations of the law, including the 2023 Supreme Court decision in *Students for Fair Admissions v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*.

Following the OCR's Dear Colleague letter, higher education institutions are now struggling to determine what programs can still exist and how to juggle the inconsistencies between the federal orders and state law, particularly in California.



While many institutions are taking a wait and see approach amid the disruption caused by the Dear Colleague letter and flurry of Presidential executive orders, “some scholars say there’s no choosing; all policies, practices and strategies potentially targeted by the Dear Colleague letter need to be defended on principle.”

Time will tell how the situation plays out, but in the meantime, colleges and universities hurriedly review their policies and practices to determine the DEI landscape going forward.

Anxiety is radiating through the higher ed sector as colleges have mere days to make difficult decisions about how to respond to a federal directive to ax race-conscious practices and programming.

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