

What the Executive Order Weaponizing DEI Mean for Your Campus

Title of Executive Order	Ending Radical And Wasteful Government DEI Programs And Preferencing (January 20, 2025)
What is the policy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and Attorney General end “DEI and ‘diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility’ (DEIA) mandates, policies, programs, preferences, and activities in the Federal Government.” • Instructs these agencies to modify “Federal employment practices, union contracts, and training policies or programs to comply.” • Instructs them to eliminate DEI or DEIA from federal employment practices, contractor agreements, and performance reviews, and to eliminate DEI, DEIA, and “environmental justice” offices and positions. • OMB creates a list of all DEI, DEIA, and environmental justice “positions, committees, programs, services, activities, budgets, and expenditures,” including contractors providing DEI services, and grantees who received funding. • OMB reports the “prevalence” of “DEI, DEIA, and ‘environmental justice’ in agency or department programs, activities, policies, regulations, guidance, employment practices, enforcement activities, contracts (including set-asides), grants, consent orders, and litigating positions.”
How does it affect campus and other communities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The executive order directly affects federal offices, employees, and contractors. • OMB is tasked with documenting all grantees and contractors who engage in DEI work—this likely includes academic faculty, programs, and institutions. • Sows confusions: chaos is the purpose. • Directs faculty and administrative time away from core missions to address intrusive federal mandates.
Who else is under attack?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students denied support as universities overcomply to protect federal grants/ contracts. • Researchers forced to avoid certain topics to secure funding. • Differently-abled students and campus employees who benefit from accessibility efforts. • Defenders of free speech, the First Amendment, and academic freedom. • American democracy, which requires an informed and educated citizenry.
Who benefits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who traffic in distorted understandings of DEI. • Those who promote ideological rather than scholarly understandings of American history, race, and gender.
What can you do / How do we fight back?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalize the stories of students, faculty, researchers, and campus workers for whom DEI work helped make higher education accessible and are now villainized by this EO • Work with organizations protecting the rights of underrepresented groups • Avoid anticipatory obedience in teaching and research • The AAUP and others have filed a lawsuit to block unlawful and unconstitutional DEI executive orders • Join the AAUP if you are a faculty member • If you or someone you know is adversely impacted by the EOs, share your story with lawyers at Democracy 2025, LDF, or Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law • Write an op-ed in your local paper, weekly journal, or blog post to share how students, staff, and administrators are being targeted by this EO and share with CDAF@aaup.org.
Additional resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Criteria for Faculty Evaluation, AAUP • African American Policy Forum's Executive Disorder Project • Education Council's analysis