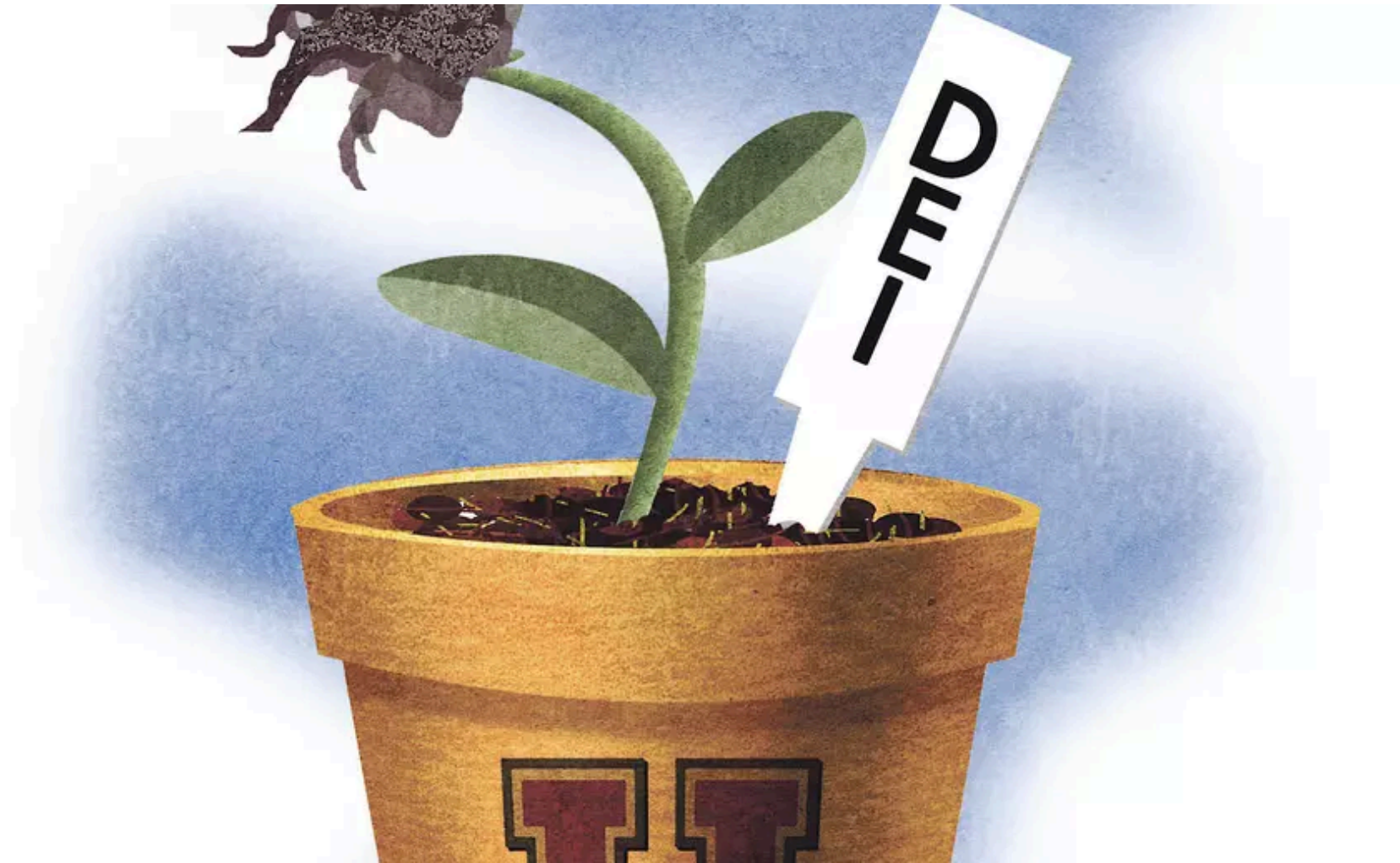


DEI on the defensive: Here's how to defeat it for good on university campuses

Bar public colleges from making students take courses in it to graduate



Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs on college (university) campuses illustration by Alexander Hunter/The Washington Times Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs ... more >

COMMENTARY

By Timothy K. Minella
Monday, June 3, 2024

OPINION:

On university campuses around the nation, racially discriminatory diversity, equity and inclusion programs are withering under the sunlight of public scrutiny.

This welcome shift recognizes the incompatibility of DEI with rigorous education, the pursuit of truth, and equality of opportunity. Now, policymakers can defeat this scourge of discrimination in public higher education by ending DEI indoctrination in the classroom — building on recent victories over the bloated bureaucracies whose shock troops promote discriminatory practices in hiring and admissions and conduct mandatory training in DEI concepts.

For instance, just last month, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill's board of trustees voted to redirect \$2.3 million from DEI programs to public safety.

In April, the Iowa legislature passed a law that abolished DEI bureaucracies at all public universities.

And the Massachusetts Institute of Technology became the first elite private university to end the use of “diversity statements” — requiring applicants for faculty positions to write a statement declaring their fealty to the DEI regime.

DEI is on the defensive across the country as Americans realize that the dogma cloaks its radical and discriminatory aims in feel-good buzzwords.

The ideology behind DEI divides the world into the simplistic categories of “oppressor” and “oppressed,” calling for discrimination against those deemed “oppressors” to achieve “equity” and “social justice.” DEI thus rejects the American ideal of equal opportunity regardless of race or religion.

The recent explosion of anti-Israel protests on many campuses represents the logical endpoint of this ideology. In the upside-down world of DEI, Jews — a group that has endured the Holocaust and countless acts of repression — become “oppressors” because of their alleged proximity to “whiteness.” The loathsome antisemitism of these protests does not contradict the principles of DEI but rather fulfills them.

Furthermore, proponents of DEI make little secret of their disdain for America’s founding principles as they seek to tear down our constitutional republic. Ibram X. Kendi, a leading academic in the “antiracism” wing of DEI, sees the United States as so fundamentally racist that he has called for a “Department of Antiracism” that would strike down any law or policy deemed insufficiently “antiracist.” For Mr. Kendi, Americans cannot be trusted to govern themselves. They require the oversight of an enlightened elite schooled in DEI theories.

The pushback against DEI bureaucracies and “diversity statements” is a commendable first step in restoring universities to their core education and research missions. But to complete this work, university decision-makers must also address DEI in the classroom.

According to a recent report by Speech First, more than two-thirds of major universities require students to take DEI courses to obtain a degree. These courses teach students concepts such as “antiracism,” identity politics and gender identity.

Yet many of those same universities that force DEI indoctrination down students’ throats fail to prepare them for citizenship by educating them in the fundamentals of American history and civics. Indeed, less than 20% of general education programs require students to take a course in American history or government, according to an American Council of Trustees and Alumni analysis of over 1,100 colleges and universities.

At many institutions, students can graduate having mastered the ability to identify microaggressions but knowing nothing about the Civil War. They'll read Mr. Kendi's "How to Be an Antiracist," but not The Federalist Papers. And they'll spend more time pondering the evils of "cisgender" privilege than studying the history of constitutional rights.

Thankfully, these DEI requirements are receiving more scrutiny. George Mason University and Virginia Commonwealth University recently rejected proposals to add DEI to graduation requirements.

But Americans must go further to fix these flawed curricula. The Goldwater Institute, where I work, is advancing the Freedom From Indoctrination Act — a commonsense reform prohibiting public universities from forcing students to take DEI courses to graduate. It also requires public universities, which have a crucial role in preparing students for thoughtful citizenship, to include instruction in fundamental principles of American civics. Under this policy, students would learn about important elements of the American system of self-government, including the separation of powers, equal protection under the law, freedom of speech, and landmark Supreme Court cases.

Public universities are institutions that educate the next generation of scientists, entrepreneurs and leaders. They have a responsibility to provide their students with rigorous instruction that prepares them for successful careers and responsible citizenship. The Freedom From Indoctrination Act helps to refocus universities on this crucial mission rather than promoting poisonous DEI ideology.

Americans must reform academic curricula to achieve a lasting victory over DEI.

• Timothy K. Minella is a senior fellow at the Goldwater Institute's Van Sittert Center for Constitutional Advocacy.

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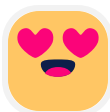
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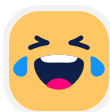
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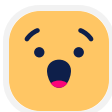
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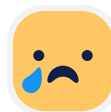
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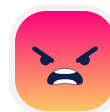
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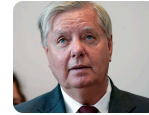
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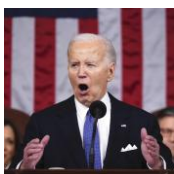
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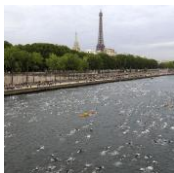
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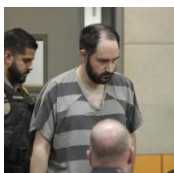
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