



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on May 18, 2024

DEI Official Sentenced in Major Fraud Scheme; Stole More Than \$5M From Facebook, Nike

In yet another scandal that exposes the diversity, equity, and inclusion scam for what it is, a federal judge has sentenced a former top diversity officer at two major companies to more than five years in prison for bilking her employers of more than \$5 million.

The fraud that Barbara Furlow-Smiles perpetrated while working as a “diversity” manager at Nike and Facebook involved “fraudulent vendors, fictitious paperwork, and cash kickbacks,” the [Justice Department announced](#) this week.



Dzmitry Dzemidovich/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Now, it appears, “DEI official” isn’t just a code-word for a plagiarist [hired by](#) a major university — it might also apply to someone hired by a major corporation in a similar role.

Barbara Furlow-Smiles, a former diversity program manager at Facebook and Nike, has been sentenced for stealing more than \$5 million based on an elaborate scheme involving fraudulent vendors, fictitious paperwork, and cash kickbacks. <https://t.co/HTCotTgqEI>

— US Attorney NDGA (@NDGAnews) [May 13, 2024](#)

The Schemes

Furlow-Smiles began her career as a fraudstress, at least as far as we know, at Facebook, which “put an extreme amount of trust in her, only to have that trust completely violated,” said Atlanta FBI chief Keri Farley. “After she was fired, she carelessly continued her fraudulent schemes at Nike, thinking she was untouchable. As a result, she not only threw away a lucrative career, but will serve time behind bars for her excessive greed.”

From January 2017 to September 2021 at the social media giant, Furlow-Smiles was the DEI leader in charge of “developing and executing DEI initiatives, operations, and engagement programs,” DOJ said. That gave her the keys of the kingdom ... or at least Facebook’s bank account. She had company credit cards and could “submit purchase requisitions and approve invoices for authorized vendors of Facebook,” [DOJ said](#):

Furlow-Smiles used her position at Facebook to cheat and defraud the company. She caused Facebook to pay numerous individuals for goods and services that were never provided and then directed those individuals to kick back the fraudulent proceeds to her, often in cash. Her scheme operated in two ways.

First, Furlow-Smiles linked PayPal, Venmo, and Cash App accounts to her Facebook credit cards and used those accounts to pay friends, relatives, and other associates for goods and



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services that in truth were never provided to Facebook. To conceal the bogus charges, Furlow-Smiles submitted fraudulent expense reports, falsely claiming that her associates or their businesses had performed work on programs and events for Facebook, such as providing swag or marketing services, when in fact they had not done so.

You know what happened next. The individuals to whom Furlow-Smiles directed the payments kicked back the “vast majority” of money to her “through account transfers to others, including her husband.”

As well, [DOJ said](#), “they paid the cash kickbacks in person and by Federal Express or mail, sometimes wrapping the cash in other items, such as T-shirts. Furlow-Smiles also directed associates to pay one another, or others to whom she owed money, to conceal her involvement in the scheme.”

Furlow-Smiles also hired vendors that just happened to be owned by friends and associates. They too lined her purse with kickbacks. She OK’d fraudulent invoices, and after Facebook paid them, the vendors kicked back the booty to her.

[Continued DOJ:](#)

Furlow-Smiles recruited numerous individuals to participate in the scheme. These individuals included friends, relatives, former interns from a prior job, nannies and babysitters, a hair stylist, and her university tutor. She also caused Facebook to make payments for her benefit to others who did not pay kickbacks. For example, Furlow-Smiles caused Facebook to pay nearly \$10,000 to an artist for specialty portraits and more than \$18,000 to a preschool for tuition.

Terminated by Facebook for an unstated reason, Furlow-Smiles landed at Nike in November 2021, where she served as DEI senior director until February 2023. Her main job was supervising a Juneteenth holiday event in New York.

At Nike, she did what she did to Facebook. She paid associates with PayPal and Venmo accounts linked to her company credit card. Those payments dinged the credit card with fraudulent charges. “The associates kicked back portions of the payments to Furlow-Smiles, who submitted fraudulent expense reports to Nike to cover her tracks,” DOJ said. The expense reports credited the spending to the Juneteenth event.

Furlow-Smiles robbed Facebook of almost \$5 million, and Nike of more than \$120,000. She used the ill-gotten loot to “fund a luxury lifestyle in California, Georgia, and Oregon.”

The 38-year-old will pay restitution and serve time for the conviction on December 11, 2023 that came after a guilty plea. Aside from the five-year, three-month stretch in prison, she will service three years of supervised release.

U.S. Attorney Ryan Buchanan said Furlow-Smiles “shamelessly violated her position of trust.”

Unclear is what will happen to her co-conspirators.

DEI University Scam

Furlow-Smiles, of course, isn’t the only DEI official to benefit from the nationwide scam that began after the [George Floyd Hoax](#).

Academic fraudsters benefit as well when hired for faculty and DEI administration positions at major



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universities.

Most recently, as [The New American reported](#), citing the Washington Free Beacon, two plagiarists were uncovered at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The two are among six DEI deans that the university hired to police diversity at its six major subsidiary schools.

[DEI plagiarists have also been uncovered](#) at Harvard, most notably, [former president Claudine Gay](#), and at [UCLA Medical School](#) and the [University of Wisconsin](#).

H/T: [The Post Millennial](#)



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