



“Diversity Statements”: Academia’s New Loyalty Oath

Institutions of higher learning, once dedicated to the free exchange of ideas, are increasingly becoming left-wing echo chambers, and nowhere is that more obvious than in their growing use of “diversity statements” to making hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions.



Simply put, anyone who wants to work in secular academia these days had better be a social-justice warrior or play one on campus. “Professors and other faculty members are asked to pledge their commitment to ‘equity’ and ‘inclusion’ and to demonstrate how they have acted to fulfill this pledge in the past,” Christian Schneider wrote in a [New York Post op-ed](#).

The University of California (UC) is the most famous example. The Los Angeles campus demands that all professors applying for tenure-track positions “write a statement on their commitment to diversity, showing, for example, their ‘record of success advising women and minority graduate students,’” reported [RealClearInvestigations](#). Similar mandates are in place at other UC campuses.

This is serious business. Merely offering a few bromides about your commitment to diversity won’t cut it, UC Merced associate sociology professor Tanya Golash-Boza argued in an [Inside Higher Ed article](#). “Strong” diversity statements, she explained, tell of candidates’ “experiences teaching first-generation college students, their involvement with LGBTQ student groups, their experiences teaching in inner-city high schools and their awareness of how systemic inequalities affect students’ ability to excel.” She advised candidates to “write about racial oppression, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism or some other commonly recognized form of oppression.”

The problem extends far beyond California, noted Schneider:

At Vassar, tenure-track candidates have to report their “contributions to social justice.” Applicants at the University of Minnesota-Duluth must “demonstrate ability to support the university’s commitment to equity and diversity.” Vanderbilt, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Washington and the University of Nebraska all instruct their professors on how to write effective diversity statements....

Faculty at Harvard’s School of Engineering and Applied Sciences were recently required to submit reports detailing their actions in support of “diversity, inclusion and belonging.” Teachers’ ability to demonstrate wokeness will affect the assignment of future bonuses, per the school’s dean.

“As a dean of a major academic institution, I could not have said this. But I will now,” [tweeted](#) former Harvard Medical School Dean Jeffrey Flier. “Requiring such statements in applications for appointments and promotions is an affront to academic freedom, and diminishes the true value of diversity, equity of inclusion by trivializing it.”

University of Michigan economics and finance professor [Mark Perry](#) observed, “What is called a ‘diversity statement’ is essentially a pledge of allegiance to higher education’s orthodox and uniform agenda in its ongoing battle against a color-blind, gender-blind, merit-driven academia.... Diversity statements will actually be anti-diversity statements of uniform, leftist-liberal-progressive thought that



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on April 30, 2019

completely ignore diversity of viewpoints, ideology and thought, and are therefore dangerous and misguided efforts that are threats to academic freedom and will weaken true intellectual diversity.”

“Strangely,” penned Schneider,

groups that often take Christian colleges to task over their statements of faith are silent on the pernicious effects of the secular variety. In 2016, for example, when Wheaton College in Illinois fired a faculty member for expressing views that ran afoul of its theological beliefs, the American Political Science Association called into question the school’s “commitment to academic freedom.”

Yet the APSA, which itself has a department dedicated to diversity, hasn’t publicly weighed in on whether forcing faculty to sign diversity statements infringes their freedom of expression.

Make no mistake about it: These diversity statements are statements of faith. In order to be hired in many academic institutions today, “you have to make a public confession of faith” in the left-wing agenda, National Association of Scholars president Peter Wood told RealClearInvestigations. “You’re essentially citing a creed,” and “all the more effectively, they force you to put that creed into your own words.”

That faith, of course, will then be passed down to students, many of whom are already primed for it by public schools, social media, and popular culture. Nonbelievers will find resistance difficult.

Seventy years ago, the Left [opposed](#) requiring professors to profess loyalty to the Constitution. Today, it seeks to impose on them a new loyalty oath — to its own divisive, destructive ideology.

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