



Alabamians for Academic Excellence and Integrity



Tuscaloosa YMCA

March 9, 2022

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Pursuit of Academic Excellence



“Make knowledge your mistress and impregnate your mind with the seeds of understanding.”

President Frank A. Rose

September 1964



AAEI Mission Statement



“Alabamians for Academic Excellence and Integrity is a non-partisan group advocating for education rooted in the classic Western tradition which includes pursuing truth, preserving and enriching our culture, developing character and instilling the values of good citizenship while ensuring graduates are prepared to succeed in their chosen professions or fields of endeavor.”

AAEI's Threefold Goals



- 1. Increase public awareness of the nature and importance of classical Western education**
- 2. Seeking and undertaking opportunities to advocate for classical education at the local and state levels**
- 3. Supporting programs and events that reflect the purposes of classical education**



AAEI's Purposes



- 1. Critical Race Theory (CRT) rampant throughout higher education must NOT gain entree into K-12 schools**
 - Legislation may be passed, but might be irrelevant since K-12 is not really threatened by CRT, but by its offshoots
 - No problem with CRT being taught at colleges and universities as a theory
- 2. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is inimical to American values attendant to individual freedom, liberty, rule of law and personal responsibility**
- 3. Pedagogy should be free of political agendas, personal ideological passions, and social-justice activism**



AAEI Believes...



- **Knowledge is information gained by experience through education**
 - **Knowledge can exist without wisdom, but wisdom cannot exist absent knowledge**
- **K-12 and publicly funded higher education should promote cooperative, respectful relationships that ensure free speech and open dialogue**
- **History should be preserved without ideological biases**
- **Publicly funded educational institutions should be fiscally transparent**
- **Goal should be to matriculate undergraduates in four NOT six years**



How Did We Get Here?



- **Knight vs Alabama 1983 desegregation lawsuit**
 - Aimed at divesting last vestiges of segregation
 - Remedial decree on December 31, 1991, required Alabama to demonstrate good faith effort in hiring Black senior-level faculty and administrators
- Such efforts were initiated so that on December 5, 2006, the Knight case was dismissed
- Alabama agreed to “create and implement a ‘Strategic Diversity Plan’”
- Fifty-eight page “Strategic Diversity Plan 2008” updated periodically since
 - Individual colleges within the University produce their plans, (College of Arts and Sciences, etc.)

Critical Race Theory



- **Critical Race Theory originated in 1970's legal scholarship**
- **Harvard Law School Professor Derrick Bell is “Father of CRT”**
 - **Explores relationships between race, racism, and power**
 - **Combined critical legal studies with early feminism**
- **Over five decades CRT movement rendered “spin offs”**
 - **Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit), FemCrit, QueerCrit, etc.**
- **Critical Race Theory goes beyond MLK’s admonition to judge people by the content of character rather than skin color**

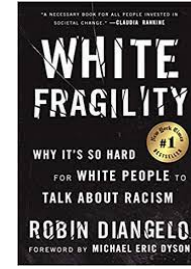
CRT Tenets



- 1. Racism is ordinary and not aberrational**
(A strong connection exists between Critical Race Theory and Critical Justice Theory)
- 2. Interest Convergence Thesis**
- 3. Social Construction Thesis**
- 4. Differential Racialization and its Consequences**



Tenet 1: Racism is Ordinary and not Aberrational



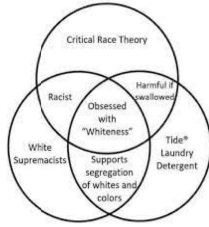
- Societies usually organize and operate racially
- Ordinariness of racism makes it difficult to recognize, address, or cure
- The MLK early civil rights “color blind” approach addressed only the most blatant forms of racism
- America is a White dominated society and most liberal Whites are impervious to their own racism
 - White fragility does not allow Whites to admit their racism, confront it and address it



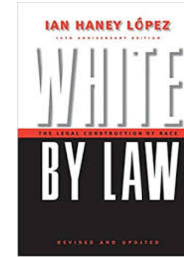
Tenet 2: Interest Convergence Thesis



- **Form of material determinism holding racism advances interests of White elites materially and working-class Whites psychically**
 - **Two classes have no incentive to eradicate racism**
- **Derrick Bell believed 1960s civil rights movement succeeded because it served interests of both White elites and Black activists**
 - **Example 1: University of Alabama desegregation broke color barrier on campus and enabled the University to attract higher caliber faculty**
 - **Example 2: 1963 Black boycott in Birmingham got White businesses to hire Blacks in other than menial (janitorial) positions thus ending the demonstrations and allowing White business to operate profitably**



Tenet 3: Social Construction Thesis



- **Race and races result from societal thought and not biological or genetic reality**
 - One's race is only superficially related to skin color and hair texture
 - These attributes may inhibit or promote success depending on social constructs fixed around them
- **Race status involves social structures attendant to economic and political factors**
- **These structures are established in law and custom to make one race dominant over another**

Tenet 4: Differential Racialization



- Process by which each racial and ethnic group comes to be treated differently by mainstream society
 - Racism is malleable, influenced by socio-economic and political needs
 - In the agricultural South, White socio-economic/political elites subjugated Blacks to secure cheap farm labor
 - In New Mexico, Arizona and Nevada same factors led to subjugation of Latinos
 - In California and upper Mid West, Whites subjugated the Japanese, Chinese and Native Americans for economic reasons
 - In 19th and early 20th Century Whites in New England and Atlantic Coast states dominated Irish and Italian emigrates for cheap labor

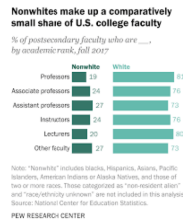
Critical Race Theory in Education



“Critical Race Theory in Education is a movement that applies CRT to issues in the field of education, including high-stakes testing, affirmative action, hierarchy in schools, tracking and school discipline, bilingual and multicultural education and the debate over ethnic studies and the Western canon.”

Critical Race Theory: An Introduction

Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education



- There are between 31 to 34 (perhaps more) DEI-designated administrators charged with directing programs at the University of Alabama
- The Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion works in the Office of the Provost
- Across American higher education DEI staffing is 3.4 personnel per 100 tenured/tenure track professors*

*James Paul, "Diversity University: DEI Bloat in the Academy," Hoover Institution, July 27, 2021

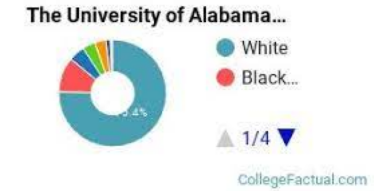
Hoover DEI Rankings per 100 Faculty

<u>University</u>	<u>DEI Personnel</u>	<u>Total Faculty</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
Syracuse	65	994	7.4 per 100 Faculty
Michigan	163	2,827	5.8 per 100 Faculty
Alabama	31	1,005	3.1 per 100 Faculty
Auburn	20	1,070	1.9 per 100 Faculty

DEI compared to # of Tenured/Tenured Track History Professors

<u>University</u>	<u>DEI Personnel</u>	<u>History Faculty</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
Georgia Tech	41	13	3.2 to 1
Michigan	163	72	2.3 to 1
Alabama	34	27	1.3 to 1
Auburn	20	29	.07 to 1

U of A Path Forward Update 2021-2022



- 1. Recruit, retain, and graduate more diverse students**
- 2. Recruit and retain more diverse faculty and staff members**
- 3. Create a more welcoming campus environment**
- 4. Develop cultural competences for faculty, staff, and students**
- 5. Expand Diversity, Equity and Inclusion infrastructure**

Goal #2: Recruit and Retain More Diverse Faculty and Staff (1)

“Develop and implement a campus-wide inclusive hiring practice workshop for faculty and staff hiring committees to support the goal of increasing the diversity of staff and tenure-track faculty. The workshop would include training on recognizing bias, building a diverse candidate pool and incorporating institutional cultural responsiveness in the search process.”

Goal#2: Recruit and Retain More Diverse Faculty and Staff (2)

“Institute appropriate checks and balances and certification for each faculty and staff search process to insure all known inclusive hiring best-practice techniques are employed. (Examples: requesting availability pool data from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, advertising, developing the pool, non-bias review applications.)

Goal #2: Recruit and Retain More Diverse Faculty and Staff (3)

“Embed DEI competencies into the employee’s annual performance review process to measure inclusive behavior by employees, ensure accountability and goal #3 of the strategic plan (Creating a More Welcoming Campus Environment), track employee growth over time, and recognize the contributions of outstanding employees.”

Recruit and Retain More Diverse Faculty and Staff

“Conduct with the leadership of the provost, a review the tenure and promotion process to re-value the service performed by faculty in the interest of advancing racial equality. The review would take into account such work as mentoring of underrepresented students or performing service to underserved communities. Units (departments) should ensure that these highly valued contributions of the tenure and promotion process do not prohibit faculty from advancing in rank in a timely manner.”

Why Does This Matter?



MARCH 2022
DIVERSITY
PROGRAMMING



Academic Standings



- **US News & World Report, 2011 Rankings**
 - **University of Alabama #31st among publicly-funded American universities**
 - 2007-2015, Alabama remained in “Top 40 or top 50” of publicly funded universities
 - Only once did Auburn rank above Alabama
- **USNWR 2021-22 rankings**
 - **University of Alabama #67th among public universities & 148th among both public and private universities**
 - Ranks #199th in “Outcomes” (Retention and graduation rates in six years)
 - Ranks #255th in “Faculty Resources” (includes salaries)
- **Auburn ranks 42nd among publicly funded universities (Top 50) and 99th among both public and private universities**

What Can be Done?



Suggestions for Reform

- **Do away with tenure**
 - Out of date
 - Often abused
- **Substitute three-to-five-year renewable contracts**
 - **New hires on a three-year contract, first year is probationary**
 - At end of second year negotiate your next contract of three-to-five years
 - If contract will NOT be renewed, faculty member has a year to find a job
 - **Step wage increase can be negotiated at contract renewal**
 - **Department chairs review/renewing authority for faculty**
 - **Deans, review/renewing authority for department chairs**
 - **Provost for the deans**

Suggested Reforms: Faculty Recruitment



- Focus on the pursuit of academic excellence
- Apply it to faculty recruitment
 - New faculty recruited based on how his/her graduate education fits the job requirement
 - Source of the doctorate (What university)
 - Dissertation title (Promise of further research)
 - Papers delivered/published while a student
- Senior Faculty
 - Scholarly reputation, record of pedagogy, “fit” with the department
- Minimize factors like race, gender, sexual orientation (diversity)

Suggested Reforms Student Recruitment



- **Revive ACT and SAT scores as PART of evaluating applications**
 - **Combine it with high school GPA, earned honors, and activities**
- **Consideration blind to race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation**
- **Remember University of Alabama is our state's "Flagship University"**
 - **Should recruit the best possible potential students FROM Alabama**
 - **Recruit nationally but not as a priority**
 - **Mid-term grades SHOULD serve to "awaken" students to college life**
 - **Provide ample tutorial services as soon as weaknesses are identified**
- **Students with less potential should apply to directional state universities with possibility of transferring in based on freshman academic record**



Reform Administration and Curriculum



- **Cut administrative structure and “build better smaller”**
- **Divest courses in majors that have no future: African-American Studies, Black Studies, Women’s Studies, LGBTQIA Studies**
 - **Most of those fields can be covered as part of majors in history, English, sociology, anthropology, and psychology**
- **Retain studies that provide a professional credential, i.e. Nursing, Military Studies, Air and Space Studies (ROTC)**
- **Divest “studies” that have no foreign language requirement**
- **Higher education should be the ultimate “Meritocracy”**



Classical College



- **Establish a “Classical College” on par with “Honors College”**
- **Stress Great Ideas of Western Civilization**
- **Require two years of a classic language: Greek or Latin**
- **Require two years of a modern language, one if proficiency from high school can be assessed**
- **Extensive readings in history, literature, stress the importance of the Enlightenment and of America’s founding documents: Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights**
- **Apply updated versions of the Trivium and Quadrivium**



Act Now!
<https://alabamiansaei.org>



- **Alabama Office of DEI is over half-way into a 5-Years Plan**
 - Division of DEI currently boasts 1,500 courses have a diversity-focus
 - DEI objective is that by 2025 every course (8,000 +) will have a DEI focus
 - Entire faculty and administration will be DEI-oriented and certified
 - Every student activity to include Greek system, clubs, social outreach will be DEI certified and diversity focused

If accomplished, liberal higher education will be finished at the Capstone!

- Write state legislators, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, and the University of Alabama Board of Trustees
- Demand evidence as to the effectiveness of DEI and the efficacy of its goals
- Insist that the content of DEI programs and services include a *diversity of perspectives* inclusive of all students

Questions and Comments

"A university our football team can be proud of"
President E. Roger Sayers, 1988-96

