
From: Hebda, Kathy <Kathy.Hebda@fldoe.org>
Sent: Wednesday, December 28, 2022, 12:12 PM
To: Tonjua Williams <Williams.Tonjua@spcollege.edu>
Cc: Mack, Henry <Henry.Mack@fldoe.org>
Subject: RE:

President Williams – thank you for the conversation yesterday evening. Based on that, here is something for your consideration. Thank you – KH

From: Mack, Henry <Henry.Mack@fldoe.org>
Sent: Tuesday, December 27, 2022 5:03 PM
To: Williams.Tonjua <Williams.Tonjua@spcollege.edu>
Cc: Hebda, Kathy <Kathy.Hebda@fldoe.org>
Subject: FW:

The presidents of the Florida College System (FCS), by and through the FCS Council of Presidents (COP), jointly commit to eradicating all forms of unlawful discrimination from its campuses, including new forms of discrimination and totalitarianism that have taken hold within academia. While these new discriminatory and anti-intellectual practices are not as apparent as most, they are nevertheless equally as insidious, and found in most diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

Historically, DEI initiatives served to *increase* the diversity of thought, underrepresented populations—and these populations' academic success—and worked to promote the open access mission of our state college system. In recent years, however, DEI has come to represent the opposite. In most instances, DEI initiatives now push an ideology opposed to intellectual and academic freedom, freedom of expression, viewpoint diversity and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. It directly or indirectly implies the adoption of critical race theory and/or its various tenants. It also directly or indirectly assumes as true, or as settled science, certain gender ideologies, intersectionality, and/or the idea that systems of oppression should be the primary lens through which teaching and learning are analyzed and/or improved upon. This has led to many students, faculty, and staff feeling unwelcomed or unable to pursue their academic interests without fear of reprisal or being “canceled.”

The COP thus jointly rejects any and all DEI initiatives across our campuses, initiatives that unlawfully espouse, promote, advance, inculcate or compels belief in concepts set forth in House Bill 7 (2022) and beyond. Moreover, the COP will jointly work to restore a campus environment that upholds objectivity in teaching and learning and professional development. In the development of knowledge, research endeavors, faculty hiring and onboarding, and creative activities, a college faculty and student body must be free to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and scholarly criticism, and to examine ideas in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence, in a nondiscriminatory manner. For example, the COP will work to cease all unconscious or implicit bias trainings and activity, professional development practices, and/or student activities that make race, national origin, or sex the primary lens through which our students and residents are engaged, taught, and/or uplifted.

Moreover, the COP will neither fund nor promote any institutional practice, policy, or academic requirement, that indirectly or directly normalizes belief in systemic racism, gender ideology, or intersectionality. It will instead seek to reaffirm its commitment to merit, reason, fairness, cultivating intellectual autonomy and equality, evaluating our successes on achievements, not by group identifies.

By February 1st, 2023, then, the COP jointly commits to having eradicated all forms of discrimination from its campuses, especially these new forms of DEI and other anti-intellectual practices. The FCS presidents renew our commitment to cultivate the values that are foundational to maintaining our country's Common Good and we understand that a United States higher education is, at the end of the day, responsible for helping to maintain it.