

Critical Analyses of DEI Issues and Ways Forward

Issue briefs from the Diversity Scholars Network

Responding to attacks on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility

BY KEENAN COLQUITT, PHD, NCID PROGRAM MANAGER FOR DIVERSITY SCHOLAR ENGAGEMENT

The Problem

Attacks on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives, practices and policies are prevalent and escalating within the United State's education system. According to the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#), as of August 2024, 86 anti-DEI bills have been introduced and 14 have been signed into law.

How should those supporting DEIA respond? [NCID](#) is proud to highlight [DSN](#) members who have written and/or presented on how educational institutions can effectively counter these attacks on DEI.

The Experts



KEVIN COKLEY,
PHD

Professor of Psychology
and Associate Chair of
Diversity Initiatives at the
University of Michigan

Critics are passing anti-DEI laws. We have to fight back.

"...we have long known about the positive impact of diversity. Twenty years ago, U-M psychology professor emerita Patricia Gurin and colleagues provided [data](#) on the importance of diversity in the college experience. In terms of learning outcomes, they found that students with the most diverse experiences during college showed the greatest engagement in active thinking processes and growth in intellectual and academic skills. In terms of democracy, they found that students' experiences with diversity were consistently and positively related to engagement in citizenship activities and motivation to take the

perspective of others, and other outcomes essential for democracy to thrive... **While imperfect, DEI is a noble goal that does not deserve to be slandered — and it is time for supporters to go on the offensive and defend diversity with the same passion as critics of DEI.**



MICHAEL GAVIN,
PHD

Author and President of
Delta College

Writing in Diverse: Issues In Higher Education

“What if we can love a new higher education into existence? Loving a new world into reality not by strategic planning and measurement. Loving it through action, by talking about a world where all belong, not defending why we do DEI. What if love was the primary tool we used to assert our values and we wrapped our arms around all students, all stories, all knowledge?”



JAMES HOLLY, JR.,
PHD

Assistant Professor of
Mechanical Engineering at
the University of Michigan

Recording: DEI Needs to D-I-E

“I talk about reconstructing education, but beyond the classroom, we need to look at the gates that prevent black folks from getting [to universities like UM] or being successful because we look at other institutions, specifically HBCUs [Historically Black Colleges and Universities], they are not only accepting students but they are doing well to elevate and help them prosper and discover in advance the gifts that they have.”

Some Solutions

Faculty and staff who want to create more equitable and inclusive institutions to benefit all students can:

- Acknowledge the limitations of our education system and that our current methods towards equity include missteps, which are a normal part of course correcting initiatives.

- Advocate for the use of evidence- based practices in teaching and evaluation to create greater equity.
- Speak out about the positive outcomes of inclusive practices and [set the record straight on DEI](#).

For more information, [Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings](#) offers a blueprint for developing more equitable systems of education [in this podcast](#).

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Kevin Cokley

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James Holly, Jr.

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Michael Gavin

Michael Gavin

Goodrom, L. (2021, August 20). [Photograph]. CollegePresidents.org. Retrieved from <https://collegepresidents.org/member/michael-gavin/>