



DEI

University System of Georgia's board cracked down on DEI. Will universities comply?

COLE MURPHY - GEORGIA TECH · DECEMBER 10, 2024

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The University System of Georgia's Board of Regents recently passed a series of regulations that curb diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives across the system's 26 universities, establishing institutional neutrality on political issues and strengthening its prohibition of diversity statements in hiring.



Now the hard part begins, as enforcement will be a key component to the policies' success, according to some watchdogs.

"These are just words on paper," David Bray, a professor of finance at Kennesaw State University and **major outspoken critic** of DEI in Georgia universities, told *The College Fix*.

Bray said he is enthusiastic about the new policies, but they are only the first step in a longer fight: "I give them kudos, but now the real work must begin."

Laura Beltz, director of policy reform at the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, also said the policy changes in Georgia are a positive step, but it will likely be difficult for USG to enforce political neutrality.

"Just generally speaking, when we see universities committing to institutional neutrality, it's more of a set of principles that university leadership is going to follow," she told *The Fix*.

"Typically, it's not really an enforceable document."

System leaders did not respond to requests for comment about how they plan to enforce the new rules.

Last year, the system stopped requiring diversity statements in hiring as an **HR position**, but at November's board meeting, the regents codified the restriction into policy, **barring** "ideological tests, affirmations, and oaths, including diversity statements," according to the policy changes.

"These proposed updates strengthen USG's academic communities," the USG Board of Regents said to *The College Fix* in a statement. "They allow institutions to foster a campus environment where people have the freedom to share their thoughts and learn from one another through objective scholarship and inquiry. They reflect an unyielding obligation to protect freedom, provide quality higher education and promote student success."

University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Georgia State University, and Kennesaw State University did not respond to requests for comment. Several Georgia professors also did not respond to *The College Fix's* requests for comment.

"We are committed to hiring those who have the experience and credentials necessary to do their jobs well, without regard to their beliefs, opinions or identities," said a Georgia College and State University statement to *The College Fix*. "Our primary focus has always been to prepare students to enter the workforce ready to make a positive impact on the planet, and the new policies do not alter our commitment to that tradition going forward."

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