

University of Central Oklahoma Student Congress
8th Meeting of the Spring Session of the 27th Legislature (2024)

CR24-209

Authors: Chair Barry, President Harman

An act regarding the current state of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education in the wake of Governor Stitt's Executive Order 2023-31; taking an official stance supporting and reiterating the importance of DEI; calling on University administration to make a public statement in support of diversity, equity, and inclusion; to be distributed to President Lamb, the President's Cabinet, and the Presidents of the Faculty and Staff Senates.

WHEREAS, recent executive and legislative action negatively impacts diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives within our public university system, undermining progress towards a more inclusive and equitable academic environment;

WHEREAS, DEI initiatives are crucial for ensuring all members of our academic community, regardless of background, have the necessary support and resources to thrive, enriching the educational experience for all by promoting diversity and inclusion;

WHEREAS, the success and retention of underrepresented students, faculty, and staff are closely tied to DEI initiatives, which provide essential support systems, mentorship, professional development, and pathways for leadership roles;

WHEREAS, restricting DEI initiatives contradicts the principle of academic freedom and risks creating a homogenous academic culture, contrary to the essence of higher learning;

WHEREAS, universities play a pivotal role in preparing students for a diverse and interconnected world, making DEI initiatives vital for equipping them with empathy, understanding, and cultural competence;

WHEREAS, within the confines of existing state law, the spectrum of possibilities for strengthening DEI is vast and multifaceted. By embracing a holistic approach that encompasses community collaborations, volunteering, external grants and funding, curriculum integration, and student-led endeavors, the University of Central Oklahoma can develop a comprehensive approach and attitude regarding inclusivity that aligns with the legal frameworks in place; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE UCO STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The official position of UCO Student Association is diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral to the function of our campus community; and hindering these values are detrimental to the livelihood of our University. UCO Student Association requests that the University of Central Oklahoma's administration publicly commit to fostering an environment of diversity, equity, and inclusion by utilizing all available resources and partnerships to support, advocate for, and empower all, but especially the most underrepresented, members of its community, thereby ensuring their success and representation in all facets of university life.

Section 1. This legislation shall be distributed to the following.

Todd Lamb, President of the University of Central Oklahoma
Dr. Charlotte Simmons, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs
Kevin Freeman, Vice President of Finance and Operations
Adrienne Nobles, Vice President of Communications and Public Affairs
Art Cotton, Vice President of Advancement
Diane Feinberg, Vice President of People and Culture
Christopher Lynch, Vice President of Enrollment and Student Success
Kendall Parrish, General Counsel
Dr. Alyssa Provencio, Faculty Senate President
Ellen Schmidt, Staff Senate President

Reviewing Committee(s): Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Academic Affairs

Committee Recommendation: DO PASS

Action Taken by Congress:

Izzi Barry, Chair of the UCO Student Congress

Date