

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 8, 2023

Mr. Walter “Ted” Carter Jr.
Incoming President
The Ohio State University
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue, Fifth Floor
Columbus, OH 43201

Dear President Carter,

I write to express frustration with the culture at my alma mater, The Ohio State University, and to understand how that culture might change once you become its president. In particular, I am concerned by recent news reports that considerations related to “diversity, equity, and inclusion” have been infused into the university’s hiring practices and curricula.

My concerns began late last month when researcher John Sailer of the National Association of Scholars published his analysis of the university’s public records in a major newspaper.¹ Sailer discovered that so-called “diversity” considerations—including both applicants’ immutable characteristics, like race, ethnicity, and sex, and applicants’ *views* on diversity as a social and political matter—were central to faculty hiring decisions across the College of Arts and Sciences.² One hiring committee at the university even admitted that “[d]iversity and inclusion featured prominently in all [its] discussions” about applicants and that, “[n]aturally, most weight was given to candidates from URM”—*i.e.*, “underrepresented” minorities.³

Before rushing to judgment, I made sure that Ohio State had a chance to convey its side of the story and proffer any rebuttals to Sailer’s analysis. University administrators assured me and my staff that a new program of “standardization” would remove illegal considerations like race and sex from the hiring process and preclude the use of “diversity statements” to discriminate against those who reject DEI culture. Though I still had some concerns, those conversations left me feeling optimistic that some of the worst abuses of recent years would be corrected by the university itself and that further reforms could be worked out in private.

However, I recently learned that the problem here may go well beyond hiring practices. Once again, a public records request has revealed that a core function of the university—this time,

¹ John Sailer, *Inside Ohio State’s DEI Factory*, WALL STREET J., Nov. 20, 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/inside-ohio-states-dei-factory-faculty-report-diversity-hiring-cefd804d>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

teaching—has been compromised in the name of DEI dogma.⁴ It turns out that earlier *this semester*, Ohio State undergraduates were being asked to “Unpack the Invisible Knapsack” of privilege, including “White Privilege,” “Heterosexual Privilege,” and “Able-Bodied Privilege.”⁵ One of the materials given to students in the course at issue encouraged white students to confess that “[w]hiteness . . . subtly trained [them] to visit” “hostility, distress, and violence . . . upon people of color.”⁶ In other words, students in this course were being taught to traffic in various race- and identity-based stereotypes, including the stereotype that white people are inherently wicked and oppressive.

It seems that the rot of “DEI”—a modern gloss on racism, antisemitism, and other ancient prejudices—is pervasive at Ohio State. Your presidency is the kind of change in leadership that I hope will occasion a serious review of these ideas, their legality, and their role on campus. I’d like to know whether and how you plan to right the ship. And I am most interested in your response to the following questions:

- Will you allow faculty to discriminate on the basis of viewpoint during your tenure as Ohio State’s president? For example, would you allow a faculty hiring committee to reject a scholar’s application because the scholar had previously criticized the Black Lives Matter movement?
- Will you permit undergraduate courses to inculcate race- and identity-based stereotypes, including the stereotype that white people are inherently privileged? If not, will you terminate members of the faculty who attempt to present racial stereotypes as fact?

On a personal note, I don’t relish sending this letter. I am alumnus of The Ohio State University, and I’m extremely proud of the university. Some of the fondest memories of my life were made there.

I fear much has changed. Some of the poorest counties in our state are in the Appalachian region, a region that is disproportionately white, and suffers from a host of socioeconomic problems at higher rates than the country at large. I wonder how many poor children have come to Ohio State as I did—first in their family to go to college and wonderstruck by the campus’s beauty and infinite possibilities—only to learn that they are “privileged” because of the color of their skin.

Ohio State is not an Ivy League school. It is one of our nation’s oldest land grant schools, established to serve the people of our state. I want Ohio State to be successful, but I believe that success depends on serving all citizens of our state rather than parroting the latest madness to come out of Harvard and Yale.

I will direct my staff to schedule a meeting at your earliest convenience, in order to discuss these and other matters.

⁴ Kyle Morris, *Ohio State University health course requires students to address their White, heterosexual privileges*, FOX NEWS, Dec. 6, 2023, <https://www.foxnews.com/us/university-ohio-health-course-requires-students-address-white-heterosexual-privileges>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JDV', with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

JD VANCE
United States Senator