

## Testimony before the House Committee on Higher Education on SB 17

Mr. Chairman, Members, my name is Daniel Bonevac. I'm here to support Senate Bill 17, representing myself purely as a private citizen of Texas. I've been on college campuses for more than fifty years—for the past 43 years, as a professor of philosophy. I've taught more than 20,000 students. My YouTube videos have more than 5 million views. My eleventh book, on the history of ethics, will be out in October.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. They *sound* good. But let me tell you how they appear from a faculty member's point of view. These offices aren't what they purport to be. They're *radical political organizations indoctrinating students and training activists. They act as the campus thought police.*

**Diversity?** DEI offices and programs treat any dissent from the ideology that underlies their entire project as heresy. Using the wrong word, laughing at the wrong joke, liking the wrong social media post, asking the wrong question in class—all can lead to serious consequences. There's a reason why comics won't appear on college campuses anymore. Saying the wrong thing gets you into trouble. You can't teach balanced courses that look at both sides of a controversial question. You can't judge ideas on their merits; even saying the word 'merit' can get you into trouble. (It's supposedly "white supremacist.")

**Equity?** To understand what DEI offices advocate, we have to look at their ideology. I call it *Postmodern Manicheanism*.

- It is *postmodern*, because it rejects the possibility of objective truth, objective knowledge, and reason. It replaces them with emotion, "lived experience," and relations of raw power.
- It is *Manichean*, because it divides the world into good and evil people and groups, the oppressors and the oppressed. Individual people matter only representatives of those groups. Which group you belong to doesn't depend on anything you believe, aim for, or do. It depends on accidents of your birth.

That's what DEI offices mean by 'equity': discriminating against the oppressors and in favor of the oppressed. *'Equity' means discrimination.*

**Inclusion?** Dividing people into morally charged categories doesn't make them feel included. The programs certainly don't welcome those who are assigned to the oppressor category. But they don't welcome those of the oppressed category either. They're told not to trust the people around them—that their classmates, their teachers, the entire institution, and society at large are systematically biased against them. How can that make anyone think that they belong? And it doesn't. At Texas A&M, surveys show, 85% felt that they belonged before DEI offices appeared; now, after DEI, 55% do.

Let me close by pointing to two deeper problems. First, DEI destroys *social capital*—the networks of trust and cooperation that bind people together. DEI tells people to react emotionally, not logically; to obsess over small things ("microaggressions," "microinsults," etc.); and to suspect the motives of people around them. Students end up feeling isolated—that they *don't* belong.

Second, DEI corrupts the central mission of a university: *to discover and communicate the truth*. DEI rejects the very *concept* of truth. Certain topics, questions, and methodologies are out of bounds in research and in the classroom. When we get to the point that DEI advocates denounce science and mathematics as racist—and *they do*—it's a sign: the threat to the university is profound.

Thank you.

