



# Educating *for* Citizenship

ARIZONA CASE STUDY

NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION  
*of* SCHOLARS

John D. Sailer





# Educating for Citizenship

*Arizona Case Study*

A report by the

NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION  
*of* SCHOLARS

420 Madison Avenue, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10017

Author

## John Sailer

Senior Research Fellow  
National Association of Scholars

Cover Design by Beck&Stone

Interior Design by Chance Layton

Published May 2022

© 2022 National Association of Scholars



# About the National Association of Scholars

## Mission

The National Association of Scholars is an independent membership association of academics and others working to sustain the tradition of reasoned scholarship and civil debate in America's colleges and universities. We uphold the standards of a liberal arts education that fosters intellectual freedom, searches for the truth, and promotes virtuous citizenship.

## What We Do

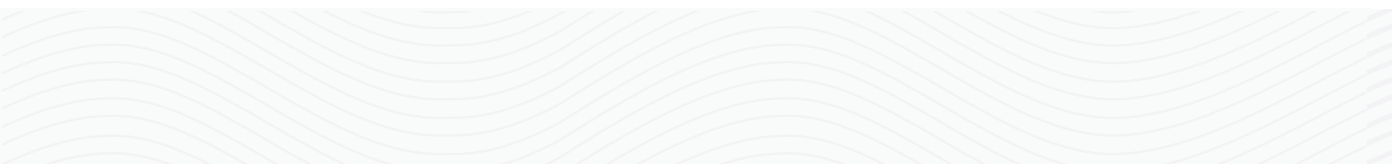
We publish a quarterly journal, *Academic Questions*, which examines the intellectual controversies and the institutional challenges of contemporary higher education.

We publish studies of current higher education policy and practice with the aim of drawing attention to weaknesses and stimulating improvements.

Our website presents educated opinion and commentary on higher education, and archives our research reports for public access.

NAS engages in public advocacy to pass legislation to advance the cause of higher education reform. We file friend-of-the-court briefs in legal cases defending freedom of speech and conscience and the civil rights of educators and students. We give testimony before congressional and legislative committees and engage public support for worthy reforms.

NAS holds national and regional meetings that focus on important issues and public policy debates in higher education today.



## Membership

NAS membership is open to all who share a commitment to its core principles of fostering intellectual freedom and academic excellence in American higher education. A large majority of our members are current and former faculty members. We also welcome graduate and undergraduate students, teachers, college administrators, and independent scholars, as well as non-academic citizens who care about the future of higher education.

NAS members receive a subscription to our journal *Academic Questions* and access to a network of people who share a commitment to academic freedom and excellence. We offer opportunities to influence key aspects of contemporary higher education.

Visit our website, [www.nas.org](http://www.nas.org), to learn more about NAS and to become a member.

## Our Recent Publications

*Skewed History: Textbook Coverage of Early America and the New Deal.* 2021.

*Climbing Down: How the Next Generation Science Standards Diminish Scientific Literacy.* 2021.

*Priced Out: What College Costs America.* 2021.

*Freedom to Learn: Amending the Higher Education Act.* 2021.

*Rebalancing the Narrative: Higher Education, Border Security, and Immigration.* 2021.

*Disfigured History: How the College Board Demolishes the Past.* 2020.

*Dear Colleague: The Weaponization of Title IX.* 2020.

*Corrupting the College Board: Confucius Institutes and K-12 Education.* 2020.

*Critical Care: Policy Recommendations to Restore American Higher Education after the 2020 Coronavirus Shutdown.* 2020.

*The Lost History of Western Civilization.* 2020.

# Cont

**Introduction** \_\_\_\_\_

**Political and Legal Background** \_\_\_\_\_

**General Studies Authorized by ABOR:  
American Institutions and “Diversity”** \_\_\_\_\_

**General Studies at the Universities** \_\_\_\_\_

University of Arizona \_\_\_\_\_

Arizona State University \_\_\_\_\_

Northern Arizona University \_\_\_\_\_

**The Prevalence of DEI** \_\_\_\_\_

University of Arizona \_\_\_\_\_

Arizona State University \_\_\_\_\_

Northern Arizona University \_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion and Policy Recommendations** \_\_\_\_\_



# ents

---

10

---

12

---

13

---

15

---

15

---

17

---

19

---

21

---

22

---

23

---

25

---

27

# Introduction

Arizona's elected representatives have worked hard in recent years to improve Arizona's civics education. They have had some effect in K-12 education, most notably by requiring Arizona high school graduates to pass a civics examination based upon the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States citizenship and immigration services.

Yet they have had far less effect on improving Arizona's system of higher education. Public universities possess a civic mission, which justifies their existence as much as do their missions to create "new knowledge," encourage scientific innovation, and boost economic growth. In fact, Americans have long understood a university's civic goal to be more basic. Americans see higher education as the training ground for leaders, and a place for citizens to develop their civic capacities. It is incumbent upon Arizona's leaders to take this mission seriously.

To this end, the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) has reaffirmed the universities' civic charge. In its new general education policy, ABOR clearly mandated that Arizona's universities must lead every student in the study of "American institutions," and it clarified that this must include content typically found in a robust course of instruction in American history and civics.

Arizona's universities, however, have responded with evasion and misdirection. At each university, the curricular changes that incorporate these requirements are vague and weak. Each university, moreover, subordinates American history and civics to separate initiatives to impose courses and programming in "diversity and inclusion." In fact, the concepts of *diversity, equity, and inclusion* (DEI) have become the guiding principle of these institutions. In practice, DEI programming often requires assent to the ideology that there should be equal results for identity groups in all areas of politics, society, and culture; ascribes any deviation from these equal results to *systemic oppression* and *privilege*; requires every aspect of life to be dedicated to removing oppression; and calls for supervisory bureaucracies to enforce adherence to this ideology. Arizona's universities, through their commitment to DEI, have

“redefined” their civic mission through a new “lens,” that of oppression, power, privilege, and narrowly-defined group identity. In other words, they increasingly teach Arizonan college students that American history and government have been and are systematically oppressive, and that they can only fulfill their civic mission by transforming every putatively oppressive aspect of their country’s politics, society, and culture.

Arizona’s elected representatives and ABOR did not intend this when they called on Arizona’s public universities to strengthen the study of American institutions.

This report surveys the political and legal background for Arizona’s civics instruction in public higher education. It then examines in detail how the three major public universities under the jurisdiction of ABOR—the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, and Northern Arizona University—teach civics and American history, and how they have substituted diversity, equity, and inclusion for civics in their curriculum and their “co-curriculum.” It concludes with recommendations to Arizona’s citizens, elected representatives, and ABOR on how they may ensure that Arizona’s public universities fulfill their civic mission, and especially their mandate to instruct students in American institutions.

# Political and Legal Background

Arizona’s statutory commitment to civics education is longstanding, but has deepened in recent years. These statutes, however, all concern K-12 education; Arizona has no statutory commitment to civics education in public higher education. In this, it differs from neighboring states that require undergraduates to take courses in American history and/or government, such as California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, and Texas.<sup>1</sup>

Statute	Title	Recent Legislation: Dates Passed and Amended
Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 15-259	State seal of civics literacy program; requirements; diploma	2018; amended 2021
Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 15-506	Flag, Constitution and the Bill of Rights display; recitation of the pledge of allegiance; exemption	
Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 15-701.01	High schools; graduation; requirements; community college or university courses; transfer from other schools; academic credit	Amended 2013-2015, 2017-2019, 2021-2022
Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 15-710	Instruction in state and federal constitutions, American institutions and history of Arizona	
Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 15-710.01	Sandra Day O’Connor civics celebration day; civics instruction requirement	2020
Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 15-717	American history and heritage	Amended 2018
Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 15-717.01	Bible influence; elective course; requirements; immunity	
Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 15-719	Character education program instruction; fund	

Among the most recent changes are the establishment of the Sandra Day O’Connor Civics Celebration Day (2020) and an amendment (2022) that “pushes the Arizona Civics Test passing score up from 60 to 70 percent, allows students to take the test as early as middle school and requires test score data to be made publicly available online.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> American History Act, Civics Alliance, <https://civicsalliance.org/higher-education-civics-reform/american-history-act/>.

<sup>2</sup> “Governor Ducey Signs Legislation Strengthening Arizona’s Position as a National Leader in American Civics Education,” Office of the Governor of Doug Ducey, March 24, 2022, <https://azgovernor.gov/governor/news/2022/03/governor-ducey-signs-legislation-strengthening-arizonas-position-national>.

# General Studies Authorized by ABOR: American Institutions and “Diversity”

The Arizona Board of Regents possesses the power to regulate general education requirements at the three universities it supervises. In 2018, ABOR began to consider a systemwide requirement in American history and government, and in 2019 it updated its General Studies policy to mandate the study of “American Institutions,” along with other content areas.<sup>3</sup> As revised in 2021, the ABOR policy now requires that each university’s general education requirements, “consisting of a minimum of 32 semester credits of coursework,” should study “American Institutions, which includes the study of Economics Theory and U.S. History.”<sup>4</sup> The American Institutions sequence should include at least:

(I) how the history of the United States continues to shape the present; (II) the basic principles of American constitutional democracy and how they are applied under a republican form of government; (III) the United States Constitution and major American constitutional debates and developments; (IV) the essential founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of American Institutions of self governance; (V) landmark Supreme Court cases that have shaped law and society; (VI) the civic actions necessary for effective citizenship and civic participation in a self-governing society – for example civil dialog and civil disagreement; and (VII) basic economic knowledge to critically assess public policy options and to inform professional and personal decisions.<sup>5</sup>

3 Michael Poliakoff, “How Purdue University, Arizona Regents, and Others Educate for Citizenship,” *Forbes*, December 2, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelpoliakoff/2021/12/02/how-purdue-university-arizona-regents-and-others-educate-for-citizenship/?sh=1a7251966be6>.

4 2-210 General Education, Arizona Board of Regents, February 2021, <https://public.azregents.edu/Policy%20Manual/2-210%20General%20Education.pdf>.

5 2-210 General Education.

Any course that meets these requirements—provided that it does so in a straightforward manner—would provide students a good basic civic education in both American constitutional history and the obligations of republican citizenship.

The ABOR policy, however, also forwards two omnipresent values of the modern university: diversity and inclusion. It aims to create graduates who embrace the values of “diversity, inclusion and constructive dialog through civil discourse,” and its general education requirements “must also include a clear and direct education around questions related to ethics, civility, diversity, and inclusion.”<sup>6</sup> As we shall see below, university administrators and professors generally use these terms to denote a large and detailed program of education designed to instill specific political beliefs—beliefs that redefine America’s civic ideals and institutions.

---

<sup>6</sup> 2-210 General Education.

# General Studies at the Universities

The University of Arizona, Arizona State University, and Northern Arizona University all acknowledge ABOR's new American Institutions requirement. Recently, both the University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University announced their new general education curricula, making explicit reference to the American Institutions requirement. Arizona State University also acknowledges the requirement, without explaining how it will be carried out. But a close examination reveals that students at these universities are likely to learn American history only through courses that focus on particular identity groups or issues of social justice.

## University of Arizona

In 2021, the University of Arizona (UA) announced its *General Education Refresh*, a series of major changes to its general education curriculum.<sup>7</sup> The university's General Education website repeatedly acknowledges the American Institutions requirement. The new curriculum, however, does little to ensure that students master the basics of American history and civics. Rather, it tilts the scale further toward teaching American history through the lenses of power, oppression, and identity-group politics.

UA's general education requirements include no course devoted to American Institutions. Its website notes, rather, that an education in American institutions will be "embedded throughout the GE curriculum."<sup>8</sup> Incoming students will be required to take a "Civics Assessment," which tests their knowledge of US history and government, but even students who demonstrate serious knowledge gaps will not be required to take remedial courses.<sup>9</sup> Rather, the "results of the assessment will include recommended Gen Ed courses

7 *General Education Refresh*, University of Arizona, <https://provost.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/Gen%20Ed%20Refresh%20Slides.pdf>.

8 *Mission, Vision, & Outcomes*, University of Arizona, <https://ge.arizona.edu/curriculum/mission-vision-outcomes>.

9 *Mission, Vision, & Outcomes*.

to fulfill the requirements”—and these recommended courses will “also cover areas of need in the students’ civic knowledge.”<sup>10</sup> At best, students will receive a list of courses that embed American history and civics.

A document explaining the *General Education Refresh* shows what this assessment and recommendation approach might look like in action. It notes that a student could satisfy the American Institution requirement by taking “Introduction to GE (First-Year civics assessment with recommendations); Composition II; Introduction to Economics; Data, Privacy, and Freedom.”<sup>11</sup> While “Introduction to Economics” is bound to cover some of the required American Institutions material, this sample clearly falls short of the spirit of the ABOR requirements.

Even if UA required robust American history and civics coursework, that work would be overshadowed and distorted by the new diversity requirements. The *General Education Refresh* requires students to take a total of seven “Core Courses” under the ambiguous categories of “Exploring Perspectives” and “Building Connections.”<sup>12</sup> Each of these core courses—whether in the Exploring Perspectives or Building Connections category—must carry one or two “attributes.” The four available attributes are “Diversity and Equity,” “World Cultures and Society,” “Quantitative Reasoning,” and “Writing.” The upshot of this policy is that, if a core course does not emphasize writing, math, or world cultures, it must emphasize the ideologically-inflected categories of diversity and equity. The Office of General Education provides a checklist, showing exactly what sort of course qualifies for the diversity and equity attribute.<sup>13</sup>

---

10 *Mission, Vision, & Outcomes*

11 *General Education Refresh*.

12 *General Education Refresh*.

13 “Deep Dive Sessions,” University of Arizona, accessed March 1, 2022, <https://provost.arizona.edu/content/deep-dive-sessions>.



### Checklist for Courses with Diversity & Equity Attribute

Does my course do all three of the following?

- Center one or more marginalized populations inside the United States. (These include but are not limited to: racial/ethnic minorities, women, LGBTQIA+ people, disabled people, people from marginalized communities and societies, socioeconomically disadvantaged communities and/or people from colonized societies.)
- Explore how relationships among diversity, power, equity and/or social justice have been analyzed and debated through the lens of one or more disciplinary perspectives inside the United States.
- Ensure that voices from the communities and/or societies that are studied in the course are centered in the syllabus.

Does my course also do at least one of the following?

- Focus on how social, environmental, institutional, political and/or other systemic structures influence how knowledge is constructed, whether historically or contemporarily.
- Support students in comprehending how individuals, communities, and societies experience privilege and oppression/marginalization.
- Support students in promoting meaningful action at whatever scale to create a more equitable society, articulating meaningful ethical responses to help create a more equitable society, or connecting classroom discussions to real-world situations.

ABOR provided a lengthy list of qualities that should belong in a course devoted to American Institutions. UA effectively has ignored that requirement. What the university has done instead is to create even more extensive DEI requirements in its general education curriculum.

## Arizona State University

At present, Arizona State University does not mandate any coursework in United States history in either its general education or graduation requirements. Students might choose to take courses that cover United States history to fulfill other general education distribution requirements, such as Social-Behavioral Sciences. The Arizona State University catalog notes, however, that the university intends to change its requirement in response to the new Arizona Board of Regents general education requirements policy. The catalog notes that the new required courses will satisfy the American Institutions requirement, but unlike the University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University, Arizona State University has released little information on what its new curriculum might look like.

Thus, as it stands, ASU provides little incentive for students to take American civic education courses. A survey of ASU's Fall 2021 course offerings reveals that the university does not give priority to conventional American history, government, or civics survey courses, such as HST 109 *United States to 1865*, HST 110 *United States Since 1865*, and POS 310 *American*

*National Government*.<sup>14</sup> While these courses are offered in the general education curriculum, they are far outnumbered by the many courses that satisfy the university’s diversity awareness area requirements.

Under Social-Behavioral Sciences, the requirement most likely to include any American Institutions courses, ASU offers a total of twenty-five out of the 944 in-person classes, less than 3% of the available classes, which would qualify as conventional American history or American government survey courses.

**Arizona State University, Fall 2021, Social-Behavioral Sciences  
Conventional American History and American Government Survey Courses**

- HST 109** *United States to 1865* (six sections)
- HST 110** *United States Since 1865* (four sections)
- POS 110** *American Government & Politics* (seven sections)
- POS 310** *American National Government* (five sections)
- POS 313** *The Congress*
- POS 314** *The American Presidency*
- POS 315** *The Supreme Court*

Seventy-nine further available in-person class sections, about 8% of the available classes, address some portion of the content prescribed by the Arizona Board of Regents’ American Institutions requirement. Many of these courses, however, emphasize social justice and activism (PAF 112 *Identity, Service and American Democracy*), examine episodes in American history (HST 408 *Civil War & Reconstruction*), or focus on leadership skills that have little to do with American history and civics (PAF 311 *Leadership and Change*).

By contrast, 142 of the in-person Social-Behavioral Sciences class sections, some 16% of the available classes, satisfy the “Cultural Diversity in the US” awareness area. These include SWU 180 *Intro to LGBT Studies*, HST 325 *Immigration & Ethnicity in US*, and WST 380 *Race, Gender, and Class*. All of these courses satisfy two requirements—both a core requirement and an awareness requirement—which makes them a more convenient and attractive choice for students.

Under Humanities, Arts, and Design, a total of thirteen out of 820 listed in-person class sections, less than 2% of the available classes, would qualify as a standard American history, government, or civics survey. These include CEL 200 *Great Debates Amer Pol & Econ* (six

<sup>14</sup> “Class Search,” Arizona State University, <https://webapp4.asu.edu/catalog/classlist/>.

sections), HST 109 *United States to 1865* (six sections), and POS 442 *American Political Thought* (one section).

As with Social-Behavioral Sciences, far more of these courses satisfy the Diversity requirements. seventy-eight of the Humanities, Arts, and Design in-person classes, nearly 10% of the available courses, are cross-listed as Cultural Diversity in the US. These include HST 194 *Topic: Racism to Justice: Reshaping Humanities 21st Cent*, JUS 370 *Cultural Diversity and Justice*, REL 202 *Religion and Popular Culture*, and WST 220 *Gender, Media and Culture*. All of these courses also satisfy two requirements, both a core requirement and an awareness requirement, making them the more likely choice for students.

Under the Historical Awareness category, finally, only fifteen of 258 available class sections, less than 6% of the available courses, would qualify as a conventional American history, government, or civics survey course. These courses are HST 109 *United States to 1865* (six sections), HST 110 *United States Since 1865* (four sections), HST 322 *Constitution Hist/US Since 1865* (one section), and GCU 113 *US/AZ Social Studies* (four sections). Once again, many more courses offer an account of American history from the perspective of identity group politics. thirty-six class sections of the Historical Awareness classes, nearly 14% of the total offered, fall under the categories of both Historical Awareness and Cultural Diversity in the US. Diversity courses outnumber potential American Institution courses in Social-Behavioral Sciences; Humanities, Arts, and Design; and Historical Awareness.

Arizona State University does provide a robust program of civics study through its School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership (SCETL). ASU did not create SCETL voluntarily. SCETL exists, rather, because the Arizona state legislature provided separate financing for it and has ensured by legislative proviso that ASU cannot assimilate SCETL into its regular, ideologically homogenous instruction.<sup>15</sup> SCETL offers undergraduate degrees “blending the transdisciplinary study of the liberal arts and classic texts with a rigorous examination of American ideas, institutions, and civic culture,” and its bachelor’s degrees require such courses as CEL 100: *Great Ideas of Politics and Ethics* and CEL 200: *Great Debates in American Politics*, along with an upper division course in American political thought.<sup>16</sup> What courses ASU offers that would support the American Institutions requirement are heavily clustered in SCETL.

## Northern Arizona University

Northern Arizona University (NAU), meanwhile, illustrates the limits of the American Institutions mandate. In October 2021, NAU announced that ABOR approved the university’s

15 Stephanie Saul, “Arizona Republicans Inject Schools of Conservative Thought into State Universities,” *New York Times*, February 26, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/26/us/arizona-state-conservatives.html>.

16 School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership, Arizona State University, <https://scetl.asu.edu>.

new general studies curriculum.<sup>17</sup> The university designed the curriculum, at least in part, as a response to the new ABOR general studies policy. To its credit, NAU has straightforwardly added American Institutions to its list of Knowledge Requirements, and its guidelines for the requirement incorporate ABOR's language almost verbatim.<sup>18</sup>

The new general studies curriculum places a heavy emphasis on diversity courses—according to the university's own Diversity Curriculum Committee, an “unprecedented” emphasis.<sup>19</sup> The old curriculum required students to take two diversity courses, U.S. Ethnic Diversity and Global Diversity.<sup>20</sup> In the new curriculum, there are four diversity designations: Global Diversity, Indigenous Peoples, Intersectional Identities, and U.S. Ethnic Diversity.<sup>21</sup> While the university website does not fully explain the requirements, a series of notes from committee meetings suggests that students must take a total of twelve credits in these categories: “The 12 credits of diversity requirements are unprecedented and puts NAU at the forefront of higher education.”<sup>22</sup>

Any course bearing a diversity designation, moreover, must be ideologically inflected to even qualify for that designation in the first place. The notes from an NAU Liberal Arts Committee meeting explain that foreign language courses cannot qualify as diversity courses “because they do not incorporate critical theory which the DCC [Diversity Curriculum Committee] expects of the courses it approves.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, the NAU now requires its students to take four courses that explicitly incorporate critical theory.

---

17 “NAU’s General Studies Program,” Northern Arizona University, October 6, 2021, [https://in.nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/123/2021/10/10-6-2021\\_NAUs-Gen-Ed-program-approved.pdf](https://in.nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/123/2021/10/10-6-2021_NAUs-Gen-Ed-program-approved.pdf).

18 “Knowledge Area Requirements,” Northern Arizona University, <https://in.nau.edu/curriculum-and-assessment/general-studies-program/knowledge-area-requirements/>.

19 “Diversity Curriculum Committee Notes of Discussion (amended),” Northern Arizona University, September 2, 2021, <https://in.nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/123/2021/10/DCC-approved-amended-notes-of-discussion-9.2.21.pdf>.

20 “Diversity Requirement,” Northern Arizona University, <https://in.nau.edu/curriculum-and-assessment/diversity-requirement/>.

21 “Program Description,” Northern Arizona University, <https://in.nau.edu/curriculum-and-assessment/general-studies-program/program-description/>.

22 “Diversity Curriculum Committee Notes of Discussion (amended).”

23 “Liberal Studies Committee Notes of Discussion,” Northern Arizona University, February 2, 2021, <https://in.nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/123/2021/03/LSC-approved-notes-of-discussion-2.2.21.pdf>.

# The Prevalence of DEI

**A**s the previous section shows, Arizona's major universities have begun to redefine civic education, even as they attempt to incorporate the study of American institutions. Increasingly, Arizona's universities have mandated a new version of United States history, not only through the formal curriculum but through growing initiatives that fall under the umbrella of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). These DEI initiatives have grown precipitously in a short time. They mandate university-wide training sessions and orientations that offer a skewed interpretation of United States history—one designed to emphasize power, privilege, oppression, and intersectionality.

Moreover, these DEI efforts compound the influence of diversity courses within the curriculum. We have reviewed the newly-announced DEI policies at Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, and Northern Arizona University. Examining the DEI policies at each, we found several notable characteristics.

- All three universities have promised or implemented exhaustive diversity, equity, and inclusion plans since the summer of 2020.
- All three universities have promised or implemented mandatory DEI training for all students and faculty.
- The University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University have promised to reevaluate their curricula through a DEI lens. Many individual departments at Arizona State University have made the same promise.
- Northern Arizona University has committed to making DEI a component of faculty evaluations and tenure requirements. Several departments at Arizona State University have made similar commitments.

These DEI initiatives cover both the curriculum and a large amount of administrative policy, some of it labeled as “co-curriculum.” The effect of these DEI initiatives far outweighs the American Institutions reform. The insertion of “diversity” courses into the universities’ general education requirements is only a small portion of the institutionalization of DEI at Arizona’s public universities.

Arizona’s public universities teach *diversity, equity, and inclusion* and pretend it is civics instruction.

## University of Arizona

In the summer of 2020, the “Coalition of Black Students and Allies at the University of Arizona” sent the university a list of demands, “With Revolutionary Intentions,” such as “We demand the integration of Cultural Competency training at the incoming freshman orientation as well as in the Housing and Residential Life that are more radical and centered on transformative justice” and “We demand an institutional reeducation program specifically for students who have been racist.”<sup>24</sup> UA’s Office of Diversity & Inclusion has incorporated these demands onto its website, but it notes that, of these “21 Recommendations,” two have been completed and fourteen are “Ongoing.”<sup>25</sup>

The university, meanwhile, has issued its own list of DEI commitments in its *Diversity Strategic Plan*, which includes various goals, tools, and metrics to immediately expand both the curriculum’s diversity requirements and the university’s DEI training.<sup>26</sup>

The *Diversity Strategic Plan* promises the now-standard array of bureaucratic DEI tools. Under the category of improving the university climate, the plan lists five tools: “Reimagining campus climate surveys,” “Increased D&I trainings,” “Sustainable D&I infrastructure,” “Equity Audit,” and “Accessible spaces & improved cultural spaces.” Meanwhile, under the category of “Inclusive Education,” the plan lists four tools: “Campus wide required trainings,” “Professional development plan for SLT & Cabinet,” “Intergroup dialogue and restorative justice programs,” and “Support inclusive research and teaching.” The metrics for this category emphasize training: “Number of trainings; number of campus community members completing trainings; connecting with campus climate surveys to actively measure impact on institutional climate; number of diverse research grants and articles.”

More measures will follow. The University of Arizona intends to spread responsibility for DEI work among the various departments. “In June 2021,” its DEI page notes, “ODI will begin working with every college, administrative unit, and division to gather your diversity, equity, and inclusion goals to develop strategies and tactics that align with our institutional vision. At this point, we are not creating new strategies but gathering current strategies so that we may identify areas of opportunity.”<sup>27</sup> This follows a broader trend in DEI programming, as many universities have required individual schools, academic departments, and administrative units to “do the work” and produce their own sets of DEI commitments.

24 “Joint Statements by a Coalition of Black Students and Allies at the University of Arizona,” June 24, 2020, [https://diversity.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2021-08/COBA%20Statements\\_July%2023%202020.pdf](https://diversity.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2021-08/COBA%20Statements_July%2023%202020.pdf).

25 Responding to Our Community, Office of Diversity & Inclusion, University of Arizona, <https://diversity.arizona.edu/responding-our-community>.

26 *Diversity Strategic Plan*, University of Arizona, [https://diversity.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2021-08/UA%20Diversity%20Strategic%20Plan\\_0.pdf](https://diversity.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2021-08/UA%20Diversity%20Strategic%20Plan_0.pdf).

27 “A Vision for Our Campus,” University of Arizona, <https://diversity.arizona.edu/vision-our-campus>.

## Arizona State University

In June of 2020, ASU announced large-scale institutional plans for diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Office of the President announced its commitment to “black students, faculty and staff” and to a list of twenty-five institutional changes, later rebranded the “LIFT” initiative.<sup>28</sup> Many similar changes, meanwhile, took place at the school and department level, as schools and departments throughout the university issued their own DEI commitments and created their own DEI committees. While DEI is not a new phenomenon on campuses, the specific programs at ASU are of recent vintage, their ultimate consequences are yet to be seen, and they are spearheaded by multiple actors within the university.

These initiatives are designed to inculcate substantive social and political views. They do so most directly by mandating training sessions. The Office of the President, for example, announced that all students and employees will now undergo “To Be Welcoming” training.<sup>29</sup> Originally designed for Starbucks employees, “To Be Welcoming” is an exhaustive course in watchwords of contemporary identity politics such as *microaggressions*, *systemic injustice*, and *cultural appropriation*.<sup>30</sup> At the moment, these are the only lessons in American history that every student is guaranteed to receive.

“To Be Welcoming” is not, however, the only form of DEI training students will receive. Various schools within the university also have promised to provide their own DEI trainings. The School of Engineering, for example, recently promised that it too will “provide training to students, faculty, and staff to improve DEI awareness.”<sup>31</sup>

These initiatives also exert indirect pressure on how students are taught through curricular changes and—perhaps more significantly—DEI faculty evaluations. The School of Engineering will “Establish metrics for faculty and staff evaluations that assess DEI contributions,” while the College of Integrative Science and Art will “Explore mechanisms for formally recognizing DEISJ contributions as part of the promotion, tenure, and annual review processes.”<sup>32</sup> ASU is shifting to a system where faculty members must demonstrate their commitment to DEI—and the substantive political views that the rubric connotes—as a condition of tenure and promotion.

---

28 “The LIFT Report,” Arizona State University, 2021, [https://president.asu.edu/sites/default/files/the\\_lift\\_report.pdf](https://president.asu.edu/sites/default/files/the_lift_report.pdf).

29 “ASU’s Commitment to Black Students, Faculty and Staff,” September 2, 2020, <https://president.asu.edu/statements/asus-commitment-to-black-students-faculty-and-staff>.

30 “ASU To Be Welcoming,” <https://www.starbucksglobalacademy.com/to-be-welcoming/asu/>.

31 “2020-2022 FSE Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan,” Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering, Arizona State University, [https://engineering.asu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ASU\\_FSE\\_ADRP-DEI-Plan\\_Final2020.pdf](https://engineering.asu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ASU_FSE_ADRP-DEI-Plan_Final2020.pdf).

32 “2020-2022 FSE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan”; “CISA’s Inclusion Committee,” College of Integrative Sciences and Arts, <https://cisa.asu.edu/inclusion-committee>.

Administrative Component	Notable Commitments
Office of the President	ASU commits to implementing the “To Be Welcoming” training for all continuing and new ASU employees and students. <sup>33</sup>
School of Business	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Inclusive Teaching & Learning Committee. DEI training for faculty and staff. <sup>34</sup>
Schools of Engineering	Provide training to students, faculty, and staff to improve DEI awareness. Establish metrics for faculty and staff evaluations that assess DEI contributions. <sup>35</sup>
College of Health Solutions	Improve inclusivity in onboarding, training, and mentoring of all faculty and staff. Develop an inclusive teaching and learning committee to integrate JEDI [justice, equity, diversity, inclusion] principles into the academic experience. <sup>36</sup>
College of Integrative Science and Art	Explore mechanisms for formally recognizing DEISJ contributions as part of the promotion, tenure, and annual review processes. Propose updates to the course evaluation instrument to address inequities it perpetuates along gender and racial lines and to add questions about DEISJ efforts in the classroom. <sup>37</sup>
College of Public Service	Ensure all degree programs in the college include content that addresses the specific impact of racism in their areas of study. Update the content to ensure our students are able to recognize instances of structural racism built into our institutions as well as their own implicit biases. Ensure content written by people from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, when available, is included as required readings. <sup>38</sup>
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences	Committee members advocate for The College community with the hope that The College will become a place where justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are embedded in all aspects of the community — enabling all students, faculty, and staff to thrive. <sup>39</sup>
Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts	The Core Equity Team works with Race Forward, a national organization that provides research and training to advance racial equity, to develop equity tools to use across the Institute for communication, operations, hiring, and decision making. <sup>40</sup>
Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law	ASU Law has added courses in <i>Critical Race Theory</i> , <i>Civil Rights Litigation</i> , and <i>Intellectual Property and Race</i> . The law school faculty also created a publicly available resource, titled “Incorporating Discussions of Race and Racism into Teaching,” that includes curated resources to help professors address race and discrimination in the classroom. <sup>41</sup>

33 “ASU’s commitment to Black students, faculty and staff,” September 2, 2020, <https://president.asu.edu/statements/asus-commitment-to-black-students-faculty-and-staff>.

34 “Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion at W. P. Carey,” <https://wpcarey.asu.edu/dei>.

35 “2020-2022 FSE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan.”

36 “Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion,” College of Health Solutions, <https://chs.asu.edu/about/justice-equity-diversity-inclusion>.

37 “CISA’s Inclusion Committee.”

38 “Ensuring Inclusivity,” Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions, <https://publicservice.asu.edu/about/ensuring-inclusivity>.

39 “Advancing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion,” College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, <https://thecollege.asu.edu/about/council-equity-diversity-inclusion>.

40 “Culture and Access,” Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, <https://herbergerinstitute.asu.edu/culture-and-access?dept=1400&id=1>.

41 “Diversity and Social Justice at ASU Law,” Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law, <https://law.asu.edu/diversity>.



## Northern Arizona University

NAU's *Diversity Strategic Plan* is the most detailed of the three universities under ABOR's supervision. Released in the fall of 2020, the plan makes recommendations and establishes metrics for virtually every area of university governance.<sup>42</sup> Some of these objectives exert little direct influence on the curriculum, such as "Remove barriers to access for individuals with disabilities" and "Provide transparent and effective communication." Others, however, focus directly on the curriculum or establish a sort of alternative curriculum through a regimen of training programs.

NAU's *Diversity Strategic Plan* focuses on making diversity a primary goal of the curriculum. It mandates that the theme of diversity be embedded in virtually all coursework through "diversity learning outcomes." Moreover, it offers career incentives for professors to incorporate diversity teaching.

### Northern Arizona University: Diversity Learning Initiatives<sup>43</sup>

- Institutionalize the value of diversity-centered learning, service, scholarship, and work by embedding diversity as an important component of learning outcomes, professional development, performance expectations, and performance evaluations at all levels
- Inventory courses with diversity (as defined by the DSP) components and outcomes and begin to consider diversity-centered learning outcomes for remaining courses
- Incentivize diversity-centered learning, service, scholarship, and work
- Reward effective diversity-centered teaching in all disciplines
- Offer opportunities to earn distinctions for taking or providing diversity-centered training and expanding curricular and co-curricular activities

The *Diversity Strategic Plan* lists various metrics for measuring the success of those objectives. Already, diversity courses dominate the general education requirements at Northern Arizona University. One explicit goal is to increase by 20% both the number of courses with diversity outcomes and the number of students taking these courses. It also notes the need for faculty career incentives related to diversity teaching.

<sup>42</sup> *Diversity Strategic Plan*, Northern Arizona University, Fall 2020 <https://in.nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/189/DSP-Final-3-12-21-1.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> *Diversity Strategic Plan*, Northern Arizona University.

#### **Northern Arizona University: Diversity Learning Initiatives Metrics and Objectives<sup>44</sup>**

- Increase of courses including diversity-centered learning outcomes by 20%
- Increase of students taking courses with diversity-centered learning outcomes by 20%
- Increase number of students engaging in diversity-related, sponsored, or directed research opportunities across disciplines
- Faculty and staff earning distinctions for taking or providing diversity-centered training and expanding curricular and co-curricular activities

The *Diversity Strategic Plan* deliberately exerts extensive influence on faculty members, who in turn will shape the curriculum. This includes using a diversity commitment as a litmus test for continued employment, promotion, and tenure. It also mandates making diversity requirements a part of employee expectation documents.

#### **Northern Arizona University: Diversity Faculty Initiatives<sup>45</sup>**

- Institutionalize the value of diversity-centered learning, service, scholarship, and work by embedding diversity as an important component of learning outcomes, professional development, performance expectations, and performance evaluations at all levels.
- Incorporate diversity-centered work, professional development, service, and research/scholarship in evaluation and promotion and tenure criteria in substantive and meaningful ways such that it is valued on par with other activities
- Include diversity-centered work, professional development, service, and research/scholarship in all employee expectation documents, appraisals, and evaluations

In an effort to hire underrepresented faculty, the plan also requires a statement on diversity for all “applicants for all administrator, faculty, and designated professional and staff positions.” A commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion—no matter how vaguely defined—is now a litmus test for hiring. Bureaucratic “metrics” that faculty and staff are expected to fulfill reinforce this requirement.

#### **Northern Arizona University: Diversity Faculty Initiative Metrics<sup>46</sup>**

- 25% of faculty and staff reporting engaging in diversity activities in their self appraisals/performance evaluation materials at least once over the review period.
- A 25% increase reported in faculty engaged in diversity-centered activities within their fields of study (e.g., research, training, outreach)
- Faculty and staff engaged in diversity activities for which they receive recognition/stipends/time-release
- 100% of faculty and staff completing diversity and inclusion training

These measures will ultimately exert pressure on the curriculum—and, indeed, on all aspects of education and life at NAU.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

# Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

**P**ublic universities ought to serve the common good. In their research capacity, they can do so through the dispassionate pursuit of truth. In their teaching capacity, they can do so by forming good citizens and skillful leaders. This happens, at least in part, by helping students understand America's political traditions.

As our study has shown, Arizona's public universities have sidelined this distinctly civic education, rendering American history an obscure topic in a forest of attractive alternatives. A bureaucratic apparatus is being constructed that will further tilt the scale against standard American history in favor of controversial and often radical interpretations of the American past. Arizona's public universities are replacing the old civic mission with a mission oriented around the concepts of diversity and inclusion: focusing on concepts such as microaggressions and systemic bias, prioritizing narrow identity-group politics, and injecting the concepts of *diversity, equity, and inclusion* in every aspect of university life.

Public universities are created by the public, funded by the public, and ultimately answerable to the public. Elected officials have the power to shape these institutions, and they ought to use that power. Their doing so is a responsibility, which should not be delegated to academic administrators, faculty committees, or student activists. Thus, we recommend the following policies.

Arizona's system of public higher education requires three kinds of reform.

1. ABOR must be reformed to strengthen its capacity to defend the public universities from the new challenge of DEI.
2. The state of Arizona must pass laws that directly reform the public universities.
3. The public universities must be reformed in detail to restore them to their civic function and to remove DEI from their institutional functioning.

Arizonans must undertake all of these overlapping, complementary reforms if they wish to restore their system of public higher education.

## ABOR Reform

ABOR requires substantial reform in how it operates. Much of this simply is a matter of using the powers it already has. Should any of these reforms require statutory changes, we recommend that Arizona's policymakers change the necessary laws.

- 1. Regents Appointments.** ABOR currently possesses no regents with extensive experience within the university who are equipped to understand the nature of the ideological challenge to higher education and the administrative tools at its disposal. Arizona's governors should commit to appointing a minimum of three regents with such experience, who are capable of manning a supervisory committee dedicated to these subject matters. These regents should be expected to devote a substantial portion of their time to this committee work, if necessary with an appropriate stipend.
- 2. Academic Freedom Committee.** ABOR should constitute an Academic Freedom Committee (AFC) dedicated to curricular and administrative matters such as academic freedom, due process, and transparency. The AFC should be delegated powers to investigate university policies in detail and provided with a paid staff capable of handling this body of material. The AFC also should be expected to draft ABOR policies to maintain academic freedom in its fullest sense, including by the removal of DEI policies, to establish metrics by which to measure the progress of the universities toward academic freedom, and to follow up by ensuring that the public universities comply with ABOR policies in a timely manner.
- 3. Academic Freedom Priority.** ABOR possesses extensive powers to govern UA, ASU, and NAU. It must make a priority of this issue. ABOR should make academic freedom matters the first item in every agenda. It must make clear to university administrations that academic freedom is an absolute priority and cannot be compromised.

## Legislative Reform

Arizona's policymakers have already done substantial good by dedicating funds to SCETL and ensuring its autonomy. Arizona's policymakers should build upon this good work by passing a series of laws to strengthen academic freedom, the civic mission, and accountability at the state's public universities. We draw our recommendations substantially from the Model Higher Education Code drafted by the Civics Alliance of the National Association

of Scholars.<sup>47</sup> All such laws will still need to be enforced, but their passage is an essential element in higher education reform.

1. **Budget Transparency and Line-Item Veto.** State policymakers should require public universities to disclose their operating budgets, and they should grant themselves the power to exercise a line-item veto on public university expenditures. A line-item veto will allow policymakers to excise politicized university bureaucracies.<sup>48</sup>
2. **Academic Transparency.** State policymakers usually possess limited power to exercise oversight over the public universities because they do not know what is taught in the classrooms. State policymakers should require each public university to put on its website a syllabus for each undergraduate course.<sup>49</sup>
3. **Campus Freedoms.** State policymakers should guarantee First Amendment freedoms and due process at public universities and should prohibit discrimination on the basis of ideology.<sup>50</sup>
4. **Legislative Review.** State policymakers should require legislative review and approval of all public university gateway requirements imposed by a university or a school within the university, including admissions requirements, transfer requirements, general education requirements, competencies, and learning objectives.<sup>51</sup>
5. **American Institutions.** State policymakers should require undergraduates at public universities to take and pass one course (three semester credit hours) in American history and/or American government.<sup>52</sup>
6. **General Education Requirements.** State policymakers should limit general education requirements to forty semester credit hours, limit the number of courses that may be selected to satisfy any individual general education requirement, bar diversity requirements, and bar allowing a course to satisfy multiple general education requirements—unless an American Institutions course also satisfies a social sciences or humanities requirement.<sup>53</sup>
7. **Duplicate SCETL.** SCETL does admirable work at ASU. Arizona policymakers should provide dedicated funding and administrative autonomy to similar institutions at UA and NAU.

47 Model Higher Education Code, Civics Alliance, <https://civicsalliance.org/model-higher-education-code/>.

48 College Finances Act, Civics Alliance, <https://civicsalliance.org/college-finances-act/>.

49 Syllabus Transparency Act, Civics Alliance, <https://civicsalliance.org/syllabus-transparency-act/>.

50 Campus Freedoms Act, Civics Alliance, <https://civicsalliance.org/campus-freedoms-act/>; Campus Due Process Act, Civics Alliance, <https://civicsalliance.org/campus-due-process-act/>; Campus Intellectual Diversity Act, Civics Alliance, <https://civicsalliance.org/campus-intellectual-diversity-act/>.

51 Higher Education Gateway Requirements Act, Civics Alliance, <https://civicsalliance.org/higher-education-gateway-requirements-act/>.

52 American History Act, Civics Alliance, <https://civicsalliance.org/higher-education-civics-reform/american-history-act/>.

53 Core Curriculum Act, Civics Alliance, <https://civicsalliance.org/core-curriculum-act/>.

## University Reform

All the recommendations we make at the ABOR and legislative level should be carried out in detail within the universities. The universities should fulfill the intent of the American Institutions initiative and remove DEI from their institutional structure—and they should be accountable by ABOR, state policymakers, and the Arizona public if they do not. We make the following recommendations as particular measures to fulfill those goals.

1. **Comply with, and expand upon, the American Institutions mandate.** Expanding upon the ABOR requirement, each public university should require students to take six-credits of American history and American government survey courses as part of its general education requirement. These courses should stand alone. No course that fulfills an American Institutions requirement should fulfill any other general education requirement.
2. **Eliminate social justice and diversity general education requirements.** Each university should exclude all ideologically inflected general education requirements.
3. Prohibit mandatory “diversity, equity, and inclusion” statements, mandatory DEI training, and all other ideological litmus tests. Mandatory DEI statements for admissions, hiring, promotion, and tenure function as ideological litmus tests. Mandatory DEI training subjects all employees to abusive and racist propaganda. Universities should eliminate all such materials at once.
4. **Remove the “co-curriculum.”** Universities require an ever growing “co-curriculum,” delivered through mandatory training sessions and ideologically-charged extracurricular activities, while employing and entrenching an expanding diversity, equity, and inclusion bureaucracy. Universities should aggressively reduce their administrative bloat, starting with the co-curriculum.<sup>54</sup>
5. **Require all sessions and materials for orientation, professional development, and climate surveys to be recorded and posted publicly on a university website.** All such materials can be used to inculcate a narrow orthodoxy. While universities should simply ban ideological content from these sessions, not least by ending DEI training sessions altogether, transparency would allow scrutiny by parents, prospective students, alumni, accreditors, and lawmakers.

---

54 Neetu Arnold, *Priced Out: What College Costs America* (National Association of Scholars, 2021), <https://www.nas.org/reports/priced-out>.

## Conclusion

Arizona's system of public higher education is undergoing nothing less than a *diversity, equity, and inclusion* revolution, one which has redefined the system's underlying goals. Arizona's public and policymakers must devote themselves to reforming their system of public higher education by a triple policy aimed at statutory reform, changes to the structure and focus of ABOR, and administrative policy changes within the university. If Arizonans succeed in putting these three reforms into practice, they will rededicate Arizona's public higher education system to serving its true civic mission.









NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION  
*of* SCHOLARS