

To: SACUA

From: Germine Awad, Chair, Committee on Anti-Racism

Subject: Report on Activities of Committee on Anti-Racism for 2024-2025

Members: Emad Abou-Arab, Solomon Adera, Mark Allison, Germine Awad, Nicole Boucher, Mary Byrnes, Nora Krinitsky, Scott Martin, Deirdre Spencer, Matthew Spradling, Kristen Verhey

SACUA Liaison: Deirdre Spencer

FSO Coordinator: Ann Marshall

Meeting Dates: September 9, October 10, November 11, December 12, January 30, February 10, March 10, April 21.

Committee Charge

1. Work with the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (ODEI) and Vice Provost Tabbye Chavous on DEI efforts, including issues related to DEI metrics. Consider inviting Vice Provost Chavous to a fall term CAR meeting.
2. Work with ODEI and other university structures to make sure that anti-Arab racism is being addressed alongside racism targeted towards other racially minoritized communities.
3. Work with ODEI to understand and help plan how the recent revised Office of Management and Budget (OMB) race and ethnicity guidelines will be implanted at the University of Michigan.
4. Follow up with the Equity, Civil Rights, and Title IX Office (ECRT) regarding the Title VII report.
5. Consider emergent issues or topics brought forward by CAR committee members for discussion over the course of the year. While coordinating with the Faculty Senate Office to help avoid duplicating work that SACUA has now referred to itself or to another committee, the committee may also continue discussing any issues or topics raised in the committee's most recent annual committee report.

Committee Actions

- In fall 2024, CAR members compiled metrics from a variety of U-M sources, including at both the U-M Ann Arbor and Flint campuses. Note that some of the compiled U-M metrics are no longer publicly available on U-M websites.



- In fall 2024, CAR had begun plans to partner with ODEI to share over 150 pages of testimonials about the importance of DEI.
- At the November 2024 meeting, Dr. Tabbye Chavous, Ph.D., Vice Provost for Equity & Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer, was guest and presented “DEI Year 1 Progress Report,” and shared a video and presentation slides as resources:
 - There are very clear patterns of progress, including for first generation college students and significant impacts made with financial aid (e.g. Go Blue Guarantee and Wolverine Pathways). As a part of these efforts, the number of incoming Latinx, Asian, and black students have increased. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion's (ODEI) collaborative efforts have also been impactful in recruiting out-of-state students (who tend to be more affluent) while also making U-M accessible to less affluent instate students.
 - Equally important is ODEI’s partnerships and support for a wide range student success programs across campus. These programs are impactful by retaining students of many backgrounds and by creating connections so that incoming students are able flourish at U-M.
 - At the November 2024 meeting, CAR also discussed the following topics:
 - A commitment to anti-racism is important, especially given the intentional spreading of misinformation and the need to push back against white supremacy tactics. It is important to resist the siloing of groups and to work in support of “rising all boats” – anti-racism and intersectional efforts in support of race, gender, women of color, disability, LGBTQ, and veteran identities.
 - The October 16, *New York Times* article was a tool of misinformation about DEI at U-M. For example, given the size of U-M's budget, the amount spent on DEI is a very small fraction of the budget (less than .0024%) and the number quoted in the article is the amount spent over eight years. CAR expressed interest in supporting better transparency about U-M's budget and working towards a more robust and accurate narrative about DEI's budget and its impact.
- At the February 2025 meeting, CAR discussed and then voted unanimously in support of a jointly authored [Statement in Support of Valued Members of Our Community](#). As part of CAR's review of this statement, CAR members also discussed plans for CAR to release its own statement. Because of the extent of misinformation and as a part of efforts to combat fascism, many statements of varying emphases can actively work towards providing a counter narrative.
- In spring 2025, CAR members spent multiple meetings discussing and crafting a CAR statement (see Appendix A, page 4).

Information Obtained & Supporting Actions

- *Fall 2024 Update:* The Regents had privately discussed cuts to DEI, and the SACUA Chair emailed faculty alerting them to the proposed DEI cuts. A petition telling the Regents to "protect DEI" received over 2,700 signatures. A rally in support of DEI, held on the diag on December 2nd, was very well-attended despite the cold weather, had moving speakers, and was overall very positive. That same week, the [Regents met](#) and did not



announce cuts to DEI. The DEI petition and rally seemed to inform the Regents and positively impact the December Regents' meeting.

- *Fall 2024 Update:* CAR discussed concerns about U-M's messaging and processes related to its new diversity statements policy. The Provost had convened a Faculty Diversity Statement Working Group and, as a part of its findings, the group learned that a number of U-M units did not require diversity statements. The working group's first set of recommendations was to allow U-M units to set their own diversity statement policies. The Regents did not accept this first set of recommendations and the working group's report on these recommendations was not made public. The working group's second set of recommendations concluded that U-M can and should collect faculty diversity statements, but not as *standalone* statements. The *Record* article (see [links](#)) was an oversimplification of the working group's recommendations and the intent was to convey that U-M bans diversity statements.
- *Spring 2025 Update:* CAR members discussed their deep concern and frustration about national events and the attacks on DEI at U-M and across the country. A number of academic institutions are being targeted even though such attacks are likely illegal and counter to academic freedom. These anti-DEI assaults are anti-black, anti-trans, and anti-immigrant, and the intent is a total erasure of the history of black and brown struggle. A reason for optimism is that a wide range of groups are resisting and working behind the scenes. One such example is the [Know Your Rights](#) campaign.
- *Spring 2025 Update:* CAR members discussed an upcoming silent march in support of DEI on the Diag. The [rally](#) was very well attended and received news coverage from a variety of sources including [MLive](#) and the [Michigan Daily](#).

Recommendations

- CAR is committed to being uncompromising in its focus on anti-racism, to labeling untruths, to addressing discomfort in talking about race, and to persuading with evidence.
- There are persistent concerns that the U-M administration is not providing leadership and is complying with assaults on higher education. CAR members stress the importance of not sacrificing U-M values during this time of attacks on federal funding.
- Given the departure of Santa Ono, we urge the administration to involve faculty, staff, and students in the search for a new university president.
- CAR plans to reach out to the new Vice Provost for Access and Opportunity (the new version of the Vice Provost of Equity and Inclusion) to understand how Michigan's core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion will be upheld and implemented. We encourage the new Vice Provost to remain committed to the university mission and core values.
- Please see also page 4, Appendix A, Statement from the Faculty Senate Committee on Anti-Racism (CAR), *To Fight Racism, We Need Anti-Racism, Not 'Color-Blindness'*

Appendix A

Statement from the Faculty Senate Committee on Anti-Racism (CAR)

To Fight Racism, We Need Anti-Racism, Not 'Color-Blindness'

The current attacks on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies and programs continue to set off alarm bells throughout higher education. DEI policies and programs recognize that anti-discrimination laws are not enough but rather that implementation of e.g. Civil Rights and Americans with Disabilities policies must be supported by work and educational spaces where barriers are removed, where everyone feels respected and is set up for success, and where people feel included and safe. As the Faculty Senate Committee on Anti-Racism, we know that DEI does not promote preferential treatment for certain groups, but rather ensures that all people are provided opportunities regardless of having a disability, being a veteran, having certain religious beliefs, or being of a particular race, ethnicity, gender, or sex. However, opponents of DEI often target race/ethnicity as the source of their grievances.

For faculty that have been working within these spheres that seek to emphasize equity and inclusion, these attacks are not new. In the fight for racial equity, the pendulum of public opinion and political rhetoric tends to swing every few years from promoting and fighting for racial equity to a backlash against perceived increases in racial equity mischaracterized as “reverse discrimination.”

Opponents of DEI argue that “race-neutral” policies are the only way to ensure fairness, leading to the promotion of racial “colorblind” policies. According to [Neville and colleagues](#), racial colorblindness consists of two components, color-evasion and power-evasion. Color-evasion refers to the denial of an individual’s racial differences by emphasizing sameness, while power-evasion focuses on the denial of racism and racial inequities.

This denial of racism is not a new phenomenon. Attacks on affirmative action from the late 1990s and Critical Race Theory (CRT) in the beginning of the 2020s are earlier versions of today's attack on DEI. The foci change slightly, but the core arguments by opponents of affirmative action, CRT, and DEI are the same. There is a false belief that recognition of race and racial differences is inherently racist and, therefore, the goal is to be racially color-blind. However, research evidence shows that higher levels of colorblind racial ideology is related to higher levels of racial intolerance, bias, prejudice, racism, and lower levels of empathy towards racial out-groups.

Because there is a tendency by opponents of DEI to deny racial inequalities, it is imperative that proponents emphasize anti-racist strategies to combat structural inequities that perpetuate racial inequities. Anti-racist strategies involve the active dismantling of systemic racism through pedagogy, policies, and practices that challenge structures that maintain racism. DEI programs that employ anti-racist strategies tend to focus on combating racism through education, activism, and allyship while promoting inclusive environments in higher education. No anti-racist strategy denies the role of race and racism in the oppression of communities of color because denying the role of race only increases prejudice and racism.



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The University of Michigan community must affirm and act on our commitment to anti-racism. We must name these bad-faith attacks on DEI for what they are—attempts to enforce the boundaries of whiteness and construct a racially exclusive society. This will require critical examination of systems of inequity and oppression at our institution and solidarity with those who are marginalized by those systems. It will also require the reversal of recent centralizations of institutional authority and the restoration of independent faculty governance. But only by engaging in the difficult and uncomfortable process of critical self-reflection can we claim to truly uphold our values of equity, inclusion, justice, and anti-racism.