

# Veritatem Cognoscere: The DEI Threat to National Security

*by Mason Goad*

*Diversity Dysfunction: The DEI Threat to National Security Intelligence*, John A. Gentry, Academica Press, 2025, pp. 102, \$20.00 paperback.

It was a crisp, clear morning several years ago when I found myself walking in circles in downtown Atlanta, waiting for a text message to come through. When it did, I followed its instructions, first to a nearby hotel, and then to a bulletin board inside, upon which a fresh poster was hanging. The poster announced a workshop on diversity and inclusion in the workforce being held nearby that same day. *A clever ruse*, I thought to myself, as I set off to the location mentioned on the poster. Passersby were not likely to take interest in, much less notice, a workshop on diversity on some random weekday morning, and they certainly would never guess that the host of this event was actually the Central Intelligence Agency.

To my surprise, however, it was not entirely a ruse. While this clandestine, CIA-only job fair was indeed a legitimate recruitment event, the event's theme was also genuinely focused on diversity and inclusion in the (CIA's) workforce. Officers wore pride flag pins on their lapels, passed out brochures about racial and sexual affinity groups, and keynote speakers gave presentations on LGBTQIA importance and employment in the Agency. I left that day with serious concerns about what I had witnessed, because it seemed to me that while the senior staff made "diversity" their central focus, their enthusiasm was not shared by many of the other officers I spoke with. In fact, a few officers appeared to even resent the event's theme.

Today, years later, I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that my early observations were correct, and I have long been convinced that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are not only deleterious to the agency's mission, but an active threat to national security. When exactly I became convinced of this, I cannot say, but I believe the notion solidified after I watched several national security leaders cower at the mere thought of calling out the DEI regime for its clear authoritarianism and sanctification of Communist radicals, such as Angela Davis. Other private discussions with intelligence officers of various agencies—though primarily with CIA officers of various directorates, namely the Directorate of Operations and the Directorate of Science and Technology—have, likewise, revealed that my concerns are shared by many.

So, when John Gentry, a former CIA analyst, told me that he was working on a deep dive into the damage that DEI has wrought for the CIA, I was ecstatic, and Gentry's brief, 102-page book does not disappoint. As Gentry states in his preface: "current and former intelligence officers really know what has happened and what continues to happen in their agencies," and the officers he interviewed, almost always under the condition of anonymity, shared accounts that ought to leave taxpayers' mouths agape and policy makers demanding reform.

Gentry begins by briefly tracing the history of DEI in the CIA and the Intelligence Community (IC) more broadly,

through analysis of both the ideological neo-Marxist background of DEI, and the way in which DEI entered into the IC—from affirmative action back in the 1960s, to initiatives under Presidents Obama, Trump, and Biden. This synopsis is a succinct and invaluable resource for understanding just how the CIA and other agencies wound up in such a mess. Without a full accounting of DEI's deleterious effects in the more shadowy sectors of the agency, however, the public and policy makers remain ignorant of just how bad for business DEI has truly been.

The last half of Gentry's book attempts to shine a light on those shadowy sectors through a litany of anecdotes told by CIA officers with first-hand knowledge of the accounts. Take, for example, the anonymous testimony of a retired, female, senior CIA Operations Officer, who spoke about how preferential treatment for women is divisive. Some women favor the treatment, but men broadly feel discriminated against. Worse, when a female officer rises through the ranks due to her legitimate accomplishments, such as with the officer speaking off the record here, "people wonder whether [such] officers actually earned their promotions, as opposed to receiving them on DEI grounds."

The suspicion is ever present, and demoralizing for all. Much worse, should the suspicion be clearly factual, it can lead to loss of intelligence and working hours that could be spent on asset recruitment or other matters of im-

portance. One operations officer spoke about such an instance:

In one station, we had a position for a single officer located about 1-2 hours away that required a seasoned operations officer who could operate on their own. We brought in a female case officer whose paperwork implied that she was the best candidate. We found out later that her home division had been passing her off to other divisions for years and kept her [Performance Appraisal Reports] decent looking to prevent lawsuits. We saw issues, and began documenting, within her first three months. She couldn't write cables at the level expected of someone at her [pay] grade, was not going out and making contacts (the bread and butter of the case officer), was submitting accounting for meetings with people of no operational value (social contacts), etc.

So, in addition to careful documentation, I had to begin working with her to improve her performance, which took away from my other duties. She claimed to our Deputy Chief of Station (DCOS) that I was "harassing" her by trying to get her to do her job. Fortunately, our DCOS (a woman) saw through this nonsense, and we soon removed this officer from her position ... Anyway, here was a personnel decision (allowing an underperforming person to continue worming [her] way through the system because [she was] willing to pull the diversity card when held accountable and no one wanted to deal with that.) ... The work she was hired to do was never done, so we lost all that potential productivity.

Of course, a loss of intelligence or loss of productivity pale in comparison to the worst-case scenario, when DEI leads to the death of intelligence officers. One of the deadliest incidents in CIA history was the suicide bombing at Camp Chapman near Khost, Afghanistan on December 30, 2009. Jennifer

Matthews, a CIA analyst, was given an assignment of a coveted combat command in order to enable her to be promoted into the Senior Intelligence Service, despite the fact that Matthews was not an operations officer. Critics charged that Matthews did not properly vet the individual who carried out the suicide bombing, and Matthews allowed too many others to get close to the bomber, increasing the death toll. As one former officer told Gentry:

I worked in the CTC [Counterterrorism Center] after that happened. There were many times when I encountered conversations from veteran CTC officers about Matthew's lack of qualifications for the job—a common quip being that she went from being a reports officer in Europe to a paramilitary base in a war zone in the Middle East. (At the same time, there was a strong effort by CTC management to quash any such talk.) I never heard her assignment spoken of in terms of favoritism, but I suppose it was implied by the perpetuation of the idea that she simply wasn't qualified for the job (and her decisions led to the death of officers).

The anecdotes enumerated above focus on the operational side of the CIA, but the analytical side has been affected just as badly. Take, for example, the account of one such officer who spoke with Gentry in 2023. That officer recounted that "it has become common for employees of favored demographic identity groups to complain to a diversity office if they receive criticism from managers about their daily work." Naturally, the diversity officers often side with these demographically-favored complainants. As a consequence, "good managers have been inappropriately

punished, leading other managers who observe this pattern to refrain from criticizing, and even to reward, shoddy performance.”

Barry Zulauf, who was at the time the Intelligence Community Analytic Ombudsman, a senior role with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, wrote on the record to Gentry:

I have seen in the comments brought to my attention as Analytic Ombudsman where analysts confuse editing or constructive criticism as politicization. I am afraid we have a whole generation now in the workforce who have never had a harsh word spoken to them or never had any criticism expressed to them in college as they express their “feelings” on issues.

Without doubt, a large part of the issue with the IC’s workforce begins with the college education of intelligence officers, but the IC has promoted DEI within higher education as well, and with similarly dismal results. The IC Centers of Academic Excellence (CAE) program, for example, begun by Congress in 2005, is intended to develop intelligence-related undergraduate courses that could increase the IC’s recruitment pool of “culturally and ethnically diverse” applicants, despite the fact that such “diversity” will not necessarily translate into operational effectiveness.

Indeed, CAE program administrators seem reluctant to study whether such “diversity” increases effectiveness. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that the Defense Intelligence Agency—which oversaw the CAE program from 2011 to 2020—had

not even designed metrics to merely attempt to determine program effectiveness and the U.S. Government’s return on investment. The CIA, which initially worked closely with 16 IC CAE institutions, significantly reduced its involvement with the program in 2014, now working with only six major universities. One CIA officer, who chose to speak off the record for fear of being called racist, confirmed that CIA’s dealings with the CAE program had not been favorable. Writes Gentry:

According to the officer, CIA personnel who visited [Historically Black Colleges and Universities] were disappointed with their visits, and recruits from these schools experienced greater than average performance problems at the CIA. Another former intelligence officer, who had considerable experience working with IC CAE member schools, said some HBCUs merely added the word “intelligence” to the titles of already existing courses; in some cases, no one administering the program at participating colleges had a background in either education or intelligence.

Of course, the IC CAE program is by no means the only issue in the relationship between American higher education and the Intelligence Community’s workforce. IC leadership’s failure to realize—or perhaps pusillanimity in the face of—the Neo-Marxism and anti-American philosophies clearly present on college campuses nationwide (greatly emboldened by the entrenchment of DEI programs at these institutions) puts the Intelligence Community and, by extension, the American public, at great risk.

In 2019, Margaret Marangione, a former CIA analyst, cited surveys showing that 58 percent of college students scored higher on a narcissism test in 2009 than did students back in 1982. With the advent of social media throughout the 2010s and 20s, the percentage is now likely even higher. Writing in *Studies in Intelligence* in 2017, CIA psychologist Ursula Wilder observed that narcissism and a sense of entitlement is strongly associated with leaking by intelligence personnel. As such, one can see the risk to operational security that DEI programming creates, as DEI deals in narcissistic notions of identity, and entitlements surrounding one's identity, effectively institutionalizing the very conditions that lead to insider threats.

In summary, DEI has clearly damaged the culture of the IC's workforce, as well as the operational and analytical performance of the CIA and other agencies. The IC's diversity programs in higher education are reportedly ineffective at recruiting top talent, and have further legitimized the anti-Americanism so pervasive now on college campuses. In fact, as I was drafting this review, *Campus Reform* reported that the CIA was effectively run off from New York University's career fair, conceding to the demands of radical Leftist protesters. The agency's recruitment booth was cleared out within the first hour.

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, leaders in the Intelligence Community blamed their failures on a lack of imagination rather than a lack

of intelligence. In the aftermath of the next major intelligence failure, leaders will have no such excuse. Imagination is not necessary to see issues as obvious as those caused by DEI. Years of identity politics and politicization have thoroughly corrupted the Intelligence Community. Gentry's succinct analysis will prove invaluable when policy makers and members of the public finally seek to hold those leaders accountable.

Until then, let us pray that day comes without mass casualties to catalyze Congressional inquiry.

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