

NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
of SCHOLARS

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A Ramblin' Wreck Over the Rainbow

*Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity at the
Georgia Institute of Technology*



A Ramblin' Wreck Over the Rainbow

*A Case Study of Diversity, Equity, and
Inclusion at the Georgia Institute of Technology
and Considerations for National Security*

A report by the

NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
of SCHOLARS

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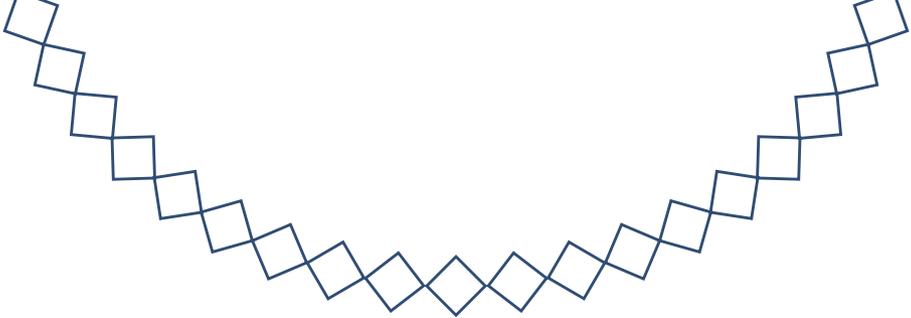
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Cover Design by Beck&Stone

Typesetting by Chance Layton

Published October 2025

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Abstract

This report explores DEI (Diversity, Inclusion and Equity) as part of a longer tradition of progressive domestic radicalism, foregrounding the discussion in the history of affirmative action on the campus of the Georgia Institute of Technology (GIT).

Executive Summary

This report surveys the history of DEI at Georgia Institute of Technology. We trace the origins of DEI's underlying philosophy back to our nation's adversaries who sought to antagonize racial relations in order to destabilize American society for their own violent ends, and show how this continues in modern forms of DEI. We conclude with a set of recommendations for Georgia Tech's stakeholders to rid themselves of DEI's radicalism and racial discrimination, and safeguard their community and the campus climate from harmful racial antagonism.

Introduction to DEI

The values of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are today widely extolled as central to the mission of American universities. DEI has been billed to Americans as a remedy for police brutality and systemic racism. The defining characteristic of DEI, however, is race-consciousness backed by coercive power. DEI is, concretely, a set of practices and policies that discriminates on the basis of race, sex, and an expanding list of other social categorizations.

Race-consciousness as a policy framework emerged in the post-Civil Rights era, when, disenchanted with the pace of social change under colorblindness, activist-turned-academic administrators implemented race-conscious policies and programs. These programs, extant and expanding hitherto, enact group preferences, billed as 'positive' discrimination or 'affirmative action.' Racial preferences entail straightforward racial exclusion—such as in “anti-racist spaces”—where DEI advocates recreate the precise outcomes advanced by Dixiecrat segregationists.¹

As DEI is confronted, and its abuses revealed, Americans will be left wondering how our institutions could have fallen victim to this perversion of the civil rights movement. This report attempts to answer that question, placing DEI within the longer arc of American domestic radicalism, and this movement's connection to foreign, authoritarian regimes. DEI ideology's infiltration of Georgia Tech provides a case study for how radicals became ensconced on campuses.

1 See “Chapter 13: Space” in Ibram X. Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist* (One World, New York, NY, 2019).

From Civil Rights to DEI at Georgia Tech

Racial discrimination long plagued the South, and still does to varying degrees. Initially to the benefit of white people, the paradigm of racial discrimination began to shift with the advent of affirmative action policies, to the point that racial discrimination—so long as it was to the benefit of black people and others deemed minorities—was argued as beneficial. While the merits of affirmative action policies, or lack thereof, are debatable, our greater concern lies with the ideology that rose up alongside it, hidden under the guise of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, or DEI ideology. This ideology has been inarguably deleterious to every institution it enters.

This report traces Georgia Tech’s transition from desegregation to DEI through 4 phases: pre-1975; 1975 to 2008; from 2008 to 2020; and from 2020 to the present. The history of civil rights at Georgia Tech presents numerous laudable successes. However, with the advent of DEI on campus, the university in recent years would appear to be running backwards. As Johnny Smith, a Georgia Tech professor teaching the history of American sports notes, “[t]he color line was smudged here and there, erased and then redrawn. The history of civil rights and racial progress is complicated. Sometimes victories were followed by two steps backward.”²

Pre-1975

In 1961, Georgia Tech became the first university in the Deep South to desegregate without the order of a court. A lesser-known incident occurred several years earlier, nearer the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. In 1955, Georgia Tech’s winning football team accepted an invitation to the Sugar Bowl, an annual college football bowl game held in New Orleans. When Georgia’s segregationists discovered that the team Georgia Tech would be playing had a black player, Bobby Grier, and that this Sugar Bowl would be the first racially-integrated game, they protested.

² *Ibid.*

Georgia's governor, Marvin Griffin, demanded that Georgia Tech not play. In response, students rioted and burned an effigy of Governor Griffin.³

After a month or so of protests, the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents voted to allow Georgia Tech to fulfill its pledge and play at the Sugar Bowl. On January 2, 1956, the two teams met at Tulane Stadium. No racial incidents occurred, and the overwhelmingly white audience was reported to have cheered for Grier.

Phase One (1975 to 2008):

The civil rights movement, and the nationwide student protests of 1969 elevated racial inequality and 'representation' to issues of great concern for American college administrators. In the early 1970s, universities began to cave to activist demands, implementing new policies to increase the presence of minorities on campuses, creating new administrative offices of civil rights and staffing them.

Georgia Tech followed this national trend. In 1975, it launched an *ad-hoc* committee to address concerns about academic and social success of minority students, leading to the formation in 1979 of the Office of Minority Educational Development (OMED). OMED was charged with the retention and development of "traditionally underrepresented students: African American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, and multicultural students."⁴ The formation of OMED followed the 1978 landmark ruling *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, which was taken by universities as giving a green light to affirmative action programs.

By the mid-1980s, OMED was orchestrating leadership retreats for identity-based student groups, Academic Survival Workshops, and even a Minority Orientation Week, and appears to have had a hand in institutional planning from its early days of existence. Georgia Tech's 1990 Fact Book opens with a statement: "Georgia Institute of Technology is committed to a comprehensive program of affirmative action to ensure access, equity, and fairness in educational programs, related activities, and employment for minorities." Such a statement, endorsing equity and affirmative action, is common today, but it was exceptional in 1990.⁵

In 1998, Georgia Tech opened a second office, the Office of Diversity Issues and Programs (ODIP), separate from OMED. Its mission was to "provide a systemic approach for meeting the needs of underrepresented populations by coordinating and planning educational opportunities which enhance interaction and learning across

3 Shelley Wunder-Smith, "The South Stands at Armageddon": Georgia Tech and the Racial Politics of the 1956 Sugar Bowl," *Georgia Tech Alumni Magazine*, <https://www.gtalumni.org/s/1481/alumni/17/magazine-pages.aspx?sid=1481&gid=21&pgid=24780#:~:text=In%201961%2C%20Georgia%20Tech%20became,integration%3A%20the%201956%20Sugar%20Bowl>.

4 OMED: Educational Services, Georgia Tech, <https://omed.gatech.edu/about-omed/>.

5 The statement appears in neither the 1989 FactBook, nor the 1998 FactBook. Office of Institutional Research and Planning, *1989-90 Fact Book*, Georgia Institute of Technology, https://irp.gatech.edu/files/FactBook/FactBook_1989_1990.pdf; Office of Institutional Research and Planning, *1998 Fact Book*, Georgia Institute of Technology, https://irp.gatech.edu/files/FactBook/FactBook_1998.pdf

groups.”⁶ ODIP declared itself “responsible for fostering a vision of diversity appreciation which is actualized through intentional educational programming in support of the Institute’s Strategic Plan.” Georgia’s first Strategic Plan, 2000-2010 does not make a clear reference to diversity, however. In 2000, ODIP was already holding a number of events that would today be associated with DEI offices.⁷ Among them were celebrations of “Disability and Diversity Week” and “Religious Awareness Week,” the latter including programming on “the diversity of thought among atheists, agnostics, and others,” “marriage from an Islamic and Hindu perspective,” “acts of religious intolerance/insensitivity,” and celebrating “life through music, drama and dance.”⁸ The “diversity dates” billeted convey a less benighted understanding of ‘diversity’: also memorialized was Dutch American Heritage Day, birthdays of Martin Luther (German), Sun Yat-sen (Chinese), and Jan Ignacy Paderewski (Polish).⁹

Throughout the 2000s, ODIP expanded, simplifying its name in 2006 to ‘Diversity Programs.’ To the two main programs, Religious Awareness Week and Disability and Diversity Week, were added an annual “Power Over Prejudice” summit, a Diversity Forum, and a Black Leadership Summit. The office adopted stronger diversity language, introducing their office with the statement that “Diversity is one of Georgia Tech’s greatest strengths.”¹⁰ A decade later, the notion that “diversity is our strength” would become an oft-repeated phrase—bordering on mantra—at many institutions, indicating that, again, Georgia Tech was ahead of the curve on DEI.

Georgia Tech was among the first institutions to get into legal trouble over DEI ideology. In 2006, the institute faced a federal lawsuit over several unconstitutional policies meant to support the Institute’s Pride Alliance, an LGBT advocacy and support group. The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression explained: “These policies included a speech code, a restrictive speech zone, discriminatory student-fee regulations, and a program of state religious indoctrination called ‘Safe Space’ that explicitly compared those who have traditional views of sexual morality to slaveowners.” In response, Georgia Tech revised its speech policies, and was ordered in late 2008 to pay \$203,734.14 for violating students’ rights in its early adherence to DEI ideology.¹¹

6 Georgia Tech, “Office of Diversity Issues and Programs,” Internet Archive Wayback Machine, <https://web.archive.org/web/20000226022924/https://diversity.gatech.edu/>.

7 Georgia Tech, “Strategic Plan; Journey of the Plan,” <https://strategicplan.gatech.edu/about/journey#:~:text=In%20response%20to%20President%20Cabrera's,plan%20for%20the%20next%20decade.x>.

8 Georgia Tech, “Religious Awareness Week,” Internet Archive Wayback Machine, <https://web.archive.org/web/20000511171751/http://www.diversity.gatech.edu/raw.html>.

9 Georgia Tech, “Education,” Internet Archive Wayback Machine, <https://web.archive.org/web/20000226085320/http://www.diversity.gatech.edu/education.html>.

10 Georgia Tech, “Diversity Programs @ Georgia Tech,” Internet Archive Wayback Machine, <https://web.archive.org/web/20060510025012/https://diversity.gatech.edu/>.

11 Robert Shibley, “Georgia Tech Ordered to Pay \$203,734.14 for Violating Students’ Rights,” *The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression*, December 30, 2008, <https://www.thefire.org/news/georgia-tech-ordered-pay-20373414-violating-students-rights>.

Phase Two (2008 to 2020):

By 2008, DEI was fairly well established at Georgia Tech. The Office of Diversity Programs held regular events and training, and activities were only expanding. The institute's first Diversity Symposium, for example, was held in 2008, and Georgia Tech's Student Life began celebrating "Diversity and Inclusion Month," an annual event which continued up to 2023, when anti-DEI legislation was introduced in the Georgia state legislature.¹²

The first major event of Phase Two came in 2011, when Dr. Archie Ervin was appointed as the first Chief Diversity Office and Vice President of Institute Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (IDEI). The Office of Minority Education (OMED) was moved under IDEI, a bureaucratic reorganization that marks the beginning of modern DEI efforts at Georgia Tech: legacy civil rights offices combined with the multicultural center to consolidate in one office expansion of identity-based programs.¹³ One year later, in 2012, Georgia Tech saw the creation of the Diversity Programs Committee, with the charge:

1. Identify and catalogue existing Institute programs/initiatives that address gender and racial/ethnic diversity for faculty, staff and students;
2. Identify and catalogue existing Institute initiatives that address education and training around issues of bias and diversity equity;
3. Identify and catalogue existing funded research that address gender and racial/ethnic diversity in STEM;
4. Develop strategies to promote collaborations and multidisciplinary initiatives that leverage existing and potential efforts to address broadly the agenda of gender and diversity equity in STEM.¹⁴

In 2016, DEI at Georgia Tech grew once again. The Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion (CSDI) was established within IDEI, and S. Gordon Moore Jr. was hired as CSDI's new executive director.¹⁵ The same year, the Black Student Task Force was established, and Georgia Tech adopted the Task Force's eleven recommendations;

12 See Georgia Tech Liberal Arts Ambassador Program, "2023 Diversity Symposium," <https://enrollment.iac.gatech.edu/events/item/668124/diversity-symposium>; Diversity and Inclusion Month is still listed in Google's search results, however the Georgia Tech webpage appears to have been taken down. The description reads: "Each spring since 2008, Georgia Tech celebrates and brings awareness to our community's diverse student body through Diversity and Inclusivity Month," see: https://www.google.com/search?q=Georgia+Tech+Diversity+and+Inclusion+month&oq=Georgia+Tech+Diversity+and+Inclusion+month&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAFEEUYOdIBCDY1ODBqMGoQqAIAAsAIB&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8.

13 OMED: Educational Services, "History," <https://omed.gatech.edu/about-omed/>.

14 The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System, "Georgia Institute of Technology, PAE-6: Diversity and Equity Coordination," <https://reports.aashe.org/institutions/georgia-institute-of-technology-ga/report/2012-05-15/PAE/diversity-and-affordability/PAE-6/>.

15 OMED: Educational Services, "History," <https://omed.gatech.edu/about-omed/>.

launching the Leading Women@Tech, Inclusive Leaders Academy, and Emerging Leaders programs; expanding OMED's Challenge program; creating a five-week long preparatory course for incoming freshmen; and establishing a Student Advisory Committee on Black Student Experiences and Campus Environment.¹⁶

Gender exclusive groups, such as Leading Women@Tech, had historically been part of the IDEI office. Sexual orientation specifically rose in prominence after the death of Scott Schulz. Schulz, who went by the name 'Scout', was a "bisexual, nonbinary, and intersex" activist, who served as president of the Pride Alliance at Georgia Tech in addition to being active with Black Lives Matter and the Democratic Socialists of America.¹⁷ On September 16th, 2017, Shultz was shot by police, in what appears to have been a case of suicide-by-cop.¹⁸ Shultz, who had long suffered from depression and had attempted suicide before, placed the 911 call, and left a suicide note with a friend immediately prior to the incident.¹⁹

On September 18th, two days after his death, Shultz's friends held a protest vigil. Three days after the vigil, the group rioted, triggering the second campus-wide "shelter in place" order within a week. Law enforcement began arresting student rioters based on security camera footage. Shultz's former romantic partner, Dallas

Figure 1. Scout Shultz at a Pride Alliance rally in 2017



16 Office of the President, "Georgia Tech Diversity Symposium, September 6, 2017, G.P. 'Bud' Peterson," Georgia Tech, September 6, 2017, <https://president.gatech.edu/speech/opening-remarks-institutes-ninth-annual-diversity-symposium>.

17 Associated Press Atlanta, "Georgia Tech officer overreacted in shooting LGBTQ activist, lawyer says," *The Guardian*, September 18, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/sep/18/georgia-tech-police-shoot-lgbtq-student-dead>

18 *Ibid.*

19 School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, "Campus Community Mourns Loss of Scout Schultz," Georgia Tech, September 16, 2017, <https://ece.gatech.edu/news/2023/12/campus-community-mourns-loss-scout-schultz>

Punja, who had been part of the riot and suffered from depression and borderline personality disorder, purchased a gun from a local gun show and shot herself on September 30th.²⁰ On December 6, 2017, Kirby Jackson, who was facing criminal charges for his conduct in the vigil-turned-riot, committed suicide. Jackson was Scott's friend and a black transgender advocate described as "Georgia Tech's LGBTQ den mother."²¹ Going into 2018, the intensity of the protests and activism waned, but were carried on by Cat Monden, Shultz's friend who had entered into pretrial intervention that Fall.

Following this string of incidents, the officer who had fired at Scout was cleared by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and returned to duty.²² The LGBTQ Resource Center held training sessions with Georgia Tech's Police Department. The Progressive Students Association (PSA) made a list of demands of Georgia Tech, such as funding for more mental health treatment, police training in crisis intervention, more gender-neutral bathrooms, and more gender-inclusive housing on campus, and more. Georgia Tech administrators, conducting a separate review of the events, recommended the administration increase funding for student counseling, hiring counselors with "extensive training in related areas such as gender and LGBTQIA studies," and create new initiatives to diminish student stress.²³ Administrative concern over sexual orientation, however, proved shortlasting. By 2020, the focus of administrators, following the newscycle, had shifted back toward race and culture.

Phase Three (2020 to present):

In response to the Black Lives Matter riots in the summer of 2020, DEI and "Anti-Racist" programs received a tremendous amount of focus from higher education administrators. Georgia Tech was no exception to this general trend, and several new programs and initiatives were devised not only institution-wide, but also within specific schools and departments.

Georgia Tech began the Peer-I-Scope program that year to recruit prospective students from Atlanta's public schools as well as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).²⁴ The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts began its own DEI initiatives, directly attributing its "increased awareness of injustice, particularly of institutional racism" in "response to the tragic death of George Floyd in the Summer of 2020."²⁵ The School of History and Sociology (HSOC) within Ivan Allen College began its own "Anti-Racism Action Committee," which stated that:

20 Hallie Lieberman, "The Trigger Effect," *Atavista Magazine*, No. 82, <https://magazine.atavist.com/the-trigger-effect-scout-schultz-georgia-tech/>.

21 *Ibid.*

22 *Ibid.*

23 *Ibid.*

24 OMED: Educational Services, "History," <https://omed.gatech.edu/about-omed/>

25 Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts, "DEI @ IAC Overview," Internet Archive Wayback Machine, <https://web.archive.org/web/20240421213238/https://dei.iac.gatech.edu/overview>.

The current national and international reckoning with systemic racism and injustice has led the Georgia Institute of Technology and HSOC to a much more critical self-examination, and it is clear that we still have a long way to go in our efforts to make our community as inclusive as it must be. In discussions with students, alumni, faculty, and staff, we have heard stories of inexcusable experiences with racism. These stories have pained us and galvanized us in equal measure. We must first acknowledge and critically examine how our School's own practices have contributed, however unintentionally, to the racism and injustice that people of color have experienced at our university. Furthermore, we cannot be content with gradually reducing the number and intensity of these experiences and gradually improving the quality of the experience of people of color at Georgia Tech and HSOC.

Instead, we must recognize that this is an urgent crisis that demands immediate adjustments as well as long-term strategic plans to ensure that Georgia Tech becomes an anti-racist institution. We see HSOC's faculty, staff, and students as leaders for not only our university and the University System of Georgia, but for other universities and colleges throughout the country as well. The HSOC Anti-Racism Action Committee defines anti-racism as the active opposition to systemic racism through intentional actions, policies, and practices. This opposition to racism must be present at the individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels, with understanding and commitment from all in the HSOC community, as we all bear responsibility for the fulfillment of our mission.²⁶

The committee then laid out a list of objectives to “decolonize [their] curriculum, educate [their] faculty and students, strengthen [their] future hiring practices, and contribute to anti-racism work beyond HSOC.” These objectives include:

1. Press Georgia Tech's library to obtain the main databases needed to study and teach about Black history and related fields.
2. Revisit/revise the undergraduate curriculum, including existing course titles, exploring new course offerings, and potentially amending requirements for the major. Develop a robust Black Studies minor using HSOC's existing African American Studies Certificate as a starting point.
3. Press Georgia Tech to hire faculty in the fields of African American and/or African Diaspora history and sociology.

26 School of History and Sociology, “HSOC Anti-Racism Action Committee,” Georgia Tech, https://hsoc.gatech.edu/hsoc-anti-racism-action-committee?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

4. Locate and hire an external consultant to assist in designing proactively equitable practices around hiring, promotion and tenure, and periodic peer review as well as to help create spaces where faculty can voice concerns related to the work of this committee.
5. Make this committee a permanent standing committee in the School of History and Sociology.²⁷

By the Spring semester of 2021, the radicalism of these revamped DEI efforts was revealed when Angela Davis was invited to give a keynote lecture for Black History Month. Georgia Tech described the former Communist leader as a “political activist, philosopher, educator, and author.”²⁸ Archie Ervin, still the Vice President for Institute Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (IDEI), remarked: “Through her activism spanning over 50 years, Davis has been deeply involved in movements for social justice and social reform around the world. As a leader of the Black Power Movement in the 1960s, she contributed to the advancement of the term ‘antiracist,’ which was later etched in the American lexicon by Ibram X. Kendi’s best-seller, ‘How to Be an Antiracist.’”²⁹

Between 2021 and 2022, Georgia Tech’s DEI advocates helped to make changes to the Institute. In 2021, Georgia Tech’s Provost sent out a memo whereby “all faculty who serve on reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure committees, and faculty search committees are required to participate in an implicit bias workshop.”³⁰ In 2022, Georgia Tech’s Career Center, which helps students find employers, hired eight new staff members aligned with Georgia Tech’s institutional DEI plans.³¹

At the same time, Georgia’s lawmakers were growing increasingly skeptical of DEI programming throughout the state. In 2021, State Representative Emory Dunahoo requested information from the University System of Georgia about any courses that an institution may be teaching about “privilege” and “oppression.” Georgia Tech responded to the request, stating that while there were no courses explicitly “teaching students that possessing certain characteristics inherently

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Georgia Tech News Center, “Angela Davis to Give Keynote at 2021 Georgia Tech Black History Month Lecture,” February 2, 2021, <https://news.gatech.edu/news/2021/02/02/angela-davis-give-keynote-2021-georgia-tech-black-history-month-lecture>; Mason Goad, “KGB Documents Show the Secret History of Ibram X. Kendi’s “Antiracist” Movement,” *Minding the Campus*, August 29, 2022, <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2022/08/29/kgb-documents-show-the-secret-history-of-ibram-x-kendis-antiracist-movement/>.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Georgia Tech, “ADVANCE Program,” Internet Archive Wayback Machine, <https://web.archive.org/web/20230317163747/http://www.advance.gatech.edu/bias-awareness-workshops>; Note that this requirement was apparently instituted in 2016, but renewed in 2021. Why the policy was in need of being renewed, we are not sure. See: Tessa MacCartney, “2022 USG Response to DEI request,” *University System of Georgia*, February 16, 2022, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CtJZ3uFmtpSKh1HMPn-oJZgOVtVNHT1R/view>,

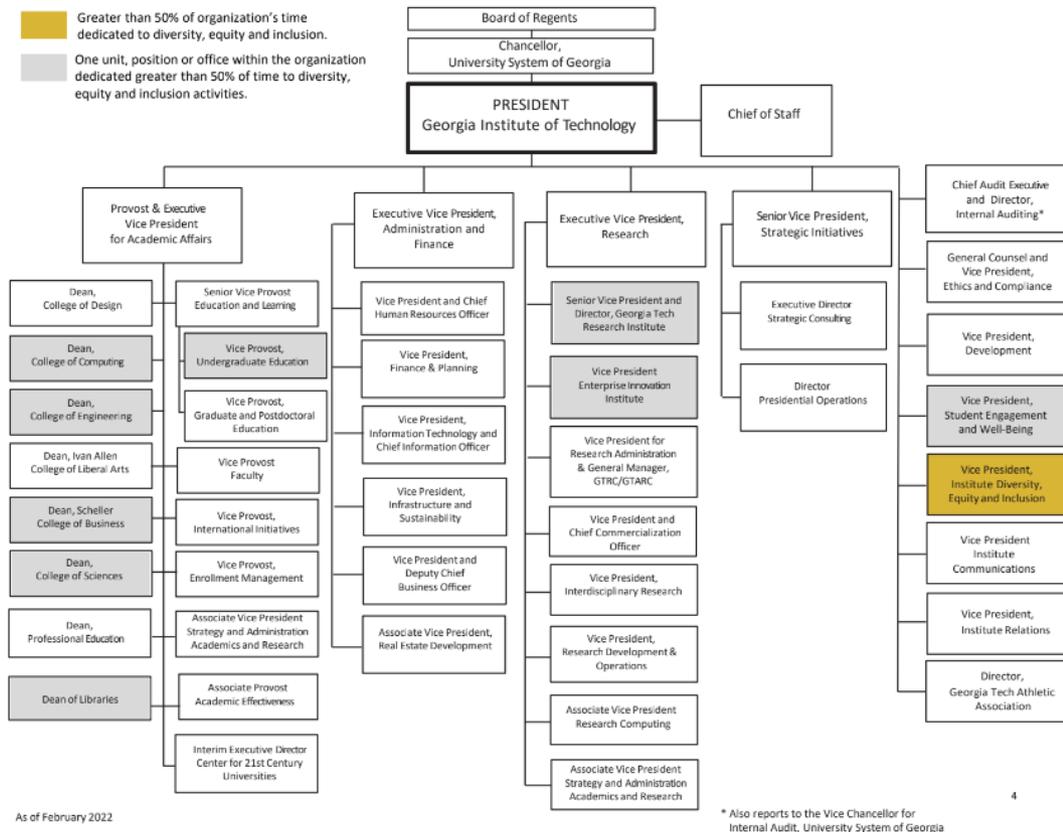
³¹ Kevin Gray, “Georgia Tech Career Center Initiative Builds a Diverse Team and a Psychologically Safe Environment,” *National Association of Colleges and Employees*, September 23, 2024, <https://www.nacweb.org/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/best-practices/georgia-tech-career-center-initiative-builds-a-diverse-team-and-a-psychologically-safe-environment>.

designates them as either being “privileged” or “oppressed” and none teaching explicitly that “students who identify as white, male, heterosexual, or Christian are intrinsically

privileged and oppressive, which is defined as ‘malicious or unjust’ and ‘wrong,’” there were in fact a number of courses at Georgia Tech that directly dealt with such topics, such as:

- HTS 2016. Social Issues and Public Policy.
- HTS 3008. Class, Power, and Social Inequality
- HTS 3017. Sociology of Gender
- HTS 3026. Sociology of Race and Ethnicity
- HTS 6119. Race and Ethnicity
- LMC 3304. Science, Technology, and Gender
- LMC 3306. Science, Technology, and Race³²

Figure 2. Georgia Tech’s Organizational Chart of DEI Activities as of 2022.



32 Office of the Chancellor, “Response to Emory Dunahoo,” *Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia*, February 10, 2021, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NWt_1hhZFKjRMhbBgZ8pw-xhxJzH1YOC/view.

To take from but one syllabus, HTS 2016. Social Issues and Public Policy, the course description reads “This course focuses on social issues associated with society in the United States ... taking a critical sociological perspective in analyzing U.S. culture and capitalism and its impact on our social institutions, social inequalities, and the quality of our democracy,” and features Joy Ann Reid as guest speaker in the first week of class.³³

In 2022, Representative David Knight filed a similar request for information with the Board of Regents, asking for information about “diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, faculty job ads that mention anti-racism or social justice, and staff dedicated to DEI and other race-based programs.” Georgia Tech provided a comprehensive organizational chart mapping out which departments were dedicated to DEI and which had at least one position dedicated to DEI.

Rep. Knight also asked whether “announcements, job descriptions, or other parts of the application process for any USG administrative, faculty, instruction or teaching positions require applicants to provide the following, or if it was listed as a preference, including:

- a. Evidence of activism, scholarship, and/or engagement supporting social justice, equity, anti-racism, and/or addressing institutional and/or structural racism or discrimination.
- b. Demonstration of a disposition, commitment, or other mental impression supporting social justice, equity, or anti-racism.
- c. Evidence, declaration, or identity of an individual’s conscious or unconscious bias or privilege and how the individual redressed it.

In its response, Georgia Tech reviewed recent job postings, with Xs in lettered columns corresponding to the points above indicating positive hits. The report reveals that Criterion a), or evidence of activism, was required for only a handful of administrative, typically student affairs, positions. Criterion b), that is demonstrated commitment to DEI, was required or preferred for nearly all roles, both faculty and administrative. Criterion c), declaration of bias, was not required or preferred for any role.³⁴

33 HTS 2016_Spring 2018 Syllabus_Final, <https://hsoc.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/hts2016b.pdf>.

34 Tessa MacCartney, “2022 USG Response to DEI request,” University System of Georgia, February 16, 2022, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CtJZ3uFmtpSKh1HMPn-oJZgOVtVNHT1R/view>.

Table 1. Part of Georgia Tech’s Response On DEI in Job Postings.
Criteria a), b), and c) are described in the text.

Position	a)			b)			c)		
	Required	Preferred	Neither	Required	Preferred	Neither	Required	Preferred	Neither
Title IX Coordinator	X					X			X
Staff Diversity Inclusion and Engagement Coordinator			X		X				X
Executive Director, Compliance Programs	X								
Director, Culture, Inclusion and Engagement			X	X					X
Student Life Program Director (Women’s Resource Center)	X					X			X
Assistant Title IX Coordinator			X	X					X
LGBTQIA Resource Center Coordinator			X	X					X
Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (Academic Professional)/COS			X	X					X
Associate Vice President-Institute Diversity, Equity and Inclusion			X	X					X
Assistant Director, Academic Initiatives/OMED				X					
Associate Director of Research, IDEaS			X		X				X
MBDA Startup Catalyst/EI2			X		X				X
MBDA Project Mgr./EI2			X	X					X
PIN Workforce Development Mgr./EI2			X		X				X
Assistant Dean, Collections, Strategy, Development/Library			X	X					X
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Outreach/Library			X	X					X

Rep. Knight’s request in 2022 was followed by another request by Georgia’s Lieutenant Governor Burt Jones in 2023, focused on the issue of DEI and free speech.³⁵ That same year, the state legislature introduced a bill to prohibit “the

35 Sonny Purdue, “2023 USG DEI response,” *University System of Georgia*, June 30, 2023, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oWqy89yLumen-IW3qfcx17Se-IZGkYs/view>.

use of political litmus tests in postsecondary educational institutions” but the bill failed to advance.³⁶ Similarly, in 2025, Senate Bill 120, which would have ended DEI in Georgia’s institutions of higher education, failed to advance.³⁷

The University of Georgia System, to which Georgia Tech belongs, has adopted a posture of amenability towards state efforts, but administrative efforts appear cosmetic rather than invoking substantive reform. Seeking to get out ahead of legislative efforts in 2023, the University System of Georgia publicly ended the use of diversity statements, yet in 2025 diversity statements are still required in hiring for select postdoctoral positions.³⁸ In early 2025, in anticipation that Senate Bill 120 would become law, Georgia Tech scrubbed DEI language from its website and “closed/moved” the LGBTQ+ Resource Center and the Women’s Resource Center. Not a single DEI administrator was dismissed, however, indicating Georgia Tech’s ongoing appeasement of DEI, rather than conforming to law. Further evidence is Georgia Tech’s continued participation in the President’s Postdoctoral Fellowship, one of the largest, racially discriminatory DEI postdoctoral programs nationwide.³⁹

36 See Georgia Senate Bill 261, 2023-2024, <https://legiscan.com/GA/bill/SB261/2023>.

37 Ellie Parker, “Georgia Tech ‘preemptively’ shuttering groups for marginalized students, pride alliance says,” *Atlanta News First*, February 28, 2025, <https://www.atlantaneewsfirst.com/2025/02/28/georgia-tech-preemptively-shuttering-groups-marginalized-students-pride-alliance-says/>; Katie Burkholder, “Georgia Tech dissolves LGBTQ+ Pride Alliance, Women’s Resource Center, Black tech group amid DEI concerns,” *Rough Draft Atlanta*, February 27, 2025, <https://roughdraftatlanta.com/2025/02/27/georgia-tech-pride-alliance-dissolved/>; Melmel Xu, “Georgia bill echoing Trump’s DEI crackdown in schools fails to advance,” *WABE*, March 7, 2025, <https://www.wabe.org/georgia-bill-echoing-trumps-dei-crackdown-in-schools-fails-to-advance/>.

38 Elad Vaida. “University System of Georgia curbs DEI, adopts institutional neutrality, strengthens First Amendment rights in new changes,” *Campus Reform*, November 18, 2024, <https://www.goacta.org/2024/11/university-system-of-georgia-curbs-dei-adopts-institutional-neutrality-strengthens-first-amendment-rights-in-new-changes/>; Laura Spitalniak. “Georgia public colleges put end to required DEI statements in hiring,” *Higher Ed Dive*, August 31, 2023, <https://www.highereddive.com/news/georgia-public-colleges-ban-required-dei-statements-hiring/692318/>; John Sailer, Post on X, February 26, 2025, <https://x.com/JohnDSailer/status/1894787145400713529>.

39 John Sailer, Post on X, February 26, 2025, <https://x.com/JohnDSailer/status/1894787145400713529>.

DEI and National Security Considerations

The history of America’s enemies—both foreign and domestic—antagonizing race relations through covert action goes back to the earliest days of Independence. How such operations transformed into modern-day DEI can be traced back to as early as September 1969. That was the year when Gus Hall, the former General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA), secretly wrote a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC-CPSU) on behalf of Communist party member James Jackson.⁴⁰

Jackson was a well-known black activist. Hall explained that were Jackson to receive an honorary doctorate degree, it would expand Communist influence within American higher education and among the “negro masses.” Hall opened his letter with the acknowledgement that the CPUSA had made similar requests in the past, though when and on whose behalf, Hall did not specify. The Soviets soon agreed to furnish such credentials with the hope that Jackson could use them to obtain a faculty position at New York University, and use his authority there to influence not only black Americans, but also members of the Democratic party and other politically left-leaning individuals.

A more consequential request came a few months later, not from Hall and the CPUSA, but from Yuri Andropov, then Chairman of the Soviet KGB. Inspired by the CPUSA’s early and “positive results,” Andropov filed a request with the CC-CPSU to assist the CPUSA in its covert influence operations to further radicalize and recruit the Black Panthers. Andropov explained to the Central Committee that “the rise of negro protests in the USA will bring definite difficulties to the ruling classes of the USA and will distract the Nixon administration from pursuing an active foreign policy,” and he wanted to bolster such protests.

40 Mason Goad, “KGB Documents Show the Secret History of Ibram X. Kendi’s “Antiracist” Movement,” *Minding the Campus*, August 29, 2022, <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2022/08/29/kgb-documents-show-the-secret-history-of-ibram-x-kendis-antiracist-movement/>; see also the original document in the Bukovsky Archives: <https://bukovsky-archive.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/1-oct-69-3-pp-25-s-17651.pdf>.

Just two months earlier, in February 1970, a CPUSA cell known as the Che-Lumumba Club began a campaign of protests on behalf of incarcerated Black Panther member George Jackson. One of the club's members rose to international prominence as a result of this campaign, when weapons she purchased ended up in the hands of George's 17-year old brother Jonathan, who used those weapons to carry out a shooting in August 1970, leaving four dead including himself. The woman who purchased the weapons was an ousted professor from UCLA named Angela Davis.

After the shooting, Davis went on the run and was soon captured and charged with aggravated kidnapping and first degree murder. The KGB wasted no time in spinning up its propaganda machine for her defense, and declassified reports from the Central Intelligence Agency from March 1971 noted that Davis's prosecution was "developing into a rallying-point for a Soviet manipulated... anti-U.S. campaign." Propaganda was not the only tool in the Soviet's arsenal, however, and KGB archivist Vasili Mitrokhin reported after his defection that the KGB conspired to place an explosive package in "the Negro section of New York [City]," preferably at a Historically Black College or University (HBCU). After the attack, phone calls were to be placed to African American organizations and KGB operatives posing as members of the Jewish Defense League would take credit. According to Mitrokhin, the operation was codenamed PANDORA.

After a campaign by CPUSA and CC-CPSU to ensure jury nullification, Angela Davis was acquitted in 1972. While her purchasing the weapons used in the attack was beyond dispute, her role as a co-conspirator could not be established "beyond a reasonable doubt." After her acquittal, she continued her activism and her prominence within the Communist Party USA grew. Gus Hall, still the CPUSA's leader, chose Davis as his running mate for the 1980 presidential election, as the CPUSA continued its clandestine work with the Soviets. Hall even requested special training from the KGB just months before the election took place.

Around this time, having achieved a high station within the CPUSA and fame amongst radicals, Davis began work on her most influential book, *Women, Race, and Class*, which would go on to inspire DEI advocates a generation later. Ibram X. Kendi, the champion of the so-called "Anti-Racist" movement, for example, heaped praise on Davis and her book in his own 2017 publication *Stamped from the Beginning*—a staple of DEI-related literature.⁴¹ Of course, Davis's book was no less a consequence of Soviet influence operations than was her infamy, as much of the Marxist material cited by Davis was purchased through International Publishers, a publication firm

41 Ibram X. Kendi, "Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America," August 15, 2015, <https://www.amazon.com/Stamped-Beginning-Definitive-History-National/dp/1568585985>.

that—as shown by a top-secret Soviet document from 1982—had received covert financial assistance from the USSR for decades.⁴²

Throughout the 1980s, the KGB’s aggravation of race relations in the United States never ceased. In 1984, for example, KGB operatives sent racist pamphlets—made to look as if the pamphlets came from the Ku Klux Klan—to Asian and African athletes participating in the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles.⁴³ Some tried to expose the Soviet propagandist effort. In 1985, KGB defector and Soviet propagandist Yuri Bezmenov published a pamphlet of his own, titled *Black is Beautiful, Communism is Not*, that sought to expose the KGB’s activities and goals to the black community. The pamphlet, derived from a speech Bezmenov gave in Atlanta, Georgia, not far from the Georgia Institute of Technology, warned of how the Soviets were aggravating racial tensions, and how it was actually the Soviet’s communist system that was the most racist in the world. As Bezmenov put it:

I wish I could explain it to your freedom fighters in the United States, who blame America for being racist. It is my country, under Soviet socialism, which is the most racist system in the world. By law in USSR, I was not allowed to marry a foreign girl, and—Marx forbid!—to make love to her because the Communist Party has control of my genes and chromosomes. I was not allowed to marry into an ‘inferior race’, and this is something that I have desperately tried to explain to your civil rights activists who blame America.⁴⁴

Yuri Bezmenov’s words of warning, however, did not travel far enough or fast enough before he died in 1993.⁴⁵ The year before, Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky was invited to give testimony in regard to the criminality of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He had scanned documents in archives of the Central Committee that revealed details about Soviet influence operations, such as their aggravation of race relations in the United States. Bukovsky’s work, like Bezmenov’s, was not immediately recognized, and due to the documents he collected implicating various prominent Westerners as having colluded with the Soviet Union, Bukovsky was not able to find a publisher for nearly 25 years.⁴⁶

42 See the Bukovsky Archives: <https://bukovsky-archive.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/5-jan-82-st-44-7.pdf>

43 Fred Barbash, “U.S. Ties ‘Klan’ Olympic Hate Mail to KGB,” *The Washington Post*, August 6, 1984, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1984/08/07/us-ties-klan-olympic-hate-mail-to-kgb/80918fe8-fcf0-46cf-bb58-726ee46d8ce9/>.

44 Yuri Bezmenov, *Black is Beautiful, Communism is Not* (1985), pg. 11, <https://ia600202.us.archive.org/1/items/YuriBezmenovBlackIsBeautifulCommunismIsNot/YuriBezmenovBlackIsBeautiful.pdf>.

45 See the archive of the Windsor Public Library Obituaries Database: <https://web.archive.org/web/20160304222006/http://projects.windsorpubliclibrary.com/digi/obits/results.php?lname=Schuman&fname=Tomas>; note that, after his defection, Yuri Bezmenov went by the alias of Thomas D. Shuman.

46 Juliana Geran Pilon, “A Dissident Outlives Soviet Communism,” *The Wall Street Journal*, October 28, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-dissident-outlives-soviet-communism-11572302952>.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of its clandestine support for Western radicals was an immense setback for the Communist Party USA and its fellow travelers. Even so, Davis continued her radical activism, as did her successors. Critical Theory, a neo-Marxist philosophy championed by Davis's former mentor Herbert Marcuse, officially adopted a racial dimension in the 1990s, and in 1995 the key writings of so-called "Critical Race Theory" were formally codified, with Davis an oft-cited inspiration of the movement.⁴⁷

Thus, by the turn of the millennium, a generation of domestic radicals, cultivated as part of ongoing cultural subversion efforts by the Soviet regime, had infiltrated university faculties and university administration, which spearheaded diversity, equity, and inclusion and numerous other campus initiatives. The Georgia Institute of Technology was no exception to this trend, and, as discussed in the previous section, Angela Davis herself was introduced to the Georgia Tech community as a "political activist, philosopher, educator, and author" by the institute's Vice President for Institute Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (IDEI) when Davis gave her 2021 keynote speech for Black History Month.⁴⁸

Recent protests for "Palestinian Liberation" at Georgia Tech and elsewhere also find origins in operations backed by adversarial foreign nations. In recent months, campuses across the country have seen protests and encampments in support of "intifada" (i.e. armed rebellion) against Jews and the Jewish state of Israel, support for the terrorist group Hamas, and various acts of vandalism and antisemitism.⁴⁹ Georgia's Governor, Brian Kemp, released a statement saying:

"Across the country, Americans have watched with horror as radicals have terrorized Jewish students and forced them to evacuate... but in Georgia there will never be a safe haven for those who promote terrorism and extremism that threatens the safety of students."⁵⁰

From the Bukovsky archives, we find that the Soviet Union was an early material supporter of the Palestinian liberation movement. In August 1969, for example, KGB Chairman Yuri Andropov sent a top secret letter to the Central Committee of

47 Cornel, West et al.. 1995. *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*. The New Press.

48 Georgia Institute of Technology, Angela Davis to Give Keynote at 2021 Georgia Tech Black History Month Lecture, February 2, 2021, <https://news.gatech.edu/news/2021/02/02/angela-davis-give-keynote-2021-georgia-tech-black-history-month-lecture>; Center for the Study of Women, Science and Technology, "Angela Davis Talks Activism, Reform - Black History Month Lecture," February 11, 2021, <https://wst.gatech.edu/news/item/644130/angela-davis-talks-activism-reform-black-history-month-lecture>

49 Anti-Defamation League, "What Do Anti-Israel Student Organizers Really Want? Examining the Extreme Demands Behind the Campus Protests," *Anti-Defamation League*, March 15, 2024, <https://www.adl.org/resources/article/what-do-anti-israel-student-organizers-really-want-examining-extreme-demands>.

50 Jessica Moore, "Gov. Kemp releases statement after protests in support of Palestinians swept across Georgia's college campuses," 11 Alive News, April 25, 2024, <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/nation-world/israel-hamas-conflict/read-gov-kemp-full-statement-protests-swept-across-georgias-college-campuses/85-63b644b1-2264-4dcc-8a9d-1ffc-16b4ef2f>.

51 See PSL Atlanta's post on Instagram, March 15, 2024, https://www.instagram.com/pslatlanta/p/C4i05OrO5dd/?img_index=2; See also Mason Goad, *Instagram the Intifada: Mapping the Social Networks of Students for Justice in Palestine*, The National Association of Scholars, November 9, 2024, <https://www.nas.org/reports/instagram-the-intifada/full-report>.

Figure 3. Photograph of the Pro-Palestine Protests at Georgia Tech, March 15, 2024.
Source: Party for Socialism and Liberation, Atlanta Chapter⁵¹



the Communist Party of the Soviet Union about how an arson at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (a fire started by a delusional Australian Christian named Denis Rohan) could be used by the KGB station in India to organize a mass protest at the US Embassy against America and Israel.⁵² This letter was sent merely three days after the CC-CPSU agreed to honor Gus Hall's request to confer an honorary doctorate on an African-American communist to infiltrate NYU and politically left-leaning social circles.⁵³

The year prior, in 1968, the Soviet KGB began a clandestine relationship with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which the US Director of National Intelligence's National Counterterrorism Center (DNI NCTC) described as "a terrorist group based in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. It combines Arab nationalism with Marxist-Leninist ideology, viewing the destruction of Israel as integral to the struggle to remove Western capitalism from the Middle East and ultimately establish a Communist Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital." According to the NCTC, as of July 2022, the PFLP along with Hamas and other

52 Mason Goad, "KGB Documents Show the Secret Link Between 'Anti-Racist' and Palestinian Terrorists," *Minding the Campus*, October 26, 2023, <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2023/10/26/kgb-documents-show-the-secret-link-between-anti-racists-and-palestinian-terrorists/>.

53 Mason Goad, "KGB Documents Show the Secret History of Ibram X. Kendi's 'Antiracist' Movement," *Minding the Campus*, August 29, 2022, <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2022/08/29/kgb-documents-show-the-secret-history-of-ibram-x-kendis-antiracist-movement/>.

groups, were working to create a National Liberation Front to address “internal divisions” and unify.⁵⁴

In addition to organizing protests on the PFLP's behalf, the Soviet KGB armed the PFLP so that it could conduct terrorist attacks against numerous targets against American and Israeli representatives in foreign countries. As Andropov wrote to Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev on April 23, 1974:

Since 1968 the KGB has maintained secret working contact with Wadie Haddad, Politburo member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), head of the PFLP's external operations section.

In a confidential conversation in April this year at a meeting with the KGB station chief in Lebanon, Wadie Haddad outlined a long-term program of sabotage and terrorism by the PFLP, which can be summarized as follows.

The main aim of special actions by the PFLP is to increase the effectiveness of the struggle of the Palestinian resistance movement against Israel, Zionism and American imperialism. Arising from this, the planned sabotage and terrorist operations will mainly be directed towards:

employing special means to prolong the “oil war” of Arab countries against the imperialist forces supporting Israel, carrying out operations against American and Israeli personnel in third countries with the aim of securing reliable information about the plans and intentions of the USA and Israel, carrying out acts of sabotage and terrorism on the territory of Israel, organizing acts of sabotage against the Diamond Centre, whose basic capital derives from Israeli, British, Belgian and West German companies.

[page two]

In order to implement the above measures, the PFLP is currently preparing a number of special operations, including strikes against large oil-storage installations in various countries (Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf, Hong Kong et al), the destruction of oil tankers and super-tankers, actions against American and Israeli representatives in Iran, Greece, Ethiopia and Kenya, an attack on the Diamond Centre in Tel Aviv, etc.”⁵⁵

54 Goad, “KGB Documents Show the Secret Link Between ‘Anti-Racist’ and Palestinian Terrorists,” *Minding the Campus*; National Counterterrorism Center, “Counter Terrorism Guid: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine,” *Office of the Director of National Intelligence*, As of November 2022, https://www.dni.gov/nctc/ftos/pflp_fto.html.

55 *Ibid*; see The Bukovsky Archives, “23 April 1974* (1071-A/ov) Contacts with Haddad, PFLP-EO,” <https://bukovsky-archive.com/2016/07/01/23-april-1974-1071-aov/>.

The Soviet KGB was authorized to assist the PFLP on a case-by-case basis, and did so by delivering weapons and other equipment to Palestinian terror groups based on documents dated January 10 and May 16, 1975.⁵⁶ Senior Hamas leader Osama Hamdan outlined the extent of KGB support in a May 2021 interview with Russia's *Novaya Gazeta*. In response to the question "Where did Hamas get such a large number of Russian-made rockets used to attack Israel?" Hamden said, "I think the Russian people should be proud they gave the oppressed peoples of the world weapons with which they can defend themselves. These weapons were sent to our region in the 60s and 70s."⁵⁷

While the U.S.S.R is today out of the picture, Georgia Tech and many other institutions of higher education have invited a more recent U.S. adversary with open arms: the People's Republic of China. Georgia Tech's relationship with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) goes back several years, and for good reason has recently been scrutinized by authorities and the public. Georgia Tech established a Confucius Institute with the CCP in 2014. The institute was, ostensibly, a collaboration between Georgia Tech and Tianjin University in China, with a specific and supposedly benign focus on Chinese language and cultural instruction, as well as technical cooperation between the two institutions.⁵⁸

56 See The Bukovsky Archives, "10 January 1975** (55-A/ov) Haddad" and "16 May 1975* (1218-A/ov) Arms transfer to Haddad," <https://bukovsky-archive.com/2017/06/06/10-january-1975-55-aov/>, <https://bukovsky-archive.com/2016/07/01/16-may-1975-1218-a/>.

57 Anna Borshchevskaya, "Russia's Relationship with Hamas and Putin's Global Calculations," The Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy, November 6, 2023, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/russias-relationship-hamas-and-putins-global-calculations>.

58 "Investigation into Georgia Tech for Partnership with blacklisted Chinese Military-linked University," House Select Committee on the CCP, May 9, 2024, <https://selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/media/investigations/investigation-georgia-tech-partnership-blacklisted-chinese-military-linked>.

Conclusion and Recommendations

American liberal and progressive academics have long maintained intellectual, public, and political ties to foreign regimes with which they share an ideological affinity. The first generation of American communist sympathizers, however, dispensed with ideology insofar as their beliefs proved contrary to American values and institutions.

In the 1920s, American labor leaders, journalists, and intellectuals visited the Soviet Union. Like today's progressives, they were passionate about the global struggle for liberation and equality. Throughout the Cold War, the Soviet Union labeled its foreign apologists 'agents of influence:' individuals with the ability to shape public opinion and decision making, who might be used, consciously or unconsciously, to produce results beneficial for another country.⁵⁹ As described by the former Soviet propagandist Yuri Bezmenov, the U.S.S.R employed agents of influence to defeat the enemy from within, engaging the four-fold process of demoralization, destabilization, crisis, and normalization.⁶⁰

Proclaiming the United States a nation fundamentally and irredeemably oppressive, the post-civil rights Social Justice movement has mounted such a campaign. Activist-scholars frequently call not only for the overthrow of the institutions at which they are employed, but the United States itself.⁶¹ Pride in being American has reached historic lows.⁶² Racial tensions, the focus of the movement, are perceived to be growing worse, not better, since the advent of the DEI movement.⁶³

59 Paul Kengor, *Dupes: How America's Adversaries Have Manipulated Progressives for a Century* (Washington, DC: Regnery ISI Books, September 10, 2010), ISBN 978-1-935191-75-9.

60 Ayaan Hirsi Ali, "Ayaan Hirsi Ali: We Have Been Subverted," *The Free Press*, June 4, 2024, <https://www.thefp.com/p/ayaan-hirsi-ali-we-have-been-subverted>.

61 Paul A. Szypula, Post on X, footage from Socialism 2025, <https://x.com/Bubblebathgirl/status/1941885273983312156>; Stu, Post on X, footage from Socialism 2025, <https://x.com/thestustustudio/status/1941958171389538635>.

62 Jeffrey M. Jones, "American Pride Slips to New Low," *Gallup*, June 30, 2025, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/692150/american-pride-slips-new-low.aspx>.

63 Pew Research Center, *Race in America 2019*, [https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/04/09/how-americans-see-the-state-of-race-relations/#:~:text=Overall%2C%2053%25%20of%20the%20public,halfof%20whites%20\(49%25\)](https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/04/09/how-americans-see-the-state-of-race-relations/#:~:text=Overall%2C%2053%25%20of%20the%20public,halfof%20whites%20(49%25)).

American academics have served as the primary vector for this cultural demoralization and destabilization, but this need not be the case. In the 1930s and 1940s, numerous Soviet agents of influence changed their beliefs. America's leading philosopher and pioneer of the Education school, John Dewey was just such an idealist dupe, used by the Soviet Union after his 1928 visit to spread propaganda for the country abroad. In the 1930s however, Dewey became more clear-eyed about the communists, publicly coming out against the denial of civil liberties, political persecution, and ideological rigidity of the Soviet system.⁶⁴ Arthur Lovejoy, the founder of American Association of University Professors, likewise drew attention to the ways in which communism was incompatible with American institutions. In 1947, he made an argument, from Academic Freedom as the first principle, that universities ought not hire communists as faculty members. Time and time again, Lovejoy observed, communists had subjugated the act at the heart of the academy, the pursuit of truth, to political priorities and eliminated the freedoms enjoyed by academics at Western academies.

Today's institutional guardians would be wise to follow the path of these first progressives. The 60s radical-turned-university administrator must acknowledge that DEI, in a similar fashion to communism, tends to subjugate the academy to political goals—namely, social justice and equity. As the DEI administrative apparatus expands in purview, liberal institutional norms—Academic Freedom, Equal Protection and Opportunity, and basic procedural justice—fall by the wayside, replaced by authoritarian means of achieving equity or social justice. Academics, staff, and students who do not express their support—indeed, their enthusiasm—for DEI beliefs, practices, and policies, become subject to investigation and penalties such as suspension of teaching, loss of funding, and firing.⁶⁵ Nick Wolfinger's *Professors Speak Out: The Truth About Campus Investigations*, compiles the stories of a number of faculty whose lives and careers were ruined after challenging DEI policies.⁶⁶ At Ohio Northern University, Scott Gerber was sued by his university after criticizing racial preference policies in admissions.⁶⁷ Robert Frodeman was ordered to stay off of University of North Texas's campus and gagged for speaking out against

64 David C. Engerman, "John Dewey and the Soviet Union: When Pragmatism Meets Revolution," *Modern intellectual history*, vol. 3(1) (2006): 33-63, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244305000594>.

65 *Professors Speak Out: The Truth About Campus Investigations*, ed. Nicholas Wolfinger (Washington, DC: Academica Press, 2025).

66 "Tracking Cancel Culture in Higher Education," National Association of Scholars, Last Updated November 2024, <https://www.nas.org/blogs/article/tracking-cancel-culture-in-higher-education>.

67 Peter Wood, "Scott Gerber's Case in Context," July 12, 2023, <https://www.nas.org/blogs/article/scott-gerbers-case-in-context>

women-only hiring policies.⁶⁸ Yoel Inbar was taken out of consideration for a teaching position at UCLA for refusing to sign a diversity statement.⁶⁹

Heavy-handed administrative responses to DEI criticism chill speech and create strong taboos around themes and entire subjects (e.g. race), shrinking the freedom of academics to forthrightly pursue truth in these areas. The act at the heart of the academy is thereby diminished. To combat DEI's assault on academic freedom, as well as due process and equal protection, university presidents should eliminate the vast majority of DEI practices. Academic freedom, and the spirit of liberality and humility which previously animated the Western academy, might serve as the lodestar for this act of institutional self-regulation, as they did for John Dewey and Arthur Lovejoy. Popular, executive, and legislative interventions occur when universities fail to maintain their social contract with American society.⁷⁰ If they hope to preserve their autonomy, universities must recover and recommit to the first principles of their institutions.

The American academy, currently a locus for internal dissolution, could be a source of national unity, a cogenerator of a new era of national and local prosperity, preparing students with the vocational skills and acculturation to democratic civic norms. Activism is a failed model for this engagement, which polarizes the average American against the academy.⁷¹ If universities wish to survive the coming age, imbuing—instead of opposing—the rising spirit of civic nationalism would be a prudent stratagem. Putting America first, universities might avoid governmental assault and oversight, though it is in all likelihood already too late.⁷² The *Senatus Populusque Americanus* have spoken: *academia delenda est*.

68 George Leef, "Universities' Stalinesque Procedures Are Silencing Unpopular Professors," James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal, May 23, 2025, <https://jamesgmartin.center/2025/05/universities-stalinesque-procedures-are-silencing-unpopular-professors/>.

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71 Anemona Hartocollis, "Oberlin Says It Will Pay \$36.59 Million to a Local Bakery," *New York Times*, September 8, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/08/us/oberlin-bakery-lawsuit.html>.

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