

United States Senate

COMMITTEES:
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
FINANCE
JOINT ECONOMIC
JUDICIARY
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

July 23, 2025

Dr. Daniel Diermeier
Chancellor, Vanderbilt University
1 Vanderbilt Way
Nashville, TN 37240

Dear Dr. Diermeier,

I write to express my concern regarding reports that Vanderbilt University is concealing its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs instead of fully complying with President Trump's executive action to end wasteful DEI programs in educational institutions.¹ For the benefit of Vanderbilt University students and our state, I urge you to end all DEI programs and fully comply with the President's executive action.

Leaked video footage shows Vanderbilt employees discussing how the University is concealing woke DEI programs by renaming them while continuing to push this harmful content. In the video, a Vanderbilt employee can be heard saying, "different universities were under investigation for their DEI practices... so that's why I think the naming has changed... we have things that clue people in and let people know." Later in the video, when asked if they are engaged in DEI initiatives, she responded affirmatively. And, in another video, one employee exhibited blatant political bias, which raises questions about the extent to which such bias is forced onto the student body by certain activist employees.²

Renaming woke DEI programs to circumvent compliance and public scrutiny degrades the educational experience of your students and the trust placed in institutions of higher education like Vanderbilt. As a beneficiary of federal funding, Vanderbilt has a responsibility to align with the President's executive order and return to a focus on providing quality education to your students. Instead of rebranding harmful, woke DEI initiatives, Vanderbilt should focus on the important

¹ See Exec. Order No. 14,173.

² See Jeff Charles, Leaked Audio Reveals DEI Isn't Dead—It Just Got a Makeover, TOWNHALL (July 23, 2025, 1:00 PM) <https://townhall.com/tipsheet/jeff-charles/2025/07/23/heres-how-tennessee-universities-are-skirting-anti-dei-policies-n2660815> ("God help us . . . [Senator Marsha Blackburn's] ridiculous.")

work of research and workforce development that the institution does so well. I look forward to working with you to this end.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marsha Blackburn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marsha" and last name "Blackburn" clearly distinguishable.

Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator