Access and Engagement: A National Perspective

2023 Academic and Student Affairs Summit
University of Tennessee

SYSTEM

Serving all Tennesseans and beyond through education, discovery and outreach that enables strong economic, social and environmental well-being.
Strategic Pillars

Enhancing Educational Excellence
- Reimagining Admissions & Recruitment

Expanding Research Capabilities
- Leveraging Diversity & Inclusion to Expand Research

Fostering Outreach & Engagement
- Intentional Outreach to Underrepresented Communities

Ensuring Workforce & Administrative Excellence
- Ensuring an Inclusive Environment

Advocating for UT
- Building Trust Through Transparent Communication

Championing Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement
An Evolution of Our Approach

Championing Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement
Our Charge:

• **Streamline our focus** on recruitment, retention, and engagement.

• **Evaluate student and faculty services** currently housed within the Offices of Diversity and Inclusion.

• **Identify new opportunities** to align and improve resources.

• **Refocus on measurable impact** around student and faculty retention and success.

• **Engage with campus stakeholders and leaders for input** on how to make this new approach even more effective and impactful.
National Landscape

DEI, Access, and Engagement in Higher Education
DEI Legislation in June 2023

DEI Bills in 2023

40 have been introduced.

7 have final legislative approval.

7 have become law.

29 have been tabled, failed to pass, or vetoed.

Source: https://www.chronicle.com/article/here-are-the-states-where-lawmakers-are-seeking-to-ban-colleges-dei-efforts
What legislation restricts?

DEI Offices and Mandatory DEI Diversity Stat: Identity-Based Preferences for Hiring and Admissions

Source: https://www.chronicle.com/article/here-are-the-states-where-lawmakers-are-seeking-to-ban-colleges-dei-efforts
Florida governor Ron DeSantis has officially signed legislation that will ban state dollars from going to diversity, equity and inclusion programs at public institutions, ultimately defunding such efforts.

Wisconsin Republicans withhold university pay raises in fight over school diversity funding

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Leaders of the Republican-controlled Wisconsin Legislature withheld pay raises for Universities of Wisconsin employees while approving raises for other state workers on Tuesday in an ongoing fight over the school system’s diversity, equity and inclusion spending.

Republican Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, who co-chairs the Legislature’s employment relations committee, has promised to block pay raises for UW employees until the school system cuts its so-called DEI spending by $32 million.

Source: https://apnews.com/article/university-wisconsin-legislature-diversity-dei-pay-raises-ddee5255f27e54da9a36e2a76b0f5489
Gov. Abbott signs DEI bill into law, dismantling diversity offices at colleges

Texas campuses must eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion offices.

“With this bold, forward-thinking legislation to eliminate DEI programs, Texas is leading the nation, and ensuring our campuses return to focusing on the strength of diversity and promoting a merit-based approach where individuals are judged on their qualifications, skills, and contributions,” Sen. Brandon Creighton, R-Conroe, said in a statement. Creighton introduced the bill to the Senate early March.

On Jan. 11, State Sen. Todd Gardenhire, a Republican, introduced a bill that would end mandatory implicit-bias training. State Rep. Jason Zachary, a Republican, introduced a version of the bill in the House on the same day. On April 18, the House version was placed on the regular calendar for April 20. On April 20 the Senate version was recommended for passage and referred to the Senate Calendar Committee. On April 21, the House and the Senate substituted companion bills. On the same day, the House voted 71 to 22 and the Senate voted 24 to 5 to pass SB 102. On April 28, SB 102 was enrolled and ready for signatures. On May 3 it was signed by the Senate speaker, and on May 5 it was signed by the House speaker. On May 9, the bill was sent to the governor’s desk. On May 17, \textit{SB 102 was signed} by the governor.

- DEI offices: --
- Mandatory DEI training: \checkmark
- Diversity statements: --
- Identity-based preferences: --

Source: https://www.chronicle.com/article/here-are-the-states-where-lawmakers-are-seeking-to-ban-colleges-dei-efforts
Dissolving a DEI Office to Save DEI

“Supporting equal opportunity, access and belonging are critical to our land-grant mission and university values,” wrote Robinson, Fayetteville’s first Black chancellor and former vice chancellor for diversity. “It is my belief based on my experience ... that we can accomplish better outcomes by reallocating resources into these essential areas.”

What are other universities doing to improve access and engagement for students?
Access and Engagement: First Gen Students

**Georgia Tech**
- Developed a first-gen college institute summer program for grades 8-12 to engage and prepare first-generation and low-income students.
- The program helps ease the transition from high school to college, promotes unity among students with similar backgrounds, and connects them with resources and support staff.

**Penn State**
- The Student Success Center offers resources and support to first-gen students through events such as the First-Gen Student Support Summit and a student-run mentorship program, First-Gen Advocates.

Source: https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/best-colleges-first-generation-students/
Ohio State University

• OSU is helping low-income individuals access affordable education by offering digital textbooks, summer tuition discounts, and tuition freezes.

• Since 2018, OSU has covered the full cost of tuition and mandatory fees for Ohio students who qualify for Pell Grants.

University of Arizona

• In an effort to enroll a higher number of underrepresented students, the university received $4 million in federal grants to help students pursue STEM majors, earn bachelor’s degrees, and become teachers over a 5-year period.

Source: https://www.greatvaluecolleges.net/colleges-addressing-poverty/
Access and Engagement: Targeted Populations

Georgia State University

• As one of the nation’s largest minority-serving institution, GSU launched a Student Success Institute in 2022 to close equity gaps for Black, Latino/a, and Pell Grant-eligible students.

• Innovative strategies include a data-driven approach to academic advising and targeted focus on other areas of student support.

University of Texas System

• This fall, UT launched an expanded micro-credential program with a goal of preparing every interested student for the state’s workforce demands at no extra cost to them.

• This initiative targeting adult learners supports local employment and the state’s economy.

What are recent UT initiatives aimed at improving access and engagement?
Strategic Efforts Underway

Systemwide

• Guaranteed Admission Policy Changes
  • Top 10% and 4.0 GPA
  • 3.2 GPA and 23 ACT
• UT Promise Fall 2024 Enhancements
• Common Application & UT Access Collaborative

Campus-Based

• We’ll learn more today and tomorrow…
Why are we here?
Summit Engagement: Critical Questions

- How is each campus approaching access and engagement?
- How will campuses operationalize the various changes? What can we learn from each other?
- What will success look like for you/your teams/your campus?
- What will you track/measure when it comes to access and engagement? What might be hard to measure?

What other questions are you reflecting on?
Summit Objectives

• **Increase your knowledge** of existing efforts, strategies, and structures focused on improving access and engagement.

• Deepen campus- and system-level partnerships to **increase collaboration**.

• Identify and **examine existing barriers** that keep us from making necessary progress and improving outcomes.

• **Develop action steps** to advance efforts and remove barriers.

• **Leave with a clear understanding** of campus and systemwide activities, expectations, and deliverables.
Questions?

Institutional Effectiveness

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