

UCWAZ CWA Local 7065's University of Arizona Caucus Stands with DEI Staff, Rejects President Garimella's Compliance with Trump's Executive Order



Approved by the UCWAZ Executive Committee and University of Arizona Caucus
Monday, February 24th, 2025

On February 10, 2025, Arizona Senate President Peterson called on all public Arizona Universities to comply with the Trump Administration's Executive Order that targets Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. This was followed by a letter on February 14, 2025, from the acting assistant secretary for civil rights of the Department of Education, which explicitly tied the federal funding that public schools receive to what some state and federal officials are calling "discriminatory" DEI work. In particular, these statements characterized DEI work as discriminatory "on the basis of race, color, or national origin," particularly toward white and Asian students.

United Campus Workers rejects these dangerous mischaracterizations of what DEI work is, and calls for University of Arizona President Suresh Garimella to publicly commit to concrete actions that protect initiatives and programs on our campuses.

UA prides itself in being a very diverse campus which is only made possible because of DEI initiatives that provide critical services to first-generation students, students of color, women, disabled students, veterans, rural students, international students, Indigenous students, and LGBTQ+ students. We are a university that in 2024 celebrated "not only the largest but also the most diverse [incoming freshman class] in the university's history: 50% of students self-identify as ethnicities other than white," not to mention the other unique identities these students bring to the classroom, sporting arenas, and research laboratories (Burtch-Buus, University Communications, 2024). Now more than ever, UA needs to reaffirm its commitment to all students. UA recently said it will "continue to uphold our university commitment to fostering a campus environment where everyone can thrive as we advance our academic, research and service missions" (Garimella, 2025). Now is the time to put those words into action for everyone in our campus community.

We must understand the true value of DEI work in higher education and how it benefits all students regardless of race, national origin, or a myriad of other identities that make our campus the vibrant community it is today. DEI allows the university to recognize and





support all students– this could be anything from the existence of a Veterans Affairs office, the celebration of APIDA Heritage Month and even things like college recruiters visiting local high schools and students having access to resources like Campus Health’s Free Condom Friday, are DEI work. DEI programs not only allow diverse students to attend and thrive at UA, but promote “students’ understanding and acceptance of diverse people, experiences, and perspectives, ultimately preparing them to effectively communicate and collaborate with diverse colleagues and clients” (Booker, Cook and Wu, 2023). Students with more exposure to more diverse perspectives and to people with dissimilar backgrounds have a more expansive worldview and an improved ability to excel in the University of Arizona and broader academic community. In short: DEI promotes excellence before, during, and after a student’s time at the university.

UCWAZ CWA Local 7065 stands with all who will be impacted by President Garimella’s compliance with the Executive Order and Letter from the Department of Education, and encourages you to connect with resources both on campus and in the Tucson community.

