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John Sailer: Uncovering DEI in Higher Education

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Knight & Rose Show - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview John Sailer of the National Association of Scholars about DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) policies in higher education. We discussed DEI in faculty hiring, referencing guidelines ("rubrics") from major universities. We discussed DEI in research grant applications. We discussed John's victories so far, and how this battle affects ordinary Americans.

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Transcript

Welcome to the Knight & Rose Show, where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today, we're going to be looking at diversity, equity, and inclusion policies at the university. Are universities discriminating against candidates based on race, sex, religion, and political ideology? We're going to find out.

I'm Wintery Knight. And I'm Desert Rose. Welcome, Rose.

So, today's guest is John Sailer, Senior Fellow and Director of University Policy at the National Association of Scholars, and also a contributor for the Wall Street Journal. Welcome, John. Thanks so much for having me.

So, let me kick us off today. I'm really excited about this interview because I've been following your work, John, and reading your articles in the Wall Street Journal. And I know that you've been doing some really valuable research on DEI for the past couple of years.

So, for those who may not be familiar with DEI, would you just give us a quick explanation of what that is? Yeah. So, increasingly today, you hear commentators or you read writers talking about DEI as primarily an ideological project. And so, to give one example, the writer Barry Weiss, over the last couple of months, has basically made NDEI a rallying cry.

That's the title of a piece that she recently wrote, sort of as a response to what's been happening since the attack on Israel and the way that universities have responded. And I think a lot of people use the terms diversity, equity, and inclusion, or DEI, as a catchall to describe the identity-focused progressivism that has become sort of a dominant way of understanding the world in a lot of our major cultural institutions. And they do that with good reason, because a lot of our cultural institutions, especially our universities, basically make a lot of radical claims about the nature of race, gender, oppression.

And they do so under the broad banner of DEI. But I would say that when I think about DEI, I get a little bit more specific, because, broadly speaking, I know why people, or I agree that there is an ideological component, but practically speaking, when we talk about DEI, we're talking about the title of a bureaucracy and a bureaucratic goal. That is, people who are employed by either universities or businesses, who have a very specific goal or intended job outcome.

And that basically can boil down to increasing the number of minorities in your workplace or retaining minorities that you have recruited. But what's interesting, even when you talk about the bureaucratic side of DEI, is that what you almost inevitably find is that there are certain ideas that motivate the existence of this bureaucracy. Basically, there is a reason that people create these kinds of bureaucracies in the first place within their businesses or their institutions.

And that reason comes from a particular view of the world, view of what constitutes oppression. And those bureaucracies also, in order to achieve their goals, in order to achieve even the most basic goal of increasing minority participation, they employ a particular set of ideas. They employ the idea of structural racism, of microaggressions, of disparate impact, or the idea that any disparity is the equivalent of racism or discrimination.

I think the main reason that we can think of DEI as a kind of ideology is because it is a convenient and helpful way to think about the idea that underpins this massive bureaucracy or bureaucratic system that we have in a lot of different institutions. Excellent. While preparing for the podcasts, I read three of your articles talking about how DEI has played out at a few of our universities as well as in the titles that people can look them up.

These are all in the Wall Street Journal. One of them is called Inside Ohio State's DEI Factory from November 20, 2023. Another one is How Diversity Policing Fails Science from February 6, 2023.

And the last one was How the NIH Pushes DEI on Scientists, March 1, 2023. Can you talk a little bit about what you found out, how you found it and what happened next, and maybe the details of what they were doing? Yeah. So remember, like I said, the primary goal of this bureaucratic structure is to increase the number of what these institutes deem to be diverse applicants, whether that's racial minorities or increasingly, they'll also include what they call gender and sexual minorities.

And so the question then becomes, how do you do that? And the universities increasingly, over the past decade, have come to use what are known as diversity statements as a tool to influence the hiring process, at least ostensibly with that goal in mind. Now, what these are are statements that scientists or scholars have to submit along with their CV and their statement of research that constitutes a part of their job application. What that basically means is that these universities will say, okay, we have a job position in biology, or we have a job position in philosophy, and in order to apply, you have to submit a diversity statement.

Now, there's been a lot of controversy over this, because when people have to submit a statement on how they're going to contribute to DEI, the question becomes, well, are you requiring people to agree with certain tenants about how the world operates in order to get a job? Are you requiring people to make what are essentially political or ideological statements in order to get a job and to get a job in all sorts of fields that seem even unrelated to those basic questions? You know, you can see how sociology has something to do with these questions of race and gender, less so with, you know, biology, chemistry, physics, etc., even though it's an issue, you know, for both. So my article is basically using the tool of public records requests, examined how these statements are actually used in practice, a few different institutions. So at Ohio State, the university required every single search committee for the last three years to submit a diversity faculty recruitment report, describing exactly what it meant for search committees to assess faculty, job candidates, contributions to diversity.

And what you find is just a laundry list of political, ideological, and sometimes even just straight up racial discrimination in the hiring process that they very, very closely

documented. Earlier this year, I did the same with Texas Tech. Texas Tech's Department of Biological Sciences created a DEI resolution saying that they're going to require an heavily weighed diversity statements for all of their hires.

And this is the Department of Biology. And that's exactly what they did. I acquired documents showing that they had penalized candidates for committing microaggressions or for not knowing how to properly describe the difference between equality and equity.

I mean, these are, these are, in some ways, very trivial things to disqualify a scientist over. But they're also implicitly, they carry sort of an implicit ideological assumptions that are really problematic. And what I found in that last article you mentioned about the NIH, the NIH has funded this exact tool in hiring at universities and medical schools across the country, and poured hundreds of millions of dollars into making this a policy, not just at some schools, but at pretty much any school that that wants to get a big bucket of NIH money.

So, you know, it's a it's a really big issue and one that I don't think is going to go away anytime soon. Yeah, let me ask you a little bit more about that Ohio State case, they all have really interesting facets to them. But I understand that Ohio State, so this is we're not talking about New York City or LA, but in Columbus, Ohio, they've devoted $20 million to hiring 189 DEI officers.

Is that accurate? Yes. So there's a scholar at University of Michigan who basically monitors this. His name is Mark Perry, and he looks at using just publicly available information.

First, how many administrators are employed in DEI offices or have some kind of DEI related job title? And then he looks at their salary. And what he found is that Ohio State right now employs 189 DEI officers, and they spend $20 million a year just on the salaries of these diversity. It's absolutely the case that this is just a major, major priority within the university.

Yeah, people wonder why college is so expensive. Yeah, this might be one of the things. Is that Mark Perry at American Enterprise Institute? Yes.

All right. Okay, so let me ask you a follow up question because people might be wondering, well, I mean, if the goal is to have a diversity of backgrounds and viewpoints and opinions, then maybe this is all worth it. But I think when we look at how the these diversity statements from job applicants are actually graded, then you begin to see that that's not the goal at all.

So can you talk a little bit about how these diversity statements are graded? What what can a candidate do or say that counts as good or bad for purposes of being hired? Yeah, so a good example of how they're evaluated comes from the official guidelines that

many, many universities use, which they make publicly available. So the UC Berkeley, which pioneered this policy, has created a rubric for evaluating contributions to DEI. And that rubric is telling because it gives a low score to, you know, job candidates who make statements that not only would many people agree with, but statements that are that are very clearly politically coded.

Basically, if you are a classical liberal and a conservative and you're asked about diversity, you will likely say something that the Berkeley rubric finds to be disqualifying. So for instance, if you say that you prefer to ignore the varying backgrounds of your students and instead treat everyone the same, you know, that's an expression basically that you ought to be race neutral or colorblind in your teaching, you will get a low score according to that rubric. If you say that you think that racial affinity groups are a bad idea because it keeps every it keeps different racial groups separate from one another.

You know, racial affinity groups being basically a form of kind of what I would call neo segregation, where you separate people out on the basis of race or sex in order to have activities just for those particular groups. You know, if you describe that to somebody in a different context, they might think that you're describing the Jim Crow South, you can also be, you will get a low score for saying that according to this rubric, which is actually used not just at UC Berkeley, but across the country. That's one reason that people talk about why this policy requirement, whatever the stated goal is, it turns very easily into a political litmus test or an ideological litmus test that rewards certain ways of viewing the world.

Again, ways of viewing the world that are rooted in, I would say, a pretty radical understanding of race and gender and oppression, while punishing statements that are very likely to be the views of people who have kind of outsider political beliefs, conservatives, liberals, and people like that. And what I'll also say is that when you look at how people are actually evaluated, and I found plenty of documents showing that, you see that this warning about political litmus tests, it's absolutely justified. You know, you have a Texas Tech, a job candidate was praised in his review for giving a land acknowledgement at the beginning of his talk.

Another candidate at the same time said, the AI is not an issue for me, because I strive to treat everyone the same. And the evaluators for that biologist said, this shows a lack of understanding, this shows a lack of understanding of the AI issues, he's penalized for basically expressing a desire to be race neutral. Even more amusingly, at the at Ohio State, one candidate was kind of given, you know, when they were discussing the ways that they contribute to diversity, you know, that basically the things they were praised for.

One of them, the review notes that one person has a good understanding of diversity, in part because they're married to an immigrant in Texas in the age of Trump. So, you

know, that's a pretty good idea of even just what these kinds of evaluations open people up to, if they exist, and it's a big problem. Yeah, I mean, this is just absolutely shocking to me that the left is hiring based on in part, at least things like supporting racial discrimination and things that for a couple decades now, at least have claimed to be against.

It seems like progressive is not the right word, maybe regressive. Let me ask you this, when when hiring faculty, I would say that the most important priorities for determining whether or not a candidate is qualified would be proven excellence in research and in teaching. So how does DEI impact this? What impact does it have? Like is DEI just, you know, is this like 5% of the grade or something? Or what kind of impact does it have, practically speaking? Yeah, so broadly speaking, I think that a lot of people who are involved in DEI activities, whether they're like a diversity officer, or they're a faculty member who's taken on the role of diversity advocate, they'll already say that these concepts of proven excellence or of merit, those are suspicious.

And one reason they do that is because I think we have a situation right now where there are going to be disparate, disparate outcomes based on groups. So like, for instance, right now, more men than women get jobs in STEM, in science disciplines. And one way to talk about that is to say, you know, maybe that there are a lot of reasons that that happened.

And it's we can't assume just on the basis of those outcomes that there is discrimination. But there is kind of this underlying assumption that any difference in outcome is automatically evidence that discrimination exists. And if that's the case, then what do you have to blame? Well, you can either blame, you know, faculty, individual faculty members and say that, oh, you know, you've hired a disproportionate number of men, this means that you're sexist, or you can blame the standards that they use.

And often you see that explicitly articulated, you see the idea that you see the DEI training sessions or DEI inclusive hiring training sessions where they pretty explicitly say that, you know, the concept of merit is a myth, or that it doesn't account for implicit bias that always exists. And so broadly speaking, that's how that's how I would say that DEI changes the way that excellence in teaching and research are priorities, it cast doubt on the on those very concepts. But practically speaking, the way that a lot of universities have attempted to remedy this is just by heavily, heavily weighing DEI in their selection process.

So going back to Ohio State, one physics search committee in their report simply wrote down that based on the training that we were given before the search, we decided to equally weigh teaching, research and DEI. Wow. Pretty common.

Wow. Wow. The ramifications of this are just incalculable.

I think this blows my mind. If you're going to school to like, I'm my background is computer science. Basically, when we're in those courses, we're thinking, Oh, I'm going to be coding this tomorrow.

You know, I'm learning about a published subscribe pattern today. And I'm going to be coding this tomorrow using the Kafka framework. So we're paying attention.

And we are desperately trying to figure out how these mainstream tools work so that we can apply them. Now, imagine somebody comes in there who has no qualifications, no private sector work experience, you know, they're they're poor, they're at understanding this and they're they're the ones who are teaching you. It's just terrible because you for us, we have to do this.

Right, you have to get results. I'm also you know, something else that comes to mind is the majority of people in prisons are males as well. So does that mean that we need to start equalizing the number of females who are put in prison? Do we need to let people go if they're male and make sure to, you know, start arresting more women? This whole concept is just seems certain to append all of society.

There are there's also data showing that first born children have a far higher percentage of graduate degrees than later born children. So are virtually all parents, you know, guilty of giving advantages to their first borns that others don't have. Those are just a few thoughts going through my mind.

You gave an excellent seminar for Stanford University recently in which you talked about how the UNC School of Medicine wanted course directors to change their curricula to adhere to social justice concepts. What's going on there? And what kind of changes are we talking about? Yeah. So in 2020, a group of activist students petitioned the University or UNC School of Medicine to create a task force for integrating social justice into the curriculum.

The university seemingly happily acquiesced. They created this task force and that task force created a set of recommendations. And now when I first reported on this in 2021, you know, at the time it really had gone under the radar and there had been no criticism of the policies that were proposed.

And the School of Medicine's website and I have, you know, an archived page saved showing this listed every recommendation with a little status monitor on it saying on time indicating that they had adopted all of these recommendations given to them by the task force. So they were really serious about this, which is crazy given what was recommended in the task force. One of them in particular, one recommendation talked about integrating certain core concepts of anti-racism into course directors and that's basically med school professors courses.

And so the larger task force report lists out these concepts that med school professors are supposed to integrate into their course or in the words of the document adhere to. I mean, already it is crazy for a medical school or any institution of higher education to list a set of ideas that any faculty member must adhere to, especially, you know, it's a little bit different for a Christian college or university, but even there you have a statement of faith, you don't have specific like ideological commitments usually that you have to you have to commit to. So already just doing that alone is a big red flag for academic freedom, but it's especially a big red flag given that what the university or the med school actually said that faculty should adhere to.

The report includes saying that faculty members must be able to explain why health disparities exist, probably nudging the faculty towards a particular conclusion about why health disparities exist or explicitly include anti-racism content in their lectures and discussions. And now, you know, in 2020, the term anti-racism was basically synonymous with the thought of Ibram Kendi. This is not just not being racist.

It's a highly specific and highly ideologically charged understanding of what racism actually is. The craziest one to me though is that the task force, one of the concepts of the task force said faculty must adhere to is that they must be able to explain how specific organs and cells do not belong to specific sexes or belong to specific genders. And they have to explain the difference between sex and gender.

I mean, here we have a task force saying to a major medical school, you know, one of our countries, major medical schools, hey, you need to require everyone to think the same way about gender in a scribe to basically a gender ideology. And the School of Medicine basically said, okay, we're on time for carrying out this recommendation. Wow.

I was worried that, like, I was going to pay a whole bunch of money to the university, and they weren't going to teach me to code. Now, these doctors are going to come out and I'm going to pay them a whole bunch of money to operate on me, and they won't be able to do that. That's worse.

Yeah, exactly. You know, something else that really is remarkable is what's going on here with the language and what I would call linguistic theft. Anti-racism, as Ibram X. Kendi discriminated against because they are, by nature, racist themselves.

And the only way that white people have ever succeeded is by oppressing darker skinned people. And so now the white people need to be discriminated against. And so you mentioned several other words too.

Inclusion, right? Inclusion is actually code for exclusion of white males, conservatives, Christians, et cetera. So I think we need to be really discerning with language here. And when we're talking to people, maybe even ask the question frequently, what do you mean by that? What does that mean? So let me ask you something else from the same

seminar you gave.

You talked about how the UNC School of Medicine wanted their medical students to, quote, deploy advocacy skills, end quote, in their provision of medicine. So what did they want the students to advocate for? Yeah. So one of the recommendations was that every student be trained to deploy advocacy skills.

And then when it expounded on that recommendation, it said the report very clearly just laid out a list of causes. They oddly referred to these causes as health domains and said, these are the health domains that students should be trained to advocate for. You read them and they read like a list of basically progressive political priorities.

So one of them was past laws claiming that health care is a human right. One of them was US leadership restore US leadership to reverse climate change. Another was radical reform to the US criminal justice system.

Another was achieving compassionate immigration reform. There was notably no so-called health domain that would be coded as anything other than a progressive priority. You can't say radical reform to the US criminal justice system without implying some, well, pretty radical things.

Yeah, once again, I mean, this is a huge issue for academic freedom. And it also is basically the task force saying that students should be political activists in the name of social justice and for priorities that we would associate with one particular political party or even one, you know, the more radical wing of one particular political party. I mean, that really is crazy.

My ethnic background, you know, maybe regular listeners will know this, but I'm not a natural born American. I immigrated here. My family is West Indian.

And so I would count as like a West Indian black. And so I'm sensitive to, you know, being treated differently based on my skin color. But that's not what this is.

It really sounds like what they're going for is kind of enforcing a political ideology amongst the people who are in the commanding heights of the society, the people who are going to be the decision makers of tomorrow, who are coming out of the university. And I don't want to be I personally, I'm uncomfortable. The reason I fled the country I came from is to get away from from this kind of ideology, which I have experience with knowing that it doesn't work.

So it's alarming. It's not just alarming to people of a certain skin color who are being targeted. It's alarming to people who have aspirations about living in a society where they have liberty, prosperity and security as well.

Yeah. And I mean, I think about how we just went through COVID. Right.

And it seems like so what we know now is that really, the science was disregarded in a lot of ways and areas to achieve a certain political agenda that elites had decided on beforehand. And so there were mandates on masks, even though we now know that masks don't work for COVID. There were arbitrary rules enacted on public spacing.

There were experimental drug treatments that were required. And those who didn't comply with these things lost their jobs in a lot of cases. Most of us, you know, expected at the time that doctors could be trusted, that they would be equipped to object to these things if the science were not solidly behind it.

But now we know that the science was not solidly behind it and that doctors were following the people at the top. But the people at the top seem to have ulterior motives. And so, you know, we're learning that doctors too have been pre indoctrinated to agree with whatever the establishment says.

And this is obviously very concerning because if we can't trust our doctors, if we can't trust leaders and those in position of authority in our lives, in our culture, what kind of trouble are we going to be in? We need to be able to trust authority figures in order to have a functioning society. I've spent time in about 30 different cultures where there is tremendous distrust among the culture and including people in, especially people in positions of power, and they don't function well. So I think this is very concerning.

So let me ask John another question here. So where do you think that these DEI policies will lead us as a society? And we've kind of talked about this already, like explaining how we see this affecting us, but why should ordinary citizens care about this? You know, we only have one type of institution devoted exclusively to the pursuit of truth. That is the universities.

That is the function that they play in society. And that has manifold importance. The pursuit of truth, I would say, is first of all, in and of itself, a worthy and extremely important goal.

But also that's the thing that allows us to have the scientific innovation that we rely on in so many ways. It allows us to properly think about how to exist as a political entity, the United States. And it's what it's the integral part of training young people to live as citizens in our world.

That's how we have decided that we are going to train, at the very least, our leaders, increasingly everyone, increasingly, we try to push everyone through our universities. What we very explicitly see with a lot of these policies is that priority being sidelined. And you see it with, say, like the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Association of American Medical Colleges is the institution that thinks about and advocates for and in many ways defines what medical education ought to be.

And when they released their set of DEI guidelines for university medical school curricula, their leaders explicitly said that we think that this priority is just as important as teaching students about the latest scientific breakthroughs. So, you know, getting to the bottom of how our world works, just as important as this social justice priority. And that's really, really bad.

It undermines what universities are for in the function that they can play in our society. But, you know, it extends beyond that. And I think the hiring issue, I harp on it a lot, because it's such a good illustration of how that priority can practically distort things.

You know, whether you are hiring some whether you were hiring someone on the basis of their political views, or you were hiring someone on the basis simply of their race, what you are going to do inevitably, you're going to deprioritize, comparatively, other things that make up why you select them, but other criteria. And it basically does a disservice to everybody who relies on these individuals to say that, you know, your competence, your excellence, your ability to perform as a scientist, or as a musician, or as any number of things, that's not as important as this political goal. That big picture is a problem, but also on a practical level, it means that we're just not being serious about these roles and positions that are often very, very serious.

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. You know, I have been following some of the information that's been coming out about DEI in hiring for pilots and airline pilots and for air traffic controllers.

In the decade since airlines have started prioritizing DEI for hiring, there's been a 25% increase in near misses. There have been 300 near misses and a near miss is defined as flying within, coming within 500 feet of another airplane that's flying. Okay.

So the guidelines are that airplanes are supposed to remain three miles away from each other vertically. And yet we have this 25% increase in planes flying within 500 feet of one another. We've had instances of planes almost crashing and even crashing and having, and having doors fly off of the airplane in mid flight.

For example, you may have heard about the Alaska airlines situation recently when a piece of the fuselage came off in mid flight. It was obviously terrifying for everyone on board. Well, as some research was done regarding these parts, it was discovered that actually the providers of the parts are also hiring based on DEI.

And so the company Spirit Aero Systems actually had this video online, which I understand they've since taken down in which they were bragging about how all of their engineers were women. And they, these women were, were kind of strutting out to the song, doing this little dance thing, bragging about how all their engineers are women. They had, you know, black women, brown women, white women.

They were all women. And I have to wonder, was it all women who were most qualified to make the parts for airplanes? I don't, I, I, seriously doubt that that was the case. And so obviously there are enormous implications for having pilots and having air traffic controllers and, and such hired based on something as arbitrary as the color of their skin or their sex, their gender, as opposed to merit.

Like you said, when we, when we hire based on one priority, we're sacrificing on another priority. And clearly what we're sacrificing on here is merit. So let me ask you something else, John, you've done a lot of research in this.

And so what do you think, what does victory look like? And what would you say is your biggest win so far? Yeah, I think broadly speaking, victory would look like a major rollback of these bureaucracies. What's interesting to me is that we have seen actually some major changes over the last year in the opinion of kind of elite sense makers, I would say, like journalists, even at the New York Times, at the Atlantic, at CNN are now much more open to being critical of exactly what we're talking about. And so in some ways, that goal might be closer than, than we think.

Personally speaking, I would say that I have found that exposure works. So my work is basically simple investigative reporting, I find out what universities are doing, I usually find it out through leaks or public records requests. And I simply say what's going on.

And I have found that in many instances, even just at the university level, policies change when you expose what has happened, which is hopeful. It makes me hopeful. So when I read about Texas Tech, immediately the university announced that they had ended the policy.

And then almost immediately afterwards, Texas Governor Greg Abbott sent a letter to all state universities saying that he was, that the policy of mandatory diversity statements was unlawful. And so other university systems within the state ended the policy. And you've actually, I've actually seen that a couple of times where you expose the practice in universities respond, because I think there are a lot of people who are reasonable when it comes to imposing these ideas on people within universities.

I think there's still a lot of ground to be gained, just in actually talking about what's happening. Yeah, you had a pretty good response from UNC Medical School as well, didn't you? Yeah, so pretty much immediately after I wrote my piece, the Dean of the Medical School had to give a presentation to the UNC Board of Governors addressing the many concerns that were raised over the task force for integrating social justice into the curriculum. And since then, the UNC Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors, which governs the whole North Carolina State University system, they've been really good about adopting policies in favor of academic freedom, free speech, and banning things like compelled speech.

So that task force is effectively not in place anymore. And yeah, it's absolutely a matter of exposing what what's going on that that brought that to pass. Yeah, absolutely.

And I would encourage people to follow your work and especially if they see someone, if they see that their university or someone that they are contributing donations to or have any sort of voice for is practicing DEI, that they contact them immediately because your work is making a difference. I think that's an important point that I like to point out is that when we are exposing things, we tend to see improvements. And so one of the things that the Knight and Rose Show tries to push back against is the idea that, well, nothing can be done.

It's all hopeless. Let's just give up and go home and watch TV. But I appreciate the work you're doing.

We can make a difference. So what would a what would a long term solution to this be? Yeah, so I do think that sometimes people stop at the first stage. There are a lot of people out there who basically say, well, if we can just kind of excavate these bad policies and set the clock back 10 years, then we'll basically be fine.

So, you know, ban these these hiring practices that discriminate on the basis of viewpoint or on the basis of race, ban certain officers within the universities from being able to speak on the behalf of a state institution and say very ideologically charged things. And, you know, a lot of these policy proposals do a lot of good. But I think long term, there is a need for renewal.

And I think what I'm most excited about is people both within and outside of universities finding ways to build institutions anew. And so you see that at places like UNC, where the university has created a school, a separate school, their School of Civic Life and Leadership, which is at its core devoted to intellectual freedom. And at its core, I think, if it operates the way that the university has said it should operate, it'll involve very different discussions of very different curriculum.

And I think that that's very exciting. And I think there are plenty of people outside universities who are doing that as well. So that's kind of the long term solution to think big and to build the institutions that you want to see.

All right, John, so we're getting to the end of the podcast now. And I wanted to ask you, can you tell us a little bit more about the organization that you're working with? And how can we help you to achieve the things that you're trying to achieve? So the National Association of Scholars, that is the organization I work for, we are a think tank and membership organization devoted to the standards of a traditional liberal arts education. Most of our members are professors or former professors involved in academia.

But that is by no means the only place where we draw our membership from. So if you

enjoy what you heard today, if you're interested in this issue, I would encourage you to become members of the National Association of Scholars. I report on this issue a lot.

I think it's helpful whenever these kinds of reports get attention. So I would say, pay attention to what I'm writing. I would say the best way to find what I've written is to follow me on Twitter or X or whatever you want to call it.

My Twitter handle is John D. Siler. And I think that, the more we can be open about what is going on in our institutions, the better. And to the extent that you can increase that attention, I think that you're doing a great service to the cause.

Yeah, absolutely. So what advice would you give to young Christians or young conservatives about how to avoid running into problems with DEI in their educations or their careers? Yeah, you know, I think that in your education, know what you're getting yourself into. I don't think that there are many institutions that a young person could choose to go to that wouldn't have pockets of real, serious learning and real, serious intellectual engagement.

Even when I was a graduate student at Columbia University's Teachers College, I spent time with undergraduates who had a flourishing intellectual life and who are also many of whom were Christian or religious Jews or, you know, otherwise heterodox thinkers who because they found each other, they were able to have a thriving intellectual community. And they found the professors who would encourage that. And they took those professors classes even at a place like Columbia, which is absolutely not known for, you know, being a star of institution in favor of intellectual freedom.

So know what you're getting yourself into. And I would say know what to expect when these conversations come up. And lastly, I think that in general, you know, there's just a strong inclination towards self-censorship.

There is a strong inclination towards secrecy about what you actually believe. And, you know, that pressure comes from a lot of different places. And I think to the extent that you can just openly talk about what it is you believe and make that a practice, the better, no matter where you are.

And people are rightly afraid that maybe that will they'll close off job opportunities or mean that they're socially ostracized or something like that. And sometimes that's the case. And I think to the extent that that's the case, we should be willing to let that happen, because our fidelity to the truth is more important.

And, you know, if you're a Christian, your beliefs are obviously much, much more important than your ability to fit in. I hear from Christians all the time that it's really important to go to a church that is diverse. And I'm wondering, John, if you happen to have any thoughts on whether that is important or how important that is, that the church

be comprised of that a that a single fellowship be comprised of people of a variety of skin colors, or even more oddly to me, a variety of beliefs and ideology, given that we're convening to be encouraged in the Lord and our shared beliefs.

Do you have any thoughts about diversity in the church? Yeah, I think in general, I would say that contrary to the very, very popular belief of our culture, you know, I don't think that diversity is an end in itself. And a lot of people do. And I would say that that actually extends to to viewpoint diversity as well.

And now, so I do think that, you know, when regarding racial diversity, of course, you have to make sure that you are not being exclusionary. Yeah. And so that's a that's a fair thing to be mindful of.

And I think sometimes when people talk about how they want to be more diverse, one thing that they might simply be worried about is whether they're, in fact, acting in such a way that doesn't invite everyone in. And I think that's a fine thing to think about. But the goal of not being exclusionary is not simply diversity for its own sake, it's it's in order to make sure that you're carrying out your basic mission.

Well, that you're, you know, if you're a church, that you're, you're open to all believers. And now, I would also say maybe a little bit more controversially that viewpoint diversity is is a tool. It is not an end in itself.

When we talk about the the good that comes from people having different ideas, one thing that exists for the thing that that exists for is so that you avoid having certain blind spots. But, you know, the logic, and it's helpful to have people who think very differently than you talk to you. But the logic breaks down when you're talking about a community committed to a particular set of doctrines.

It is actually there is no point at all in saying that we need to, you know, include a lot of people who are not committed to a particular the particular set of doctrines that your church exists to, you know, in large part to uphold and teach and and inculcate. So, yeah, I think that that's an interesting question. And I think that it's worth understanding the good motivation behind it that I think is often there, but also recognizing that neither of those things are ends in themselves, and they shouldn't be seen as that.

And I think it's you can introduce all sorts of policies that are that are that are problematic in the same way that the policies that I've discussed today are problematic if you take these things to be ends in themselves. Yeah, excellent. Yeah, well, really appreciate your thoughts and your contribution and your work.

And I strongly encourage our subscribers to follow you. All right. That's a good place for us to stop for today.

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