



U.E. Local 896
Campaign to Organize
Graduate Students



For immediate release
Contact: Olivia Jones, Anne Moore

RESPONSE TO UI PRESIDENT WILSON'S COMMENTS ON DEI INVESTIGATION

August 6, 2025. Iowa City, IA

On July 31 at 3pm, University of Iowa President Barbara Wilson sent a campus-wide email detailing concerns over compliance with new state laws on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at public universities. This was in response to multiple anonymous videos shared on Fox news and the news site Townhall depicting UI staff members discussing these laws. The university has placed two staff members on administrative leave and launched an investigation into continued DEI practices at UI.

We, the Campaign to Organize Graduate Students (COGS), strongly condemn these actions by President Wilson and the University. They demonstrate a total capitulation to Governor Reynolds and the Trump administration at the expense of the quality and integrity of the education offered by the University of Iowa. This compliance with right-wing efforts to suppress civil rights and academic freedom, and deny basic principles of equal access to education, is a betrayal of our campus community and the values we hold as Iowa's oldest and largest public university.

COGS is firmly committed to the rights of black, brown, LGBTQ+, immigrant, and working class students, and the rights of people of all backgrounds to access higher education. Moreover, we affirm our right to organize and speak in favor of those principles. We are alarmed by the use of government power in an attempt to censor such speech, and hereby call on President Wilson to protect students, faculty, and staff from interference in our university by the Reynolds and Trump administrations.

We also want to remind our bargaining unit members of UI policy prohibiting the unauthorized recording of instructors, including teaching assistants:

The unauthorized video or audio recording of academic activities (e.g., lectures, course discussions, office hours, etc.) by a student is prohibited. Students with a reasonable accommodation for recording approved by Student Disability Services should notify each instructor and provide the Letter of Accommodation prior to using the accommodation. A

student may record classroom activities with prior written permission from the instructor and notice to other students in the class that audio or video recording may occur. Any and all classroom recording must be for personal academic use only. The distribution, sharing, sale, or posting of recordings on the internet (including social media), in whole or in part, is prohibited and doing so may be a violation of the Code of Student Life and/or state or federal privacy, copyright, or other laws.

More information regarding classroom recordings can be found on the website for the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost: <https://provost.uiowa.edu/student-course-policies>.

COGS will continue to work to oppose the elimination of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs and initiatives at the University of Iowa, and fight for the civil rights and academic freedom of our members, as well as non-union students, faculty, and staff.

COGS (Campaign to Organize Graduate Students) is the labor union for graduate student workers at the University of Iowa.

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If you would like more information about this topic, please call or email:

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Dear Hawkeyes,

For more than a year, the University of Iowa has been working diligently to comply with directives from the Iowa Board of Regents as well as changes to state law that require us to eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion programming and initiatives. Since January, the university has also taken steps to ensure compliance with new federal directives.

Our responsibility as a public university is to support all of our students, faculty, and staff regardless of their race, religion, sex, nationality, or political beliefs. To do so we must infuse a culture across our campus that rejects the use of litmus tests to determine which faculty, staff, and students we support. We help them all.

As you may be aware, videos have surfaced that raise concerns regarding compliance with university policies and applicable laws. I want to assure you that the university takes these concerns with the utmost seriousness.

Faith in our institution depends on our unwavering commitment to upholding state and federal laws as well as the policies set forth by our governing board. The expectations we have for our faculty and staff are clear and uncompromising: We adhere to the highest standards of conduct, accountability, and transparency.

In response, we have launched an immediate and comprehensive investigation. Additionally, we have reached out to the Board of Regents office and to the Iowa Attorney General's office to coordinate our efforts.

This investigation is being conducted in accordance with our established procedures to ensure fairness, accuracy, and impartiality. If at any point we find that policies or laws have been violated, we will take necessary corrective actions without hesitation.

I also want to emphasize that while personnel matters must remain confidential, our approach to this situation, like all others, will be guided by our values of integrity, compliance, and responsibility to the public we serve.

We must work collectively, as Hawkeyes, to ensure that our actions reinforce the trust placed in this university.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. Wilson

President