

Saturday, April 20, 2024

Guidance on the 2024 "Viewpoint Discrimination" Survey Intellectual Freedom and Viewpoint Diversity Survey per HB 233 (2021)

Dear Members of the United Faculty of Florida (UFF),

As you may be aware, this year's distribution of the "Intellectual Freedom and Viewpoint Diversity Survey," mandated by HB 233 (2021), is underway. This survey requires all faculty, staff, and students to disclose not only their own political and religious views but also those they perceive to belong to their peers.

The United Faculty of Florida strongly advises against participating in this survey for several critical reasons:

1. **Privacy and Autonomy:** The government should not invade personal privacy by collecting detailed information about the political and religious beliefs of our higher education community. Privacy is fundamental to democracy and protects against authoritarian overreach.
2. **Survey Integrity and Relevance:** The survey lacks scientific rigor and does not accurately reflect our diverse academic community. Furthermore, it diverts valuable time from our core missions of teaching and research.
3. **Potential for Discrimination:** The survey's detailed demographic questions pose a risk, especially to minority faculty, potentially influencing tenure decisions and fostering a discriminatory environment.
4. **Implications of Bias:** The survey's leading questions presume existing problems with viewpoint equity, potentially skewing the narrative and undermining genuine academic discourse.
5. **Surveillance Concerns:** Asking participants to report on the beliefs and behaviors of colleagues and students introduces an unwelcome surveillance culture within our campuses.
6. **Freedom of Speech:** The chilling effect on free speech and association is profound. Faculty, students, and staff may feel their academic and personal expressions could be monitored or used adversely.
7. **Political Coercion:** There have been threats from state leadership, including potential funding cuts or punitive measures for institutions, based on survey responses. This tactic undermines the autonomy and integrity of our academic institutions.

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Given these concerns, UFF discourages participation in the survey. We urge you to join us in standing for the rights of faculty, students, and staff across Florida's higher education institutions. Protecting our freedoms against such intrusions is crucial.

Action Steps: Encourage your colleagues and students to refrain from participating in this year's survey. There is power in unity, and together, we are stronger.

UFF remains committed to opposing this legislation and protecting our fundamental freedoms of speech, association, and privacy.

Join us in this critical fight—for our rights, our privacy, and our academic freedom.

In Service & Solidarity,

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