



## Will Universities Pledge Allegiance or Draw a Line?

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The Trump administration's attacks on higher education and diversity, equity and inclusion may have fallen out of the headlines, but for close observers the latest battle lines have clearly been drawn. And the looming changes could have sweeping implications for postsecondary institutions' ability to self-govern free from political coercion.

In early April, without much fanfare, the public comment period closed on proposed rule changes to the U.S. General Services Administration's System for Award Management. These changes would move the federal anti-DEI strategy laid out in the January 2025 "Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity" Executive Order from blueprint to implementation. If they take effect, these rules will **condition federal higher education funding on universities obtaining certifications of compliance** with the administration's interpretation of federal anti-discrimination law—a move that poses one of the biggest threats to academic freedom yet.