

Oppose the far-right takeover of George Mason University!

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality at George Mason University
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The International Youth and Students for Social Equality at George Mason University (GMU) denounces the Trump administration's fraudulent investigations into alleged racial discrimination in hiring, admissions, and the university's response to antisemitism as fraudulent attempts to silence dissent and undermine democratic rights. These attacks serve the aim of paving the way for a presidential dictatorship, trampling academic freedom and student activism.

The White House has launched a series of federal investigations into GMU, focusing on accusations of discriminatory practices tied to its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. These probes examine GMU's admissions, scholarship policies, and employment practices under civil rights laws such as Title VI and Title VII, specifically targeting alleged race and sex-based discrimination in hiring, promotions, student benefits and false claims of "antisemitism."

This is part an escalating attack on higher education institutions across the country. It follows on the heels of the forced resignation of the University of Virginia's president, Jim Ryan, on June 27, following pressure from the Department of Justice using similar allegations.

Two weeks ago, Columbia University agreed to pay the Trump administration \$220 million to settle investigations of alleged antisemitism. Harvard may follow Columbia's lead to submit to the administration, reportedly in discussions to pay out as much as \$500 million.

The investigations are being spearheaded by the White House's Joint Task Force to Combat Anti-Semitism, commissioned in the weeks following Trump's return to office to address the supposed failures of higher education institutes to crack down on anti-genocide and pro-Palestinian protests that have swept the country, in the name of "protecting" Jewish students.

The character of the task force and the personnel that make it up reveals the baseless character of the administration's campaign against "antisemitism." The task force is headed by civil rights attorney Leo Terrell, a former Democrat

turned Fox News contributor and ardent Trump supporter. Terrell has made antisemitic comments on X, calling for the revoking of Democratic Senator Charles Schumer's "Jew Card," and sharing a post from prominent antisemite and former president of the Identity Evropa group, Patrick Casey.

A *Washington Post* article on the task force reveals the connection between the attack on student protesters and the Trump administration's attack on DEI policies. It states, "In reality, many of the task force's unprecedented demands and punishments have nothing to do with antisemitism. Instead, they seek hiring and programming changes to strip long-standing conservative targets including DEI and a liberal worldview from higher education."

The *Post* cites a member of the task force saying, the policies are necessary to stamp out the "corrupt culture on college campuses" which "labels Jews as oppressors [and] also isolates White students in favor of promoting racial minorities."

In line with this, Trump has initiated investigations into GMU's hiring and admissions policies, which it alleges "not only allow[s] but champion[s] illegal racial preferencing" in violation of federal civil rights law. Trump and other officials falsely refer to these initiatives as 'Marxist' or as 'Cultural Marxism.'

Some of the White House's allegations against the GMU administration include:

- The use of "Equity Advisors" in academic departments to consider race and sex in faculty recruitment.
- University directives to develop promotion and tenure processes that account for the "invisible emotional labor" of faculty of color.
- Metrics and task forces designed to advance "systemic and cultural anti-racism" and diversity hiring to reflect student demographics.

The White House has cited President Gregory Washington's internal communications, some of which advise hiring staff to retain candidates for specific roles based upon their ethnic or racial backgrounds, "even if that

candidate may not have better credentials” than another.

In response, Washington has pledged to comply with the new administration, stating, “Just as we complied with leadership expectations to increase DEI programming, we have also worked in good faith to follow directives in the opposite direction.”

The IYSSE at GMU opposes the Trump administration’s hostile takeover of George Mason University and other schools around the country. In targeting DEI as a supposed “Marxist” concept, Trump reveals his real aim is to stamp out all left wing thought.

But we also reject the claim that DEI and other forms of race or gender-based criteria in academia are in any way a “left-wing” or “Marxist” response to the crass right-wing politics of the Trump administration.

These racist fixations reject the central concept of social class, an essential component of Marxism in determining a policy’s “progressive” character. Instead, such policies promote the careerism of the middle class within academia and professional life, while also attempting to divide and misdirect workers and youth away from challenging capitalist relations in society.

The circumstances under which the policy was adopted make this clear.

Washington, in a recent email to the student body, notes that the university adopted its DEI policy in 2021, as mass protests against police brutality swept the globe in the aftermath of the police murder of George Floyd.

GMU, working under the direction of Democratic Governor Ralph Northam, in office 2018-2021, set out to “establish and maintain a comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan in coordination with the Governor’s Office.” They were likewise required to ‘integrate the diversity, equity, and inclusion goals into the agency’s mission, operations, programs, and infrastructure.’

The capitalist class responded to the 2020 mass protests against George Floyd’s killing through a dual strategy of violent repression and political co-optation. The Democratic Party, while feigning outrage against Trump’s authoritarianism, joined Republicans in imposing curfews, deploying the National Guard, and denouncing protesters as “outside agitators.” Simultaneously, Democrats promoted racial identity politics to divert and fragment the movement along non-class lines.

This reached its peak with the attack on monuments to the American founding fathers; figures emblematic of the United States’ democratic foundations. At GMU, this takes on special relevance as George Mason, a close ally of Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, was a major influence on the U.S. Declaration of Independence and helped to enshrine the Fifth Amendment—in particular, its

guarantee of the right of due process—in the Constitution.

The reaction against these founding principles ties directly to the current witch-hunt against alleged “antisemitism” at GMU, where demands for ideological conformity mean suppressing dissent and academic freedom. The crackdown uses false claims of antisemitism as a pretext to target those opposing state policies, justifying repression in the name of combating “hate,” even while undermining basic democratic rights.

Nothing in the school adoption of DEI policies has stopped Washington, GMU’s first black president with a yearly salary of over \$823,452, from orchestrating this crackdown on campus protesters demonstrating against the Israeli genocide of the Palestinian people.

Under his watch, the school has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s definition of antisemitism as an amendment to its non-discrimination policy, which slanders criticism of Zionism as “antisemitic.” Under President Washington, the same nostrums that proclaim American society to be hopelessly racist have now been used to claim that the university is a stronghold of ingrained “antisemitism,” which Trump now claims to be stamping out.

As the GMU IYSSE wrote last year, “Students and youth need a perspective to guide a struggle against the attacks on democratic rights. In doing this, they must draw the political lessons of 14 months of protests against the US-backed genocide in Gaza.”

This included rejecting the politics of putting pressure on the Democratic Party as the focus of the protests and to recognize “The root cause” lay “not in the choice of individual governments or politicians, but in the objective crisis of world capitalism and the emergence of an imperialist redivision of the world.”

We again call on students, faculty and members of the community to join the IYSSE and fight to politically mobilize the working class, “the only social force capable of liberating society from the stranglehold of the capitalist financial oligarchy, genocide and war,” against the Trump administration’s move toward dictatorship.



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