

Poison Ivies: DEI and the Downfall of the Ivy League

Overview

On June 29, 2023, the United States Supreme Court ruled to end the consideration of racial status for the purpose of admissions decision-making in universities. The case, though it was originally regarded Harvard College and the University of North Carolina, impacts all universities in America, including the Ivy League. As outlined below, each of the Ivy League universities have released a statement outlining its consideration of the Supreme Court ruling. However, the schools are side-stepping the regulation changes by asking applicants to discuss their race in identity-based essay prompts. These prompts were adjusted just enough to possibly meet the requirements of the decision, yet in terms of their content, they enable the university to legally go against the law.

Each of the Ivy Leagues offer a plethora of CRT/DEI programs and initiatives both historically and recently. The programs feature topics such as unconscious bias, privilege, anti-racism, racial injustice, and systemic racism. Students find these topics in all corners of the universities, whether through planned university-wide events, voluntary or involuntary training, class content, or many other aspects. While some changes have been made, many schools remain steadfast in their desire to promote such content.

The combination of Supreme Court ruling work-arounds and intense DEI activity call into question whether the schools of the Ivy League legitimately are complying with the Supreme Court's mandate not to take race into account in admissions and educational access.

By the Numbers

Of the eight Ivy League universities:

- 4 require DEI training in student orientation programs (Columbia University, Harvard University, Princeton University, and Yale University)
- 6 require faculty or staff DEI training in some capacity (Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, and Yale University)
- All 8 contain DEI offices at the institutional and/or department level
- 5 have a strategic plan devoted to DEI or anti-racism (Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth University, and Yale University)
- All 8 contain DEI or CRT topics in classes and curriculum
- All 8 have bias reporting systems

Key Findings

At Brown, the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan requires all departments to have multi-year plans on DEI.

At Columbia, as part of orientation, new students undergo the Inclusion & Belonging program, which includes concepts such as inclusion, diversity, equity, allyship, and bias.

At Cornell, the DoBetterCornell student group is involved in the development of an educational requirement that focuses on themes like systemic racism, bias, colonialism, and inequity. In addition, in 2024, the Center for Racial Justice and Equitable Futures was launched to center on anti-Black racism.

At Dartmouth, all students are required to take a class under the topic of Culture and Identity.

Harvard has an Office for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging which also has the Inclusive Teaching Institute dedicated to training faculty and staff to incorporate inclusive teaching.

Princeton maintains its General Education requirement of taking one Culture and Difference class and DEI training is required of student leaders, faculty involved in graduate admission or hiring recruitment, and all employees.

The University of Pennsylvania has a Cultural Diversity course requirement for all undergraduate students, as well as a Cross-Cultural Perspectives 3-course requirement for all Wharton students. In 2022, the school introduced two new majors and concentrations, which are the ESGB and DEI programs. They are available to Wharton business students as majors and as undergraduate concentrations. The first class will be graduating in May 2025. Further, Penn has a program known as Projects for Progress, which offers up to \$100k grants for projects focused on topics like systemic racism.

Yale stipulates that each school and administrative division should have a 5-year action plan on DEI.

Brown University

Response to Supreme Court Ruling

Brown University has issued a response regarding its admissions policies after the Supreme Court affirmative action decision, stating that Brown will continue its pursuit of diversity in recruitment and pipeline programs, yet the essay prompts are slightly adjusted.

Curriculum

In the year of 2024-2025, Brown University offers 164 courses under the Race, Power, and Privilege designation, which teaches students. These classes are found in many departments, including the Department of Sociology, which offers courses focused on inequality, social justice, and racial disparities. The Department for Earth, Environment, and Planetary Sciences has a program known as DEEPS START Team which seeks to promote the development of anti-racist syllabi for educators. Furthermore, 260 courses fall under the Race, Gender and Inequality designation.

Programs & Initiatives

Trainings on the topics of anti-Black racism, cultural humility, mitigating bias, positionality, power, privilege, and unconscious bias are offered by the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity currently. Initiatives such as the Racial Justice Resource Center and the Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit offer resources on these themes to all students, faculty, and staff. The Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan requires all departments to have multi-year plans on DEI. A talk was hosted in 2022 on Examining Anti-Critical Race Theory Legislation. Brown has a separate orientation program for students of color.

Required Trainings

Brown University Police Department undergoes an annual training program for all officers. The training centers on implicit bias, racial profiling, and diversity, among other themes. The PD also has the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. The Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior has a requirement which began in July 2022 stipulating that faculty seeking appointment or reappointment must undergo DEI training.

Columbia University

Response to Supreme Court Ruling

Columbia's 2023 statement was similar, citing its commitment to preserving DEI efforts. The statement was unclear on precisely what changes would be made.

Curriculum

Columbia University's Center for Teaching and Learning has a program known as Anti-Racism Pedagogy in Action, which seeks to promote anti-racist curriculum content for faculty graduate instructors. Columbia's Department of Psychiatry has Health Equity and Social Justice classes which permeate all of residency training.

Programs & Initiatives

Each school in Columbia University has Anti-Racist Plans. Columbia's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation is dedicated to anti-Black racism and racial injustice. The school has a Bias Reporting Tool as well as a Bias Incident Resource Team. The school's Office of Institutional Equity was recently established in summer of 2024 and delves into discrimination reports among other actions. The Center for Science and Society prioritizes initiatives and applications focused on DEI for grant approval. A funding pool for DEI was created within the Earth Institute and Climate School community. The school also has a Racial Justice Mini-Grant Program focused on anti-racist themes.

Required Trainings

As part of orientation, new students undergo the Inclusion & Belonging program, which includes concepts such as inclusion, diversity, equity, allyship, and bias. Columbia's School of Social Work mandates anti-bias training for all PhD candidates, faculty, and staff year-round. Public Safety Officers are trained on implicit bias, microaggressions, and DEI.

Cornell University

Response to Supreme Court Ruling

Similar to Brown University, Cornell University made a change to its application essay by adding an identity based essay prompt in 2023.

Curriculum

The Cornell Free Speech Alliance crafted a report illustrating the corruption of STEM programs with DEI policies that reject faculty candidates for not being in line with DEI promotion. The DoBetterCornell student group is involved in the development of an educational requirement that focuses on themes like systemic racism, bias, colonialism, and inequity. Cornell offers numerous classes focused on DEI content in every school and department.

Programs & Initiatives

In fall of 2023, Cornell University began a collegewide tradition known as Impact Week at Cornell (or I-Week). This tradition involves celebrating DEI through activities tailored to fields of study. In 2024, the Center for Racial Justice and Equitable Futures was launched to

center on anti-Black racism. Cornell has an Each One Teach One orientation program for students of color. The Department of Inclusion and Belonging encourages all Cornell community members to engage. Also, the school has an Inclusive Excellence Podcast monthly.

Required Trainings

At Cornell University, staff are required to take trainings on equity and cultural competency in the Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Cornell certificate program. Cornell Tech has stated that it will pursue requiring anti-racism faculty training in the future. The Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity has the Inclusive Excellence Academy and the New Supervisor Orientation Certificate Program which contains a DEI module. The Nolan School has an anti-racism action plan which promises to offer DEI training for student club leaders and teaching assistants in the future. All faculty must take training in race, racism, and colonialism.

Dartmouth College

Response to Supreme Court Ruling

In 2023, Dartmouth stated that it is in the process of considering how to adapt to the admissions regulation changes. However, the school has reassured its commitment to DEI. As addressed below, anti-bias training for students, faculty, and staff used to be required, yet it now appears that this is no longer in place.

Curriculum

Faculty are encouraged to reflect on their biases and to ensure their pedagogy incorporates anti-racism. All students are required to take a class under the topic of Culture and Identity.

Programs & Initiatives

The school has an Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity. Also, the school had a 2022 3-year DEI strategic plan titled Toward Equity: Aligning Action and Accountability. The Student Affairs Department has a section where students may report bias. There is a DEI training program known as Academic Impressions offered on a voluntary basis for school officials, faculty, and staff. The School House Anti-Racism Coalition has several programs and events. The college library has anti-racism resources.

Required Trainings

Anti-Bias Training used to be mandatory for students, staff, and faculty, yet it is no longer mandatory at this time.

Harvard University

Response to Supreme Court Ruling

As addressed below, DEI statements are no longer required for faculty hiring in response to the 2023 legislation changes by the Supreme Court.

Curriculum

Harvard's Medical Anti-Racism Initiatives intends to curate classes that teach about racism in science for its Master's and PhD candidates. All MPS students are required to take Race and Racism in the Making of the United States as a Global Power.

Programs & Initiatives

Harvard has an Office for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging which also has the Inclusive Teaching Institute dedicated to training faculty and staff to incorporate inclusive teaching. Harvard's School of Public Health and Graduate School of Design both have bias reporting systems. The Harvard Library has the Diversity Residency Program.

Required Trainings

Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences no longer requires DEI statements of faculty applicants. The Kennedy School has an Action Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism. This Action Plan includes student orientation sessions focused on anti-racism as well as faculty training.

Princeton University

Response to Supreme Court Ruling

In response to the 2023 law changes, Princeton reaffirmed its commitment to diversity. No changes were specified.

Curriculum

The school maintains its General Education requirement of taking one Culture and Difference class. This requirement applies to all students, whether A.B. or B.S.E.

Programs & Initiatives

The school has an Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity. Furthermore, there is a bias reporting system in place. There is a RISE Fellowship program for research on anti-racism.

Required Trainings

Princeton requires all students to undergo an orientation program focused on DEI, where all students are put into groups to discuss Dialogue and Difference in Action as well as other DEI topics. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion runs these activities. The New Faculty Institute requires that new hires attend a training session on Principles of Equitable and Inclusive Teaching. DEI training is required of student leaders, faculty involved in graduate admission or hiring recruitment, and all employees.

University of Pennsylvania

Response to Supreme Court Ruling

The university has stated that its admissions process will change in response to the 2023 Supreme Court ruling, yet it did not specify the exact changes.

Curriculum

The University of Pennsylvania has a Cultural Diversity course requirement for all undergraduate students, as well as a Cross-Cultural Perspectives 3-course requirement for all Wharton students. In 2022, the school introduced two new majors and concentrations, which are the ESGB and DEI programs. They are available to Wharton business students as majors and as undergraduate concentrations. The first class will be graduating in May 2025.

Programs & Initiatives

The school has a program known as Projects for Progress, which offers up to \$100k grants for projects focused on topics like systemic racism. Students have the option to take a DEI concentration. In October 2024, the Diversity Equity Engagement program was accepting applications. The school has a Bias Incident Reporting system for students. The University of Pennsylvania also has an Office of Social Equity and Community.

Required Trainings

Certain departments, like the School of Communication and the Engineering Department, require faculty DEI training for either some or all faculty.

Yale University

Response to Supreme Court Ruling

Yale has changed its 2023-2024 essay prompts following the 2023 law changes by the Supreme Court decision.

Curriculum

Within the 2021-2026 Belonging at Yale program, the school will expand to have more courses on anti-racism and race. All MPH students must take the course, Social Justice and Health Equity, in the School of Public Health.

Programs & Initiatives

Yale stipulates that each school and administrative division should have a 5-year action plan on DEI. From September to October of 2024, the Yale Divinity School had a series on Unmasking Racism in Anti-Racism Education. The school offers grants for Belonging at Yale which prioritize anti-racism projects.

Required Trainings

Incoming undergraduates must watch a video on discrimination, while incoming graduates must undergo implicit bias awareness training. The School of Music requires anti-racism training.