



Occupying the Academy: Just How Important Is Diversity Work in Higher Education?

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In the wake of the election of President Obama, many diversity scholars and practitioners imagined that renewed commitments to educational equity and justice were just around the corner. Unfortunately, the opposite has become the Obama-era reality. Across the country, equity and diversity workers at all levels in university and colleges, but especially Chief Diversity Officers in public institutions, are under assault. Is this assault a result of a pre-meditated and carefully calculated conservative political agenda or the unfortunate consequence of how largely white, politically conservative—and the power bases they represent—are expressing their anger about the changing racial landscape in the United States? This volume explores and deconstructs the reasons for this assault from various perspectives. This volume also illustrates how the national assault on equity and diversity has resulted in a continuum. At one end are “diversity-friendly” institutions that are benignly neglecting equity/diversity efforts because of state budget crises. At the other end of the spectrum are the deliberate efforts being made to systematically dismantle equity and diversity work in especially politically conservative states.

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