

Texas Tech University System Component University Guidance Related to Senate Bill 17

Note: the following is general guidance intended to broadly apply across academic and other units at component universities within the Texas Tech University System. Specific questions not addressed by the guidance below and questions resulting from the guidance below should be directed to the respective point(s) of contact at your university.

With the stipulation that in no event shall state appropriated funds be used to fund such programs, events, or initiatives, please see the following general guidance regarding the use of institutional funds:

1. Generally, units may use institutional funds to support the following:
 - i. Registered student organizations and their related activities to include events that are related to race, color, ethnicity, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation, provided that:
 1. There are published procedures for applying for funds;
 2. There are published procedures for reviewing applications;
 3. All recognized student organizations are eligible to apply for funds; and
 4. The funded organization does not have exclusive membership policies.
 - ii. Outside employee memberships in professional organizations whose activities may include trainings and programs that are related to race, color, ethnicity, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation, provided that:
 1. There are published procedures for applying for funds;
 2. There are published procedures for reviewing applications;
 3. All employees are eligible to apply for funds for similar outside membership programs;
 4. Such professional organizations are not university-operated organizations/programs (and such trainings/programs are not intended to be utilized as an alternative means of mandated DEI training/programming); and
 5. The funded organization does not have exclusive membership policies.
 - iii. Employee and student membership and participation in external, non-university-sponsored conferences or other, external, non-university-sponsored professional development activities, which may include trainings and programs which may be related to race, color, ethnicity, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation, provided that:
 1. There are published procedures for applying for funds; and
 2. There are published procedures for reviewing applications.
 - iv. Faculty travel and associated costs related to publication and presentation of their research and/or creative works; such travel and associated costs shall be treated

and processed in accordance with standard university policies and procedures regarding research and creative work(s).

2. Universities and their respective colleges/units may not use institutional funds to conduct or promote activities, programs, events, or initiatives related to race, color, ethnicity, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation other than:
 - i. Faculty/student/research personnel activities that are specific to scholarly research or creative work(s);
 - ii. Academic coursework; or
 - iii. Activities that are part of an already-existing grant that mandates such activities; provided such grant(s), including any renewals, may be subject to continual review by the university.

Matters related to all units and all employees:

1. Neither a university nor any of its units may retain or house offices, trainings, initiatives, events, activities, or named groups relating to race, color, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation. The potential exception to this rule is that activities specifically required by a currently funded and already-existing external federal grant (though not funded by state appropriated funds) may be permitted, though such grant(s) may be subject to continual university review.
 - i. Per SB 17, for purposes of applying for a grant or complying with the terms of accreditation by an accrediting agency/entity, university units may submit to the grantor or accrediting agency/entity a statement that:
 1. highlights the institution's work in supporting:
 - (A) first-generation college students, or
 - (B) low-income students, or
 - (C) underserved student populations; *or*
 2. certifies compliance with state and federal anti-discrimination laws.
2. Generally, units may continue to host certain types of programming that may incidentally touch upon DEI-related topics. This would generally be limited to:
 - i. Guest speakers/performers coming to campus for short-term engagements; or
 - ii. A program offered/conducted by a student organization.
3. University employees may assist with logistics and preparations for the short events and activities referenced in Item 2, above, in accordance with standard university procedures. If the event itself is permissible (e.g., a guest speaker coming to campus), university employees may assist with planning for, execution of the and promotion of the event as with any other event without regard to content of the event.
4. Generally, university employees serving as advisors to registered student organizations may assist those organizations with planning events which may involve topics involving race, color, gender identity, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation, provided that the members of the registered student organization operate, conduct, and manage the event.

5. Units may develop and offer focused resources, programs, and initiatives not related to race, color, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation (e.g., economically disadvantaged, rural, urban, first-generation college student, historically underserved/underutilized).
6. Employees in their individual (private) capacities may support, organize, and/or publicize events related to DEI initiatives and topics. Employees acting in their individual capacities should remember that their employer university has specific facilities use policies: university facilities, equipment, supplies, and services are to be used only for duly authorized university purposes and activities. Private events hosted by a university employee in their individual capacity should not be held in university facilities or using university funds. Employees acting in their individual capacities are reminded to use non-university-issued email addresses—for both the sender and the recipient(s)—when sending electronic messages about non-university private events/activities.
7. A university unit may choose to recognize a heritage month, provided the unit gives equal recognition to [all federally-designated heritage months](#). Options for recommended language follow:
 - i. “The [INSERT UNIT NAME HERE] recognizes [XXXX] Heritage Month!” [The unit can then direct the reader to activities conducted by recognized student organizations]
 - ii. “[INSERT DATES HERE] is [XXX] Heritage Month! The [INSERT UNIT NAME HERE] recognizes this important month.”

Generally, university programming and/or activities (other than programming/activities conducted by recognized student organizations) advertised as specific to a heritage month and which are not required by an existing grant or other federal requirement are not permitted. Existing grants requiring such programs or activities may be subject to continual university review.

8. Any unit, in accordance with its existing procedures and standard practices, may circulate to all students information about external, non-university-administered scholarship opportunities available from outside organizations which may have special interest(s) to minority applicants and/or focus attention on the importance of diversity.
9. Units may approve requests from external organizations to rent and use university facilities and space(s) in accordance with applicable university policies and procedures.

In the context of the guidance provided above, units and employees are advised that each university is prohibited from using third parties to perform DEI activities *directed at the university’s employees or students*.

Matters related to faculty members and academic units:

1. Academic course instruction and program content is exempt from prohibitions described in SB 17. Faculty members are not being asked to revise course or program content. Faculty members with questions about how to advertise their courses are encouraged to

take these questions to their department chairs, school directors, area coordinators, or other university points of contact, all as applicable.

2. Research, scholarship, and creative work(s) are generally exempt from prohibitions described in SB 17. Faculty members are not asked to make changes to their research, scholarship, or creative work(s). Faculty members may continue to request university funds to support the on- and off-campus publication/distribution of their research, scholarship, and creative work(s). Faculty members may retain statements on university-hosted websites identifying their research and/or creative work(s) which may include DEI-related verbiage.
3. Faculty members may generally provide on-campus lectures, performances, and/or workshops which may include DEI-related content, provided such content is a bona fide component of the faculty member's research/creative work(s). As each university generally does for such programs and activities, university may support these events by, for example, providing a faculty member with a space for the event, promotion of the event, and a reception after the event. As discussed above, each university is prohibited from using these works and activities to perform DEI trainings directed at the university's employees or students.
4. Units are prohibited from compelling, requiring, inducing, or soliciting any person to provide a DEI statement or giving preferential consideration to any person based on the provision of a DEI statement.
5. Generally, units may include training on writing DEI statements in academic courses provided this training is part of course curricula preparing students for further study and/or career trajectories.
6. Generally, units may offer non-credit-bearing workshops or professional development activities to enhance student academic achievement or postgraduate outcomes which may include training on writing DEI statements, provided such training relates to preparing students for further study and/or career trajectories (e.g., for careers/positions in the private sector which may require such statements).

Guidance on accreditation and external funding:

1. Regarding disciplinary accreditation requirements, it is recommended that units review their applicable accreditation standards to determine whether any requirements of accreditation conflict with prohibitions articulated in SB 17.
2. Faculty members should continue to comply with all requirements specific to **existing** federal grants and grants awarded prior to 12/31/23, provided such grant(s), including any renewals, may be subject to continual review by university. Notwithstanding the foregoing, faculty members should **not** continue with such requirements if such grants are funded with appropriated funds.

3. Faculty members who have state-level grants or federal grants currently under review that require specific DEI activities or statements should consult with the university's respective point of contact.
4. Faculty members considering applying for federal grants with requirements or restrictions that are impacted by SB 17 should first consult with the university's respective point of contact.