

Dylan Canter
10 February 2025

Subject: Strong Opposition to Senate Bill 1- Protect Student Academic Freedom, Faculty Rights, and Collective Bargaining

Dear Committee:

I am writing as a concerned community college faculty member, and a lifelong learner and educator, to strongly oppose Senate Bill 1 (SB1). This bill devalues student academic freedom and independent thought. In addition, it aims to remove the collective bargaining rights and higher education framework that have worked to ensure student success for so many years.

A problem with the bill and its eventual implementation is the lack of student insight and voices in its creation. While there may be an outlying anecdotal student support of the bill, the vast majority of students do not support this bill and will not benefit from it as evident in previous student testimony on past iterations of this bill.

In addition, the bill's specifications on what and how faculty can teach, and what and how students can learn, are not informed by any research and precedent. It is proven that aspects of Universal Design teaching work well with students. This is where instructors can work with students to suit their individualized learning needs and goals for the success of all students, because a one size fits all education approach does not work. The bill's language puts limitations on an instructor's ability to support a student's independently formed thinking and success goals.

Universal Design teaching pedagogy is also related to ideas regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in many ways because its purpose is to honor all students and their lived experiences and identities. DEI is a current buzzword in social rhetoric and politics, and it is being used as a venue with which to assume that higher education is currently placing priority on one student over another or indoctrinating students into a certain belief system. The rhetoric also assumes that large resources have been allocated to DEI programming and pedagogy. Anyone who immerses themselves in higher education on a daily basis knows that this is not true.

Further, students faced a huge challenge during the pandemic and as a result of remote learning. However, recent research and data show that students are bouncing back from initial pandemic success rate dips and are doing very well in course retention and degree/certificate completion in the previous couple of years due to the current work of faculty and colleges and universities. So, if the current rhetoric around this bill and in the

State is that DEI and higher education are now harming students' academic freedoms and successes, then the data does not support that at all.

The implementation of this bill will disrupt the students and the institutions responsible for their success in immeasurable and damaging ways. This includes the bill's language restricting collective bargaining rights and an institution's ability to define promotion and tenure. This disruption is not needed as shown in faculty and student testimony as well as documented research.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please take a stand against this harmful legislation and instead support policies that respect student success, support faculty expertise, uphold academic freedom, and protect collective bargaining. Please urge our lawmakers to listen to the students who do not want this bill, and who may see their current success derailed because of the bill. Ohio college students deserve better than SB1.

Sincerely,

Dylan Canter