

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

March 3, 2023

Dear University Committee on Faculty Affairs,

Following a conversation with Peter White, I wanted to share with you concerns that many CANR faculty have with MSUs plans to use DEI statements in annual evaluations and tenure and promotion (RTP) packets.

In Provost Woodruff's Spring 2022 "University Philosophy and Guiding Policies on Faculty Tenure and Promotion" letter, it states "Contributions to DEI will be acknowledged, evaluated, and recognized in the reappointment, promotion, and tenure process, as well as in annual reviews of faculty accomplishments", and "Significant involvement in DEI efforts can be viewed as a metric for advancement".

Many CANR faculty have expressed concern over this new policy of requiring DEI statements in annual evaluations and RTP packets. For seven of ten CANR departments responding to an anonymous poll, the majority (range of 50 – 94%) of faculty were opposed to mandating a DEI statement in annual evaluations, for one department 48% opposed (30% no opinion), and the other two departments did not offer a poll to their faculty. While specific concerns varied among faculty and departments, for many the primary concern is that even with good intentions, including DEI information can easily result in implicit bias at the administrative level.



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Faculty largely have confidence in the university's annual evaluation and RTP system because they operate under a "peer evaluation" process that suppresses implicit bias. Inserting DEI into the evaluation of scientific productivity holds serious risk of implicit bias, because those at the provost level promoting and judging DEI activities are not our peers. Including DEI in this way risks undermining the confidence that faculty have in a well-established annual evaluation and RTP system.

Please consider how these concerns might be addressed within your committee.

Sincerely,

John C. Wise  
Professor (Entomology CAC rep)