

Research
Report

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Changing DEI Requirements in Faculty Hiring:

*A Comparative Analysis
Between 2024 and 2025 Hiring Cycles*

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1 Requests for U.S. full-time faculty job applicants to address DEI in their application materials (either standalone DEI statements, within cover letters, or within research teaching statements) have declined sharply, falling from approximately 25% in 2024 to 11% in 2025. This change represents a reduction of more than 50% in the share of job advertisements that mandate DEI-related statements or materials.

2 Thirty-seven percent of faculty job advertisements in 2025 don't explicitly request that applicants address DEI in application materials, but still signal that a commitment to DEI will be valued.

3 DEI requests in 2025 vary by geographic region, being more prevalent in institutions in the Northeast and the West Coast. States with anti-DEI legislation generally exhibit lower rates of DEI requirements.

4 Requests to address DEI in 2025 vary substantially by discipline: faculty job advertisements in the social sciences and humanities are more likely than those in STEM and professional disciplines to request DEI statements or related application materials.

5 Private institutions continue to request DEI materials at higher rates than public institutions, though both have declined substantially from 2024.

6 DEI-related material requests have fallen across almost all Carnegie classifications in 2025, except for community colleges, where they have slightly increased from 2024 (from 4.8% to 8.3%).

7 Full-time faculty positions are far more likely to request DEI materials in 2025 than adjunct or part-time positions, where such requests are mostly absent.

8 The vast majority of faculty jobs requesting addressing DEI in application materials do not mention viewpoint diversity: Only 13% of faculty job ads requesting DEI-related materials mention viewpoint diversity, suggesting that universities continue to emphasize demographic diversity rather than other potential dimensions of diversity such as intellectual heterogeneity.

The Role of DEI Statements in Faculty Hiring



After being championed by the University of California system in the 2000s as a way to diversify the academic workforce, universities across the country began integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) statement requests as a part of their faculty application process. DEI statement requests typically ask prospective faculty applicants to address their commitment, values, and experiences related to DEI or related topics such as social justice, antiracism, and belonging.

As more institutions and departments adopted the practice of requesting DEI statements from faculty applicants, critics also began to take note. Opponents argue that DEI statements threaten academic freedom, function as ideological or political litmus tests, compel speech, and disadvantage applicants who embrace non-identitarian frameworks ([Botvinick, 2026](#); [Flier, 2019](#); [Frey, 2024](#); [Kang et al., 2016](#); [Whittington, 2025](#)). (Objections have been raised by students as well; e.g., [Botvinick, 2026](#)). Critics also claim the requirement encourages performative conformity rather than genuine diversity of thought and lacks evidence of improving student outcomes. At worst, critics allege that DEI statement requests effectively mask affirmative action hiring practices, which have been illegal in states like California since the 1990s and nationwide since 2023.

Despite sustained controversy, systematic evidence on the prevalence of DEI statement requests in applications for faculty jobs has remained sparse. Last year, HxA addressed this gap with a report analyzing DEI requests in faculty job advertisements from the Fall 2024 hiring cycle ([Arnold et al., 2025](#)). The present report adds newly collected data from the Fall 2025 hiring cycle, affording the most current prevalence estimates of DEI requests and an assessment of year-to-year changes.

A large crowd of students is gathered on the steps of a classical building with white columns. In the foreground, four students are sitting on the steps: a woman in a red cap and blue shirt, a woman in a red and black plaid shirt, a woman with orange hair, and a woman in a pink shirt. The background is filled with many other students, some standing and some sitting, all facing towards the building. The building has a prominent portico with large white columns. The sky is clear and blue.

A Transformed Political Landscape

The 2025 faculty hiring cycle unfolded in a markedly different political climate than the year before. On January 20, 2025, Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 47th President of the United States and issued Executive Order 14151, “Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing,” directing federal agencies to terminate all DEI-related programs and initiatives (Exec. Order No. 14151, 2025). This was quickly followed by another executive order, “Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity,” which revoked previous executive orders promoting affirmative action and DEI programs and called for investigations into institutions (particularly those with endowments exceeding \$1 billion) suspected of maintaining DEI programs that violate federal anti-discrimination laws (Exec. Order No. 14173, 2025).

Under the new administration, the Department of Education sent letters to institutions nationwide warning them to eliminate DEI programs or face potential loss of federal funding (American Council on Education, 2025). Federal contractors and grant recipients were required to certify that they do not operate DEI programs that violate applicable anti-discrimination laws (Przypyszny et al., 2025).

The administration’s approach has been described by many as confrontational. Harvard University, which publicly refused to comply with demands to eliminate DEI programs and adopt administration-approved policies, saw over \$2.2 billion in federal grants frozen, with an additional \$450 million subsequently cut (Doherty & Mangan, 2025). The university filed a lawsuit challenging what it characterized as an illegal overreach of government authority. Columbia University, by contrast, agreed to pay a \$221 million fine and implement sweeping policy changes, including prohibiting “illegal” DEI programs and allowing an independent monitor to oversee compliance (Nadworny & Owens, 2025).

Other institutions have faced similar funding freezes, with some reaching settlements involving tens of millions of dollars. Courts have pushed back on this executive action. One federal judge issued a preliminary nationwide injunction blocking key parts of the executive orders on free speech grounds (Schwartz, 2025), and another found that the government had weaponized claims of antisemitism to support an unlawful, ideologically motivated attack on Harvard (Charalambous & Jones, 2025).

The federal push against DEI has been accompanied by continued legislative action at the state level. As of December 2025, 17 states had passed legislation banning the use of diversity statements in hiring: Arkansas, Florida, Idaho,

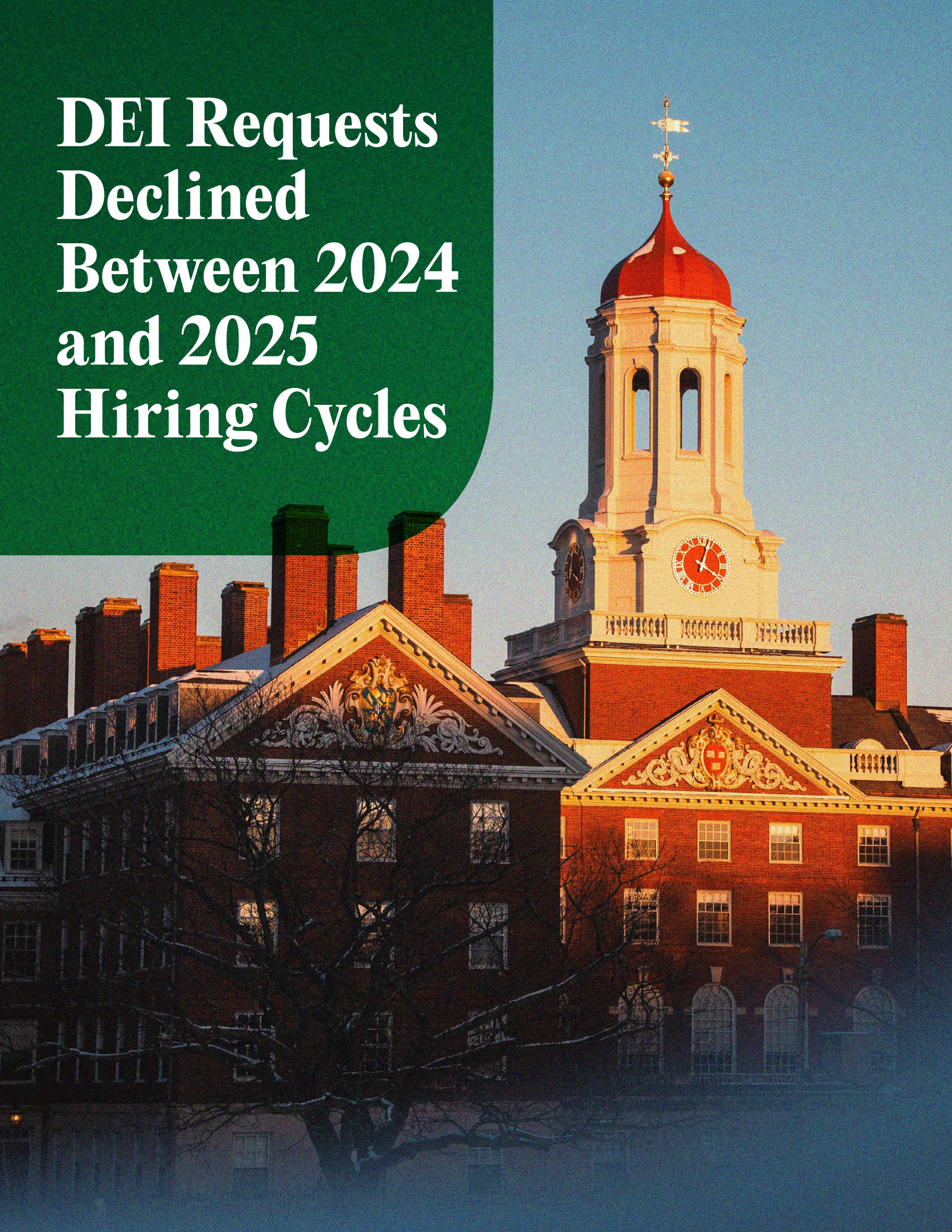
Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2026). A policy brief from the University of Southern California identified six states – Texas, Missouri, Tennessee, Iowa, Oklahoma, and Indiana — as national leaders in efforts to dismantle DEI programs, with Texas alone having introduced 10 bills and passed three laws restricting DEI efforts (Haynes et al., 2025).

These laws vary in their specific provisions but generally target DEI offices and staff, DEI training requirements, diversity statements in hiring, and identity-based hiring practices. The Chronicle of Higher Education has tracked changes at hundreds of campuses across U.S. states in response to this legislative and political pressure (Cutler et al., 2026).

Against this backdrop of federal and state pressure, many institutions have reconsidered their use of DEI statements. The University of California announced it would stop requiring standalone DEI statements in faculty hiring (Choi, 2025). The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Michigan, and Harvard’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences have walked back or prohibited their use (Zimmermann, 2024). Some institutions have engaged in what the AAUP has termed “anticipatory obedience” — that is, scaling back DEI programs before any formal enforcement action, including canceling cultural events and removing references to DEI from institutional websites (AAUP, 2025).



DEI Requests Declined Between 2024 and 2025 Hiring Cycles



Our analysis reveals a substantial decline in DEI-related requests in full-time faculty job advertisements between 2024 and 2025. The percentage of job advertisements explicitly requesting applicants to address DEI in their application materials dropped from 25.4% in 2024 to 11.0% in 2025 — a reduction of more than half.

For a more granular analysis of what faculty job ads are specifically requesting regarding DEI, we classified each advertisement into one of four categories:

Request for a stand-alone DEI statement
Request to address DEI elsewhere in the application materials (e.g., in the cover letter)
No explicit request for applicants to address DEI, but there is language about how DEI will be valued in selecting a candidate (e.g., *“ideal candidates will have a demonstrated commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom”*).

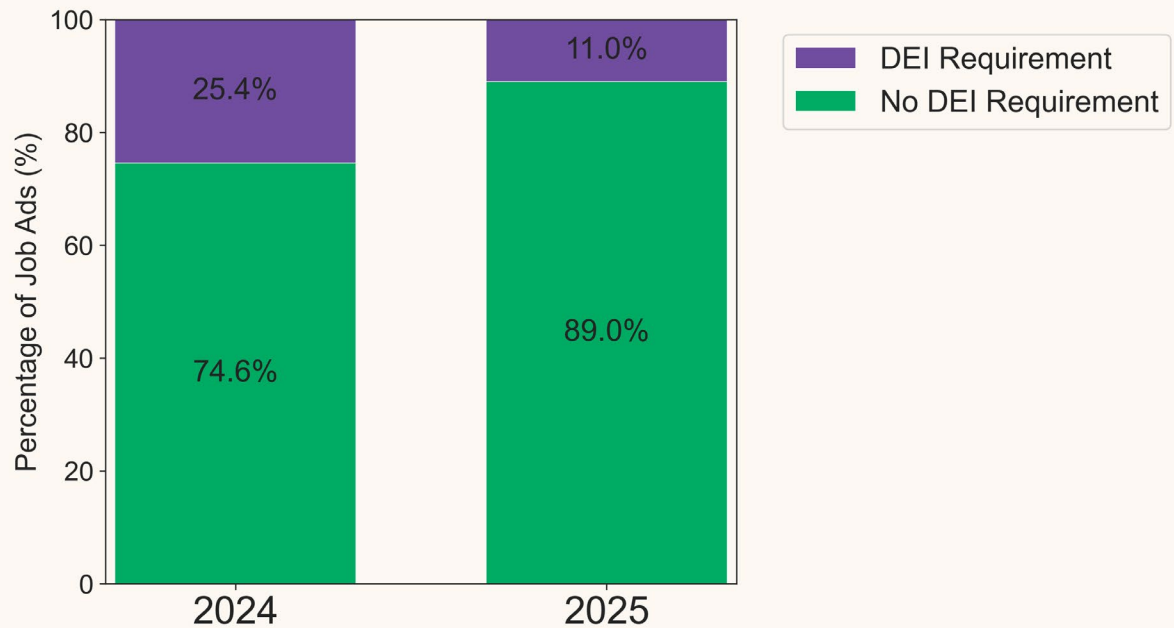
No DEI expectations (the job ad contains no mention of DEI and does not indicate that addressing DEI in application materials is required or valued in candidate selection). In addition to an overall decline in DEI requests between 2024 and 2025, the more granular analysis reveals additional patterns in the nature of DEI requests from year to year (see *Figure 2*).

First, whereas the job ads requesting a standalone DEI statement and those requesting DEI to be addressed elsewhere made up roughly equal shares of the dataset in 2024 (13.4% and 12%, respectively), requests for a standalone DEI statement not only declined but were particularly rare compared to requests to address DEI elsewhere in 2025 (2.5% vs. 8.5%, respectively). This collapse of standalone DEI statement requests from 2024 to 2025 is the most dramatic change found in our analysis.

Second, this analysis reveals a sizable share of job ads in 2024 that signaled that DEI was a valued selection criterion even in the absence of an explicit DEI statement request (40.4%). These ads were categorized in our 2024 report (which used a binary “explicit request/no explicit request” coding system) as having no DEI-related statement request. Including this category of more implicit requests, roughly two-thirds (65.8%) of job ads in the 2024 dataset contained DEI-oriented expectations of some kind.

Third, a substantial share of 2025 job ads (37.2%) continue to signal that DEI will be valued in the hiring process without explicitly requesting any DEI-related materials. The proportional decline in this category is relatively slight, suggesting that while formal DEI statement requests have declined, many institutions continue to consider DEI-related material when evaluating candidates. Combining this type of language with explicit requests for applicants to address DEI, we observe that 48.2% of job ads contain DEI-oriented expectations of some variety. Finally, declines across all DEI-related categories have meant that the proportion of full-time faculty job ads with no DEI expectations rose from 34.1% in 2024 to 51.8% in 2025.

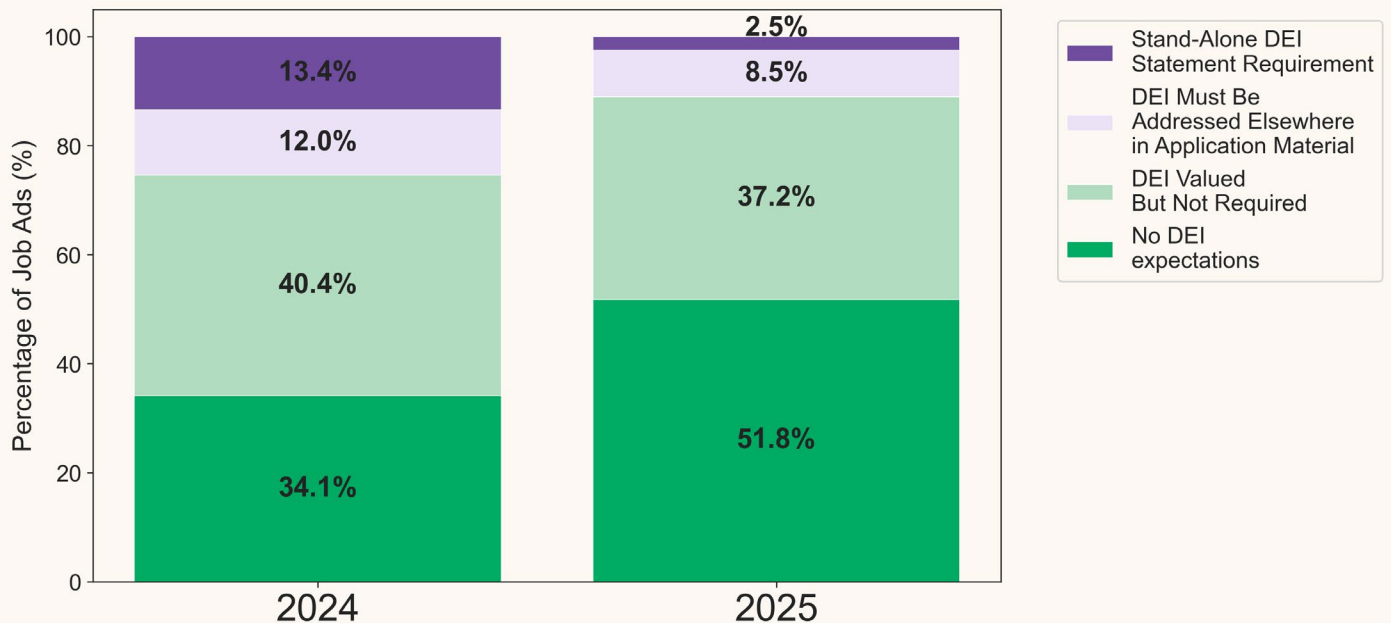
Share of Faculty Jobs Requesting Applicants to Address DEI



Source: **heterodox academy**

Figure 1: Percentage of full-time faculty job advertisements explicitly requesting applicants to address DEI in application materials in 2024 vs. 2025. Note. There is a small discrepancy between the 2024 figure reported here (25.4%) and the value reported in last year's report (22.3%). This stems from using a more modern model for the automated annotation of job descriptions and the adoption of a more granular four-category classification scheme in this year's analysis, which, when applied retrospectively to the 2024 data, yields a slightly higher estimate of the prevalence of DEI statement requests (see the Methods section for details).

Share of Faculty Job Ads by DEI Expectations for Applicants



Source: **heterodox academy**

Figure 2: Distribution of DEI expectations in full-time faculty job advertisements in 2024 vs. 2025.

How Do DEI Requests Vary?



Variation by Geography

For the following analyses and through the remainder of the report, we discuss variance across geography, institution type, disciplinary fields, and position type. In these analyses, we focus only on ads with explicit DEI requests within application materials, not DEI-related qualifications which may be valued in the hiring process. Except for the section on job type, the analysis is circumscribed to full-time jobs.

An analysis of state-by-state DEI requests in faculty job postings reveals pronounced geographic variation (see *Figure 3*). Universities in the Northeast and on the West Coast continue to request DEI materials at higher rates, whereas states in the Southeast and Midwest, as well as those that have enacted legislation restricting DEI-related hiring practices (shown with their labels boxed in the figure), show markedly lower rates. We do not suggest here that DEI requests in states that now have anti-DEI legislation are necessarily unlawful, as this would depend on the specific wording of the legislation, the date it went into effect, and the interpretation of what constitutes a prohibited “DEI statement.”

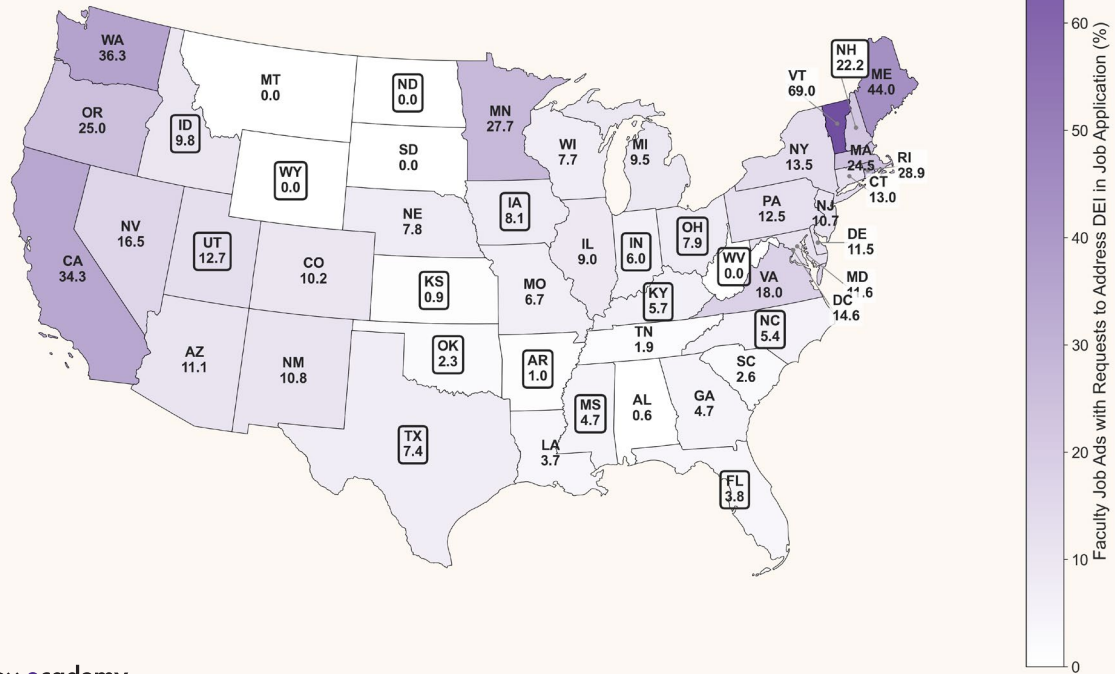
The geographic patterns observed, with DEI material requests concentrated in coastal states and rarer in

other states, might indicate that faculty job markets have become increasingly regionalized with respect to ideological expectations. Faculty candidates may face very different application requirements and implicit expectations depending on where they apply.

The frequency of DEI requests roughly halved between 2024 and 2025, both in states that currently have legislation restricting the consideration of DEI in hiring decisions and states that do not (see *Figure 4*). DEI expectations were relatively uncommon in states with anti-DEI legislation even in 2024, which is unsurprising on a few accounts given that several of these states (e.g., Texas, Florida, Utah) had already passed their anti-DEI legislation prior to the 2024 hiring cycle. While much of the decline in DEI requests is likely due to anti-DEI legislation explicitly aimed at changing faculty hiring practices, the marked decline in states *without* this legislation — as exemplified by the University of California’s system-wide decision to drop DEI statement requirements — suggests that national trends have had their own effect.



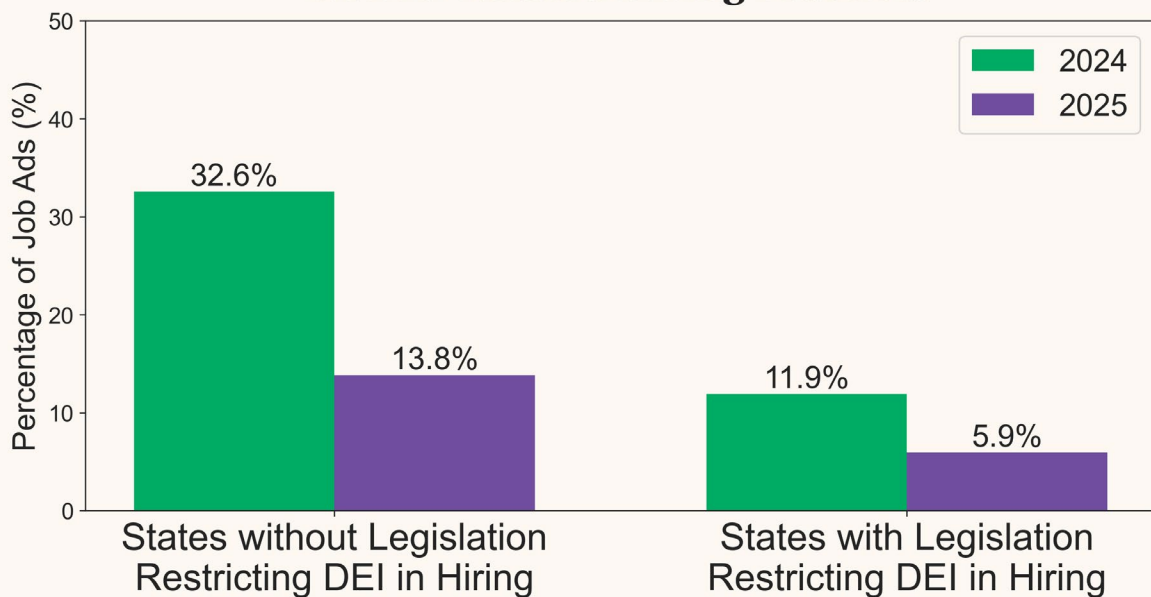
Percentage of Faculty Job Ads with Requests to Address DEI in Job Application (States with Legislation Restricting DEI-Related Hiring Practices Outlined in Boxes)



Source: heterodox academy

Figure 3: Percentage of full-time faculty job ads requiring applicants to address DEI, by state. States with legislation restricting DEI-related hiring practices are indicated with boxes.

DEI Requests in Faculty Job Ads by State Restrictions on DEI-Related Hiring Practices



Source: heterodox academy

Figure 4: Percentage of full-time faculty job ads requiring applicants to address DEI in 2024 vs. 2025 as a function of whether the home institution is in a state with anti-DEI legislation in hiring. States were grouped according to whether they had passed legislation as of 2025, meaning that the “states with anti-DEI legislation” group includes both states that already had legislation in 2024 and those that adopted it more recently.

Variation by Institution Type

Private institutions continue to request DEI-related materials from applicants at higher rates than public institutions (see *Figure 5*). In 2024, 31.8% of job ads from private institutions requested DEI materials, compared to 22.1% from public institutions. In 2025, these rates declined to 14.5% and 9.6%, respectively.

Despite state-level anti-DEI legislation applying only to public institutions, and private institutions not being subject to these laws, private institutions have also reduced DEI requests substantially, perhaps responding to the national decline in support for DEI and federal legislation against it.

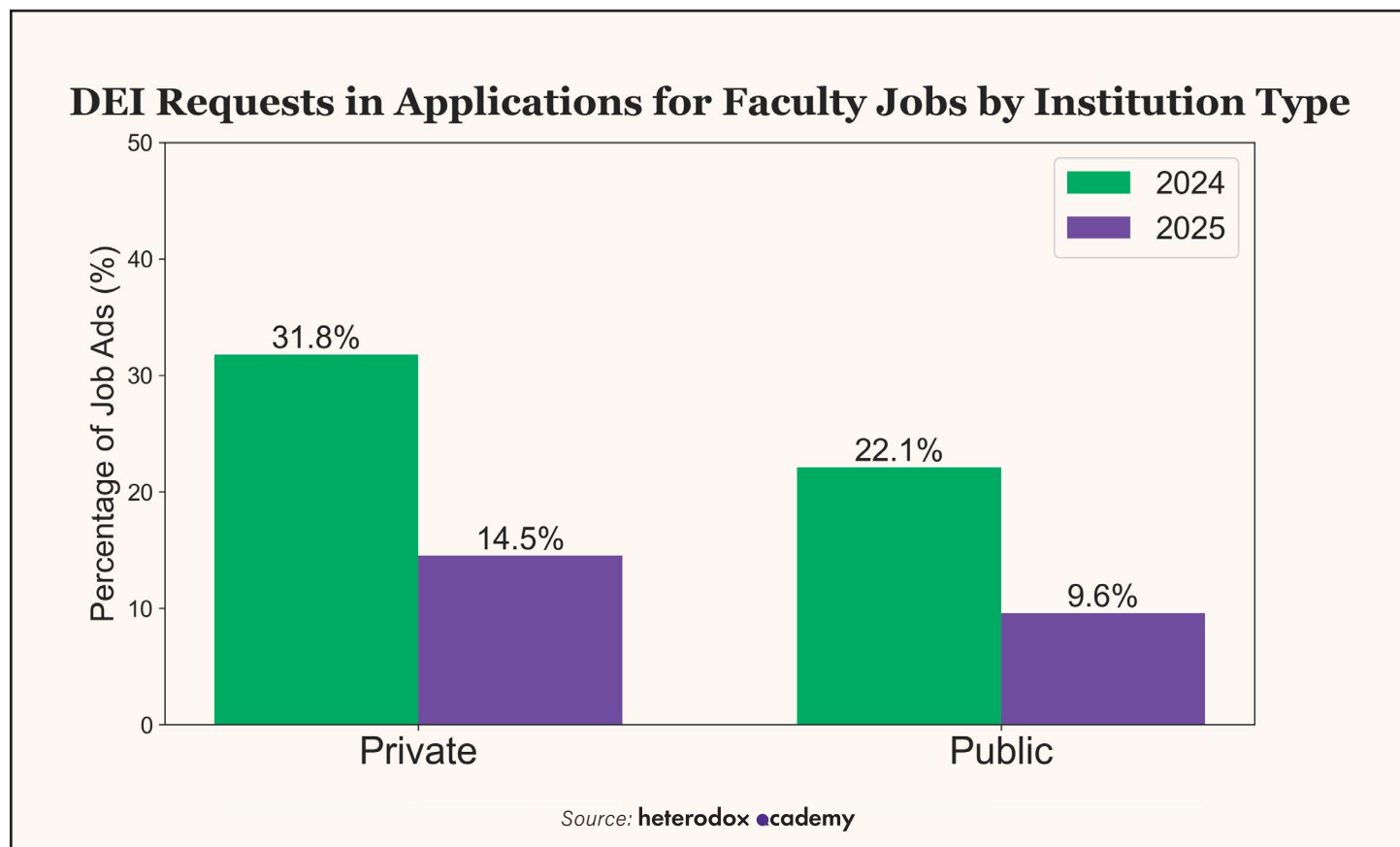


Figure 5: Percentage of full-time faculty job ads requiring DEI materials in 2024 vs. 2025, by institution type (public vs. private).

Variation by Carnegie Classification

Breaking down the faculty jobs by the Carnegie classification of the institution reveals that DEI requests have declined across nearly all institution types (see *Figure 6*). Baccalaureate colleges showed the steepest decline, falling from over half of job ads requesting DEI materials to approximately one in five. R1 and R2 research universities also saw dramatic reductions. The increase at community colleges — from 4.8% to 8.3% stands out as the only category showing growth in DEI material requests, though rates at these institutions remain below average.

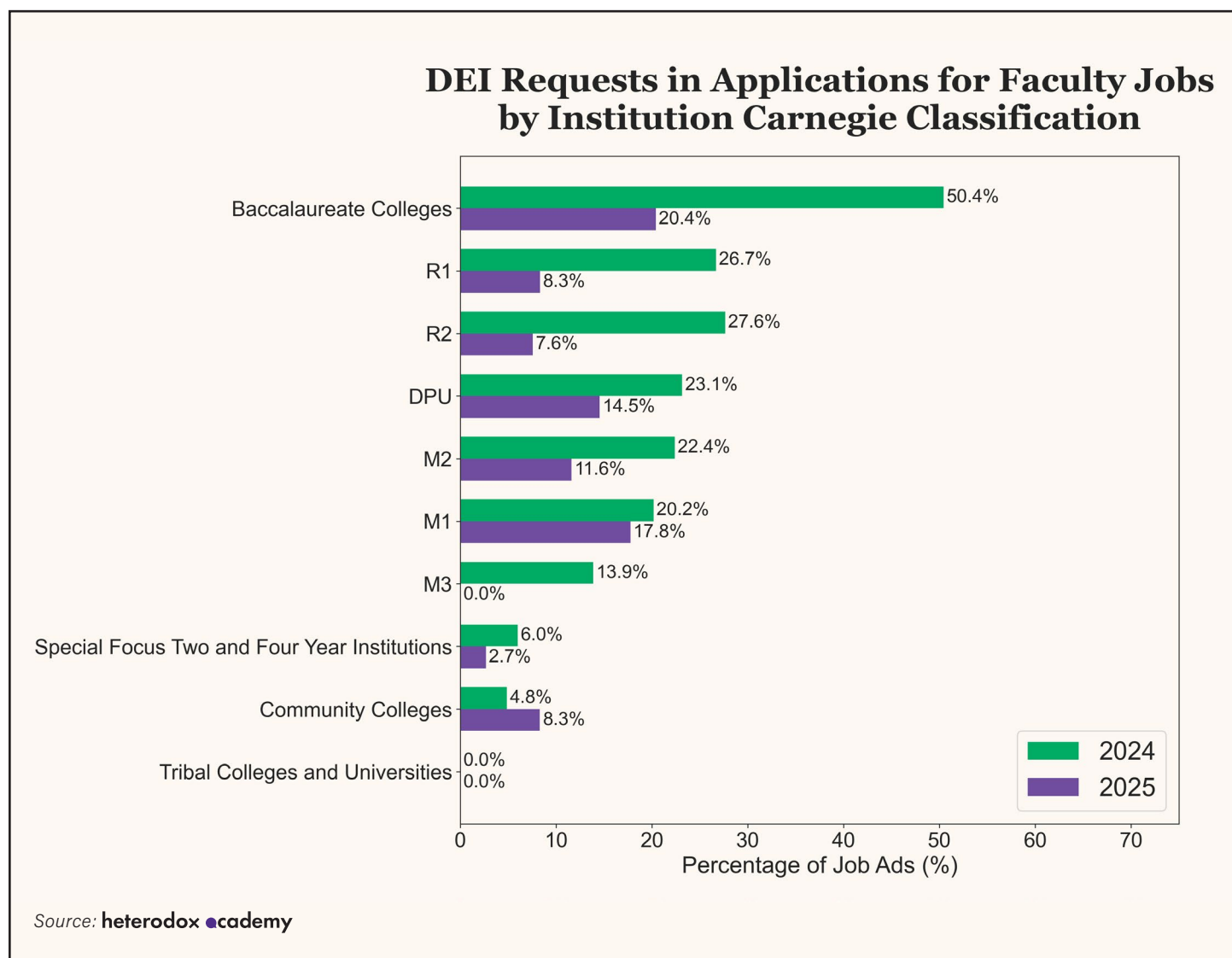


Figure 6: Percentage of full-time faculty job ads requiring DEI materials in 2024 vs. 2025, by Carnegie classification of the institution

Variation by Discipline

All broad academic disciplinary categories showed declines in DEI requests between 2024 and 2025 (see *Figure 7*). In 2024, STEM fields showed rates of DEI material requests comparable to the humanities and social sciences. In 2025, however, STEM fields showed lower rates (10.0%) than both social sciences (14.6%) and humanities (14.5%). (The particularly sharp decline in STEM fields makes sense in light of the National Science Foundation's termination of over 1,500 active grants, 89% of which were related to DEI, in 2025; Schwabish & Axelrod, [2025](#)). Professional and interdisciplinary studies continue to show the lowest rates across both years.

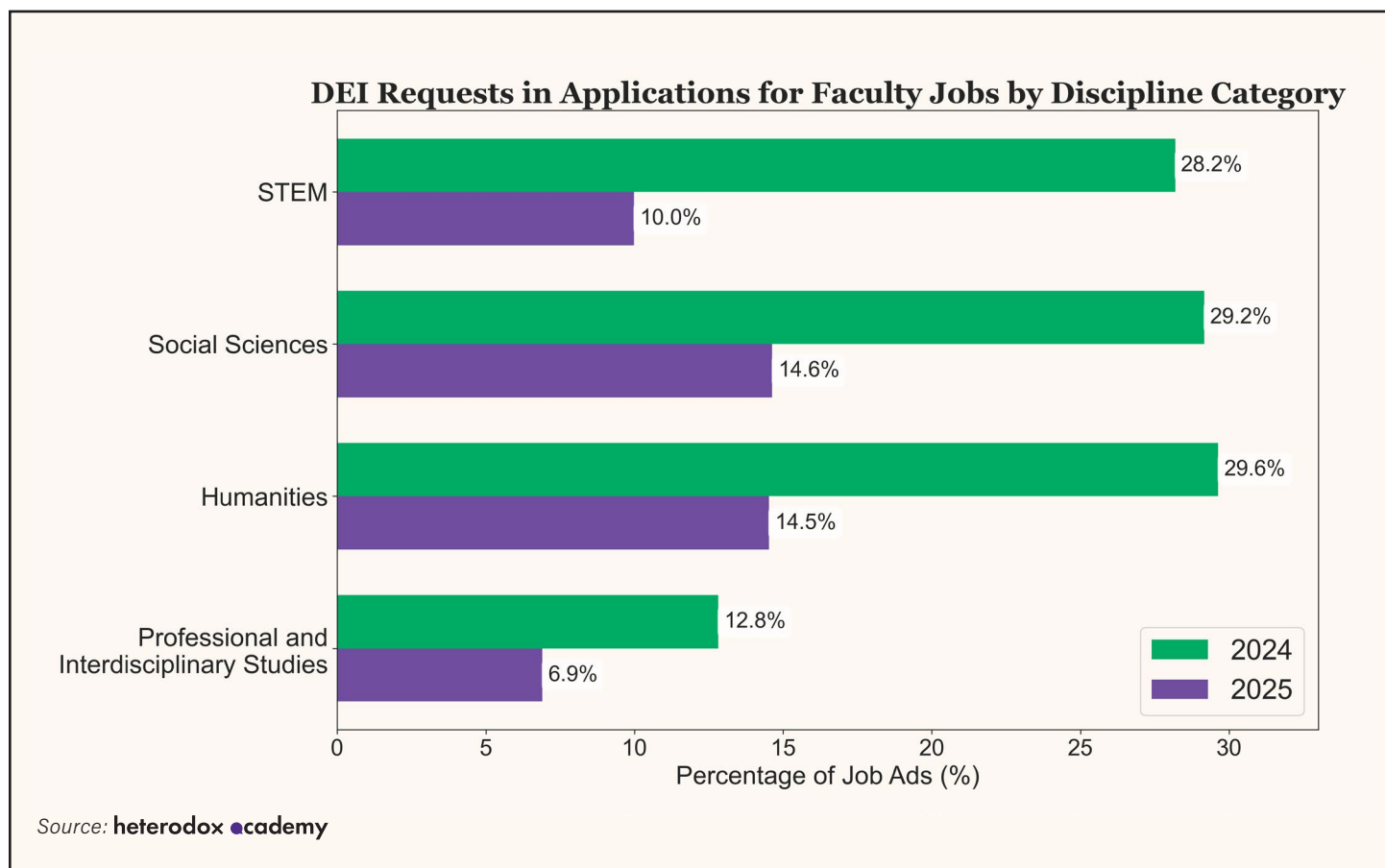


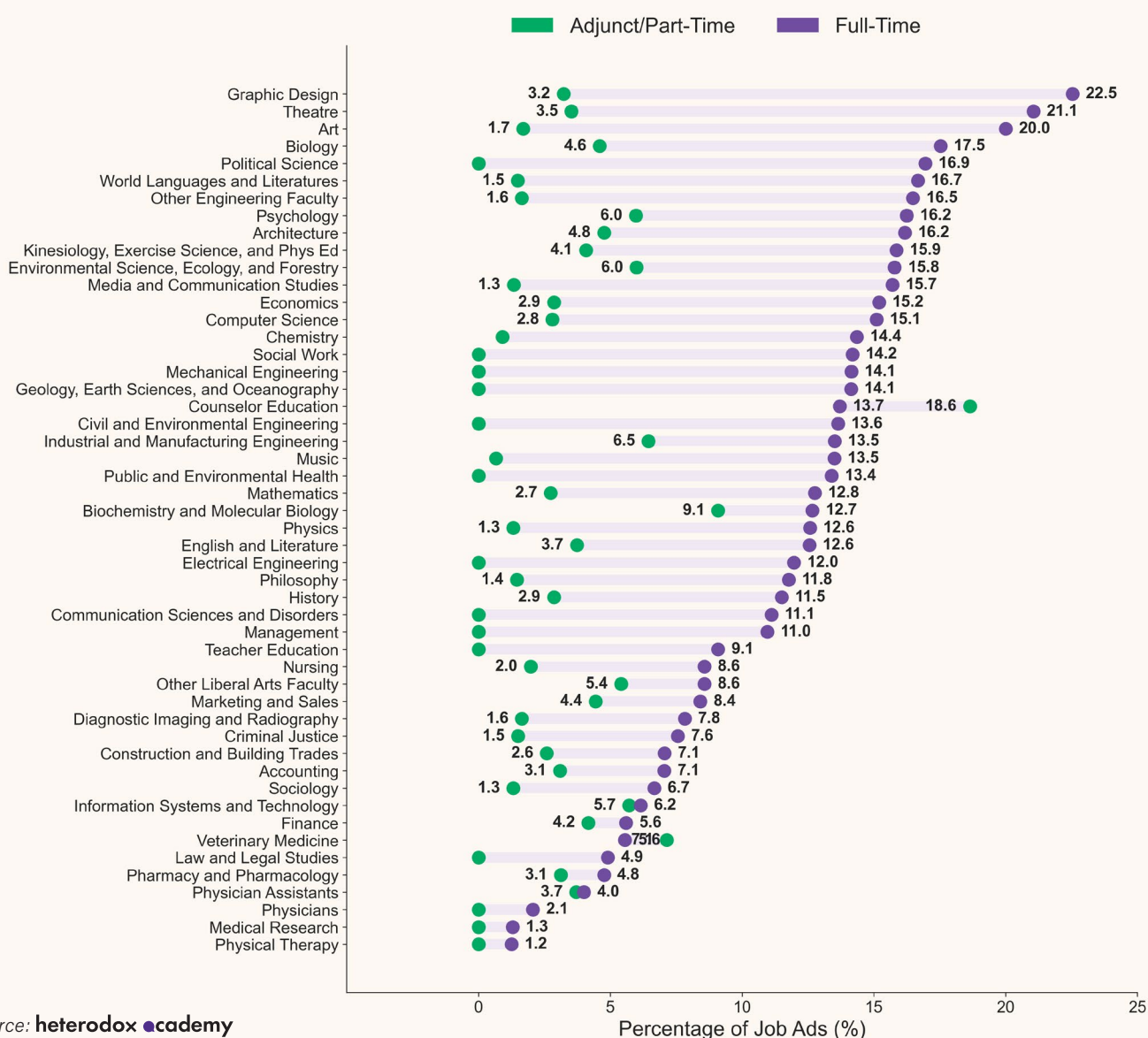
Figure 7: Percentage of full-time faculty job ads requesting DEI materials in 2024 vs. 2025, by discipline category.

Variation by Job Type

There is a marked difference in DEI material requests between full-time and adjunct/part-time positions (see *Figure 8*). Adjunct and part-time positions exhibited substantially fewer DEI requests than full-time roles, with almost no job ads in this category explicitly requiring applicants to address DEI, which may reflect less formal hiring processes for

contingent faculty and the lower institutional stakes attached to these appointments. Yet, if institutions are serious about advancing DEI for the benefit of students, it is striking that the faculty who interact most with students in the classroom are the least likely to be required to engage in DEI.

DEI Requests in Applications for Faculty Jobs by Job Discipline and Job Type



Source: heterodox academy

Figure 8: Distribution of DEI requirements by job type (full-time vs. adjunct/part-time).

Viewpoint Diversity in DEI Requests

Among job advertisements that request applicants to address DEI, we examined how many also mention “viewpoint diversity,” “intellectual diversity,” “diversity of thought,” or similar concepts. In 2024, 18.1% of ads requesting DEI materials also mentioned viewpoint diversity; in 2025, this figure declined slightly to 12.7% (see *Figure 9*). We note that last year’s analysis reported 15.6% of job ads requesting DEI statements to include viewpoint diversity terminology. The slight difference (15.6% vs 18.1%) is due to changes to our methodology (like the new, more granular partitioning of DEI requirements and the usage of a more modern model for automated annotations).

It appears that the vast majority of DEI-related requests in faculty hiring continue to focus on

demographic diversity rather than other dimensions of diversity, such as intellectual or ideological diversity. Even as the overall prevalence of DEI material requests has declined, there has been no corresponding increase in emphasis on viewpoint diversity among the ads that continue to request DEI materials. Concerns about intellectual diversity remain peripheral to how most institutions conceptualize diversity in faculty hiring (see Shariff, 2025, for a discussion of rationales for faculty diversity). This is notable given that institutions have faced criticism precisely for emphasizing demographic diversity while neglecting or even suppressing viewpoint heterogeneity.

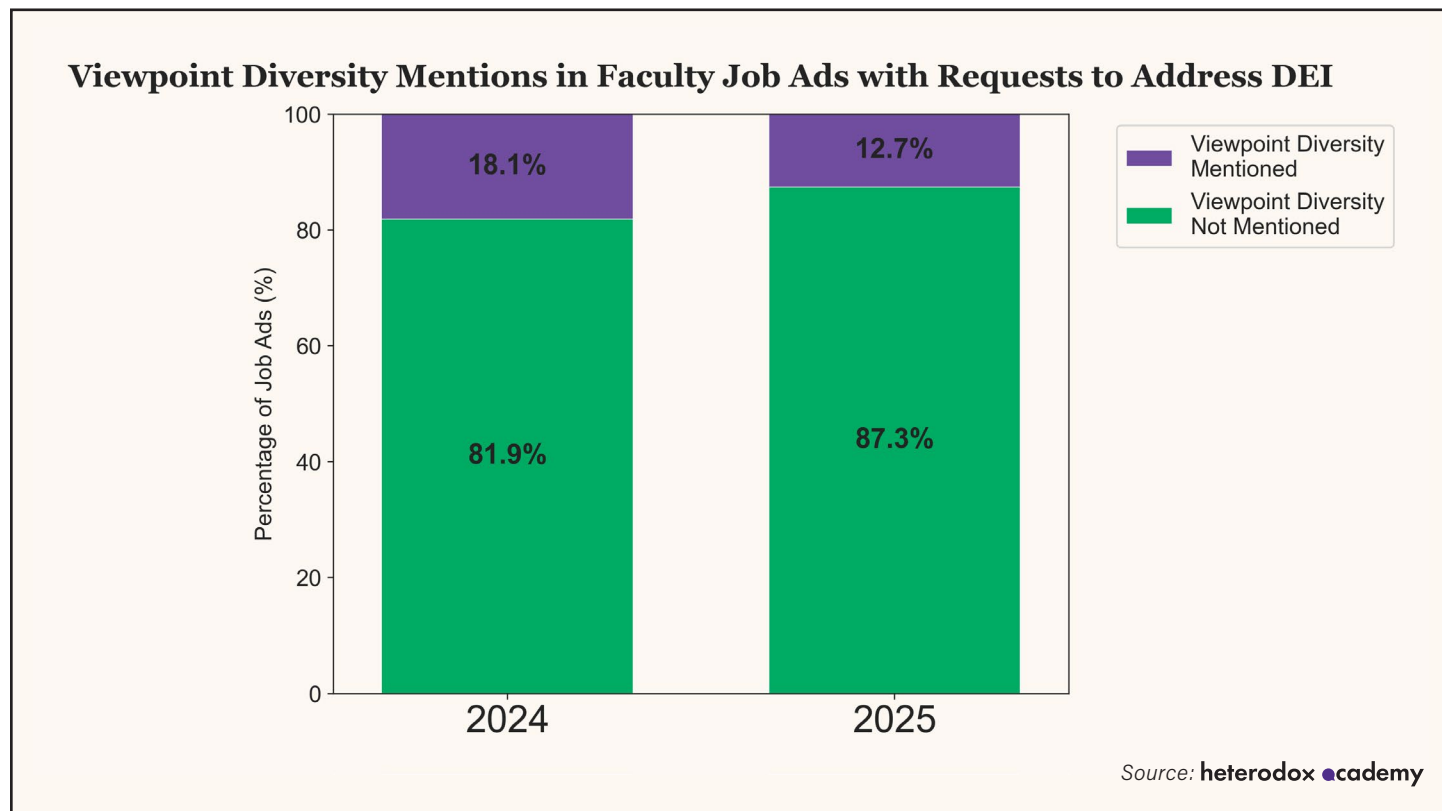


Figure 9: Percentage of full-time faculty job advertisements requiring addressing DEI that mentioned viewpoint diversity, time faculty job ads requesting DEI materials in 2024 vs. 2025, by discipline category.

Implications of a Changing Landscape



The 2025 faculty hiring cycle has seen a substantial transformation in how institutions address DEI in their job advertisements compared to the 2024 faculty hiring cycle. The share of positions explicitly requesting applicants to address DEI has more than halved in a year's time, with requests for DEI-related materials falling from 25.4% to just 11% of full-time faculty job ads. Our analysis shows that:

- DEI requests have declined dramatically but have not disappeared.
- The decline in DEI requests spans all institution types except community colleges.
- Full-time positions are far more likely to have DEI requests than adjunct or part-time positions.
- Both explicit anti-DEI legislation and normative national trends likely explain the substantial decline in DEI requests.
- Viewpoint diversity remains an underemphasized component in faculty hiring.

These findings have implications for multiple stakeholders. For faculty job applicants, the geographic location of the institution they are applying to substantially shapes whether addressing diversity-related criteria is expected, valued, or required. For policymakers, the data suggests, but does not conclusively establish, that legislative and executive actions may have measurable effects on faculty hiring practices. Whether such effects advance or undermine academic freedom and merit-based hiring depends on one's normative framework. For university administrators, the findings underscore persistent tensions among institutional autonomy, political constraints, and shifting norms surrounding diversity in higher education.

The rapid pace of change observed between 2024 and 2025 suggests that the landscape will continue to evolve. Continued research is needed to track whether these trends persist, reverse, or stabilize as the legal challenges to executive action are resolved and institutions adapt to the new political environment.

Methods

Data Collection

Faculty job advertisements were collected from HigherEdJobs.com during the Fall 2025 hiring cycle (N=16,546, 10,756 of which were full-time). We collected job advertisements listed between August 12 and December 6, 2025. The usage of text-as-data approach to analyze the prevalence of values in faculty job advertisements has been shown before to be a fruitful research method ([Kelly et al., 2025](#)). We captured basic metadata such as school name, state, job title, job description, and job advertisement URL. The data collection process involved two steps: first, job URLs were extracted from the site; second, detailed job descriptions were scraped from each URL. The resulting dataset includes job advertisements from universities and colleges across the U.S.

Classification Methodology

We classified each job advertisement from the 2024 and 2025 hiring cycles into one of four categories using a Large Language Model (LLM) as a judge (GPT-5.2):

- 1. Stand-alone DEI statement requested:** The job ad explicitly requests a dedicated diversity statement, inclusion statement, equity statement, or similar standalone document.
- 2. DEI must be addressed elsewhere in application material:**
The job ad requests applicants to address DEI-related themes in cover letters, teaching statements, research statements, or other application materials.
- 3. DEI valued but not requested:**
The job ad signals that DEI-related qualifications or experience will be valued but does not explicitly request applicants to address DEI in their application materials.
- 4. No DEI expectations:**
The job ad contains no request for DEI material nor indication that DEI will be considered in the hiring process.

LLM-Based Annotation and Validation with Human Judgment

We used GPT-5.2, a large language model, to classify each advertisement according to our four-category scheme. This approach enables efficient analysis

of large datasets while maintaining consistency in classification criteria.

We validated the LLM annotations against 2 human annotators on a random sample of 100 job advertisements (equally balanced across the four classification categories). Inter-rater reliability analysis indicated substantial agreement between annotators, with Cohen's κ between the LLM and the 2 human annotators of .77 and .80. Cohen's κ between the 2 human annotators was .74, suggesting that the LLM's agreement with each human rater was comparable to human-human agreement. Consistent with this, Krippendorff's α was .84 for the two human annotators and increased to .88 when the LLM was included, indicating that the LLM did not reduce overall annotation reliability.

To further assess alignment with human judgments, evaluation was restricted to the subset of overlapping items on which both humans agreed. On this human-agreement subset, treated as a ground truth proxy reference, the LLM achieved 92.7% accuracy and a macro-F1 score of 0.9, with balanced performance across label categories and only a small number of disagreements.

Taken together, these results indicate that the LLM operates at a level of agreement comparable to human annotators and reliably reproduces human consensus on non-ambiguous instances, supporting its use as an automated annotator under the same annotation protocol.

Comparison with 2024 Methodology

The four-category classification method used in this analysis differs from the binary classification (DEI requested / not requested) used in last year's report. When we applied the new four-category method to re-analyze the 2024 data, we found that 25.4% of job ads requested addressing DEI (combining categories of requiring either a stand-alone DEI statement or requiring addressing DEI elsewhere in the application materials), compared to 22.3% identified using last year's methodology. This modest difference reflects improvements in the clarity of instructions of the new classification scheme and the different models used (GPT-4o-mini in 2024 and the more modern and capable GPT-5.2 in 2025).

Viewpoint Diversity Analysis

We also annotated whether each job ad requesting DEI mentioned viewpoint diversity or related concepts (intellectual diversity, diversity of thought, diversity of ideas, diverse perspectives, diverse opinions, diverse beliefs, etc.).

In this year's analysis, we used an LLM (GPT-5.2) rather than regular

expressions (as in 2024) to identify viewpoint diversity mentions. This methodological change likely accounts for the small difference between our current estimate (approximately 18.1% for 2024) and last year's estimate of 15.6%, although both analyses confirm that viewpoint diversity was and remains a peripheral consideration among ads that requested DEI materials.

Limitations

LLM-based classification, while efficient, has inherent limitations, including sensitivity to prompt wording and potential variability across runs and models. LLM-based classification may also not always capture the nuanced judgment requested given the wide variation in how job advertisements request diversity-related information. Additionally, our data analysis pipeline is based on what is stated in job advertisements rather than how applications are actually evaluated; institutions may consider DEI factors even when not mentioned, and conversely, stated requests may not always be enforced. Additionally, the 2025 hiring cycle occurred during an unusually turbulent period, and observed patterns may not persist as the legal and political landscape continues to evolve. Finally, although HigherEdJobs hosts the largest single repository of job listings for faculty positions in the United States, certain departments may be more likely to advertise using alternative methods (for instance, those who do not wish to pay the listing fee or those who prefer to circulate postings via their own professional networks).

Acknowledgments

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