

Fundamental errors of data collection & validation undermine claims of ‘Ideological  
Intensification’ made by the National Association of Scholars

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The code and data used in this analysis are available for download and improvement at  
[https://github.com/embruna/quantdei\\_nas](https://github.com/embruna/quantdei_nas).

## Introduction

Efforts to advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (hereafter, DEI) at universities in the United States have emerged as another contentious issue in an increasingly polarized political climate (1, 2). While individuals and organizations critical of DEI often claim that these programs have become increasingly pervasive and ideological (3), this assertion is rarely supported with empirical evidence.

The National Association of Scholars (i.e., NAS) recently published a report by Mason Goad and Bruce R. Chartwell (3) which the authors claim is “the largest quantitative study of the growth of DEI-related language in the sciences” published to date. Goad and Chartwell searched university web pages and Twitter accounts, funding agency databases, and repositories for scientific literature to quantify changes over time in the use of “DEI-related terminology” (e.g., “advocacy”, “ally”, “diversity”, “equity”, “justice”, “privilege”, “race”). They claim to show a dramatic increase in the use of these terms in university communications and the scientific literature since 2010, which they view as unambiguous empirical evidence of “ideological intensification” in the academic and scientific arenas (3). Goad and Chartwell conclude that if the trends they document continue, “the future of STEM, along with the rest of the academy, is almost certainly imperiled” ((3), p. 47), so they encourage others to use their data-mining tools and database in their own research. Since the report’s release in December 2022, it has been widely hailed and distributed by prominent DEI critics such as Jordan Peterson, Colin Wright, and Christopher Rufo (4–6).

Goad and Chartwell made the laudable decision to post the code used to harvest and process the records used in their report (7), along with the “clean” data used to graph the trends on which they base their conclusions (8), “so that other analysts can scrutinize the methods and replicate them” ((3), p. 48). Having done so (9), I conclude that they failed to conduct even the most rudimentary data validation procedures and that the “clean” data sets on which they conducted their analyses contain thousands of irrelevant records and

40 duplications that vastly inflate their sample sizes. Notable examples include over 11000  
41 tweets about sporting events (“race”), members of the Supreme Court (“justice”), banking  
42 (“equity”), and other non-DEI topics, almost 3000 NSF grants to support ecological or  
43 evolutionary research (“diversity”), and hundreds of “DEI articles in STEM journals” that  
44 were actually published in outlets such as *The Annual Review of Law and Social Science*,  
45 *Critical Sociology*, and *The Medical Law Review* (*Appendix 1*).

46 Goad and Chartwell’s conclusions were based entirely on visualizations of these data.  
47 The NAS should therefore retract their report immediately; failure to do undermines both  
48 the integrity and intellectual rigor that they and the report’s authors claim to espouse as  
49 fundamental principles.

## References

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