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NASA

# Workers at NASA Told to 'Drop Everything' to Scrub Mentions of Indigenous People, Women from Its Websites

SAMANTHA COLE

• FEB 4, 2025 AT 9:50 AM

"This is a drop everything and reprioritize your day request," a directive "per NASA HQ direction" stated.



PHOTO BY [BENJAMIN RECINOS](#) / [UNSPASH](#)

NASA personnel were told to “drop everything” to scrub public sites of mentions of DEI, indigenous people, environmental justice, and women in leadership, according to a directive obtained by 404 Media.

The directive, sent on January 22 and obtained by 404 Media, states:

*“Per NASA HQ direction, we are required to scrub mentions of the following terms from our public sites by 5pm ET today. This is a drop everything and reprioritize your day request. Note that the list below is the list that exists this morning, but it may grow as the day goes on.*

- *DEIA*
- *Diversity (in context of DEIA)*
- *Equity (“ ”)*
- *Inclusion (“ ”)*
- *Accessibility (“ ”)*
- *MSI*
- *Minority Serving Institution*
- *Indigenous People*
- *EEJ*
- *EJ*
- *Environmental Justice*

- *Underrepresented groups/people*
- *Anything specifically targeting women (women in leadership, etc.)"*

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Do you have anything to share related to this story, NASA or SpaceX? We would love to hear from you. Using a non-work device, you can message me securely on Signal at sam.404. Otherwise, send me an email at sam@404media.co.

By now, Trump's war on "DEI" is well documented. But the directive shows the specific words that some agencies were asked to delete, providing a clearer picture of how agencies have been asked to scrub information. A NASA employee told 404 Media "we were absolutely required to scrub all DEI related or DEI adjacent topics and terms from all external websites by 5pm the 22nd, which was a drop everything and get it done task." 404 Media granted the employee anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Many of these changes are visible on publicly-available NASA Github repositories, where NASA pages have been edited to change, for example "inclusive" to "fair."

"Inclusion" has also been deleted from promotional materials about competitions.

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CODE_OF_CONDUCT.md
@@ -4,17 +4,14 @@
4 4
5 5 In the interest of fostering an open and welcoming environment, we as
6 6 contributors and maintainers pledge to making participation in our project and
7 7 - our community a harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of age, body
8 8 - size, disability, ethnicity, sex characteristics, gender identity and expression,
9 9 - level of experience, education, socio-economic status, nationality, personal
10 10 - appearance, race, religion, or sexual identity and orientation.
11 11 + our community a harassment-free experience for everyone.
12 12
13 13 ## Our Standards
14 14
15 15 Examples of behavior that contributes to creating a positive environment
16 16 include:
17 17 - * Using welcoming and inclusive language
18 18 + * Using welcoming and fair language
19 19 * Being respectful of differing viewpoints and experiences
20 20 * Gracefully accepting constructive criticism
21 21 * Focusing on what is best for the community
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These changes are a result of President Donald Trump's executive order "Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing." Civil servants across the federal government have had to divert their attention from normal operations to attempt to comply with Trump's gender- and diversity-obsessed orders the last few weeks, including Social Security Administration sites removing information about sex designations, the Department of Labor sites about discrimination at work, CDC websites, and informational videos about the use of pronouns. The NASA Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity website was taken offline, too.

Github repositories have been a public view of many of these removals.

In an email to staff after Trump's DEI order, NASA acting administrator Janet Petro—

the first woman to hold the position since its founding 67 years ago—wrote that diversity programs “divided Americans by race, wasted taxpayer dollars, and resulted in shameful discrimination,” and accused “some in government” of attempting to somehow sneak in diversity and inclusion efforts.

As Inc. pointed out, NASA is not an exceptionally “diverse” workplace: A 2024 report from the NASA Office of Inspector General said that despite diversity efforts, NASA “made little progress in increasing the representation of women and minorities in its civilian workforce or leadership ranks. Specifically, over the past decade NASA’s overall workforce demographics have stayed roughly the same.” At the same time, astronaut selection, which involves sorting through thousands of highly qualified candidates, has in the recent past (and during Trump’s first term) attempted to represent what Americans actually look like and the backgrounds they come from, including women and people of color.

When Petro took on the role to lead NASA, she wrote on LinkedIn that she would remain “steadfast in our commitment to NASA’s mission and core values.” In 2021, when she was the director of Kennedy Space Center, she spoke at length in an interview about the value of diversity, saying “our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility has been paramount to mission success.” In that interview, she went on to reflect on how “committed” she was to making paths for women and minorities in her field: “Since the beginning of my professional journey, I have been in the minority of the organization I belonged to—whether it was flying helicopters in the Army or working as a mechanical engineer or program manager in a commercial aerospace company,” she said. “I often found myself either the only female, or only one of a couple. There weren’t many minorities either. [...] I am, therefore, profoundly committed to promoting opportunities for growth for all. A big part of this is ensuring an environment where everyone feels included, has a voice and feels safe to express their opinions.”

*Jason Koebler contributed reporting to this piece.*

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sam Cole is writing from the far reaches of the internet, about sexuality, the adult industry, online culture, and AI. She’s the author of *How Sex Changed the Internet* and *the Internet Changed Sex*.

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