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1. [Akron](#)

Ohio college cancels race forum due to Trump’s DEI order; other Black History Month events still on

• Published: Feb. 04, 2025, 11:56 a.m



The University of Akron will host several Black History Month events in the coming weeks, though it will not hold its annual Rethinking Race Forum.Laura Hancock/cleveland.com

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By

- [Megan Becka, special to cleveland.com](#)

AKRON, Ohio – The University of Akron will not hold its annual Rethinking Race Forum, which has sought to engage the community with topics related to social justice, diversity, equity and inclusion.

The forum started in 1997 and has been held each year during Black History Month in February.

The decision not to hold the forum this year is in response to President Donald Trump’s executive order banning diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. A memo [obtained by ABC News](#) indicates the decision will impact observances such as Juneteenth, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Black History Month, Holocaust Days of Remembrance and Pride Month.

“While the University of Akron offers a variety of events for students and the community, we must do so in the context of a state institution that is required to abide by law, regulations and guidance at both the federal and state levels, from which we receive funding. As a result of that guidance, the University has decided not to budget for Rethinking Race this year,” the university’s Senior Director of External Communications Cristine Boyd told cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer in an email.

Though the forum won’t be held, other Black History Month events on the University of Akron campus will still proceed, according to Boyd.

They include:

Black History Month presentation

Philathia R. Bolton. Bolton, an associate professor of English, will share life experiences she has had as a Black woman while living in the United Arab Emirates, Fort-de-France, Martinique and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The presentation, “A Diasporadic Woman,” is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 5 from noon-1 p.m., in the Gardner Theatre of the Jean Hower Taber Student Union, located at 303 Carroll St. The event is free and open to the public. The event is sponsored by The Student African American Brotherhood, Collegiate 100, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. in conjunction with the Office of Community Engagement, Opportunity and Belonging.

Celebrating Black History Month concert

The School of Music is hosting the concert, which will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 19, at 7:30 p.m. at the Guzzetta Recital Hall, located at 157 University Avenue.

4th Annual Black-Owned Business Expo

The business expo features local, Black-owned businesses offering merchandise for sale. It is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 25 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. on the second floor of the Jean Hower Taber Student Union. The expo is free and open to the public.

Gospel Meets Symphony 2025

The annual concert is presented by the Akron Symphony Orchestra and features the Gospel Meets Symphony Choir. The concert is set for Saturday, Feb. 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall, located at 198 Hill St. Tickets can be purchased [online](#) and range from \$7 for students to \$60. The concert is not affiliated with the university, according to Boyd.

University of Akron Black History Month concert

On Wednesday, Feb. 19, the University of Akron’s School of Music will host a free concert for students, faculty and the public from 7:30-9 p.m. at Guzzetta Recital Hall. The concert will include works by Black composers from the late 19th century to the 21st century.

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