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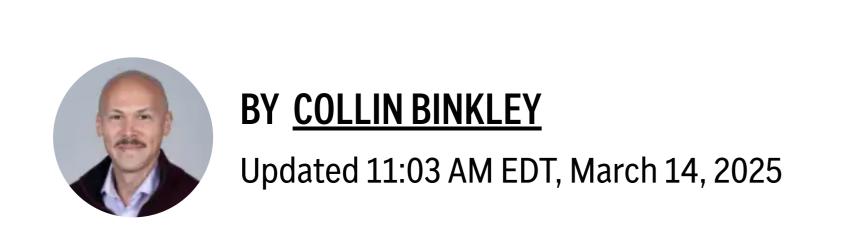
**EDUCATION** 

## More than 50 universities face federal investigations as part of Trump's anti-DEI campaign

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1 of 4 | The headquarters of the U.S. Department of Education, March 12, 2025, in Washington. (AP Photo/Mark S



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WASHINGTON (AP) — More than 50 universities are being investigated for alleged racial discrimination as part of President Donald Trump's campaign to end diversity, equity and inclusion programs that his officials say exclude white and Asian American students.

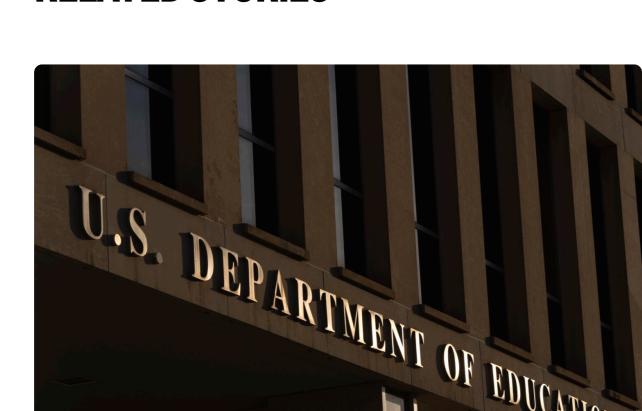
The Education Department announced the new investigations Friday, one month after issuing a memo warning America's schools and colleges that they could lose federal money over "race-based preferences" in admissions, scholarships or any aspect of student life.

"Students must be assessed according to merit and accomplishment, not prejudged by the color of their skin," Education Secretary Linda McMahon said in a statement. "We will not yield on this commitment."

Most of the new inquiries are focused on colleges' partnerships with the PhD Project, a nonprofit that helps students from underrepresented groups get degrees in business with the goal of diversifying the business world.

Department officials said that the group limits eligibility based on race and that colleges that partner with it are "engaging in race-exclusionary practices in their graduate programs."

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The group of 45 colleges facing scrutiny over ties to the PhD Project include major public universities such as Arizona State, Ohio State and Rutgers, along with prestigious private schools like Yale, Cornell, Duke and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

A message sent to the PhD Project was not immediately returned.

Six other colleges are being investigated for awarding "impermissible race-based scholarships," the department said, and another is accused of running a program that segregates students on the basis of race.

Those seven are: Grand Valley State University, Ithaca College, the New England College of Optometry, the University of Alabama, the University of Minnesota, the University of South Florida and the University of Tulsa School of Medicine.

The department did not say which of the seven was being investigated for allegations of segregation.

The Feb. 14 memo from Trump's Republican administration was a sweeping expansion of a 2023 Supreme Court decision that barred colleges from using race as a factor in admissions.

That decision focused on admissions policies at Harvard and the University of North Carolina, but the Education Department said it will interpret the decision to forbid race-based policies in any aspect of education, both in K-12 schools and higher education.

In the memo, Craig Trainor, acting assistant secretary for civil rights, had said schools' and colleges' diversity, equity and inclusion efforts have been "smuggling racial stereotypes and explicit race-consciousness into everyday training, programming and discipline."

The memo is being challenged in federal lawsuits from the nation's two largest teachers' unions. The suits say the memo is too vague and violates the free speech rights of educators.

The Associated Press' education coverage receives financial support from multiple private foundations. The AP is solely responsible for all content. Find the AP's standards for working with philanthropies, a list of supporters and funded coverage areas at AP.org.



## **COLLIN BINKLEY** Binkley covers the U.S. Education Department and federal education policy for The

Associated Press, along with a wide range of issues from K-12 through higher education.



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