

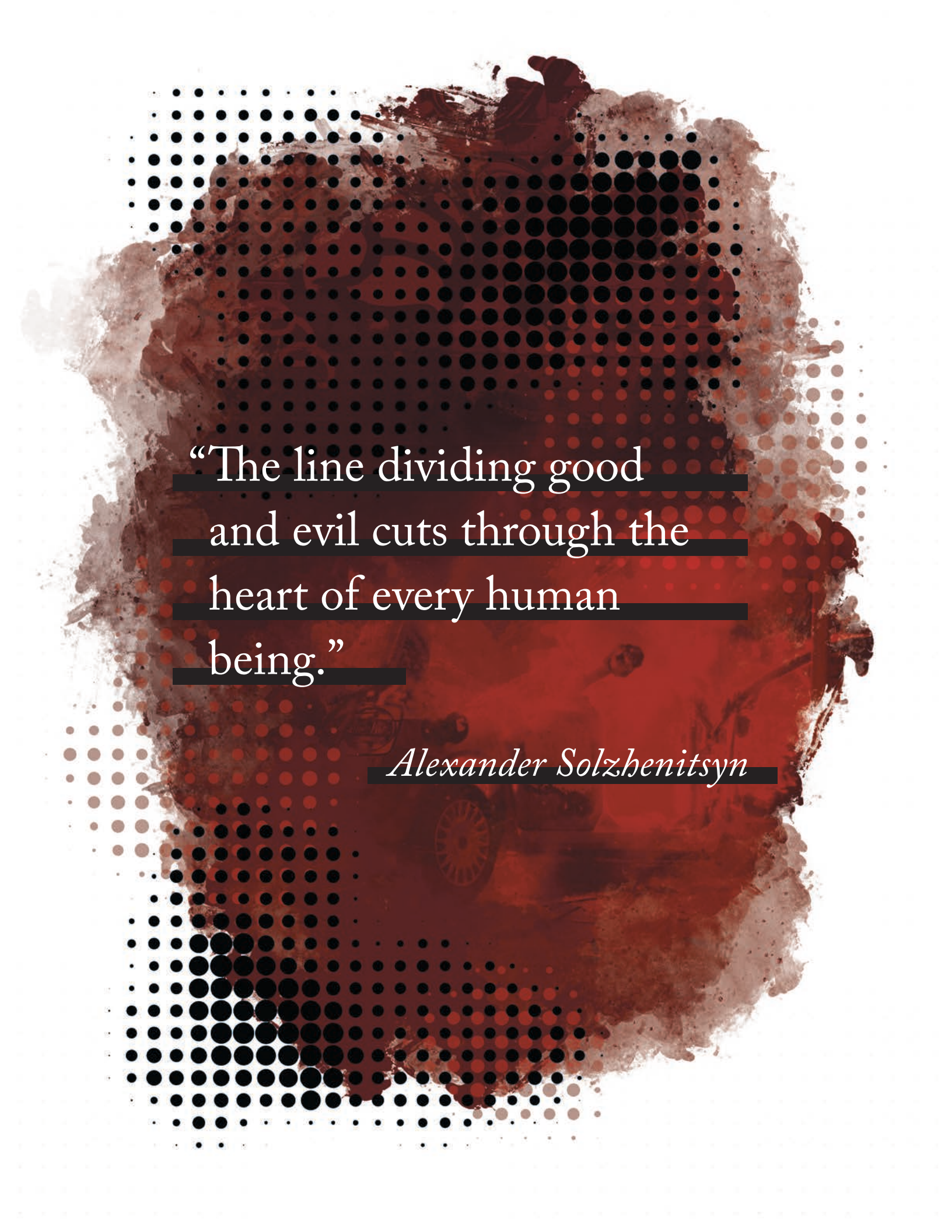
*BOISE STATE*

# **Social justice ideology in Idaho higher education**

*By Dr. Scott Yenar & Anna K. Miller*

*December 2020*



The background is a dark, textured composition. It features a prominent halftone dot pattern that transitions from black to white. Overlaid on this is a faint, reddish-brown image of a car, possibly a vintage model, which is partially obscured by the dots and the overall dark tone. The overall aesthetic is gritty and somber.

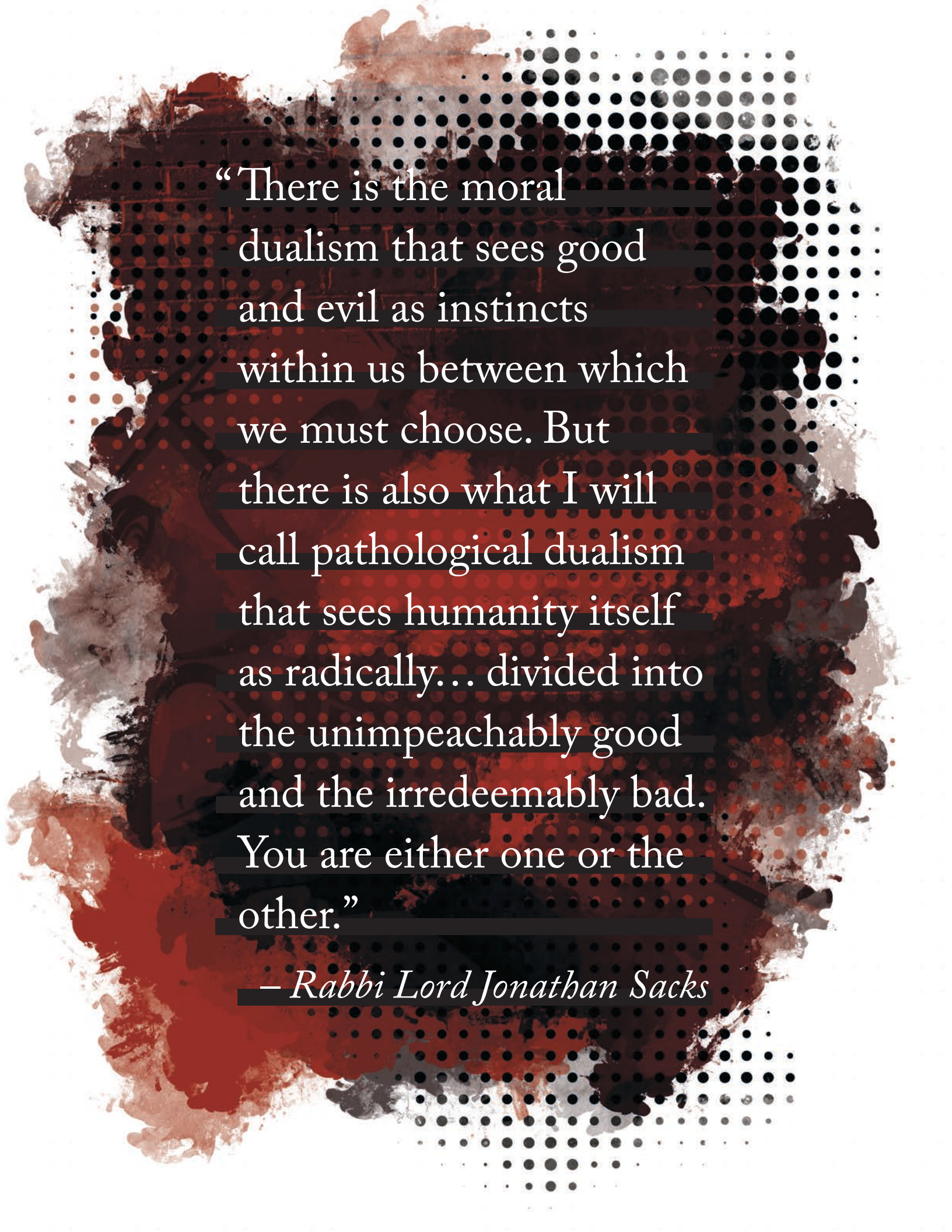
“The line dividing good  
and evil cuts through the  
heart of every human  
being.”

*Alexander Solzhenitsyn*

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The image features a circular graphic with a halftone dot pattern. The dots are arranged in a grid that is denser in the center and fades towards the edges. The background within the circle is a dark, textured wash of colors, primarily deep reds, blacks, and greys, with some lighter, almost white, areas. The overall effect is a high-contrast, artistic composition.

“There is the moral dualism that sees good and evil as instincts within us between which we must choose. But there is also what I will call pathological dualism that sees humanity itself as radically... divided into the unimpeachably good and the irredeemably bad. You are either one or the other.”

— *Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks*









# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **Social justice education poses a threat to education in America and to the American way of life.**

Social justice education divides the world into aggrieved minorities and oppressive majorities. Wherever it is practiced, it compromises the achievement of truth, the free exchange of ideas, and the aspiration for assimilating people into the great American melting pot. It cultivates anger and resentment among the supposedly aggrieved, while undermining the stability and mutual toleration that contributes to individual happiness and good citizenship.

Universities are slowly building up an apparatus where social justice ideology is displacing education toward professions and general education. Some universities like Ohio State University have over 100 administrators dedicated to social justice. But all universities including Boise State University (BSU) have adopted an ideology that demands a built out apparatus.

Social Justice education at BSU is no longer in its infancy. It is heading toward maturity, spreading into hiring, policies, curriculum, and student life. BSU is adding to its social justice mission every year. We show this in several ways:

-  Administrators at BSU have repeatedly stated their commitment to developing a mature apparatus pushing social justice activism.
-  BSU has hired several administrators to push such initiatives since beginning its intentions to transform the university in Summer 2017.
-  Administrators have adopted policies in hiring and student experience to further the social justice cause and have announced a new emphasis on “inclusion and equity” throughout its colleges.
-  Social justice education has a significant presence in the General Education requirements at BSU.
-  Social justice ideology plays a significant part in at least 14 departments at BSU.
-  The Residence Hall experience is infused with social justice ideology, as is the Writing Center.

BSU is on the same path as universities like Ohio State University and it will continue on the path unless the political institutions of Idaho force change. We suggest budgetary and administrative ways of putting our universities back on the right track.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORM

**De-emphasizing and eliminating social justice initiatives at Idaho's universities is necessary for meaningful reform, as well as disrupting their ability to provide stable careers for social justice advocates. We recommend the Idaho Legislature implement nine reforms:**

**CREATE MORE TRANSPARENCY** The Legislature should approve each university's budget separately. Separate budgets allow the Legislature to reward universities that stick to their core mission with more funding, while penalizing universities that continue to emphasize social justice education.

**RESTRICT FUNDING TO PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES INFUSED WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE IDEOLOGY.** Restore funding to universities that pursue their core mission of advancing truth and supporting the common good; have reduced administrative bloat; and have proven these changes to the Legislature.

**ADOPT ADDITIONAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.** According to the Idaho State Board of Education's policies and rules, the core mission for institutions of higher education includes protecting academic freedom in research, teaching and learning for the purpose of the "advancement of truth" and serving the "common good."<sup>1</sup>

We recommend the following model language be added to education appropriation bills every year:

**REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.** It is the intent of the Legislature that each institution continue with budget reduction considerations and cost containment efforts and, where possible, priority should be placed on reducing administrative overhead and the elimination of expenditures that support social justice ideology and are not integral to each institution's core instructional mission as determined by the State Board policies and rules. The State Board of Education shall provide a written report each year detailing compliance to the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee and the House and Senate Education committees detailing these budget reductions and cost containment efforts no later than January 15, 2022.



**ADOPT A RESOLUTION THAT SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION DOES NOT SERVE THE COMMON GOOD** so that State Board policies can differentiate universities following their mission from universities which do not.

**ASSERT CONTROL OVER UNIVERSITY TUITION AND FEES.** Freeze tuition until universities returns to their core educational mission.

**CREATE A STUDENT CHOICE INITIATIVE ALLOWING STUDENTS TO OPT OUT OF STUDENT SERVICE FEES.** The law would allow all students to choose which student fees they want to pay and how that money would be allocated.

**DIRECT THE UNIVERSITY TO ELIMINATE COURSES** that are infused with social justice ideology.

**PROTECT FREE SPEECH ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES.** According to the Idaho State Board of Education, “Membership in the academic community imposes on administrators, faculty members, other institutional employees, and students an obligation to respect the dignity of others, to acknowledge the right of others to express differing opinions, and to foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and instruction, and free expression on and off the campus of an institution.”<sup>2</sup>

We recommend passing the following model legislation from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education:

**Campus Free Expression Act:** This policy designates outdoor areas of public post-secondary educational institutions as traditional public forums open to free speech.<sup>3</sup>

**College Student Free Speech and Association Act:** This policy requires post-secondary educational institutions to disclose how their policies protect free speech on campus.<sup>4</sup>

**College Free Press Act:** This policy protects the independence of campus media at public post-secondary educational institutions.<sup>5</sup>

**Student and Administration Equality Act:** This policy establishes procedural protections applicable to student conduct disciplinary proceedings at institutions of higher education.<sup>6</sup>

**ELIMINATE SOCIAL JUSTICE INDOCTRINATION DEPARTMENTS,** as defined on page 20 of this report.

# SOCIAL JUSTICE IDEOLOGY IN IDAHO HIGHER EDUCATION

**America's colleges and universities have become increasingly liberal and radical over the past 50 years.**<sup>7</sup> Academics and administrators are no longer merely pushing progressive politics. They aim to transform higher education into institutions dedicated to political activism and ideological indoctrination. This new ideological bent is known as social justice education.<sup>8</sup>

Social justice education reflects a diagnosis and a remedy.<sup>9</sup> It offers a diagnosis of American society as made up of various structures of oppression built by the privileged to keep disadvantaged groups weak, unequal, and scattered. Under this ideology, America, for example, is seen as having a patriarchal, racist, Christian, European, homophobic, cisgendered, and ableist culture. But universities promise a remedy. They teach students to identify, shame, and destroy oppressors by retraining their minds. They teach “oppressors” to identify with the plight of victims and encourage remedial activism on their behalf, while feeling shame for what makes them superior such as their “whiteness” or “toxic masculinity.” The result, its proponents seem to think, will be a new, healthy respect for diversity and inclusion. Freed of oppressive structures, all people will be recognized in their basic human dignity regardless of their race, ethnicity, language group, social class, gender identity or expression, sex, sexual orientation, disability status, etc. Or so the official promise reads.

Totalitarian temptations are rooted in social justice education. **Its advocates demand conformity—**

**victims are only members of oppressed classes. The use of such words as “diversity,” “inclusion,” or “equity” require people to believe that America is on the treadmill of oppression and victimhood.** Social justice activists have committed countless acts of violence on and off campus during the past few years—and staged others.<sup>10</sup> Their claims of “white privilege” have gone somewhat mainstream in the Black Lives Matter movement. **Cities like Portland, Seattle, and Minneapolis have burned, and campus life has been disrupted all over the country.**

Social justice education undermines freedom under the law and social harmony.<sup>11</sup> It denies the reality that inequality and privilege are complex social phenomenon that come about in many different ways, not just from oppression. It is false and pernicious.

What is more, there is no way to get from social justice ideology to a peaceful, unified, and happy nation.

This report is based on the idea that social justice undermines the common good. It asks: **How far has social justice ideology advanced at Boise State University?**


Addressing this question requires that we understand BSU's social justice plans and how far it has advanced toward execution of those plans.

Section I discusses the ambitions of administrators,



as expressed in reports, policy changes, and mission statements. Higher-level administrators like university presidents, provosts, and deans explain where the university is headed. Policies surrounding free speech or bias incidents reveal how far things that contradict the social justice ideology are tolerated on campus. Offices and requirements dedicated specifically to social justice education are telltale signs of its advances.

Section II discusses the execution of these plans. Department mission statements, program learning outcomes, and required courses tell us how far individual departments provide social justice. General education requirements shape the education experience of students as well. Residence hall directors provide direction to student life outside of the classroom.



“He who knows only his  
own side of the case knows  
little of that.”

—*John Stuart Mill*



# SECTION 1





# ADMINISTRATION PROMOTES SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

Universities are complex organizations. A layer of administrators sits at the top. These administrators set the strategic mission and tone for the university. They hire personnel and adopt policies to carry out that mission.

Administrators are relatively free to make changes in offices under their direct control, such as Title IX compliance, admissions, and human resources. They can set long-term plans and direct academic deans to craft new mission statements. They can make policies surrounding hiring and free speech. They hire those in charge of student experiences, such as residence halls directors and vendors providing services.

Underneath administrators are permanent faculty. Administrators must often collaborate with the existing faculty in order to effect the changes they would like to see, especially on broad curricular changes.

Students can also leverage change or resist it. Politically radical students can “force” changes on administrators, as happened in the late 1960s, when administrators caved to demands from students and some faculty.<sup>12</sup> Many worry about “tenured radicals” transforming university education.<sup>13</sup> But the picture is more complex.

Faculty members can slow some administrative initiatives surrounding diversity and inclusion if they are committed to professional norms like scientific objectivity (i.e., physics) or the provision of service (i.e., nursing). Faculty can also abet those changes if their professional norms, as they see them, demand the furtherance of social justice ideology (i.e., social work).

An honest evaluation of an administration’s commitment to social justice education requires an investigation of the areas where administrators have some freedom in carrying out their vision.

For BSU, we investigate administrative plans to prioritize social justice education; the mission statements of colleges and schools; and policies relating to hiring, the creation of offices, and free speech, and to empower student activists.

**Conclusion: BSU administration is committed to building a social justice institution. Social justice culture has grown beyond its infancy and is headed toward adolescence.**

## HOW IT HAPPENED:

### JULY 2017

President Bob Kustra's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion issued a report recommending "that Boise State begin the process of building a comprehensive institution-wide strategic plan for diversity and inclusion."<sup>14</sup>

Kustra's commission thought the university must spearhead transformative change in Idaho. Defeating oppression and victimhood would become central to BSU's mission. "Our institution and those that lead it have reinforced cultural, structural, and personal norms of what success looks like in Idaho and rural America."

The "true success" of a new university and a new Idaho would center on "inclusive excellence—achieved through a 'self-reflective and uncompromised commitment to the practice of inclusivity, which seeks to break from implicit and limiting biases that reify exclusionary practices.'" The university would "replace dominant cultural norms" with a more "welcoming culture" by devising concrete steps to promote social justice.

### AUGUST 2017

Francisco Salinas is hired as director of Student Diversity and Inclusion with a budget funded through student fees.

### JUNE 2019

Interim President Martin Schimpf released an email to faculty and staff lauding accomplishments in promoting social justice and announcing new initiatives to begin under the new president, Marlene Tromp.

Accomplishments included: establishing scholarships for illegal immigrants; establishing implicit bias training for faculty on search committees; having job searches undergo "statistical analysis for assessing number of underrepresented candidates in the pool"; and setting aside scholarships specifically for "underrepresented minority students."

Future plans include hiring an associate Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion and mandatory preferred pronoun system with faculty training. Schimpf expressed "every confidence that Dr. Marlene Tromp has the background, experience and drive to take Boise State to new levels of diversity and inclusive excellence."



### **FALL 2019**

The job search began for Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion.

### **SPRING 2020**

The job search was suspended when the COVID-19 pandemic began, though at least one candidate had been to campus.

### **FALL 2020**

The BUILD program was established as “an independent entity in service to [the] campus” and to “address important needs that extend beyond the classroom.” The BUILD program is tasked with contributing to “an inclusive climate campus wide,” supporting “inclusive faculty hiring” and creating “inclusive departmental environments.” Two new hires—Tasha Souza, director of BUILD, and Jeremy Harper, instructional consultant for Inclusive Teaching—support this mission. The BUILD program will be under the new Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion when that job search is complete.

**Conclusion: There is no limiting principle to BSU’s ambitions to build a social justice infrastructure. It will build what it can afford and get away with. BSU has adopted the core propositions of social justice ideology and believes its mission involves destroying oppressive structures and elevating alleged victims. If this is its core mission, the logic demands even more commitment to realizing that vision.**

## DEANS & LEADERSHIP

**Once a university announces its commitment to social justice education, it must permeate into its colleges and schools.** This usually happens in a familiar pattern. First, the university adopts social justice ideology. Second, social justice ideology makes its way into statements of shared values. After those statements of shared values are accepted, mission statements must be changed to integrate social justice aspirations into college and school objectives. Once those objectives are set, schools and colleges usually hire associate deans dedicated to diversity and inclusion. This is how Ohio State University came to have 100 or more administrators committed to diversity and inclusion. BSU has adopted shared values of social justice across its colleges.

Mission statements set the overall strategic direction for academic units. They are also crucial for the accreditation process. Accreditors judge academic units on whether they are fulfilling their own mission statements. If universities' colleges or schools have social justice aspirations in their mission statements but are not fulfilling them, they will produce reports insisting that universities allocate more funds and resources to fulfill those missions. Mission statements are thus leveraged through the accreditation process. Colleges and schools across BSU have integrated social justice statements into their shared values.

**The College of Business and Economics (COBE)** Mission Statement has not changed since 2016, but its "shared values" have changed. It valued "relevance, respect, and responsibility" in 2016. In January 2018, COBE faculty and staff posted an "intentional culture document" on its website. Its new core values include "inclusive excellence" as a "strategy for both communicating and demonstrating that we value, seek, engage, promote and include a rich diversity of stakeholders."

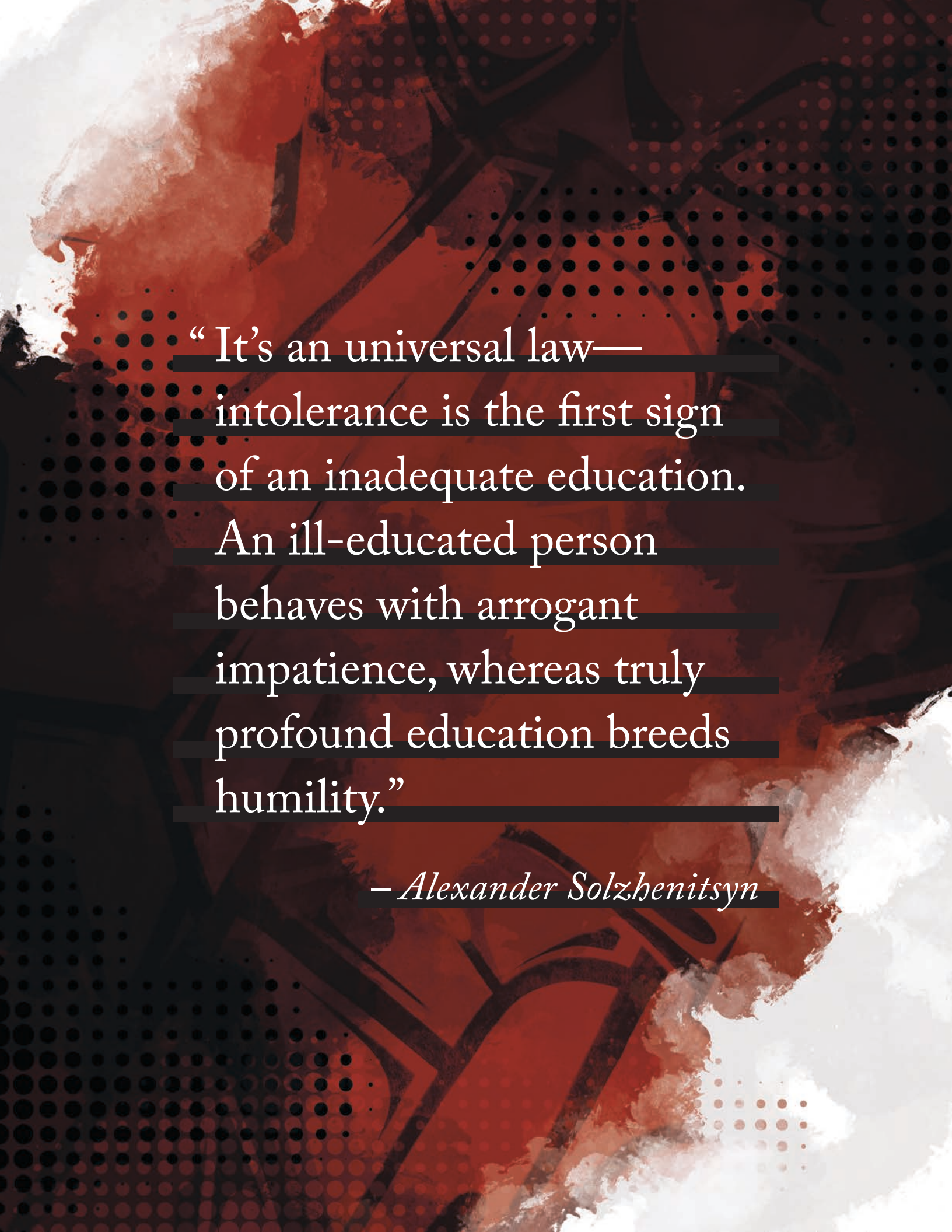
**The College of Engineering** has also adopted an emphasis in social justice education. According to its 2020 Mission Statement and Core Values.

"We excel through: Inclusion and Diversity; Innovation; Integrity." On its website, engineering claims also to embody BSU's "active commitment to diversity and inclusion."

**The Graduate College** aspires to help "the university maintain a culture of inclusiveness, collegiality and ethical behavior through its dedication to diversity, fairness and integrity."

**Conclusion: College and school mission statements understate how much social justice ideology is infused into BSU experience. Leadership is taking steps to elevate the profile of "diversity and inclusion" and "inclusive excellence" in the colleges and schools.**





“It’s an universal law—  
intolerance is the first sign  
of an inadequate education.  
An ill-educated person  
behaves with arrogant  
impatience, whereas truly  
profound education breeds  
humility.”

—*Alexander Solzhenitsyn*

# SOCIAL JUSTICE POLICIES AT BOISE STATE

Social justice policies arise especially in recruitment and hiring, as well as oversight of student conduct and student support. BSU is not sufficiently elite to practice affirmative action overmuch in student admissions or in hiring.

**CAMPUS SECURITY:** BSU announced it would not renew its contract with Boise Police Department (Boise PD), after consulting with student activists. In the meantime, it requires all Boise PD officers to take implicit bias training if they are assigned to campus.<sup>15</sup>

**HIRING:** BSU boasts that it offers its faculty “implicit bias training” as part of its recruitment efforts for new faculty. Best practices are to find candidates who satisfy the minimum qualifications and then allow diversity considerations to guide hiring. Human Resources also certifies all job pools against statistical measures to ensure that recruitment, application pools, interview pools, and final candidate pools are guided by adequate affirmative action.

**FACULTY TRAINING:** In a letter in August of 2019, Interim President Schimpf explained his plan to use a grant to grow the Center for Teaching and Learning’s BUILD Forum. BUILD provides workshops and trainings “designed to recognize and reflect upon our perceptions around implicit bias in the classroom and workplace.” According to Schimpf, “dozens of faculty and staff have gone through the program and many more are in process — as many as there is capacity to accommodate.”<sup>16</sup>

BUILD is now its own entity. Training is voluntary (for now), but this is the camel’s nose in the tent. What starts as mandatory likely becomes compulsory under the social justice education model.

**ENHANCED HARASSMENT AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES:** (Adopted March 2020). The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) judges Boise State’s policies to be in its Yellow category.<sup>17</sup> Yellow policies compromise free speech since they make the alleged victim the judge over whether a violation of university conduct has happened, or the policies tilt the scales against free speech and toward proscribing categories of speech, but do not target specific categories of speech.

For example: Policy 1060 defines Harassment as follows: “Unfair treatment, abusive words or expressions, or intimidating or threatening behavior aimed at any member of the campus community based on a protected class (e.g., religion, race, national origin) should be reported to the Office of Institutional Compliance.” BSU policy defines a “hostile environment” as “conduct is so severe, pervasive, or persistent that it creates an environment that would cause a reasonable person substantial emotional distress.”

Policy 2065 prohibits bullying and makes the allegedly bullied the judge of such bullying. “Bullying someone on the basis of sex or gender. . . may include repeated use of degrading words, gestures, or sounds to describe a person.”



**TITLE IX.** Boise State has adhered to Title IX regulations of the Obama and Trump administrations. When the Obama Administration's Dear Colleague letter went out demanding lesser procedural protections for rape accusations,<sup>18</sup> BSU adhered. When the Trump Administration rescinded that letter, BSU changed its policy as per the regulation but has taken actions to create the conditions for readopting the Obama administration's policies.


According to liberal and feminist professors,<sup>19</sup> many campuses seek to create the impression of a "rape crisis" on campus by educating students into identifying ever more acts as rape; encouraging students to report such acts and telling victims that they will be believed; and issuing increasing numbers of "timely warnings" to the student body in order to leave the impression that young men are preying on young women, which in turn justifies a weakening of due process on campus.

BSU's Title IX office uses its student orientation and its timely warning process to create the impression that the university has a general rape problem. It has sent out duplicate timely warnings during the Fall 2020 Semester. On Oct. 30, 2020, University Counsel Alicia Etsey even issued a timely warning for an anonymous claim, with the effect of creating the impression that BSU has some sort of a crisis on


its campus. Contrary to these efforts, official statistics reported through the university in its Clery reporting process show that the number of rape allegations declined from 2015-2017 to a low of 9.<sup>20</sup>

**LACK OF TRANSPARENCY.** BSU has tried to hide its administrative efforts and plans centered around social justice in several ways:

 BSU removed Kustra's 2017 Commission on Diversity and Inclusion report from its website.

 A representative partially denied a lawful public records request issued by IFF regarding implicit bias training.

 A representative has not produced documents regarding the Big City Coffee scandal pursuant to a lawful public records request issued by IFF.

 Sources within the Dean's council have told us that the university is scrubbing the word "diversity" from its website because the Legislature does not like it. It is replacing "diversity" with words like "equity, fairness, inclusion" and so on.




**Conclusion: Boise State has created racial and gender-based tiers for hiring faculty and is putting resources behind "implicit bias" and other social justice initiatives in its teacher training. It accepts the architecture of policies that prohibit free speech and provide special protection for supposedly aggrieved minorities on campus.**

# THE INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE STUDENT COUNCIL

**A key element in the social justice ideology at BSU is its Inclusive Excellence Student Council (IESC).** The IESC seems to be a successor organization of the Council for Inclusive Excellence founded after Kustra's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion. IESC is fully integrated into the student government and university administration.

IESC's mission is to have "student activists ... advocate[] for the validity of their existences within Boise State's institution, and in a system that kept marginalized communities from being able to access a culturally relevant education that de-centers: white supremacy, transphobia, homophobia, xenophobia, racism, classism, sexism, ageism, ableism, and any other discrimination or bigotry."

Duties of the IESC include advising faculty, staff and administration on policies and the broader environment on campus. Examples of such duties include:

-  Advise and address administrative leadership on diversity and inclusion efforts.
-  Hold the greater Boise State University accountable to its Statement of Shared Values, Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion, and the Student Code of Conduct.
-  Serve as an advisory board to organizations and departments associated with students and the campus community.

Members are appointed to the IESC by the IESC in conjunction with Salinas and Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Leslie Webb. It seems to be a self-perpetuating system. BSU pays students to occupy positions on IESC and to provide muscle for hard-core student activism.

## *IESC Seeks Control Over Campus Contracts*

This year Boise State signed a contract with a local small business, Big City Coffee, to replace Starbucks on campus. Big City's owner, Sarah Fendley, is engaged to Kevin Holtry, a Boise police officer. Holtry was shot five times in the line of duty while pursuing an armed and dangerous fugitive.<sup>21</sup> He is now in a wheelchair. To honor her fiancé, Fendley displayed a Blue Lives Matter flag in her original shop, located in downtown Boise.

The Vice President of IESC soon complained that the university used "limited white feedback" when it selected Big City Coffee and that "political affiliation and race weren't considered."<sup>22</sup> The vendor process, she held, was an example of "white supremacy."

Administrators and advisors for the IESC agreed with the characterization and encouraged IESC students to take an active role in university hiring, contracting, and other policy matters in the future. Webb assured IESC that the school would "create a better process moving forward," one presumably including feedback from the IESC when it considers university vendors and hires. Webb said she had already informed the university's vendor for dining



services of the school's new process. "I do believe we missed it and got caught in the urgency of [getting Big City under contract]," Webb said in the meeting. "The timeline got condensed in order to get something in and it is not a thorough or inclusive process."<sup>23</sup> Webb committed "to action oriented movement for the future."

Salinas joined the crusade. He proposed a shake down to hold "Big City accountable by providing scholarships to marginalized students."

"In contracts you can ask for human rights to be a part of it. That is a step moving in the right direction and will begin to influence others," Salinas told the students.<sup>24</sup> Pushback against Big City Coffee and getting them to leave could be, Salinas continued, "the beginning of a revolution where we say that we have a standard for corporate partnerships that we have."

Officer Holtry told KBOI-AM's Nate Shelman

that BSU officials did meet with his fiancé, and they proposed her company provide scholarships and jobs for "people of color" as a concession for remaining on campus.

Previously, the university honored Officer Holtry at half times during football games.

The university could have easily reiterated their support for Officer Holtry and Big City Coffee. It didn't. In this case, Big City Coffee's support for law enforcement was enough for the campus administration and IESC to create a hostile environment so untenable that exiting was its only viable option.

#### *Impeachment of Student Body President*

The student government, led by the IESC, impeached its student body president on the allegation that he supported extending BSU's contract with the Boise Police Department.

**CONCLUSION: IESC is a university-funded, self-perpetuating council that aims to intimidate the student body into compliance on a narrow agenda and serve as a prod to take the administration into more extreme social justice measures on campus, including a role in approving university contracts. Where will the demands of the IESC end? Will BSU ever be able to say "no" to IESC, given their plans for Social Justice education?**



“THIS COULD BE  
THE BEGINNING OF  
A REVOLUTION...”

— Francisco Salinas

*Assistant to the vice president  
for equity initiatives*



# SECTION 2



# CURRICULUM & STUDENT EXPERIENCE

## **Social justice education is the new civics education.**

A student's academic life is divided between general education requirements of approximately 40 credits hours, major requirements usually between 30-45 credits hours, and electives. One hundred twenty credits are required for graduation.

How many credits of social justice education must BSU students take? This number is different for different students. Sometimes it depends on the luck of the draw – some teachers emphasize social justice education while others in a different section might not. There is some variation in course selection for students as they fulfill general education requirements. Different majors also yield more or less social justice education. Social work and sociology majors can expect nothing but social justice education in their majors, while nursing majors may only receive it from their general education courses.

No measure of social justice education is perfect.<sup>25</sup> We have imagined the student experience as a path through general education and then through a major.

**GENERAL EDUCATION.** Our report uses course catalogue descriptions for general education courses as a reflection of course content. Sometimes faculty from a department infused with social justice ideology teach courses without an explicit social justice framework. We label such courses as Social Justice Education Courses. Examples of some course descriptions for Social Justice Education Courses can be found on pages 18 and 19.

**MAJORS.** Our report measures the degree to which social justice ideology captures departments. We judge departments based on four factors: department mission statements; program or department learning outcomes; contributions to the general education; and required major courses. Red departments are infused with social justice ideology throughout these four factors. Yellow departments have elements of social justice ideology in two or three factors. Green departments have little or no social justice ideology in their programmatic statements. Examples of these factors and a more detailed description of our measurement can be found on pages 24-26.

**Conclusion: Students encounter social justice education throughout the curriculum at BSU. Students cannot avoid exposure to social justice education, though they can avoid American history, government, and literature.**

# GENERAL EDUCATION MAP

Students cannot avoid social justice activism in BSU's general education requirements. Here's what a typical student's academic journey toward graduation looks like.

Beginning of freshman year

UF 100: Foundations of Intellectual Life

COURSE EXAMPLE:  
**DIVERSE CULTURES IN FILM**  
What dynamics are **at play between majority and minority cultures?** **What contributions do marginalized cultures make to societies they are a part of?** This course will examine the marginalization of minority cultures through film, so we can better understand ourselves, our own culture, the effects of marginalization, and the roles minorities play.

8/11 options are social justice classes.

Foundations of Mathematics  
3-4 Credits

First Year Writing  
6 Credits

English 101 & 102 often include experiential or service learning.  
\* See footnote 25

Provided by English Department

UF 200: Foundations of Ethics & Diversity

UF 200 courses typically offer experiential or service learning.  
**Themes in Ethics and Diversity:**  
**History of inequality, marginalization**

37/37 options are social justice classes





\* (continued) "...Yet, Western society includes many groups that are outside of, or are not exclusively identified with, this mainstream culture. Gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people experience difficulty in a society that does not grant them the social standings and legal rights given to heterosexuals. Mainstream customs in America often ignore or marginalize American citizens who are Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, or other non-Christian religions. Despite substantial progress, women still face discrimination as do people who are not white."

## INDOCTRINATION MAJORS

Gender Studies*	Sociology*	Global Studies*	Social Work*	History*
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**Gender Studies:** The program offers gender/sex/sexuality/intersectionality/ diversity/ race theory courses, and/or courses taught with an interdisciplinary lens. It seeks to provide students with an opportunity to learn about all forms of hierarchy and power relations which in turn perpetuate gendered socio-economic and political structures. In other words, it encourages students to think outside the box and engage in critical thinking regarding the ethics and politics of equality and justice, and links the questions of gender and sexuality (both men and women) to all forms of hierarchical differences. Multicultural and interdisciplinary in approach, the Program seeks to address many of the current social, economic, professional, media, individual, and public policy issues revolving around discussions of gender and sexuality. Students examine the experiences of women and men and concepts of gender and sexuality within different cultural, social, economic, and religious contexts through the study of scholarship and creative works in a variety of fields. Thus, the course work seeks to provide students with essential preparation for lives and careers deeply impacted by ongoing debates regarding gender and sexuality in our society.

**Sociology:** We study the key divisions of society: The social order, social inequality, social change, class, race, gender, labor, and sexuality. The Department of Sociology is a Community for Social Change, Social Justice and Equality.

**Global Studies:** Analyze and appreciate the diversity of different cultures. Analyze the role of social justice, diversity, social well-being and inclusion at global, national, and local levels.

**Social Work:** A field of study dedicated to human rights, social and economic justice, egalitarianism, and respect for diversity.

**History:** *Responsiveness*—to the needs of our students and our changing world.

*Diversity and Inclusivity*—in our curriculum and in our university culture.

*Advocacy*—For the unique and important value of history as a discipline.

*Engagement*—With our students and our communities, meeting them where they are.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE IN TRAINING

Environmental Studies	Secondary Education	Literacy, Language & Culture	Geosciences	Psychology
Community & Environmental Health*	Theatre Arts*	Urban Studies & Community Development*		

**Community & Environmental Health:** Equity: We believe that health is a human right. Access to safe and clean environments, housing, a livable wage, health, and preventative services are matters of social justice.

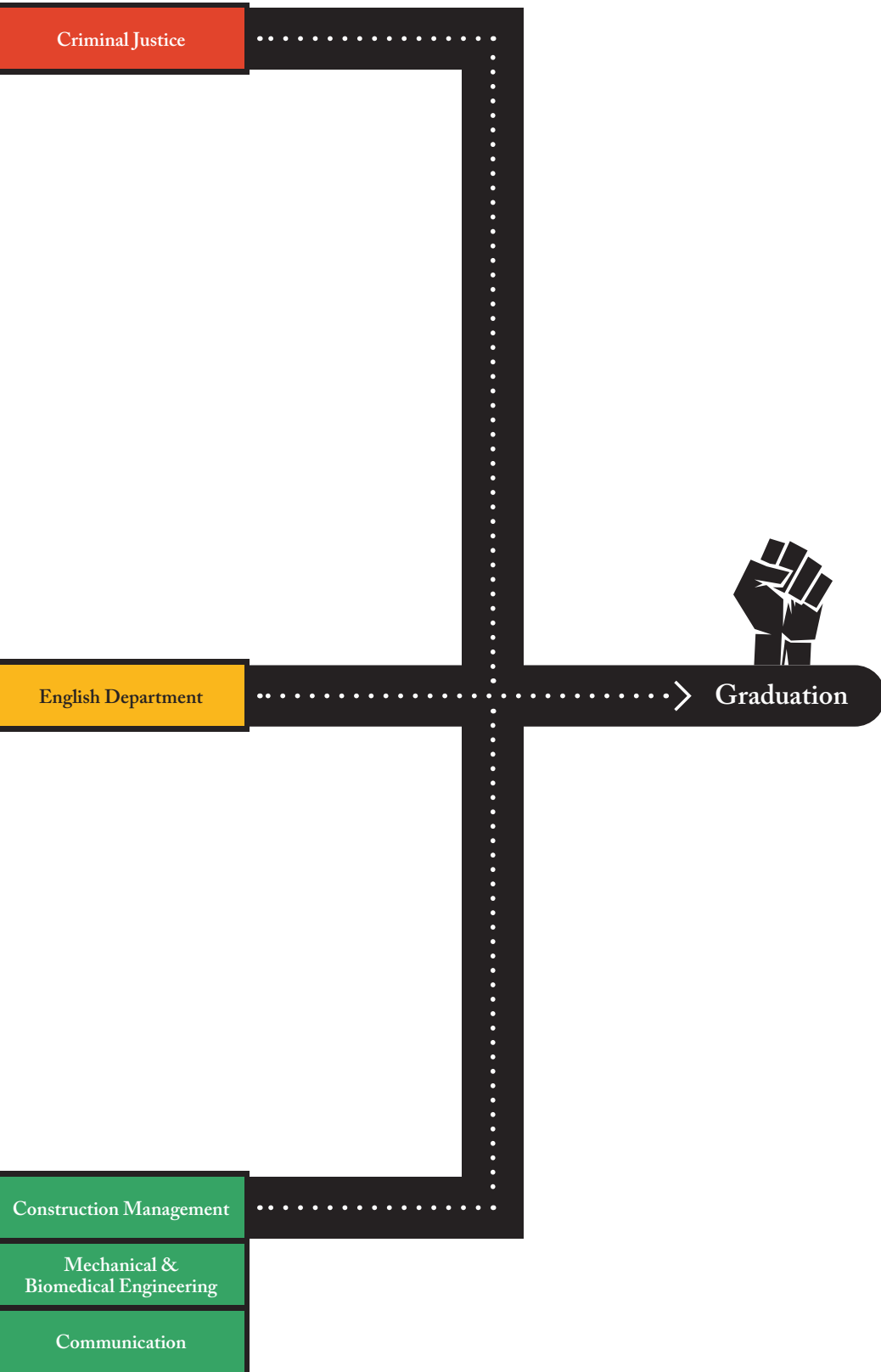
**Theatre Arts:** Analyze the roles of social justice and diversity in communities, cities and regions.

**Urban Studies & Community Development:** We stand for diversity, equality, inclusivity, kindness, and compassion. We are committed to transformation. As part of this movement, we vow to: **1.** Examine our own actions and make changes within our hearts, our homes, our educational systems, and our community; **2.** Foster open dialogue within our department; **3.** Actively seek applicants of color for full-time and tenure-track teaching positions; **4.** Actively seek students of color to join our community as both undergraduate and graduate majors; **5.** Participate in and host community events related to promoting equality and social justice; **6.** Create works of art that address injustice; **7.** Listen with the intent to understand and take appropriate action; **8.** Stand and speak and write and take action against racism in any form.

## PROFESSIONAL DEPARTMENT

Creative Writing	World Languages	Special Education	Kinesiology	Mathematics
Physics	Chemistry	Anthropology	Biology	Civil Engineering
Finance	Accountancy	Radiologic Sciences	Nursing	Economics
Computer Science	Political Science	Philosophy	Music	Respiratory Care











## WRITING CENTER: OUR TRAINING'S MISSION


**Even the Writing Center is infused with social justice education.** It affects the basic writing courses (see page 18) and the courses that train writing teachers. The following is from the Writing Center's "Our Training's Mission" found on its Google Site:<sup>26</sup>

"In brief, we identified our mission as increasing critical awareness of privilege among consultants and helping equip them to participate in conversations about social justice within the Writing Center and the university context. Our goals for this training can be broken out in detail as follows:

-  Consultants should understand privilege — both their own and that of students they work with.
-  Consultants should be mindful of "how one's own experiences have shaped these [cultural] expectations, and how to recognize and respond to such biases," as described in §6.1 of Boise State's university-wide learning outcomes<sup>27</sup> for students.
-  Consultants should have a shared vocabulary with which to describe social justice issues. In order for conversations about social justice to succeed, we need to be talking about the same issues. Familiarity with basic terminology (privilege, ideology, oppression, marginalization, equality versus equity, etc) is vital.
-  Consultants should have to wrestle with the issue of when to speak up about oppressive ideologies or actions. Do students with problematic papers deserve a safe space in the Writing Center? What does it mean for us to respect their views? Do we have a responsibility to intervene, or is there room for a consultant to choose to let it slide?
-  Consultants should "respect all identities, cultures, and points of view writers bring to the Center," as described in our mission statement.
-  Our Writing Center should make diversity of consultants a priority. Our Writing Center's staff is — and has historically been — almost exclusively white and female. Although the final decision is up to the directors, veteran consultants are highly involved in the hiring process, screening and recommending candidates and conducting official interviews; thus, it's important that diversity be on our minds.

**Conclusion: Even the writing center is a place dedicated to social justice ideology at Boise State.**





“Mass movements can rise  
and spread without belief  
in a God, but never without  
belief in a devil.”

— *Eric Hoffer*



# SOCIAL JUSTICE DEPARTMENTS HIGHLIGHTED

## GENDER STUDIES

2020 Mission Statement from its website: “The program offers *gender/sex/sexuality/intersectionality/diversity/race theory* courses, and/or courses taught with an interdisciplinary lens. It seeks to provide students with an opportunity to learn about all forms of hierarchy and power relations which in turn perpetuate gendered socio-economic and political structures.” Encourages “students to think outside the box and engage in critical thinking regarding the ethics and politics of equality and justice, and links the questions of gender and sexuality (both men and women) to all forms of hierarchical differences.”

### CORE COURSES

GENDER 200 Introduction to Gender Studies: “Interdisciplinary, multicultural introduction to gender studies that provides foundation for further study. Draws selectively from scholarship and creative work of various fields to examine how concepts of gender shape lives, personal relationships, and social institutions. Gender issues will be studied from a multicultural perspective across lines of class, race, and ethnicity.”

GENDER 301 Feminist Theory: “Students encounter new perspectives by examining major theories directly useful to scholars in search of understanding and explaining gender relations.”

## HISTORY DEPARTMENT

2020 Mission Statement from its website: The department is committed to “excellence in:

- Diversity and Inclusivity – in our curriculum and in our department and university culture.
- Advocacy – for the unique and important value of history as a discipline.
- Engagement – with our students and our communities, meeting them where they are.”

2020 Program Learning Objectives:

“Deliver curriculum that addresses the diverse needs, interests and identities of the students. Elevate our graduate program to a position of regional distinction in quality and relevance.”



## SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

2020 Mission Statement from its website: “We study the key divisions of society: **The social order, social inequality, social change, class, race, gender, labor, and sexuality.**” The department is “a Community for **Social Change, Social Justice and Equality.**”

2020 Program Learning Objectives: “**Become An Agent Of Social Change:** You want to better understand the **cultures and social structures of societies throughout history.** You want to better **understand yourself, and your place in the world.** You want to better understand the nature, causes and consequences of the **inequalities and oppressions associated with race, class, gender, sexuality, age and ability.** We are interested in the **social order, social inequality, and social change.**”

### CORE COURSES

SOC 101 Introduction to Sociology: “Emphasis is on sociological perspectives, concepts, methods, and applications in areas such as organization, **socialization, inequality, institutions, intergroup relations, change, etc.**”

## Social Work Department

2020 Mission Statement from its website: The department is “dedicated to human rights, **social and economic justice, egalitarianism, and respect for diversity.**”

2020 Program Learning Objectives: **Foster inclusiveness, cultural competence, and sensitivity.**

Competency 2: **Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

Competency 3: **Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Competency 5: **Engage in Policy Practice**

## Criminal Justice

While the Criminal Justice mission statement has no social justice language, social justice ideology is central to how they see their program. As their 2020 Anti-Racism statement shows:

There is no place for the racial injustices that have historically and continuously plagued Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC). **Boise State University’s Criminal Justice Program actively stands against racism and oppression in any form. Racism has always been present in our society.** It did not end with the abolishment of slavery or Jim Crow-era segregation of Black citizens or treaties with Indigenous peoples; **it was infused into all of our systems and institutions.** As a program that is housed within one of these institutions (academia) and studies another (the criminal justice system), we acknowledge our multiple responsibilities to students and communities to engage in anti-racist work. And yet, as faculty who are predominantly White and hold privileged places in our communities, we understand the importance of our own individual and group anti-racism education...

...This fall, the Criminal Justice Program will:

Convene listening sessions with our students and alumni from marginalized communities to better understand their experiences in our classrooms and address their concerns; and work with students and community stakeholders to review our policies, practices, and curriculum to ensure we are not complicit in furthering racism and oppression within our communities...

Form a diverse working group of people within and outside of the University to identify areas where we can utilize our knowledge and skills to assist in eliminating policies and practices that have disproportionately impacted BIPOC and other marginalized communities through systemic, institutionalized, and individual racism and oppression.

The task ahead of us is substantial. It will not be easy to dismantle racism in our communities and institutions, but as citizens we have no choice. We must act. Too many lives have been lost and many others harmed. **The listening sessions, outreach, and working groups described above are just the beginning.** Feedback from those efforts will be used to navigate future steps toward fighting for a more just and equal society.

CJ 103 INTRODUCTION TO LAW AND JUSTICE (3-0-3)(F, S)(FS). **Examines issues of social justice; e.g., poverty, racism, sexism, alienation, and use of law for social control.**

### **How We Categorized Departments:**

Departments dedicated to social justice ideology reveal their commitment in their mission statements, learning outcomes, general education offerings, and courses required by their majors. These four indicators of social justice ideology are measured on a 12-point scale. Departments most committed to social justice (earning three points on each indicator) have the following traits:

1. Affirming diversity, social justice, empathy, equity, inclusion, identifying oppressive power structures;
2. Aligning the department's mission against -isms and -phobias, including, but not limited to sexism, racism, classism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, Islamophobia, ableism, dispossession of indigenous peoples.
3. Rejecting or questioning the basis of national identity in favor of identities at the subnational or transnational level.
4. Commitment to activism as opposed to study. Departments get three points if they express a commitment to social justice without any mitigating factors.

Departments get two points if they express a commitment to social justice in any of these indicators but also acknowledge other approaches to viewing the material. Departments with ambiguous commitments to social justice — either with ambiguous statements or no pride of place for social justice ideology—receive one point. Departments with no reference to social justice ideology get zero points.



# RESIDENCE HALLS

Much of student experience is outside the classroom, through programming designed by residence hall directors and the broader division of student life. We can see what Residence Life seeks to accomplish through its mission statements and by who Residence Life hires. Personnel is policy.

## MISSION STATEMENTS

Language emphasizing social justice programming in residence halls was nonexistent until the 2010-2011 Academic Catalogue. Previously, University Housing was seen as a business relationship between the university and students. At most, the residence halls would be “vibrant and diverse,” but those values would not be promoted; students would meet people from other states or other countries. Beginning in 2011, Residence Life staff emphasized it would promote “inclusive, safe, and caring communities.”

2020 Mission and Vision:

Mission: “Housing and Residence Life provides a vibrant residential experience that promotes inclusiveness, learning, academic excellence, and meaningful relationships.”

Values:

Community – Collaboration, interdependence, intentional connections, and a sense of belonging

Learning – Critical thinking, continuous development, and exploration

Respect – Inclusive acceptance, compassion, and authenticity

Housing and Residence Life is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment that values diversity and promotes equity. Our values – community, learning, and respect – inform our Community Standards so as to increase education and promote understanding.

## Residence Hall Directors (Personnel)

BSU has many residence halls, each with a resident director whose biography is available on the university website. Their biographies reveal that the promotion of social justice must be part of the selection criteria for hiring resident directors.

University Square Director “is very interested in working towards a more just and inclusive campus experience for all students.”

Taylor Hall Director “hopes to advocate for inclusive communities.”

Towers Hall Director is “passionate about building safe, inclusive communities where every member has the support they need to be successful” and has been involved in smearing local businesses as white supremacist because they support police.

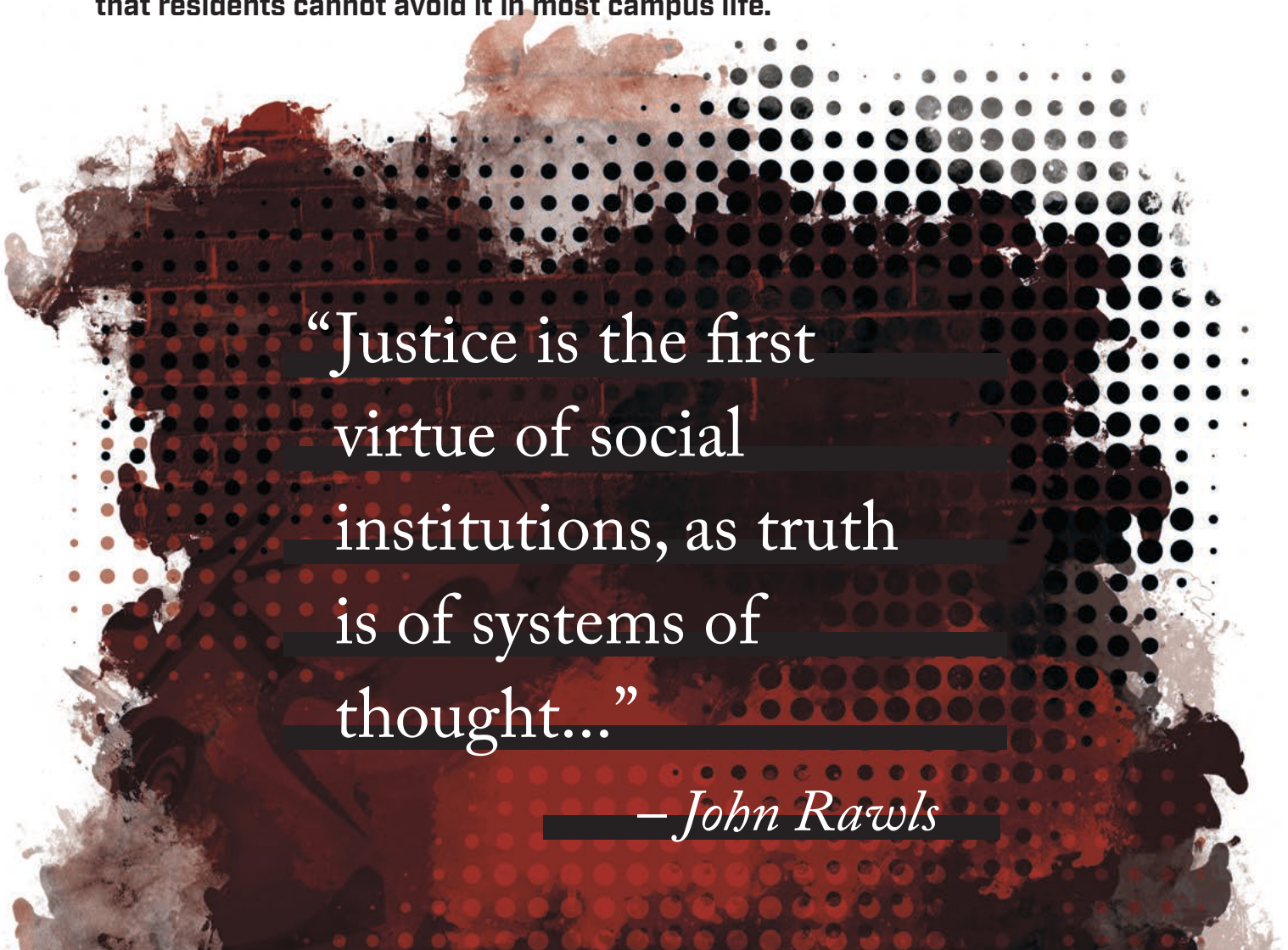
Chafee Hall Director “loves to create caring, welcoming, and inclusive residential communities.”

Driscoll, Keiser and Morrison Halls Director “seeks to create inclusive spaces where students find a sense of belonging within their campus community.”

Summer Housing Coordinator “is passionate about fostering a positive, inclusive and productive workplace culture.”

Only the Sawtooth Hall Director lacks reference to social justice ideology, though she does include personal pronouns in her statement.

**Conclusion: Residence Life is thoroughly permeated with social justice ideology, so that residents cannot avoid it in most campus life.**



“Justice is the first  
virtue of social  
institutions, as truth  
is of systems of  
thought...”

— *John Rawls*



# CONCLUSION

Boise State seeks to transform the “dominant culture” of Idaho with what it claims is a new “welcoming” culture of diversity and inclusion.

This task is unfinishable and unworthy.

Unfinishable because it simply cannot be done. Unworthy because the culture of Idaho was already welcoming and inclusive. BSU has begun the task of empowering Social Justice ideologues around campus and it has announced plans to hire a Vice Provost to oversee these efforts.

Policies like ending the Boise Police contract and blackballing Big City Coffee presage greater involvement of social justice activism on campus. The curriculum and student experience in the residence halls are trending in this same direction.

Over the next few years, we can expect an unchecked BSU to change its mission statement to include social justice commitments, to bolster its shared values to include more equity language and perhaps mandatory enforcement of the values and add additional staff to support its social justice mission, especially staff in the provost’s office.

This is happening all over the country, with many universities further along the path than Boise State. Recognize, however, that Boise State is on the same path.

**Stopping this transformative agenda before it develops to maturity is a task the Legislature and the State Board should set for themselves.**

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



### DR. SCOTT YENOR

Scott Yenor is a Washington Fellow at the Claremont Institute's Center for the American Way of Life, and a member of the National Association of Scholars. He writes extensively on marriage and family life in the contemporary world, including his most recent book *The Recovery of Family Life: Exposing the Limits of Modern Ideologies* (Baylor University Press, 2020). He also writes on higher education, American Reconstruction, David Hume, and other topics for numerous websites including Law Liberty, City Journal, First Things, and The American Mind. He neither endorses nor opposes the policy positions reflected in this report (on pages 2 and 3).



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