



HBCU
Library Alliance

Let's Talk:

Empowering HBCU Librarians for the Future of Democracy and Education

September 11, 2024, 10:00 AM

John Chrastka, Founder of EveryLibrary





EveryLibrary | 501(c)4 Political Action Committee

- Election Days and Negotiations
- Support for Legislative Agendas
- Outreach and Activism to the Public



EveryLibrary Institute - 501(c)3 Research and Policy Think Tank

- Research Agenda
- Training Programs
- Coalitions and Partnerships



Level Setting the Conversation

Are we properly engaged to answer key threats to our future?

Unprecedented Times?

The issues roiling public libraries and school libraries are breaking across the traditional barriers protecting academic libraries.

External public and education policy disruptions to the integrity of academic freedom are creating dramatic uncertainties for Academic Libraries and their publishing partners.

Education Policy Issues

1. Shift from Humanities to STEM
2. Dual Enrollment and K-12 Laws
3. Elimination of DEI Programs
4. Higher Education Act Reauthorization
5. Accreditation Fights
6. Contract Language Issues
7. Disconnects and Isolation
8. Tenure, Closures, and Budgets

Censorship and Erasure

- 10,000 titles in dozens of states across K-12 and public libraries.
- 21 States had bills that criminalize librarianship in 2023 & 2024.
 - 2023: 4 passed -> 2 vetoes, 1 court case, 1 enacted
 - 2024: 0 passed
- State overrides of RFPs and legislation about state database contracts.
- Lawsuits in twelve states challenging anti-access laws.

Stop WOKE and Anti-CRT Laws

“Since September 2020, a total of 247 local, state, and federal government entities across the United States have introduced 861 anti-Critical Race Theory bills, resolutions, executive orders, opinion letters, statements, and other measures.”

CRT Forward: <https://crtforward.law.ucla.edu/>

Project 2025 and Higher Ed

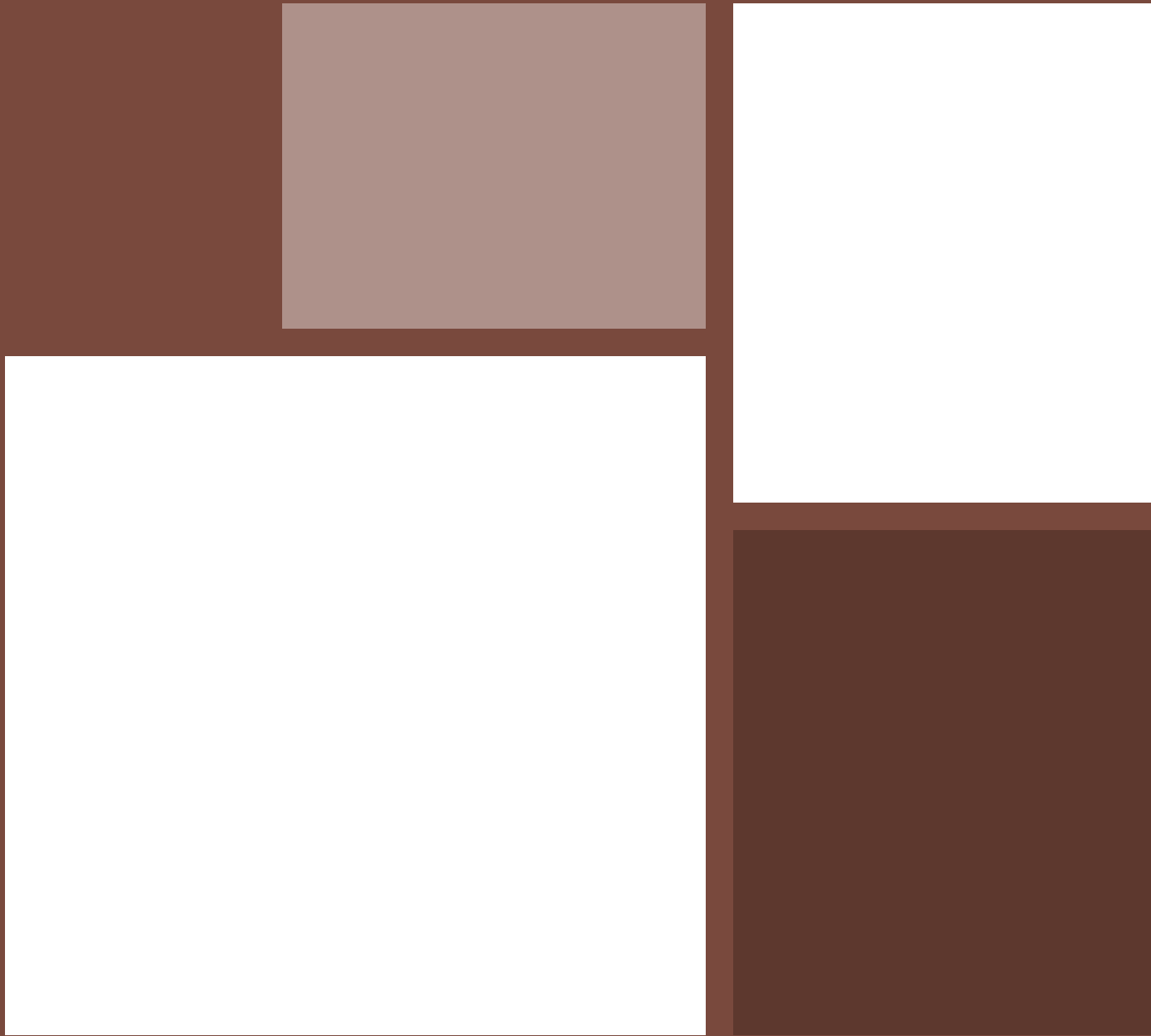
If implemented, P25 has the potential to reshape the landscape of higher education, with substantial implications for academic institutions, students, and the quality of education.

Project 2025 proposes significant changes to higher education that align with a broader reactionary agenda to reduce federal oversight and funding.

Project 2025 looks to overhaul how accreditation works. Their proposals would prevent accrediting agencies from enforcing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies and eliminate protections for the governance of state-supported colleges.

Project 2025 would minimize federal postsecondary education investments and would prioritize workforce skills and career and technical education over traditional four-year degrees. This shift would de-emphasize liberal arts and research-based education, potentially limiting students' educational choices and the development of critical thinking and analytical skills.

Project 2025 would close the Department of Education.



Education Policy Matrix

Anti-CRT laws and HBCUs

SB129 in Alabama - Stop Woke Act

“This new language (SB129) would prohibit assigning readings of essays, books, or films where the author expresses that they feel complicit in past wrongs because of their identity, or historical documents demonstrating historical perspectives on race, gender, or class. This is a more expansive restriction than even Florida’s HB 7 (Stop WOKE), which only prohibits assigning readings advocating for complicity, not merely expressing the author’s experience.”

PEN - <https://pen.org/stopping-woke-in-alabama-al-sb-129/>

*Alabama SB129
in Effect on
October 1*

SB129 Impact at University of Alabama

“The Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will be replaced by the new Division of Opportunities, Connections and Success. The former head of the DEI offices, Dr. Christine Taylor, will now lead the new division.

cite:

<https://www.alreporter.com/2024/07/24/university-of-alabama-shuts-down-dei-office-to-comply-with-state-law/>

*Implementation
on Campus*

NAACP LDF on Florida HB7 - Stop WOKE Act

“The court order found the Stop W.O.K.E. Act violates the First and Fourteenth Amendments. The judge found, “The law officially bans professors from expressing disfavored viewpoints in university classrooms while permitting unfettered expression of the opposite viewpoints. Defendants (the State of Florida) argue that, under this Act, professors enjoy ‘academic freedom’ so long as they express only those viewpoints of which the State approves. This is positively dystopian. It should go without saying that ‘[i]f liberty means anything at all it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.’”

NB: The district court drew a distinction between elementary and secondary educators, and postsecondary educators.

March 2023:

<https://www.naacpldf.org/press-release/judge-blocks-floridas-stop-w-o-k-e-censorship-bill-from-taking-effect-in-higher-education/>

*Florida Stop
WOKE Act
(2022) in the
Courts*

Auburn University Syllabus Guidance on SB129

Auburn University intends to act consistently with applicable state and federal law. At the Biggio Center, our intent is to be responsive to faculty requests for guidance on how to ensure your syllabus is consistent with Alabama Act 2024-34 (formerly SB129) effective October 1, 2024 and codified at Ala. Code § 41-1-90 et seq. The following principles should be followed:

- Diversity Statements should not be included in a syllabus. (See 2024 Ala. 34 Sec. 2(6).)
- An exception to this guidance exists when a Diversity Statement is required in furtherance of **satisfying any accreditation standard or requirement** (emphasis added). (See 2024 Ala. 34 Sec. 4(3)(a).) In that case, the Diversity Statement should include a specific reference to the applicable accreditation standard.
- Nothing in this guidance is intended to prevent faculty from setting classroom behavior expectations intended to protect First Amendment rights, intellectual diversity, and/or free expression (See 2024 Ala. 34 Sec. 4(9)).

<https://biggio.auburn.edu/programs/teaching-and-learning-services/syllabus-guidance-sb129>

*Accommodation
is Not a Solution*



Answering the Threats

An Equitable Future for
Academic Libraries

On the Horizon in Congress

- Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act
- Scrutiny of the USDOE Office for Civil Rights
- Expiration of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017
- Safeguards about AI and Social Media

In the States

- Criminalization of Libraries and Collections
- Anti-CRT Bills
- Education Funding and Pensions
- Enrollment Rates and Demographics

*Anticipating
2025 and 2026*

Seven Actions about Any Issue in Higher Ed

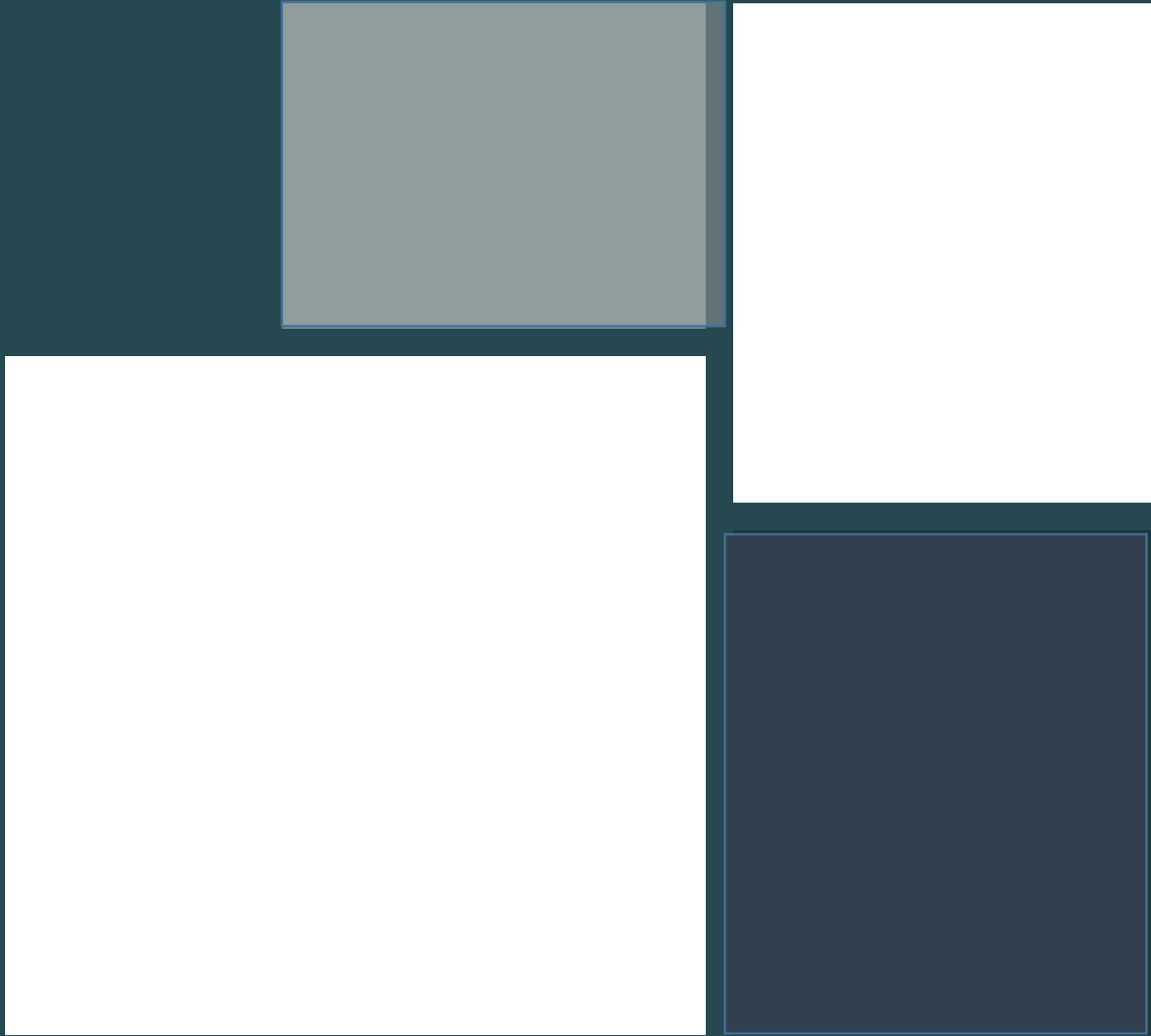
1. Develop your own Policy Brief.
2. Conduct pre-legislative policy outreach in states.
3. Join coalitions focused on academic freedom.
4. Host constituent outreach during legislative sessions.
5. Prepare testimony and expert witnesses during legislative debates.
6. File Amicus briefs in relevant court cases.
7. Inform accrediting bodies of your issues.

*How Can the
HBCU Library
Alliance respond
to Legislation:?*

Leadership Steps:

- Strategic Plans that are Aligned with the Rest of Campus.
- Risk Management Training and General Counsel Relationships.
- Policy Review for the New Political Reality:
 - Free Speech on Campus and in the Stacks
 - Religion and Public Life
 - Challenges from “Both Sides”
 - Anticipating Dual-Enrolled Students and their Parents

*On Campus:
(Re)aligning
Your Academic
Library to the
Institution*



*Planning
for Action*

“Academic libraries do not exist
independently of their institutions.”

Central Thesis

EveryLibrary Recommendations:

1. Prepare the for the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.
2. Bring the HBCU Library Alliance into Higher Ed Policy Coalitions.
3. Produce Substantive Training and Technical Guidance for HBCU Leaders about Education and Public Policy Issues.

*New Public
Policy
Conversations*

Training, Coaching, Policy Development, and Peer Mentorship

- Coalitions and Allies.
- Values-Aligned Budgeting and Planning.
- Interdepartmental Relationships.
- Student to Scholar Pipeline.
- Marketing to Build Support.
- Alumni Engagement and Culture Building.
- Leadership Development Series

*HBCU
Leadership
Discussions*

Let's Talk: Discussion Time



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EveryLibrary and the
EveryLibrary Institute