Twitter Thread by Simon DeDeo

Simon DeDeo
@SimonDeDeo

"I lied about my basic beliefs in order to keep a prestigious job. Now that it will be zero-cost to me, I have a few things to say."

> As a dean of a major academic institution, I could not have said this. But I will now. Requiring such statements in applications for appointments and promotions is an affront to academic freedom, and diminishes the true value of diversity, equity of inclusion by trivializing it. https://t.co/NfcI5VLODi
>
> — Jeffrey Flier (@jflier) November 10, 2018

We know that elite institutions like the one Flier was in (partial) charge of rely on irrelevant status markers like private school education, whiteness, legacy, and ability to charm an old white guy at an interview.

Harvard's discriminatory policies are becoming increasingly well known, across the political spectrum (see, e.g., the recent lawsuit on discrimination against East Asian applications.)

It's refreshing to hear a senior administrator admits to personally opposing policies that attempt to remedy these basic flaws. These are flaws that harm his institution's ability to do cutting-edge research and to serve the public.

Harvard is being eclipsed by institutions that have different ideas about how to run a 21st Century institution. Stanford, for one; the UC system; the "public Ivys".

I'm always shocked when I go back to my alma mater. If you select for cocktail-party skills you by necessity select against excellence. Conversely, since we know very well that discrimination against minorities and women is real, any lab with any sense has pro-inclusion policies.

If you look for the best, you do better science. Meanwhile, if you're in a humanities department, you do better scholarship: the humanities are fundamentally about the human experience, but the selection for East-coast SLACs and Ivys is even stronger there.