

Resolution on Defending Academic Freedom to Teach and Research Race and Gender Justice

TO: Faculty Council

FROM: Ball State University Chapter of American Association of University Professors (AAUP)

RE: Resolution: Defending Academic Freedom to Teach About Race and Gender Justice

Date: January 27, 2022

RATIONALE: In the summer of 2021, politicians began proposing legislation against “divisive concepts” and critical race theory. Bills have passed in twelve states and are pending in others. (The African American Policy Forum tracks the legislation [here](#).) As these bills are currently being proposed in Indiana, we believe that Faculty Councils and Senates everywhere must speak up against them and in defense of academic freedom. We join with our colleagues across the country in resolving the following:

WHEREAS state legislative proposals are being introduced across the United States that target academic discussions of racism and related issues in American history in schools, colleges and universities;

WHEREAS the [Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook](#) affirms Ball State’s “obligation not to interfere with the freedom of any member of the University community to hear and to study unpopular and controversial views on intellectual and public issues,” “pledge[s] to keep inclusive excellence at the highest level of institutional importance and as a foundation in all that we do,” and “to work so that even the quietest or most underrepresented voices among us are heard”;

WHEREAS faculty have responsibility for the curriculum at their universities, as stated in American Association of University Professors’ [1940 statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#) and in Ball State’s Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook, which affirms the procedural rights of faculty set forth in AAUP’s statement;

WHEREAS educating about systemic barriers to realizing a multiracial democracy based on race or gender should be understood as central to the active and engaged pursuit of knowledge in the 21st century to produce engaged and informed citizens;

WHEREAS over seventy organizations, including the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), issued the [Joint Statement on Legislative Efforts to Restrict Education about Racism and American History](#) (June 16, 2021) stating their “firm opposition to a spate of legislative proposals being introduced across the country that target academic lessons, presentations, and discussions of racism and related issues in American history in schools, colleges and universities . . . In higher education, under principles of academic freedom that have been widely endorsed, professors are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject. Educators, not politicians, should make decisions about teaching and learning”;

WHEREAS Ball State University’s stated values are “freedom of inquiry, imparting knowledge, and advancing the frontiers of knowledge, all for the purpose of bettering society and individuals,” and the Beneficence Pledge affirms the University’s commitment to “respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions”;

WHEREAS in a nation that has for centuries struggled with issues of racial inequity and injustice, many students do not have adequate knowledge of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer +) history and the policies that contributed to inequities, Ball State University has a responsibility and opportunity to help build equity and social justice.

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Council resolutely affirms the values of freedom of inquiry, imparting knowledge, and advancing the frontiers of knowledge, all for the purpose of bettering society and individuals. We stand firm against encroachment on these aforementioned values, in particular as they impact student learning and matters related to racial and social justice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Council stands in support of our K-12 colleagues throughout the state and country who may be affected by legislation that seeks to limit the pursuit of truth.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Faculty Council affirms the [Joint Statement on Efforts to Restrict Education about Racism](#), authored by the AAUP, PEN America, the American Historical Association, and the Association of American Colleges & Universities, endorsed by over seventy organizations, and issued on June 16, 2021.