

Template Academic Senate Resolution

TO: [Name of College or University] University Senate [or other named used for this body]
FROM: Faculty Senate Executive Committee [or name of subcommittee bringing the proposal]
RE: Resolution: Defending Academic Freedom to Teach About Race and Gender Justice and Critical Race Theory
Date: 00, 00, 2021

RATIONALE:

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 Handbook and [include here any other governance and/or bargaining language on academic freedom] affirms the importance of academic freedom to the proper functioning of universities, citing the American Association of University Professors' [1940 statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#) [if your governance language does not cite the 1940 statement, consider adding an extra "whereas" line that specifically notes the 1940 statement].

WHEREAS faculty have responsibility for the curriculum at their universities, as stated in [insert AAUP policy] and [insert university's own policy].

WHEREAS the term "divisive" is indeterminate, subjective, and chills the capacity of educators to explore a wide variety of topics based on subjective criteria that are inapposite from the goals of education and the development of essential critical thinking skills;

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 the [Name] University’s mission is to “promote access, inclusion and equity as pillars of excellence” [insert language from your own university’s mission statement that directly or indirectly affirms values associated with racial and social justice]

WHEREAS the University statement on _____ affirms the importance of racial and social justice (or BLM or Juneteenth or the importance of gender studies or Black studies or diversity and inclusion). [Here, reference any previous resolution passed by your Senate that supports initiatives or statements in support of racial and/or social justice. If you have more than one that you feel supports the resolution, add them each as a separate item.]

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 and LGBTQI history and the policies that contributed to inequities, [Name] University has a responsibility and opportunity to help build equity and social justice.

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Senate resolutely rejects any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate university curriculum on any matter, including matters related to racial and social justice, and will stand firm against encroachment on faculty authority by the legislature or the Boards of Trustees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate stands with our K-12 colleagues throughout the country who may be affected by this pernicious legislation when they seek to teach the truth in U.S. history and civics education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Senate calls upon President [insert name] and Provost [insert name] to affirm that they reject any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate university curriculum on any matter, including matters related to racial and social justice, and will stand firm against encroachment on faculty authority by the legislature or the Boards of Trustees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Senate 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.

Background:

- Scholarly Groups Condemn Laws Limiting Teaching on Race (New York Times, June 16, 2021)
- Texas 'critical race theory' bill limiting teaching of current events signed into law (ABC13, June 16, 2021)

- Republicans Want Federal Funding Cuts to Schools Using ‘1619 Project’—But There’s a Twist
(Education Week, June 15, 2021)
- Critical race theory battle invades school boards — with help from conservative groups
(NBC News, June 15, 2021)
- Teachers across the country protest laws restricting lessons on racism
(Washington Post, June 12, 2021)
- ‘Children deserve to be taught’: Teachers in 22 cities are planning protests over laws restricting racism lessons in schools
(USA Today, June 11, 2021)
- 'Critical Race Theory Is Simply the Latest Bogeyman.' Inside the Fight Over What Kids Learn About America's History (TIME Magazine, June 24, 2021)
- Uncovering Who Is Driving The Fight Against Critical Race Theory In Schools (LISTEN) (Fresh Air, June 24, 2021)
- How the media's helping GOP fuel critical race theory hysteria
(Press Run, June 23, 2021)
- Critical race theory has been around for decades — why’s it a powder keg now? (LISTEN)
(Marketplace, June 22, 2021)
- VIDEO: Creator of term ‘Critical Race Theory’ Kimberlé Crenshaw explains what it really is
(MSNBC/The Reid Out, June 21, 2021)
- VIDEO: The truth about ‘critical race theory’: co-founder breaks down GOP gaslight
(MSNBC/The Medhi Hasan Show, June 20, 2021)
- Fox’s anti-“critical race theory” parents are also GOP activists
(Media Matters, June 17, 2021)
- Critical Race Theory: What It Means for America and Why It Has Sparked Debate
(Wall Street Journal, June 17, 2021)
- Why are states lining up to ban critical race theory?
(University World News, June 12, 2021)
- The New York Times’ Culture-War Definition of Free Speech
(Melissa Gira Grant, The New Republic, June 8, 2021)
- Guest Blog: Where Does the Bizarre Hysteria About ‘Critical Race Theory’ Come From? Follow the Money!
(Inside Higher Ed, June 3, 2021)
- Opinion: Why Conservatives Really Fear Critical Race Theory
(Christine Emba, The Washington Post, May 26, 2021)
- (VIDEO) What critical race theory is really about
(CNN/Don Lemon Tonight, May 17, 2021)