

Franklin Senate Resolution Defending Academic Freedom to Teach About Race and Gender Justice and Critical Race Theory

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

WHEREAS the [Board of Regents Policy Manual](#) (6.5 Freedom of Expression) affirms the importance of freedom of expression to “promote open ideas and academic freedom,” and the [University of Georgia Statutes](#) (Article X, Section 5) emphasize Faculty’s freedom from institutional censorship, discipline or reprisal.

WHEREAS [The American Association of University Professors’ 1940](#) statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure notes that the common good, which Universities represent, rests on the “free search for truth and its free exposition.”

WHEREAS primary responsibility for the curriculum rests on the faculty of each department, college, school or institute as stated in the [Academic Affairs Policy Manual](#) (Section 2.04-3).

WHEREAS these legislative proposals vary but all seek to prohibit or restrict curriculum on what they call “divisive concepts” in the teaching and education of students.

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 how discrimination based on race and gender form systemic barriers to realizing a multiracial democracy 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 University of Georgia’s mission is to build character by requiring critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and leadership through social responsibility.

WHEREAS President Morehead’s Archnews email of June 1, 2020 addressing the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery stated “let us move forward in seeking racial justice by engaging in thoughtful listening and constructive dialogue, showing care and

understanding, and by demonstrating our ongoing commitment to do better while working together for a more united and just world.”

WHEREAS the Franklin Senate endorsed the demands of the [Beyond Baldwin Student Group](#) by passing a [statement](#) on Dec. 8, 2020 supporting the importance of dismantling systemic barriers to racial and social justice.

WHEREAS in a nation that has for centuries struggled with issues of racial and gender inequity and injustice, many students do not have adequate knowledge of the history and the policies that contributed to inequities in our own time.

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Franklin College Faculty Senate affirms that faculty authority over university curriculum and academic freedom is a foundational principle of the university.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Franklin College Faculty Senate affirms that external pressure to restrict academic freedom is antithetical to the mission of the university, and that it is the duty of faculty to resist pressure to restrict our intellectual freedom inquiry in our teaching.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Franklin College Faculty Senate calls upon President Morehead and Provost Hu to affirm that they stand united with the faculty in opposition to external pressures to restrict faculty authority over curriculum, including matters related to racial, gender, and social justice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate stands with our K-12 colleagues throughout the country who may be affected by restrictive legislation which limits academic freedom in the teaching of U.S. history and civics education.

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

(Marketplace, June 23, 2021) · Critical race theory has been around for decades — why's it a powder keg now? ([LISTEN](#))

(MSN, June 22, 2021) · VIDEO: Creator of term 'Critical Race Theory' Kimberlé Crenshaw explains what it is ([WATCH](#))

(The Nation, March 30, 2022): 'Across the Country, Faculty Fight to Defend Academic Freedom'. ([READ](#))