

Resolution Supporting Faculty Autonomy in Scholarly Work Regarding Critical Race Theory and Other Aspects of Bias, Discrimination and Social Justice.

Approved by the Research, Scholarship & the Creative Arts Committee of the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc DEI Committee, and the Faculty Senate Executive Council, May 2022

WHEREAS, state legislatures are introducing proposals across the United States that target academic discussions of racism and other aspects of bias and discrimination in American history in schools, college, and universities; and

WHEREAS, the University Manual of the University of Vermont 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; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution and Bylaws of the Faculty Senate states that the Faculty are empowered "To review and establish policy with respect to...Academic freedom including rights and responsibilities" (section 1.1.a); and

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; and

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; and

WHEREAS, educating about systemic barriers to realizing a democracy free of bias based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other aspects of human diversity should be understood as central to the active and engaged pursuit of knowledge in the twenty-first century to produce engaged and informed citizens; and

WHEREAS, UVM's Our Common Ground states, "As a just community, we unite against all forms of injustice, including, but not limited to, racism. We reject bigotry, oppression, degradation, and harassment, and we challenge injustice toward any member of our community;" and

WHEREAS, while Vermont's current legislature and governor have not sought to restrict academic freedom at the University of Vermont, Vermont is not immune from these efforts; and

WHEREAS, teaching and research regarding the diversity of human experience, equity, power and privilege represent fundamental aspects of contemporary university education, and that topics of critical importance include race and racism, anti-Semitism, religious diversity and discrimination, gender dynamics and discrimination; gender identity and expression, sexual orientation and queerness, homophobia and transphobia.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the University of Vermont Faculty Senate supports teaching, research, and scholarship in these and related fields, including critical race theory, and opposes censorship and the suppression of scholarly inquiry and dialog; and

THAT the Faculty Senate of the University of Vermont 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, or any aspect of human diversity and discrimination, and will stand firm against encroachment on faculty authority by the legislature or the Board of Trustees; and

THAT the Faculty Senate of UVM stands with our K-12 colleagues throughout the country who may be affected by this pernicious legislation; and

THAT the Faculty 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 and Universities, issued on June 6, 2021.