

**RESOLUTION ON DEFENDING ACADEMIC FREEDOM TO TEACH ABOUT RACE
AND GENDER JUSTICE, AND CRITICAL RACE THEORY**

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; and

WHEREAS [NDCC Chapter 15-10.4](#), [SBHE Policy 401.1](#) and [NDSU Policy 325](#) affirm the importance of academic freedom to the proper functioning of universities, in line with the American Association of University Professors' [1940 statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#), by virtue of which faculty have responsibility for the curriculum; and

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

WHEREAS educating about systemic racism, sexism, and gender discrimination - subjects considered divisive, difficult, controversial, or challenging in proposed or enacted state legislative bills - is critical to the active and engaged pursuit of knowledge necessary to produce engaged and informed citizens in a multiracial democracy; and

WHEREAS legislation preventing these subjects and topics from inclusion in university instructional curricula poses a threat to continued institutional and program accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission and/or other accrediting bodies; and

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;” and

WHEREAS [NDSU’s statement on Diversity and Inclusion](#) affirms that “The NDSU community prioritizes and values diversity and inclusion. We take collective responsibility for ensuring a sense of belonging, respect, and justice that support the success of each person;” and

WHEREAS the [NDSU’s Strategic Plan for 2021-2026](#) designates *Diversity, Inclusivity, and Respect* as its first goal under which the institution aspires to “Create and maintain an open and collegial environment to promote inclusivity and diversity as a cornerstone of education, research, and outreach;” and

WHEREAS a recent [North Dakota United poll](#) found that an increasing number of K-12 teachers have considered or are already leaving the profession, as they [experience pressure from politicians to teach in “less controversial” ways](#).

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate steadfastly upholds the principles of academic freedom and the independence essential for institutions of higher learning in allowing for students and faculty to explore and educate themselves on any topic deemed of interest to students and faculty.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate resolutely rejects any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate university curriculum on any content, including matters related to racial and social justice, and will stand firm against such encroachment on faculty authority.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate stands with our K-12 colleagues throughout the state of North Dakota and the United States who may be affected by this harmful legislation when they seek to teach the truth from diverse perspectives in U.S. history and civics education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED 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 & Universities, endorsed by over seventy organizations, and issued on June 16, 2021.

Adopted by the NDSU Faculty Senate on February 14, 2022.