

## Faculty Senate Resolution

RE: Resolution: Defending Academic Freedom to Teach About Race

Date: December 9, 2021

### RATIONALE:

**WHEREAS** the [mission of College of DuPage](#) is to “be a center for excellence in teaching, learning, and cultural experiences by providing accessible, affordable, and comprehensive education,” valuing equity and seeking to “reflect and meet the educational needs of the residents of our large multicultural district”;

**WHEREAS** the [college's institutional philosophy](#) recognizes “the need for freedom of expression” and promotes “dialogue and tolerance on issues supporting the common good”;

**WHEREAS** [College of DuPage values diversity](#), and seeks “to reflect and meet the educational needs of the residents of our large, multicultural district. To this end, we recognize the need for freedom of expression and that facts, arguments, and judgments should be presented, tested, debated, challenged, deliberated, and probed for their objective truth in the marketplace of ideas. Every College individual has a duty to exercise his or her own individual judgment; and to permit others to exercise that same freedom of conscience. We recognize the importance of embracing individual differences and cultures and value the contributions made to the College by people of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We affirm our role as a catalyst for promoting dialogue and tolerance on issues supporting the common good”;

**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 Contract affirms the importance of academic freedom to the proper functioning of the college;

**WHEREAS** the American Association of University Professors’ [1940 statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#) notes the role of academic freedom in promoting the common good;

**WHEREAS** faculty have responsibility for the curriculum at the college, as stated in Section D6.1 of the Faculty Contract;

**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** in a nation that has for centuries struggled with issues of racial inequity and injustice, many students do not have adequate knowledge of the history and policies that contributed to racial inequities, the college has a responsibility and opportunity to help build equity and social justice;

**WHEREAS** state legislative proposals banning the teaching of “divisive” topics are indeterminate, subjective, and chill 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 should be

understood as central to the active and engaged pursuit of knowledge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to produce engaged and informed citizens;

RESOLUTION:

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Faculty Senate resolutely rejects any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate college curriculum on any matter, including matters related to race and U.S. history, and will stand firm against encroachment on academic freedom.

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

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Senate calls upon the college president and provost to affirm that they reject any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate college curriculum on any matter, including matters related to race and U.S. history, and will stand firm against encroachment on academic freedom 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.