

Faculty Senate Resolution

RE: Resolution: Defending Academic Freedom to Teach About Sex, Gender, and Sexuality

Date: November 17, 2022

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 individual at the College 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, gender identities, and sexual orientations. We affirm our role as a catalyst for promoting dialogue and tolerance on issues supporting the common good”;

WHEREAS state and local legislative proposals are being introduced across the United States that target academic discussions of sex, gender, sexuality, and related issues in American society 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 the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) issued a [statement on academic freedom and transphobia](#) (November 22 2021), reaffirming the Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students, which states that “The freedom to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom, on the campus, and in the larger community.” To this end, the AAUP recognizes “an ethical and political imperative” by faculty and institutions “to honor colleagues’ and students’ choice of name and pronoun as an issue that falls well beyond the purview of academic debate”;

WHEREAS the American Library Association (ALA) has issued statements [on the freedom to read](#) (June 30, 2004) and [on book censorship](#) (November 29, 2021). These statements defend the “freedom to think or believe as one chooses, the freedom to express one’s thoughts and beliefs without fear or retaliation, and the right to access information without restriction.” Noting that “the unfettered exchange of ideas is essential to the preservation of a free and democratic society,” the ALA declares that “pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and culture depend.” To this end, the ALA recognizes that limiting the freedom to read represents “a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy”;

WHEREAS the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE) has issued [a statement opposing](#) “any attempt to force the removal of materials from school libraries. We strongly condemn recent efforts, by force or intimidation to remove works that focus on or document the experiences of members of the LGBTQIA+ or BIPOC

communities. We oppose censorship and any effort that limits or denies access to materials to coerce belief, suppress opinion or punish those whose expression does not conform to a singular point-of-view of history, politics, or religion”;

WHEREAS the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), in [a joint statement](#) with the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE), and the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), has expressed opposition to censorship that threatens teachers’ “freedom to prepare students to become future members of a democratic society who can engage in making responsible and informed contributions and decisions about our world.” As the National Council for Teachers of English has noted in its [Guidelines for Affirming Gender Diversity through ELA Curriculum and Pedagogy](#), “In order to include, support, and celebrate our trans and gender diverse students and families, schools must confront and amend exclusive and antiquated policies, procedures, and pedagogies”;

WHEREAS in a nation that has struggled with issues of inequality by sex, gender, and sexuality, many students do not have adequate knowledge of the history and policies that contributed to these inequities, nor have they had the opportunity to see themselves reflected in academic class content, the college has a responsibility and opportunity to help build equity and social justice;

WHEREAS state legislative proposals and local library board proposals to ban the inclusion of classroom and library content on sex, gender, and sexuality are indeterminate, subjective, chill the capacity of educators to explore a wide variety of topics. Moreover, these proposals are based on subjective criteria that conflict with the goals of education and the development of essential critical thinking skills;

WHEREAS educating about systemic barriers to realizing a society free of barriers by sex, gender, and sexuality should be understood as central to the active and engaged pursuit of knowledge in the 21st 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 or library resources on any matter, including matters related to sex, gender, and sexuality, and will stand firm against encroachment on academic freedom.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate stands with our public library, K-12, and higher education colleagues throughout the country, and in particular District 502, who may be affected by this pernicious legislation.

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 sex, gender, and sexuality, 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 statements by the AAUP, ALA, AISLE, NCSTA, and others on the freedom to read and on book censorship.