

TO: Coastal Carolina Faculty Senate
FROM: AAUP-CCU Executive Committee
RE: Resolution: Defending Academic Freedom to Teach About Race and Gender Justice and Critical Race Theory
Date: 24 February 2022

RATIONALE:

WHEREAS state legislative proposals are being introduced across the United States that seek to limit academic discussions of racism and related issues in American history in schools, colleges and universities;

WHEREAS bills [H. 4325](#), [H. 4799](#), and [H. 4605](#) currently being considered by the South Carolina House Committee on Education and Public Works are directed at limiting various aspects of curricular content in higher education curriculum – including Critical Race Theory (CRT), gender, and LGBTQI related issues;

WHEREAS the Coastal Carolina University Faculty Manual (5.2.1) affirms the importance of academic freedom to the proper functioning of universities, and has adopted the two following statements from the American Association of University Professors: “[Freedom in the Classroom](#),” and the [AAUP’s 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#);

WHEREAS faculty have responsibility for the curriculum at their universities, as affirmed by the [AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#) (2.b);

WHEREAS addressing systemic barriers to realizing a multiracial democracy based on race, gender, or sexual orientation, should be understood as central to the active and engaged pursuit of knowledge in our time;

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”;

WHEREAS the aforementioned document declares that, “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 [Coastal Carolina University Mission](#) affirms a commitment to “create a diverse and dynamic student-centered environment”;

WHEREAS [Coastal Carolina University is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion](#);

WHEREAS [Coastal Carolina University's Strategic Plan](#) established accessibility, inclusion and diversity as one of its six strategic goals;

WHEREAS the [South Carolina Commission on Higher Education Statement in Support of Academic Integrity and Responsibility](#), which was signed by CCU's President Michael T. Benson on February 3, 2022, values and honors viewpoint diversity, academic integrity and responsibility for both faculty and students, intellectual honesty, and expects South Carolina's public institutions of higher education to embrace and protect these principles;

WHEREAS in a nation that has for centuries struggled with issues of racial inequity and injustice, many students do not have adequate knowledge of BIPOC and LGBTQI history and the policies that contributed to inequities, Coastal Carolina University has a responsibility and opportunity to help build equity and social justice.

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate resolutely rejects any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate university curriculum on any matter, including matters related to racial, gender and social justice, and will stand firm against encroachment on faculty authority by the legislature or Boards of Trustees.

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Senate calls upon our University leadership to reject any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate university curriculum on any matter, including matters related to racial, gender and social justice, and will stand firm against encroachment on curricular matters by the legislature or Boards of Trustees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 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.