UNMC Student Senate Resolution

Sponsored by Hannah Tandon, UNMC Student Senate Vice President

Common document with ASUN, UNO Student Government, UNK Student Government

On Academic Freedom and Regent Pillen’s Resolution Addressing Critical Race Theory

WHEREAS, the “University of Nebraska – through its four campuses – strives to be the best public university in the country as measured by the impact we have on our people and our state, and – through them – the world”; \(^1\) and,

WHEREAS, “the University of Nebraska at Kearney [UNK] is a public, residential university committed to be one of the nation’s premier undergraduate institutions with excellent graduate education, scholarship, and public service.” Furthermore, UNK values fostering Learning that offers “a climate of rigorous inquiry, unfettered exchange of ideas, and mutual respect”; ensuring a “student centered” Learning Environment; prioritizing its People through an “inclusive environment that affords equitable access and opportunity”; and Responsible Stewardship; \(^2\) and,

WHEREAS, the University of Nebraska at Lincoln’s [UNL] mission “as Nebraska’s only land-grant, comprehensive, research institution...is to teach, to do research, and to serve Nebraskans.” Furthermore, UNL values Learning that “prepares students for lifetime success and leadership”; Excellence; Achievement; Diversity “of ideas and people”; Engagement “with academic, business, and civic communities throughout Nebraska and the world”; Research “and creative activity that inform teaching, foster discovery, and contribute to economic prosperity and our quality of life”; and Stewardship; \(^3\) and,

WHEREAS, the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s [UNMC] mission is to “lead the world in transforming lives to create a healthy future for all individuals and communities through premier educational programs, innovative research and extraordinary patient care.” Furthermore, UNMC values Innovation; Teamwork by “respect[ing] diversity and one another”; Excellence by striving for quality; Accountability; Courage to “make tough decisions and have no fear of failure in the pursuit of excellence”; and Healing; \(^4\) and,

WHEREAS, the University of Nebraska at Omaha [UNO], “as both a Metropolitan University of distinction and a Carnegie Doctoral Research institution...transforms and improves the quality of life locally, nationally, and globally.” Furthermore, UNO values Excellence by “focusing on exceptional education, groundbreaking research, and the life-long success of our students and alumni”; Engagement; Inclusion through “creating an environment that is welcoming, open,
and diverse...”); **Discovery** by “fostering a culture of critical thinking and creativity and upholding the rigorous pursuit and exchange of knowledge”; **Integrity**; and **Maverick Spirit** by “exemplifying strength, resilience, curiosity, independent thinking, and entrepreneurism in our everyday deeds and collective endeavors”; ⁵ and,

**WHEREAS**, “the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, a body corporate created by the people of Nebraska through the Constitution, has constitutional and statutory power for general supervision over all elements of the University, control and direction of all expenditures, and for general operating policies of the University”; ⁶ and,

**WHEREAS**, a resolution that opposes “any imposition of Critical Race Theory [CRT] in curriculum” is planned to be introduced to the Board of Regents by Regent Jim Pillen at the August 13, 2021, Board of Regents meeting; ⁷ and,

**WHEREAS**, according to the American Bar Association, CRT is “a practice of interrogating the role of race and racism in society” that “critiques how the social construction of race and institutionalized racism perpetuate a racial caste system that relegates people of color to the bottom tiers”; ⁸ and,

**WHEREAS**, The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska dedicates itself to promoting and honoring academic freedom in Bylaw 4.2, which reads: “the Board [of Regents] reaffirms belief in, pledges support of, and directs all segments of the University community to sustain and follow the foregoing principles of Academic Freedom”; ⁹ and,

**WHEREAS**, on July 21, 2021, the President and Chancellors of the University of Nebraska released a statement affirming the University leadership’s intention to “vigorously protect and defend academic freedom at the University of Nebraska”. Additionally, they shared their “significant concerns” regarding Regent Pillen’s resolution and the effect it may have on students, faculty, and staff; ¹⁰ and,

**WHEREAS**, Regent Pillen’s resolution violates the Board of Regents’ binding commitment to academic freedom by attempting to regulate curriculum; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Student Body Presidents of the University of Nebraska believe that the classrooms on our four respective campuses are the quintessential environment for the rigorous pursuit and exchange of knowledge to occur. Furthermore, we believe that higher education, and
the University of Nebraska specifically, should foster a culture of and promote critical, independent thinking; and,

WHEREAS, the Student Body Presidents of the four University of Nebraska campuses believe that our world-class faculty are best positioned to determine curriculum and establish space for critical, independent thinking.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Regent Pillen’s resolution undermines the mission statements and values of the four University of Nebraska campuses as it violates academic and creative freedom, decreases opportunities for critical and independent thinking, and therefore, hinders the University’s ability to provide a premier education; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Student Government of the University of Nebraska Medical Center strongly opposes Regent Pillen’s resolution; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the aforementioned governing body beseeches the Board of Regents to reject Regent Pillen’s resolution at the August 13th Board of Regents meeting.

Authored by:
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1 University of Nebraska. n.d. Get to Know Nebraska. Retrieved 25 Jul 2021 from: https://nebraska.edu/get-to-know-nebraska


This resolution was passed and accepted on 7/29/2021.

Signed:

[Signature]

Taylor Kratochvil, 7/31/2021
UNMC Student Senate President