

# The Ohio State University Resolution to Support Educators' Rights to Teach About Racism

*Caroline Clark (for the Faculty Council Ad-hoc Committee on Teaching About Racism) introduced a resolution to the Faculty Council on November 4, 2021, where it passed, then to the Senate Steering Committee where it passed, and now to the University Senate.*

**Whereas** The Ohio State University has enriched society since 1870 with its founding principle of “Education for Citizenship,” as literally inscribed on our official seal “*Disciplina in civitatem*,” and

**Whereas** the faculty of Ohio State continue to maintain this time-tested core value and the Ohio State engages in a Shared Values Initiative that aims to “reinforce our ethical culture and live our shared values to better advance the university’s core work of teaching, learning, research, and service,” and

**Whereas** most recently (2021), these included five core values of our land-grant institution: (1) Excellence and Impact; (2) Diversity and Innovation; (3) Inclusion and Equity; (4) Care and Compassion; and (5) Integrity and Respect, and

**Whereas** these core values echo the commitments asserted by President Kristina M. Johnson in her 2021 Investiture address, which included intentional efforts to build an anti-racist community, and

**Whereas** these core values and commitments have come under attack with congressional representatives proposing legislation to cut federal funding for schools that use lessons or curricula based on the *New York Times* “1619 Project” ([Ujifusa, 2021](#)), and

**Whereas** 27 additional states have proposed or passed legislation to severely limit K-12 and university educators’ ability to teach historical facts, culture, and race, and

**Whereas** these measures ostensibly aim to regulate critical race theory (CRT), a legal theory of race and society, a body of scholarship that is often misunderstood, falsely identified as widespread, and rarely taught in K-12 schools, and

**Whereas**, “CRT” has become a short-hand for all anti-racist pedagogy and an easy, misapplied way to vilify it ([Education Week, 2021](#)), and

**Whereas** this legislation undermines the core values of OSU, and puts faculty members, graduate students, contingent instructors, and K-12 educators at risk, and

**Whereas** for faculty in higher education, these amorphous mandates against “divisive teaching” ([Ohio House Bill 322](#); [Ohio House Bill 327](#)) are antithetical to and contradict the dual principles of academic freedom and academic responsibility, and

**Whereas** alarming movements across the country related to these issues are occurring, as in [Texas](#), where educators were directed to teach “both sides” of the Holocaust, in compliance with a bill curbing the teaching of history; in [Georgia](#), where the university system enacted new moves to remove the protections of tenure; and in [Ohio](#), where the state board of education repealed its earlier anti-racism resolution, and

**Whereas** these mandates have had a chilling effect on both K-12 and higher education, leading to harassment from the misinformed or antisocial elements, and questionable loss of employment, and

**Whereas** the Ohio State community stands in strong support of K-12 teachers, who are preparing our future students with the breadth of knowledge to succeed at our university, and

**Whereas** the national focus on these issues is critical and requires clarity from this faculty.

**Therefore, Let It Be Resolved** that the elected faculty senators offer this resolution in support of Ohio educator’s rights to discuss and ["teach truth"](#) about systemic racism in their K-12 and higher education classrooms independent of those who wish to rewrite history and/or to ignore the realities of our present. There are no “two sides” to racism any more than there are two sides to the Holocaust or the roundness of the earth; there are only truths that must be taught well so that we might ensure better futures for all citizens.

**Let it Further Be Resolved** that, given the founding principles of Ohio State, our Shared Values, and our commitment to anti-racism articulated by colleagues and our president, which this faculty endorses, we urge the University Senate to resolve:

- To advocate for and support faculty members, graduate students, contingent instructors, and K-12 educators in teaching truth about racism—including the systemic and ideological racism that is foundational to institutions in the United States—and to

defend educational institutions against the assault on truth that “anti-divisive” teaching bills, resolutions, and policies represent; and

- To encourage the Ohio State community to commit to and actively follow the recommendations put forth by the Shared Values Initiative and by President Johnson in the face of legislation that would obstruct university initiatives to create a more just and equitable society; and
- To actively educate and mentor faculty members, graduate students, and contingent instructors on the principles of academic freedom and their rights to teach truth about systemic, structural, and ideological racism (see, e.g., [1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#)); and
- To provide guidance to college and K-12 administrators on how to create support structures within their institutions to enable all university and K-12 educators to engage in anti-racist teaching and pedagogies for social justice without fear of repercussions from within or outside their places of work (see, e.g., [Understanding the Attacks on Critical Race Theory](#)); and
- To respond with integrity to arguments, proposed bills, and other efforts designed to curb the rights of K-12 and university educators to teach the truth about systemic, structural, and ideological racism. These truths are foundational to the free society valued by the citizens of the United States.

#### *Faculty Council Ad-hoc Committee on Teaching About Racism*

- Dr. Caroline T. Clark, University Senator, Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, College of Education and Human Ecology
- Dr. Ken Lee, Chair of the University Senate Faculty Council, Professor, Dept of Food Science and Technology, FAES.
- Dr. Sara Watson, University Senator, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, College of Arts and Sciences
- Dr. Harpreet Singh, University Senator, Associate Professor, Department of Physiology and Cell Biology, College of Medicine
- Dr. Jared Gardner, University Senator, Professor, Department of English & Director of the Humanities Collaboratory, College of Arts and Sciences
- Dr. C. Alexander Grieco, University Senate and Faculty Council Alternate Member, Assistant Professor, Department of Biomedical Education and Anatomy
- Dr. Elizabeth Hewitt, University Senator, Professor, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of English, College of Arts and Sciences

- Dr. Melvin Pascall, University Senate and Faculty Council, Professor, Dept of Food Science and Technology, FAES.
- Dr. Jill Galvan, University Senator, Associate Professor, Department of English, College of Arts and Sciences
- Prof. Gladys Mitchell, University Senator - Alternate, Associate Professor, College of Optometry
- Dr. Donna Y. Ford, University Senator, Distinguished Professor of Education and Human Ecology, Kirwan Institute Faculty Affiliate, Center for Latin American Studies Faculty Affiliate, Department of Educational Studies
- Dr. Subbu Kumarappan, University Senator, Ohio State ATI, CFAES

## References

American Association of University Professors (n.d.). 1940 Statement of principles on academic freedom and tenure. [1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#)

*Education Week* (2021). Map: Where Critical Race Theory is under attack [Infographic]. Edweek.org. <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/map-where-critical-race-theory-is-under-attack/2021/06>

[López](#), F., Molnar, A., Johnson, R., Patterson, A., Ward, L., & Kumashiro, K. (2021). *Understanding the attacks on Critical Race Theory*. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/crt>.

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