

Joint Statement from Faculty and Administration on Efforts to Restrict Education about Racism and American History

Approved by Faculty Senate on February 2, 2022

RATIONALE:

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; and

WHEREAS, the Ohio legislature has similarly proposed in HB 327 to ban academic discussions of racism and related issues in American history in schools, colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, our Faculty Personnel Policies (3344-11-01 through 3344-16-14), often referred to as the Green Book affirms the importance of academic freedom to the proper functioning of universities, citing the American Association of University Professors' [1940 statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#) and our Faculty Senate's "Resolution of the Faculty Senate on Freedom of Expression and Tenure" (October 31, 2018); and

WHEREAS, faculty of each college and the Faculty Senate have responsibility for the curriculum at Cleveland State University, as stated in Bylaws of the faculty senate 3344-13-01; and

WHEREAS, the term "divisive" is indeterminate, subjective, and chills 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; and

WHEREAS, educating about systemic barriers to realizing a multiracial democracy based on race or gender should be understood as central to the active and engaged pursuit of knowledge in the 21st century to produce engaged and informed citizens; and

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"; and

WHEREAS, the mission of Cleveland State University is for: "Empowering students, creating knowledge, engaging communities, shaping our world," and our vision is to "be a nationally recognized and student-focused public research institution that provides accessible, affordable, and engaged learning

faculty, and staff from within and outside the region, thereby enhancing our distinctive and inclusive living, learning, and working environments"; and

WHEREAS, the

Background:

Scholarly Groups Condemn Laws Limiting Teaching on Race

(New York Times, June 16, 2021)

Texas 'critical race theory' bill limiting teaching of current events signed into law

(ABC13, June 16, 2021)

Republicans Want Federal Funding Cuts to Schools Using '1619 Project'—But There's a Twist

(Education Week, June 15, 2021)

Critical race theory battle invades school boards — with help from conservative groups

(NBC News, June 15, 2021)

Teachers across the country protest laws restricting lessons on racism

(Washington Post, June 12, 2021)