

University Senate
Twamley Hall, Room 201
264 Centennial Dr Stop 8382
Grand Forks, ND 58202-8382
UND.edu/university-senate

University of North Dakota Resolution on Defending Academic Freedom

RATIONALE:

WHEREAS the North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) [Chapter 15-10.4](#) and the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) [Policy 401.1](#) affirm the importance of academic freedom to the proper functioning of universities, in line with the American Association of University Professors' [1940 statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#), by virtue of which faculty, who are experts in their respective disciplines, have responsibility for curriculum; and

WHEREAS state legislative proposals are being introduced across the United States that target academic discussions of subjects considered divisive, difficult, controversial, or challenging in schools, colleges, and universities; and

WHEREAS educating about our nation's history of racism, sexism, and gender discrimination is critical to the active and engaged pursuit of knowledge necessary to produce engaged and informed citizens in a multiracial democracy; and

WHEREAS failing to teach the history of racism, sexism, and gender discrimination is manifestly an incomplete and therefore misleading account of our nation's history that would tend to impede progress on equity and justice; and

WHEREAS institutions of higher education have a responsibility and opportunity to help build equity and advance justice through evidence-based curriculum; and

WHEREAS diversity and an understanding and appreciation of diverse people, experiences, and ideas are part of the [mission and core values of the University of North Dakota \(UND\)](#); and

WHEREAS legislation preventing evidence-based teaching of race, gender, and other topics from university instructional curricula poses a threat to continued institutional and program accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission and/or other accrediting bodies; and

WHEREAS North Dakota is currently facing a [workforce shortage of K-12 teachers](#) and a recent [North Dakota United poll](#) found that an increasing number of K-12 teachers have considered or are already leaving the profession, as they [experience pressure to not teach "controversial" topics](#); and

WHEREAS the K-12 environment is relevant to UND as it delivers dual credit courses and has Teacher Education programs that, by design, prepare future teachers within the K-12 system and state legislation banning discussions of race, gender, and other topics works against campus efforts to recruit and retain students in the state; and

WHEREAS the education received in K-12 provides the foundation for higher education and directly impacts the nature and quality of learning that students can achieve at the college/university level; and

WHEREAS UND's University Senate acknowledges and respects existing constraints on speech that is illegal, defamatory, threatening, harassing, or that impedes the work of the ND University System;

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UND University Senate steadfastly upholds the principles of academic freedom and the independence essential for institutions of higher learning in allowing for students and faculty to explore and educate themselves on any topic deemed of value to students and faculty.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UND University Senate resolutely rejects any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate university curriculum including matters related to race, gender, and other topics.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UND University Senate stands with our K-12 colleagues throughout the state of North Dakota and other U.S. States who may be affected by restrictive legislation when they teach from diverse evidence-based perspectives in U.S. history and civics education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UND University Senate affirms the [Joint Statement on Efforts to Restrict Education about Racism](#), authored by the American Association of University Professors (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.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UND University Senate affirms the statement on [Open Academic Inquiry and Vigorous Debate](#) released by the American Council on Education (ACE) and more than 90 other higher education groups, issued on March 3, 2022; and the Resolution on Defending Academic Freedom adopted by the North Dakota University System Council of College Faculties on March 1, 2022.

Adopted by the UND University Senate on April 07, 2022.