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Faculty Senate Resolution on the ANTI-CRI Bills Before the Alabama Legislature

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

FACULTY SENATE

RESOLUTION FROM THE FACULTY SENATE ON THE ANTI-CRT BILLS BEFORE THE ALABAMA LEGISLATURE

WHEREAS the Alabama State legislature is currently discussing four bills that variously restrict, prohibit or dictate how race, gender, sexuality, socio-economic class, the history of slavery in the US, capitalism and other subjects deemed “divisive” are taught in the State’s K-12 public schools and public universities; and,

WHEREAS some of the same bills establish a penalty–termination of employment– for faculty who refuse to allow the state to dictate the content of their teaching and/or research on race, sex and other subjects that the state legislators term “divisive concepts”; and,

WHEREAS the authors of the bills may be of the opinion that the discussion of race, gender, and sexuality is intrinsically “divisive,” evidence shows that the study and discussion of these so-called “divisive concepts” is essential to research and education in the humanities, social sciences, sciences, and medicine. Indeed, they are central to the University’s research mission to produce knowledge that increases our understanding of the community and the world in which our students live. Consequently, the legislative proposals serve as educational gag orders designed to prohibit faculty from introducing specific subjects, ideas, or arguments in their classrooms or research; and,

WHEREAS the University of South Alabama has a goal of advancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) as stated in the USA Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion (May, 2017); and,

WHEREAS the proposed bills are a direct partisan assault on diversity and equity work of the university and are likely to disproportionately affect faculty, staff and students of color as well as other underrepresented populations on campus; and,

WHEREAS over 70 organizations, including the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) have issued a joint statement that announces 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” and concludes that “under principles of academic freedom... professors are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject. Educators, not politicians, should make decisions about teaching and learning.”

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate opposes the attempt of any external body to restrict or dictate university curriculum in any matter, including those related to racial and social justice. The faculty will stand firm against the enactment or enforcement of this type of legislation by the legislature, university administration, or the Board of Trustees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate stands with our colleagues in K-12 public education in Alabama who confront the same censorship and threat of punishment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate calls upon President Bonner to join the faculty in opposition to any state or external body's attempts to dictate university curricula or research on any matter, including those relating to racial or social justice; and to stand firm against encroachment on faculty authority and academic freedom by the legislature or the Board of Trustees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that should any of the bills move forward in the legislature, the faculty urges President Bonner to issue a public statement opposing the Bills, as well as a public appeal to Governor Ivey to veto the legislation.

The Resolution from the Faculty Senate on the Anti-CRT Bills Before the Alabama Legislature was passed by the Faculty Senate at the January 19, 2022 meeting.