

AAUP-LA Resolution on Academic Freedom to Teach, Research, and Perform Service on
“Divisive” Social Issues
4.24.2023 B

Whereas state legislative proposals are being introduced across the United States that target academic discussions of and activity centering around activities related to critical race theory; diversity, equity, and inclusion; or transformative social emotional learning, and other “divisive” topics;

Whereas the American Association of University Professors’ developed and presented a [1940 statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#); the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) [stands in favor of free speech and academic freedom](#); the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) [champions free speech in all forms on university campuses](#); and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) [supports academic freedom and tenure](#);

Whereas faculty have responsibility for the curriculum at their universities, [as stated by the AAUP](#), university, and system boards; and these courses and programs are regularly reviewed by university, system, board of regents, and national accrediting agencies, to ensure that content is balanced, modern, and discipline-focused;

Whereas In order to better meet the mission of places of higher learning to prepare students to help the citizenry of Louisiana to become highly qualified, well educated, critical thinkers, and strong resilient community leaders;

Whereas some political parties in the state have gone on record requesting that state legislators make and pass laws defining what will not be allowed to occur in classrooms, research, service, and activities within higher education because it might be considered “divisive”;

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;

Whereas educating about systemic barriers to realizing a multiracial and gender diverse democracy 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” now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Louisiana Conference of the American Association of University Professors

1. resolutely rejects any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate university curriculum on any matter, including matters related to racial and social justice and other “divisive” issues, and will stand firm against encroachment on faculty authority;
2. stands with our K-12 colleagues throughout the country who may be affected by such legislation when they seek to teach the truth in U.S. history and civics education;
3. encourages universities and systems, including administrators and governing boards, in the state of Louisiana to affirm that they reject any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate university curriculum on any matter, including matters related to racial and social justice, and will stand firm against encroachment on faculty authority; and
4. affirms the [Joint Statement on Efforts to Restrict Education about Racism](#), authored by the 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.