

Resolution in support of requiring that all students, before graduation, complete at least one for-credit course addressing race, indigeneity, ethnicity, and bias

Sponsors:

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Background:

This resolution addresses concerns raised about the Working Group-S report's recommended approach of developing a required university-wide course divided into modules of a "literacy part" and a "discipline-specific part," with the course relying heavily on video instructional materials. Although we endorse the objective of the WG-S report to "educate our students to understand that structural racism, colonialism, and injustice as well as its current manifestations have a historical and relational basis," we offer this resolution as an alternative approach to achieve that goal. This resolution supports creating a university-wide requirement for all students to take at least one course addressing race, indigeneity, ethnicity, and bias. However, the implementation of this course requirement would remain primarily in the colleges, schools, and departments, while also enabling students to enroll in one or more of the many courses already offered on these issues, as well as new courses that will be developed. This approach has the benefit of responding to the call for a university-wide educational requirement, while relying on the expertise of faculty teaching in these areas and respecting the responsibility of colleges and departments to shape their curriculum. The resolution further provides that the Faculty Senate and its committees will have an important role in supporting the colleges, schools and departments in implementing the educational requirement.

Resolution:

*Whereas* President Pollack charged the Faculty Senate to develop plans for "the creation and implementation of a for-credit, educational requirement on racism, bias and equity for all Cornell students" in her [July 2020 letter](#) to the Cornell community;

*Whereas* Working Group S (WG-S) was charged to design such a for-credit educational requirement at Cornell,

*Whereas* the Faculty Senate has received and considered the "Working Group-S Final Report to the Faculty Senate," dated April 5, 2021,

*Whereas*, in its final report, the conclusion of the WG-S's report makes it clear that the goal is to "educate our students to understand that structural racism, colonialism, and injustice as well as its current manifestations have a historical and relational basis;"

*Whereas* such a goal in a research university can only be truly achieved through the means of scholarship;

*Whereas* the faculty in each School or College at Cornell are responsible for all aspects of the curriculum and degree program requirements,

*Whereas* in developing and creating courses on structural racism, colonialism, and injustice, colleges, schools, and departments would benefit from the expertise and experience of faculty currently invested in teaching and research on those issues,

*Be it resolved* that the Faculty Senate endorses the goal stated in the Working Group-S final report, to “aspire for all Cornell students to thrive and lead in a multiracial democracy, to be critical thinkers and lifelong learners in all matter that concern race, indigeneity, ethnicity, and bias,”

*Be it further resolved* that the Faculty Senate is in favor of requiring that all students, before graduation, complete at least one for-credit course addressing race, indigeneity, ethnicity, and bias, already taught in departments and programs or newly created with the same intent,

*Be it finally resolved* that the details of the implementation of this course requirement should rest primarily in the colleges, schools, and departments, with support from the Faculty Senate through its committees such as the [Educational Policy Committee](#) and an ad hoc committee of faculty currently invested in the research on structural racism, colonialism, and injustice.