

# Senator-S Resolution Summary

## Results

The vote tallies for the Senator-S Resolution are

Yes = 49  
No = 44  
Abstain = 13  
DNV = 20

## The Resolution

This [resolution webpage](#) contains background and uploaded comments. Here is the resolution itself:

*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, including representation from Africana Studies, American Studies, American Indian and Indigenous Studies, Asian American Studies, Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and Latinx Studies.

## Voter Comments

Voters were able to upload comments on their ballot. Below are the comments so obtained.

Comments from Buz Barstow (Faculty Senator for Biological and Environmental Engineering), after consultation with department faculty and staff (particularly Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee) These comments are the same as those posted for our vote on the Faculty Education Requirement, but we believe are important for this vote as well. We first want to emphasize our support for the recommendations of anti-racism initiative working groups. In consultation with my colleagues in Biological and Environmental Engineering, we are voting yes for the faculty, staff and student education proposals. We believe that racial reconciliation and restoring a sense of common good and community is the way of the future, both in the United States and globally. We strongly believe that doing nothing (voting no) is not an option. We also strongly believe in the possibility of education, if done right, to move minds, and make the world a better place. If these proposals create rational, well-meaning dialog and action, they will be succeeding (and are already doing this). The turbulent summer of 2020 and the debate around the anti-racism initiative has created an unprecedented degree of engagement with our colleagues that we believe bodes well for the future. We have had some of the most substantive faculty senate meetings on almost any subject considered. However, just because this trend exists, it does not mean that any particular strategy for achieving racial reconciliation and opportunity for all regardless of background is the right one. While we believe a right strategy undeniably exists, we think that humility in the face of this challenge is essential for success. As of today, no faculty or student body exists that fully reflects the diversity of the United States or the world. This means we don't yet have a workable strategy to achieve this. This means we need to constantly experiment and constantly improve with training, hiring and promotion, funding, and personal interaction. We advise that the Center for Racial Justice evaluate the educational process from the outset. There is a strong, and we believe legitimate, fear amongst our colleagues that mandatory training, if done poorly could have a counter-productive effect on our community. It could unproductively use valuable student, faculty and staff time, generate cynicism, while doing nothing to build a sense of shared community. We are worried that this will be the end of diversity education, not the beginning. We believe these concerns are particularly acute with regards to staff training that has already begun to roll out. Here, time commitments are far larger than those envisioned by the faculty senate. While much to the credit of the CALS staff there has been no outright hostility, we believe this has the potential to be overly burdensome, patronizing, and ostracizing and to widen pre-existing political divisions that are found in the wider country. Given these concerns, we want to encourage the higher ups to strongly consider the use of persuasion first, rather than coercion first to educate the faculty, staff and students. We also advise caution in the roll out of educational measures, monitoring of their effectiveness, wide choice of material, monitoring of time commitment, and limits on the duration of any mandatory measures (say 10 to 15 years). We hope the educational tools developed are used to address systemic racism much in the same way that Title IX has been working to address sexual harassment, with the evolution of both rules and ways of teaching people appropriate behavior.

Once again, I am confused by the voting. I believe by voting "yes" on the directors resolution and "yes" here I am supporting the creation of a course taught by experts and available to all students as an option to fulfill an overall requirement.

The content of the "education" is not specified

I accept the argument of the directors of units like Africana, FGSS, AIISP, etc., that they are the appropriate groups to deliver this instruction.

<p>I feel a more University-wide perspective on developing an education requirement curriculum would take us further, as per the President's request. I do support using and networking with all of the College and department resources and courses that currently exist, to inform the further work.</p>
<p>Please note that this alternative resolution was arrived at in collaboration with colleagues across the university. I would add that our new antiracism center will also serve as a resource for educational materials. Carl Franck, Physics</p>
<p>it is much better to use a combination of distribution requirements and extra training during orientation to educate students on such issues.</p>
<p>Comments: Generally supportive; thought to be an incremental change to the existing distribution requirements at least as far as Arts and Sciences and the most practical of all the options.</p>
<p>This comes closest to what I would prefer, yet I am hesitant. The existing courses should be used to the fullest. This is close to the CAS distribution requirements. I suggest it be supplemented by material produced and disseminated by the center for antiracism in a manner that is not mandatory.</p>
<p>I like that this resolution builds on existing courses and expertise.</p>
<p>I think that is a good second-choice, but that the "Directors' resolution" is better.</p>
<p>We strongly support this resolution.</p>
<p>This resolution has the benefits of advancing the goal of requiring all students to take at least one course on issues of structural racism, colonialism, and injustice, encouraging colleges/schools to add to their curricular offerings on these issues, and to involve faculty governance through the Senate and its committees (including an ad hoc committee with representation from the six units listed in the resolution).</p>
<p>My colleagues were generally not comfortable with this variant on the proposal. They do not support anything that would be mandatory, particularly at the graduate level. Rather, they endorse the idea of creating very high quality material that would attract wide interest by being of such inherent strength.</p>
<p>My understanding of this is that they propose that these courses are developed within each college only. This seems very restrictive. If there is limited scholarship on these matters within a college, then there would be no offerings. The report S is not restrictive regarding the possibility to add additional components that are college-specific.</p>
<p>Since there has been virtually no science faculty involved in this decision, I object to any requirement that adds to those already in place regarding DEI issues.</p>
<p>I don't trust any requirement which assigns an obligatory course to be taught by departments with only doctrinaire members. The essence of academic thought is that the ideas should be addressed with respect for multiple perspectives....</p>
<p>This proposal offers the best balance. It makes a virtue of the great range of scholarly expertise and teaching resources available at Cornell, and provides avenues for students to be guided to educational experiences that will address their specific disciplinary interests - for example, for students interested in careers in medicine to confront racial inequities in a public-health framework. The resulting educational experience will be more meaningful to students than a one-size-fits-all scheme.</p>
<p>ibid to my prior comment, but with the addendum that I do think that students should be exposed to these subjects,... but I think it should be partnered with the larger community, so rather than vote no and block forward movement, I'll simple get out of the way and abstain.</p>
<p>I am voting for this resolution, I would rather see a common university requirement. However, I have major objections to the "six units" proposal which would require that group to be the linchpin of implementing a university-wide requirement. They are too inflexible, dogmatic, and ideological to do this right. Accordingly, I support having the colleges take the lead.</p>
<p>The curriculum should remain in the hands of the colleges.</p>
<p>While the directors' option is intellectually respectable, this resolution, equally acceptable from the scholarly viewpoint, looks more viable practically.</p>