

UFC-F Resolution Vote Summary

Results

The vote tallies for the UFC-F Resolution are

Yes = 55
No = 46
Abstain = 5
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 an educational requirement for faculty in her [July 2020 letter](#) to the Cornell community;

Whereas the Faculty Senate discussed the working group charges and methodology at its [\(9/30/2020\) meeting](#);

Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate believes that the recommendations set forth in the [WG-F Final Report](#) are worthy of careful consideration by the President and Provost;

Be it further resolved that broad, transparent consultation with the faculty must attend any decision to implement a WG-F recommendation;

Be it finally resolved that such consultation include engagement with the Faculty Senate and whatever standing committee might be relevant, e.g., the [Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty Committee](#), the [Educational Policy Committee](#), and the [Faculty Committee on Program Review](#).

Voter Comments

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

a mandated faculty education component is key. the actual contents of this component will need work still

Required activities with career consequences in case on non-compliance are unacceptable and do not work, e.g., East Europe prior to the fall of the Berlin wall. Presentations based on single viewpoints are by definition bias. The proposal does not seem to include debates between speakers with opposite opinions.

The way the requirements are implemented are contrary to all evidence about how to engage an adult audience. If implemented as described in this alternative, the initiative is likely to annoy faculty more than persuade. We have expertise at Cornell in how to do that better, jsut as we have expertise in the subject matter of antiracist materials. The working group made an excellent start, but adding the expertise in those two areas makes it far more likely that we will realize the goal.

Comments from Buz Barstow (Faculty Senator for Biological and Environmental Engineering), after consultation with department faculty and staff (particularly Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee) 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. 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. 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I would gladly participate in discussions about structural racism. I'm sure I have a lot to learn, and I welcome any knowledge and understanding that would make me a better teacher, scholar, and community member. But such discussions are not comparable to professional development, and should not be imposed, with penalties attached for non-compliance. The comments about academic freedom in the report are disingenuous, and the references to "support" for the faculty are chilling.

Both the Infosci and Physics faculties I represent were opposed to the mandatory aspect of the proposal, both because they were skeptical that a mandatory program would be effective (such programs have repeatedly failed in the corporate context, and there are no extant examples of such a program that has succeeded in a university context), and they did not find the working group responses to questions about the obvious tension with tenure to be compelling. Paul Ginsparg

I voted "yes" because I do think people that needs to learn about these topics the most are the ones more reluctant to participate voluntarily and to be educated. The mode of implementation must be modified, however.

The report of the Working Group begins with a plain sentence, one that I could not get past: "Faculty must understand structural racism and the forces of systemic bias and privilege." To that end, it proposes, on p.4, that an educational "requirement be applied if faculty wish to ... teach....". I am a strong believer in the pervasive and corrosive effects of structural racism in the United States. I admire the committee members, several of whom are personal friends, and I regret the hysterical criticism of this proposal from some in the Senate. Nonetheless, while I ardently wish that all Cornell faculty understand many crucial contemporary issues - sexism, climate change.... - to require such an "understanding" of faculty is an illiberal overreach that will provoke counterproductive dismay from many who might otherwise be persuaded. The tone, especially in that first sentence, is unfortunate: Orwellian at worst, but at the very least, patronizing and condescending. With regret, I cannot support it.

Though I personally think all faculty should take anti-racism training, I do not think that is an appropriate requirement of employment. We are NOT responsible for the continuing education of faculty and employees. While I could make an argument that this is like safety training (b/c if we don't do it, we are opening up possibility of violence on campus), ultimately I think that's a stretch. I'm concerned about 2 elements: the futility of forced "trainings," and the danger of indoctrination (again, unlike students, this is not a "curricular" issue for faculty). I do think that whatever we develop should be created and led by the experts in our various units (Africana, FGSS, AIISP, etc.) So, I ultimately support F-2 (voluntary participation) but not F-1 (devolving to the units). I do not support the original F.

The WG report is problematic in its suggestions for repercussions if a faculty member does not fulfill the education requirement developed, but I am still in favor of moving the WG report on. I don't agree with F-2 that is should be completely voluntary. I do believe that the repercussions for non-compliance be different than prohibiting ability to teach (as the current WG_F report uses as an example). Perhaps related to a portion of a salary merit increase? There are many creative things that are positive rather than seeming punitive to doing ones basic job that I am sure can and will be considered by the groups that work further on implementing the Antiracism Initiative as the Faculty Senate recommends.

This is a collection of comments from my dept: -I believe that an educational requirement surrounding racial justice and equity should be required for all faculty at Cornell. -Any training should be university-wide and mandated for all faculty—the watered-down Senator resolutions and "compromises" are silly.

Please see our senate resolutions F1 and F2 which we offer as an alternative package to this resolution. Carl Franck, Physics

The WG-F report contains language which I find not only uncappable, but I also believe is at odds with the notion of tenure. More precisely I find the idea of forcing faculty to take any form of training and forbidding them to teach in case they do not complete such training outrageous. I am find it very disturbing that multiple members of the working group did not admit this, by saying that the report does not contain the word "punitive".

Comments: All faculty felt that a national conversation and consideration of racial inequality was important. All agreed that Cornell as an educational institution should promote educational improvement of its faculty, staff and students. Most felt that the amount of time being suggested for this sort of education was relatively small given the importance of the topic. (An oft-repeated sentiment is that we are all faced with an increasing number of work-related, imposed burdens and some of these need to be alleviated whenever new ones are added.) Significant differences of opinion arise over a top-down vs bottom-up approach and over mandated vs voluntary efforts. Some thought that any meaningful approach required a consistent, University-wide program as advocated by Pres. Pollack; others felt that it would displace effective, individual efforts within the community (close to 50-50 split). Some approved of the mandated education program for faculty; most did not ("draconian, insulting and negative", 70-30 against). Most guessed that a well-designed educational program has the potential for small incremental, positive change among receptive faculty and staff. There was some cynicism that the adoption of a University-wide program amounted to virtue signaling by the administration with insufficient consideration of the efficacy of the approach, the expected benefits that might be achieved and the ancillary costs. The devil is in the details. Most felt that selecting a framework (mandated education program for faculty with penalties) was premature at best. There was a suggestion that if a program is mandated then it should be grounded in federal law (ala sexual harassment courses) in addition to well-established history including statistical studies of discriminatory practices.

I am closest to yes on this. I support the idea that faculty should be aware of various forms of bias. I was aware of most of the material presented in the modules I completed on other topics offered, They did not really present anything new to me. I would supplement this with material produced and presented by the center for antiracism on a voluntry basis.

In my department there was broad agreement that a faculty education should become an expected universal norm for faculty but disagreement about whether it should be mandated and how the mandate would be enforced. Several colleagues strongly disagreed with making student evaluations part of the enforcement mechanism because of how this is likely to affect certain groups of faculty adversely.

This resolution calls for an overly coercive policy.

The WG-F report will not encourage a positive response to addressing important issues of racial inequalities. The negative incentives are punitive, given the fact that faculty teaching and other activities are conditioned on doing the mandated training. This will result in resistance and resentment, not in positive educational engagement with colleagues.

I am not comfortable voting yes to this resolution without knowing the quality of the training that will be provided. So why not doing to the first cycle of training with the training not being mandated, and if most faculty agree the training is good, we then make it required?

I am voting "no" at the request of my unit, where this was discussed for more than one hour, with about 40 people vigorously engaged. The essential concerns were that (1) the proposed 2.5 hours of annual content is too short to be effective, and hence forces us to anticipate an ineffective and shallow module, presumably repeated again and again ad infinitum; (2) the mandatory structure and sanctions for non-participation, coupled with a total lack of detail on who would teach the material, how qualified they would be, what the focus and approach might be, etc, is simply contrary to the Cornell principle of free and open-minded academic engagement and debate. I myself would personally have favored a different unit vote: I would prefer to be able to vote "yes" on UFC-F. I say this despite agreeing on both of the two reservations noted above. My own preferred format would be a full day or even full weekend event, similar to the ones Frank Rhodes and Hunter Rawlings used to run, which covered topics like this and were often highly effective. They were in-person, engaging, very professional, and invariably worthwhile. But they were optional -- getting back to the fundamental problem that by making the faculty course short, mandatory and imposing harsh sanctions for inadequately enthusiastic participation, we violate something basic in the Cornell academic charter. At any rate, I would have voted yes, were I voting my own view -- despite my own view differing from the recommendations. I simply feel that in the end, Cornell does do the right thing, and the format could evolve into something more appealing, even as the mandatory+sanctions aspect might have evolved to "encouraged but not required". But my colleagues feel that we must vote on the proposition as written. And given this, the faculty vote in my unit ties my hands.

There is deep opposition to the mandatory nature of the education. Even the few faculty that support it have issues with this, and fear that the trainings would have no effect because the faculty opposed would not fully participate.

Lead me with compelling concrete examples, and I will happily follow. Attempt to coerce me and I will immediately conclude that the emperor has no clothes.

We need to be careful moving forward with training. There are a lot of faculty that are opposed to mandatory training which is just going to increase resistance. Two hours per semester is rapidly going to become repetitive and un-informative because I doubt that new valuable and informative content can be generated at that pace. For instance, we only take "Through the lens" once - how effective would it be to take it continually as a mandatory exercise. There is a real danger that the training will become a pro forma exercise just like formaldehyde awareness and other mandatory yearly, incredibly tedious and unhelpful, training (e.g. blood borne pathogens). There also needs to be clearly defined objectives for the training and the training needs to be designed to be short and to the point with clearly defined outcome measures, if we really want to make a difference. By having defined outcome measures, then we can do research to see if attitudes really change or if this is just a checkbox ticking exercise. I am completely opposed along with multiple faculty in my department to adding a question on teaching evaluations which are really biased against women, as is acknowledged in the report. I also find the suggestion from the report that this training is required before we can do our jobs somewhat over the top. I do think incorporating some useful training into new faculty onboarding should be considered. We all know there is a problem and we don't need the problems necessarily outlined for us continually but we do need concrete solutions that we can implement in our daily work. The implied punitive measures in the report were very troubling. The same issues with the mandatory training required for staff also apply. What data is there on the effectiveness of the training....

The harsh punitive approach to ensuring compliance is inappropriate.

I am strongly in favor of the mandatory requirement for faculty education in DEI topics. As a senator, I regularly shared information on the reports and resolutions with my department. As well, I sent my department an email two weeks ago explaining my thinking on these resolutions and my intended voting. I requested feedback (which I received) and held an open zoom meeting to discuss the topics further. Accordingly, many of my colleagues were in agreement with my intended vote of yes on the WG-F and WG-S resolutions. However, I have been disheartened to hear a number of the faculty senators decry these resolutions as an infringement on their rights and argue to uphold the status quo. Our student and faculty of color deserve better from their learning and working environment.

The proposal from WG-F was an obstacle that prevented the faculty from having a meaningful discussion of the issues. Nothing can be both a "requirement" and a "framework to support...engagement." To say that being denied teaching is an "incentive," not a penalty-- I mean, come on.

I do not believe the President has the right to "require" its faculty in this regard.

Perhaps the study group that suggested this abomination should have drawn more broadly from the faculty at large. You stack the deck, you get a stacked resolution. I think this is an unmitigated disaster with an attack on the academic rights of the faculty.

I have come to believe over the last few weeks of discussion that the mandatory requirement is so divisive that it would do more harm than good to our community. I also find it troubling that the framers of the report insist that there are no punitive measures in there, even though a faculty member who is not allowed to teach (or, in some departments, to hire grad students to work in their lab) would inevitably lose their job. To pretend otherwise is disingenuous.

I understand that many have taken issue with the fact that this is a requirement and another pull on faculty time. To me, it seems a very small time commitment for something that is very necessary. I spend a lot of time on research-related compliance that I must complete yearly, or more frequently. And this is required and there are repercussions (i.e. my research program is essentially shut down) if I do not complete them. It seems very disingenuous to have a student requirement, and not have a faculty requirement, not to mention the message that not have a faculty requirement sends to our colleagues of color.

I will refuse to participate in any aspect of critical theory that does not begin with the public questioning of the foundations of Critical Theory. I do not believe that the proponents would be able to succeed under such questioning.

While I support the goal of the resolution to support faculty, staff and students in creating an antiracist, just and equitable climate for our campus community, I can't see this approach as just when we are treating different populations (Faculty, Staff and Student) differently based on self-defined elitist ideas. It's ok for us to require others to participate, but we only participate voluntarily? Seriously? Secondly, I don't see a scope of content (curriculum and pedagogy) that meet the needs of the goal(s) at the level of the participants. I'll grant you that I maybe asking too much given the stage we're at, but these resolutions were presented as approaches rather than aspirations. Perhaps it would be best if we went back to resolutions that supported our President in creating possible approaches and then for her to present them to the Senate for insight or for the Senate to come up with concrete approaches as possible methods of approach rather than the hodge-podge of presentations and conversations that confuse the larger concern/goal of creating an antiracist, just and equitable climate for our campus community,... let alone responsible citizens beyond the borders of our campus.

This resolution was drafted by the Dean of Faculty who (a) appointed the committee that ostensibly deliberated on it but never gave its formal approval; (b) appointed himself chair of that committee; (c) used his position as chair of the UFC to maneuver that committee into sponsoring the resolution that the committee never approved; (d) used his position as chair of the UFC to manipulate the deliberative process in the Faculty Senate to his own personal advantage; (e) and usurped the role of the Speaker of the Faculty Senate, a position which is intended to provide impartial moderation of the proceedings, in order to dominate discussion and the presentation of procedural motions. However the voting turns out, this resolution is the product of an entirely illegitimate process for which the President of Cornell University should be profoundly ashamed to have been a willing and complicit agent.

Signed, Richard Bensel

I am voting for this resolution as I have come to believe, after initially believing this should be voluntary, that a faculty requirement is a good idea. However, I am concerned about and strongly oppose some of the proposed instruments in the WG-F Final Report, most specifically, the tenure requirement, which I think could become a dangerous instrument for woke "groupthink" that is already far too present at Cornell. I am thus am putting my faith in the Administration to examine the specific recommendations critically, and for next year's Faculty Senate to examine, and vote on, specific measures, one by one, that are proposed. I would support some, but vigorously object to others. My positive vote is a vote "in spirit" of the requirement.

I am strongly opposed to any mandatory educational requirement for faculty.

The recommendations set forth in this report violate the very sense of tenure, as preventing tenured faculty from teaching, advising students, or running a lab (if they do not comply with instruction sessions that are neither mandated by law nor scholarly oriented) is, de facto, removing the privilege of academic tenure—Unless the University is planning to pay for life tenured scholars doing nothing, which would be ridiculous. Such a mandatory instruction will inevitably be challenged in court and it is hard to see how the University would win, or if it were to win, how this would happen easily, cheaply and quickly. The obligation clause would create a terrible PR effect for Cornell (we're sure to be on Fox News every night), not to speak of the civil war on campus. The option of voluntary instruction will make some people unhappy, but it will not create the turmoils the current report will inevitably generate.

I support the idea of faculty learning about race and racism and I think it is important that we support everyone at Cornell and create an inclusive environment. I would like these efforts to be evidence-based and effective rather than just symbolic. Research shows that module and corporate-style DEI training is often ineffective. There is also a risk of people we might think would most benefit from learning about race and racism being resistant and not engaging with the material and/or getting mad that they had to do it and doubling down on their racist views. I'd like whatever approach is used to be based on what's known to work elsewhere and measured here to make sure it's working as we hope it would and that we'd adjust as necessary to find and refine the most effective approach.