

UFC-S Resolution Vote Summary

Results

The vote tallies for the UFC-S Resolution are

Yes = 58

No = 41

Abstain = 7

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 students 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 this [UFC 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-S 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.

elements of the directors' proposal (esp the universal course requirement) should be adopted in my view, but in the end it is all faculty who must develop the ability to address these issues & enable our students to contend w/ them beneficially

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.

This report is somewhat amorphous on the details, which seems appropriate to the charge and timeline given for it. I support passing this report on to the President and Provost, along with the Directors Resolution which outlines in detail a process for developing an education requirement curriculum.

Below are collected comments from my dept: -This is the only resolution that addresses all the charges given by Prs. Pollack. Sending "up" a proposal that does not engage with graduate students (for example) will simply mean that the administration will make their own plans for students, cutting faculty out -As faculty point out in the comments, a few online videos is not enough.

We offer Senate resolution S as an alternative. Carl Franck, Physics

In my opinion the WG-S report is incomplete and lack information about the implementation of such courses. I think it is much better to use a combination of distribution requirements and additional seminars during the orientation to educate students on such issues.

Comments: All faculty felt that Cornell's mission to educate should include a thoughtful approach to the topics in the President's proposal. Compared to the UFC-F proposal there were fewer comments. I was unable to answer many questions asked of me. A majority thought that the President's initiative was made without taking into account and coordinating with previous, related efforts. In particular, the College of Arts and Sciences recently had extensive conversations on distribution requirements. The Pepinsky Curriculum Review Committee delivered its report (Fall 2018), the Arts and Science faculty voted 2-1 in favor of the plan and the College has just begun implementation. Courses that overlap the President's proposal fall under the category of "social difference." The plan imposes distribution requirements on these and other areas while still allowing typical students to satisfy a plethora of Arts and Sciences requirements (language, freshman writing, major). Interested faculty were unclear how new University-mandated coursework would relate to this framework. The Pepinsky committee worked for several years and had extensive consultations with stakeholders in Arts and Sciences. Most faculty thought that obvious areas of overlap (Arts and Sciences offers hundreds of courses already in the general area) should be part of any plan. Most faculty understood that the 6 units had special expertise but didn't think that obviated the worth of other courses already developed. Most faculty were skeptical about the practicality of 6 units unilaterally offering a widely-mandated course (e.g. the effort in Arts and Sciences devoted to the freshman writing seminar is huge); most didn't understand how the core materials provided by the 6 units were to be incorporated into courses from Colleges, Schools, Programs and Depts. e.g. guidelines, mandatory use, voluntary use, etc.

This calls for resources in a time of scarcity. The departments cited already offer a large number of courses and material that can be used.

I like that this report now includes both a general required literacy component, and also builds on initiatives taken within different colleges and departments to address these issues in ways that suit different units.

The misgiving that I expressed about the goals of the UFC-F resolution in my comments on the Senator-F1 resolution apply as well to the UFC-S resolution. Furthermore, I think this resolution is too indefinite about implementation, and that various ways in which it might be implemented will be seen by many students as objectionable indoctrination, and so will be unhelpful.

This proposal is ill-conceived, as it cobbles together various ideas, but without a clarity of purpose or implementation. The critiques raised about this proposal have identified its flaws in multiple ways.

Interestingly, although I myself had no very strong views on UFC-S, my colleagues were overwhelmingly negative, voting 4 to 25 that their representatives should reject this plan in the current written form. Their reasoning centered on what I might call a "cart before the horse" concern: that without creating the course and running it once or twice, it is just premature to make it required for all Cornell students as a condition for graduation. Additional concerns were raised about our large graduate student community, who currently have no required courses at all (we are distinguishing here between courses that run for a full semester and short training, like TA training and English language assessment). The faculty in my unit overwhelmingly feel that material should be created and then become popular because it is of high quality -- not purchased sight unseen, and then universally attended because it is required.

I do support it, but the Director-S resolution seems to make a little more sense since the individuals who would be teaching such a course actually have a say in the timeline and rollout. I am concerned about the Senator-S proposal because there would be less quality control over what, exactly, is deemed to meet the education requirement.

The learning outcomes are so vague, they'd never get past the curriculum committee I serve on. We need a LOT more discussion on exactly what we want students to learn.

I appreciate the faculty of this report revised it in response to comments. I wish the faculty who came up with the F report had done the same.

I am voting yes for the directors version, but overall i approve of this education requirement.

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.

As I understand the structure of the university, the academic program is not in the hands of the senate, provost, or the president. Undergrads are governed by their colleges; grad students by their fields and/or special committees. Thus this entire discussion is just a smoke-screen, as whatever might be implemented needs to be implemented by an entirely different group of faculty.

While I don't necessarily feel that the report is "worthy", I do think the goal is and that the Faculty Senate should be involved. Therefor I am holding my nose and voting yes. Just to be clear, I am holding my nose because this resolution stinks while the goal needs to be moved forward.

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 because I believe a student requirement should be university policy. I am concerned with some of the specific language in the UFC report, and would want to reserve my support for specific measures and directions until seeing what the Administration proposes, with the understanding that any and all specific proposals will come back to the Senate for discussion and voting. Thus my vote is a vote "in spirit" for the resolution, but not as blanket approval of specifics.

The curriculum should remain in the hands of the colleges.

This report is like Frankenstein's creature. It is a poorly conceived text, borrowing here and there, with no real underlying effort to come up with a viable path and an intellectual framework. The other two resolutions are equally respectable, having their advantages and inconveniences, but they are both good, solid proposals. This one is subpar and should be rejected on the merits. Deciding about the other two is more a question of perspective and fine-grained considerations.

I think students should learn about race and racism, but I think a class would be better than modules.