



August 5, 2021

In preparation for the August 13, 2021 Board of Regents Meeting, the UNK Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the UNK Education Association issue the following statement regarding a proposed resolution restricting the teaching of critical race theory:

We concur with our colleagues at UNL and University Administration that efforts by any of the Regents to impose what is taught in the classroom threatens academic freedom.

We call for increased dialogue and honest and open discussion around issues of race and diversity, not closing the door on such dialogue. Regent Pillen's resolution threatens academic freedom as outlined in section 4.2 of the Bylaws. Furthermore, the resolution seems to place the perspectives of politicians, political interest groups and the media over the research and expertise of faculty.

At a time in our nation when racial tensions are high, institutions of higher education should be taking the lead in conducting research, asking questions, and promoting open dialogue for the benefit of the state rather than refusing to accept critical views or to even listen to those who do not hold the same opinions.

As the University's Administration stated in their July 21st message,

"Issues around race, equity and the fight against racism are an important part of our country's story and they have an appropriate place in our classrooms...We further expect and believe that in discussing ideas, our instructors make their classrooms places of robust and open debate, where all viewpoints are considered, and all may express their opinions freely. That commitment to free expression is at the heart of our work as an institution of higher learning."

UNK's Faculty Senate Cabinet and UNKEA agree with this position and oppose Regent Pillen's resolution and its clear threat to academic freedom.

Sincerely,

Ben Malczyk
UNK Faculty Senate President

Will Avilés
UNKEA President