

FIU Faculty Senate Resolution on Racial, Social, and Community Justice Passed June 24, 2020

At Florida International University, one of our core values is “Respect — for diversity and the dignity of the individual”. At FIU, we commit to having uncomfortable talks and real, honest conversations about race, injustices, systemic beliefs, and upholding the dignity of the individual. At his installation speech, President Rosenberg said, “We are here today because we know we can work better together to prevent and solve problems using the blessings of our knowledge and passion.” This is a time for us to commit to solving the racial problems we are currently facing at our institution, in our community, and in our nation. Our faculty is deeply committed to providing our students with a world class education that incorporates the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that allows our students to contribute globally to advancing ideas and being leaders in their communities. Our classroom curriculum and experiences will be inclusive of representative voices, couched in diversity and equity, and challenge the biases that are prevalent in disciplines and institutions of higher education. FIU’s faculty will commit to addressing implicit bias, addressing the perspectives of underrepresented identities, and amplifying the dignity of student voices. Our community of faculty, students, staff, and administration will lead by example as we embrace our differences and strengthen the power of the diversity represented on our campuses. There are dedicated faculty within the existing structure of our university who are unfortunately working in silos on justice issues. Many of these people have deep connections to the very communities and individuals who are victims of injustice. We acknowledge that their combined work would allow FIU

students to graduate with a unique set of experiences and course work that would place them far ahead of their peers. Therefore, the Faculty Senate acknowledges the following:

WHEREAS, Florida International University is a community of many races, ethnicities, religions and creeds; and

WHEREAS, many in our community live in fear because of the historical and pervasive racially motivated acts of violence; and

WHEREAS, studies show that Black, Brown, and Native American people experience systemic racism and are killed at higher rates than others; and

WHEREAS, the world watched with horror the spectacle of George Floyd's death under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer for NEARLY 9 minutes despite his pleas for help while other officers did nothing; and

WHEREAS, George Floyd joins an ever-expanding group of unarmed Black, Brown, and other victims of racialized violence that includes Tony McDade, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Philando Castile, Victor Valencia, Sandra Bland, Walter Scott, Tamir Rice, Magdiel Sanchez, Eric Garner, Breonna Taylor, Anthony Jose Vega Cruz, Ahmaud Arbery, Trayvon Martin, Dontre Hamilton, John Crawford III, Yvette Smith, Miriam Carey, Ezell Ford, Dante Parker, Tanisha Anderson, Jerame Reid, Tarika Wilson, Eric Harris, Arthur McDuffie, Walter Scott, the Rosewood community and countless others over the past four centuries; and

WHEREAS, these and similar acts of intolerable racial violence across this country are unpardonable; and

WHEREAS, we, as part of the academy, acknowledge that we have failed to prevent and to solve the problems of historical and continued

oppression of people of color, and that we must immediately act to prevent oppression and to find ways of healing the damage caused by oppression; and

WHEREAS, we pledge to confront our systemic racism and oppression that has brought so many to this place of fear and distrust; and

WHEREAS, we are compelled to not remain silent in the face of centuries of violence against our brethren on account of the color of their skin, and we must hold oppressors accountable; and

WHEREAS, an Equity Action Initiative has been charged in identifying and implementing initiatives that can begin the lifelong work to address the issues of inclusion and equity, particularly as they relate to our FIU; and

WHEREAS, the Equity Action Initiative is asking for input from the university community,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE FACULTY SENATE OF FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY SUBMITS FOR INCLUSION BY THE EQUITY ACTION INITIATIVE THE FOLLOWING PROPOSAL :

1. The creation of the *Athalie Range Center for Racial, Social, and Community Justice* to include an Endowed Chair. This center will be interdisciplinary in nature and will provide faculty and students (graduate and undergraduate) the space to conduct and publish research, participate in equity driven initiatives, to collaborate on cross-curricular design and delivery, to teach peace and conflict prevention and management, to craft responses to on-going changes in dialogues about race, racism, equity, and justice, and

to engage in conversations that are vital to our university moving away from current narratives to a narrative promoting diversity, inclusivity, and racial justice. We call for :

- a. The creation and delivery of an undergraduate and graduate level racial and social justice course. The course would be required of freshmen, transfer, graduate, and professional students.
 - b. The University to provide the resources to the Center to implement the implicit bias training for all students, contractors who deal with FIU, staff, faculty, and administration.
 - c. The Center to be charged with implementing the training of police officers in conjunction with the FIU Police Department.
 - d. The Center to identify and create opportunities to help all faculty, staff, and students working on issues of race, justice, and violence.
2. The creation of undergraduate and graduate scholarships that honor the memory of victims of racial violence, like Arthur McDuffie and Trayvon Martin, available for those students working towards social and racial justice.
 3. The participation of the FIU police department in additional training to disable racialized and ethnic minority violence.
 4. The distribution of this resolution by the University to the entire FIU community and the community at large.
 5. The commitment of the Faculty Senate to achieving the goals set out in this resolution. It also calls for the long-term commitment by the administration to achieve these goals. The Faculty Senate will review the progress on the issues raised in this resolution and any initiatives taken at the end of each semester.