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Academic Council Statement on Critical Race Theory and Academic Freedom **April 27, 2022**

The Academic Council of the University of California Academic Senate has watched with growing alarm the state legislative proposals that have been introduced across the United States targeting academic discussions of racism and related issues in American history in schools, colleges and universities. Though most of the attention to date has focused on K-12 education, in recent months, political leaders in several states have challenged the rights of our public university colleagues to teach about particular subjects deemed “divisive.” (e.g., “I will not stand by and let looney Marxist UT professors poison the minds of young students with Critical Race Theory,” Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick (R) has stated in a tweet. “We banned it in publicly funded K-12 and we will ban it in publicly funded higher ed.”¹)

These moves threaten the foundational principles of academic freedom. These principles, as the University of California’s Academic Personnel Manual notes, “reflect the University’s fundamental mission, which is to discover knowledge and to disseminate it to its students and to society at large. . . These freedoms enable the University to advance knowledge and to transmit it effectively to its students and to the public. The University also seeks to foster in its students a mature independence of mind, and this purpose cannot be achieved unless students and faculty are free within the classroom to express the widest range of viewpoints in accord with the standards of scholarly inquiry and professional ethics.”²

Over seventy organizations, including the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), issued a [Joint Statement on Legislative Efforts to Restrict Education about Racism and American History](#) (June 16, 2021) stating their “firm opposition to a spate of legislative proposals being introduced across the country that target academic lessons, presentations, and discussions of racism and related issues in American history in schools, colleges and universities . . . In higher education, under principles of academic freedom that have been widely endorsed, professors are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject. Educators, not politicians, should make decisions about teaching and learning.”

¹ “College faculty are fighting back against state bills on critical race theory,” *Washington Post*, February 19, 2022.

² University of California APM – 010: Academic Freedom

Joining these esteemed organizations, and a growing number of Academic Senates across the country (including both the Riverside and Santa Barbara divisions within the UC system), Academic Council resolutely rejects any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate university curriculum on any matter, including matters related to racial and social justice. We stand with both our higher education and our K-12 colleagues throughout the country who may be affected by this pernicious legislation when they seek to expose students to the varieties of interpretation of US history. We emphasize that faculty from all fields of study stand in support of our colleagues whose work touches on Critical Race Theory and/or any other theories and histories of race, racism, and racial formation. Any field of study (from climate science to gender studies) could be a target for censorship by legislatures if restriction of academic studies is allowed to occur.

Committed as we are to the foundational principles of academic freedom, the Academic Council condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent actions to ban, limit, or distort the teaching of history and related subjects.