

The Faculty Senate should reject the final proposals of both [Working Group F](#) and [Working Group S](#), and send them back for reconsideration.

As described in more detail below, these Proposals both individually and collectively impose an ideological orthodoxy and adherence to a Critical Race Theory (CRT) view of the world, in violation of the educational purpose of the University and faculty academic freedom as set forth in the recent University [Policy Statement on Academic Freedom](#). The Proposals also will dramatically worsen existing free expression problems on campus which are not only obvious to anyone right-of-center at the University, but also have been documented in student surveys ranking Cornell low in free expression relative to peer schools. I address Proposals F and S together because they are interlocking in creating a coercive and punitive environment. This is not worthy of the educational mission of the University, which already has robust anti-discrimination policies and practices in place. We do not need to sacrifice academic freedom and free expression in order to achieve an environment that provides equal opportunity and equal treatment for all.

(1) Proposal F starts with the compulsion that “Faculty **must** understand structural racism and the forces of systemic bias and privilege” (emphasis added). Later, Proposal F “requires” that faculty accept that “structural racism, colonialism, and injustice, and their current manifestations have a historical and relational basis.” That CRT worldview, which in its current incarnation is often misleadingly referred to as “antiracism,” is off the table for debate under this proposal. Rather, CRT becomes the official ideology of the University. The rest of the proposal dictates how that mandate will be implemented, including dictating “a framework for interacting with other faculty, with students, with members of the staff, and the broader community” with the faculty “educational requirement ... to support the faculty in this effort.” Why such compulsion? This campus already is awash in CRT-driven programs, courses, events, workshops, and faculty and student activism, and the separately proposed Center will further the breadth of CRT-based education. These voluntary educational opportunities apparently are not sufficient to those supporting Proposals F and S. Rather than being introspective as to why the message is not resonating more broadly and engaging in debate, Proposal F (and separately, Proposal S) uses administrative power to impose the ideology on the campus.

(2) Proposal F imposes an educational requirement on faculty that appears to twist the intention of President Pollack in her [July Statement](#): “All faculty would be expected to participate in this programming and follow-on discussions in their departments. The programs would complement our existing anti-bias programs for faculty ...” This statement clearly indicates an intention for voluntary faculty participation in workshops and teaching the subject matters to students, not that faculty themselves would have to go through compulsory training.

(3) Proposal F violates the academic freedom of faculty by requiring not only ideological compliance (see above) but also ideological-based training to further “an understanding of structural racism, systemic bias, indigeneity, colonialism and related topics.” While Proposal F does not specify the exact content of the faculty training, it notes that the “content will be

prepared by a cross disciplinary group of Cornell faculty colleagues, whose scholarship and expertise are focused on these questions.” In other words, the faculty who promote a CRT-agenda will be developing the faculty training content. There is no serious commitment in Proposal F to diversity of viewpoint (including anti-CRT viewpoints) in the educational requirement, and the clear implication is that this is indoctrination not education. If there is any doubt that compulsion is the method in Proposal F, it recites that “[a]ll faculty should see the need to participate in the educational requirement, regardless of their research expertise, scholarship, or personal positions. However, incentives need to be put in place to ensure full participation.” This should be chilling to anyone who truly cares about an open educational environment.

(4) Proposal F also is contrary to the recent University Policy Statement on Academic Freedom, which “affirms the fundamental nature of *Free and Open Inquiry and Expression*” (emphasis in original). Proposal F italicizes the following words in the Faculty Statement on Academic Freedom to justify the proposed compulsion: “Academic freedom does not imply immunity from prosecution for illegal acts of wrongdoing, *nor does it provide license for faculty members to do whatever they choose.*” Proposal F thus takes a broad statement defending faculty academic freedom and expression, and turns it directly against those principles based on wording in one clause reflecting that there are limits on academic freedom. This is not a fair reading of the entire sentence or Statement, and would eviscerate faculty protections if interpreted the way used in Proposal F. Just as faculty cannot “do whatever they choose,” the Statement on Academic Freedom does not allow the Faculty Senate or administration to “do whatever they choose,” and one of the things they cannot do is impose ideological uniformity on the faculty through punitive measures.

(5) Proposal F also imposes a series of measures to ensure ideological compliance, including adding questions to course evaluations: “Course evaluations are a venue where individual instructors are held accountable.” There already are anti-discrimination policies on campus to ensure compliance with Cornell and legal requirements, including providing mechanisms for members of the community (including students) to file grievances. Incorporating such an informal grievance mechanism into course evaluations will have a chilling effect on lawful faculty free expression that fits within the scope of academic freedom, and indeed, that seems to be the purpose in Proposal F. This is part of pushing ideological uniformity directly into the classroom and coursework.

(6) There are numerous other problems with Proposal F, particularly as related to tying faculty promotion and advancement to “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” measures. This may sound anodyne, but in the context of the overall Proposal F plan, it is another cog in the ideological compulsion agenda.

(7) Proposal F notes that “[t]he goal for the faculty educational program parallels the goals for the student educational requirement,” and for these same reasons Proposal S should be rejected. There already is a serious problem on campus with free expression, as documented in a [survey](#)

by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education and other free speech groups ranking Cornell 40th out of 55 schools surveyed. For all the reasons stated above, Proposal S will make this student free expression problem worse. Neither faculty nor students should have ideological adherence to CRT demanded of them, or should be forced to undergo CRT ideological instruction. We should not sacrifice student free expression and academic freedom anymore than we would our own.

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For all the reasons above, the Faculty Senate should reject Proposals F and S and send them back to the Working Groups for reconsideration.

Very truly yours,

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