

Florida College System Presidents Statement on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Critical Race Theory

Historically, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives served to increase diversity of thought as well as the enrollment and the success of underrepresented populations and promote the open access mission of our state college system. The presidents of the Florida College System (FCS) also understand that some initiatives and instruction in higher education under the same title have come to mean and accomplish the very opposite and seek to push ideologies such as critical race theory and its related tenets.

To be clear in this environment, the FCS presidents, by and through the FCS Council of Presidents (COP), will ensure that all initiatives, instruction, and activities do not promote any ideology that suppresses intellectual and academic freedom, freedom of expression, viewpoint diversity, and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. As such, our institutions will not fund or support any institutional practice, policy, or academic requirement that compels belief in critical race theory or related concepts such as intersectionality, or the idea that systems of oppression should be the primary lens through which teaching and learning are analyzed and/or improved upon. Further, if critical race theory or related concepts are taught as part of an appropriate postsecondary subject’s curriculum, our institutions will only deliver instruction that includes critical race theory as one of several theories and in an objective manner.

In the development of knowledge, research endeavors, and creative activities, a college faculty and student body must be free to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and scholarly criticism, and to examine ideas in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence, free from shielding and in a nondiscriminatory manner.

The FCS presidents remain committed to developing campus environments that uphold objectivity in teaching and learning and in professional development and that welcome all voices—environments in which students, faculty, and staff can pursue their academic interests without fear of reprisal or being “canceled.”

The FCS presidents reaffirm our commitment to nondiscrimination in hiring, onboarding and professional development, merit, reason, fairness, civil debate, cultivating intellectual autonomy and equality, and evaluating our successes on the achievements of all students. Further, we renew our commitment to the values that are foundational to our mission and, moreover, to maintaining our country’s common good, for which we as public institutions of higher education share the responsibility. Specifically, by February 1, 2023, the FCS presidents commit to having fully evaluated and removed any institutional instruction, training, and policies opposed to the forms of discrimination described in this statement.

Florida College System Presidents
January 18, 2023

