

LEHMAN COLLEGE
ACADEMIC FREEDOM COMMITTEE
Minutes of the committee meeting
15 OCT 2020

Present: Diane Auslander, Duran Fiack, Elgloria Harrison, Richard Lahijani, David Manier (chair), Mohan Vinjamuri

1. A quorum having been established, and minutes of the preceding meeting having been approved via email, the meeting was called to order by Prof. Manier at 3:30 p.m.
2. With no other member running, Prof. Manier was re-elected unanimously as chair.
3. We reviewed an issue related to an executive order issued by President Donald Trump, and in response, passed a resolution (which is attached here) that will be presented for approval to the Lehman College Senate.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
David Manier, Assoc. Professor
Chair and Secretary Pro Tempore

Cc: Sophia Diamantis-Fry

RESOLUTION

Whereas on September 17, 2020, President Trump issued a "Proclamation on Constitution Day, Citizenship Day, And Constitution Week, 2020" in which he accused educators and others of "attacking the Constitution and the integrity of our national heroes, falsely decrying our country and its institutions as evil and unjust";

Whereas he further issued a statement at the "White House Conference on American History" on September 17, 2020, in which he said that, "Critical race theory, the 1619 Project, and the crusade against American history is toxic propaganda, ideological poison that, if not removed, will dissolve the civic bonds that tie us together," going on to note that he had "recently banned trainings in this prejudiced ideology from the federal government and banned it in the strongest manner possible";

Whereas on September 22, 2020, he issued an Executive Order on "Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping" in which (*inter alia*) he made it the policy of the United States that federal funds would not be permitted to be used to assign "fault, blame, or bias to a race or sex, or to members of a race or sex because of their race or sex" or to "claim that consciously or unconsciously, and by virtue of his or her race or sex, members of any race are inherently racist or are inherently inclined to oppress others, or that members of a sex are inherently sexist or inclined to oppress others"; and

Whereas he has issued statements on Twitter (e.g., on September 6th and 22nd, 2020) threatening to withhold federal funding from institutions (including educational institutions) that promote the teachings and views described in the above statements and executive order; now therefore be it

Resolved, that the Lehman College Senate affirms the following:

1. we uphold and support the Non-Discrimination Policy of the City University of New York, which states that efforts to "promote diversity and to combat bigotry are an inextricable part of the educational mission of the University," and therefore combating racism and sexism is an essential aspect of our educational mission at Lehman College;
2. we encourage faculty and students to seek understanding, enlightenment, and the unexpurgated truth, fully expecting and welcoming that at times this may be challenging, and even appear dangerous, including to those in positions of authority in government, possibly even including the President of the United States of America;
3. all members of the Lehman College community are free to interrogate and/or criticize the Constitution of the United States of America, question the integrity of people considered by some to be American national heroes, and decry evil and injustice, whether in the United States or anywhere else;
4. all members of the Lehman College community are free to discuss, study, and/or teach about critical race theory, the 1619 project, and other research about racism, American history, and related topics, and to reach their own considered conclusions about these matters;

5. all members of the Lehman College community are free to investigate and consider on their merits any and all claims about conscious or unconscious racism, sexism, and other forms of bias and bigotry, including whether members of our society are racist, sexist, or inclined to oppress others (whether "inherently" or otherwise); and
6. no threats about restricting or eliminating government funding to Lehman College -- including but not limited to those expressed in executive orders made by the President of the United States -- will be allowed to compromise any of the principles or rights enumerated above.