

Proposed Resolution on Diversity and Inclusion

WHEREAS, interacting with people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives augments the curricular experience and affords every student the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills fundamental to a sound twenty-first century education and necessary to be a productive and contributing citizen of this state and nation capable of participating in a global society; AND

WHEREAS, many U.S. university campuses are currently sites of student and community protest that these institutions do not dedicate enough resources for improving diversity and inclusion nor effectively uphold policies for improving diversity and inclusion; AND

WHEREAS, it is the duty of The University of Tennessee as a state entity to recognize no single religious observance over any other, consistent with the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution; AND

WHEREAS, consistent with our commitment to freedom of expression and conscience, all members of The University of Tennessee community, including students, faculty and staff, have the right to express their beliefs; AND

WHEREAS, efforts by The University of Tennessee to foster a diverse and inclusive campus environment are in compliance with our accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which affirms, "Diversity in higher education is critical to the social and economic future of this country";¹ AND

WHEREAS The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees' Diversity Statement notes "The Board affirms the educational value of a diverse and fully inclusive campus community, one that is enriched by persons of different backgrounds, points of view, cultures, socioeconomic status, and other diverse characteristics. The Board expects the University to engage in a variety of initiatives to advance diversity in all aspects of University life."

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the University's Office for Diversity and Inclusion in its progress and continuous improvement in promoting a diverse and inclusive campus environment; AND

Furthermore, the Faculty Senate encourages President DiPietro to support the ongoing efforts of Chancellor Cheek and Vice Chancellor Hall to promote improved diversity and inclusion which makes all people feel valued, empowered, and respected by their peers on the UTK campus.

¹ <http://www.sacscoc.org/documents/DiversityStatement.pdf>