

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1058

TITLE: Resolution Urging UF to Join the Universities Studying Slavery Consortium (USS)

AUTHOR(S): Senator Caitlyn Mathews, Minority Party Leader Nathaniel Pelton

SPONSOR(S): Senator Cec Wood-Barron

WHEREAS, the Student Senate unanimously passed Student Senate Bill 2020-1028 ‘Student Body Resolution Requesting that the University of Florida Assemble a Working Group on UF’s Connections to Indigenous Expropriation and Slavery to Better Understand and Document the University’s History,’ promoting the study of the University’s ties to racism and slavery [1]; and,

WHEREAS, SSB 2020-1028 established precedence “that the University of Florida Student Government Senate recognizes the need to conduct further research regarding Indian removal and the legacies of slavery at the University of Florida,” [1] and,

WHEREAS, SSB 2020-1028 requested the Office of the President and Chief Diversity Officer to “conduct further research and to develop university-level curriculum and courses on the University of Florida’s connections to Indian expulsion and slavery in Ocala, Florida (1853-1866) and Gainesville, Florida (since 1866),” [1]; and,

WHEREAS, little action has been taken by the UF Student Government following the passage of SSB 2020-1028 to address the need to study UF’s historic ties to slavery; and,

WHEREAS, in the summer of 2020 in the wake of George Floyd’s murder, UF President Kent Fuchs established the Presidential Task Force on African American and Native American History [2]; and,

WHEREAS, the Presidential Task Force on African American and Native American History published a final report in April 2022, which offered insight into the University of Florida’s relationship with African American and Native American history [3]; and,

WHEREAS, the final report addressed that the “University of Florida’s establishment as a university was premised on the expropriation of Native American lands and the violation of numerous treaties between the United States and Indigenous nations;” [3]; and,

WHEREAS, the final report lacks adequate research into the specific details of the University of Florida’s direct involvement with the institution of slavery; and,

WHEREAS, although the final report established precedence for research into the institution of slavery at the University of Florida, it is the only of its kind, and a more robust effort to investigate and understand its findings is necessary; and,

WHEREAS, one of UF's Core Values — Stewardship — as established in 2021, emphasizes the university's need to "Show respect for those who came before us, responsibility for those now with us, and the commitment to leave a just and habitable world for those who come after us," [4]; and,

WHEREAS, showing respect for those who came before us involves a commitment to investigating and understanding all aspects of UF's historic ties to slavery and racism; and,

WHEREAS, the history of slavery is an integral part of the United States and the University of Florida's past, shaping the institutions and communities we inhabit today;

WHEREAS, acknowledging and studying the history of slavery is crucial for understanding its ongoing impacts on marginalized communities, fostering meaningful dialogue, and promoting social justice; and,

WHEREAS, the Universities Studying Slavery (USS) Consortium, founded in 2016 by the University of Virginia, is an active collaborative network of over 100 institutions across the globe, including the University of Georgia, the University of Mississippi, and Louisiana State University dedicated to researching and confronting the history and legacies of slavery and racism in higher education [5]; and,

WHEREAS, the USS Consortium provides participating institutions with a platform to share resources, research findings, best practices and engage in constructive conversations around addressing historical injustices and promoting inclusive campus environments; and,

WHEREAS, by joining the Universities Studying Slavery Consortium, the University of Florida can further its efforts to foster an inclusive and supportive community for all its students, faculty, and staff; now,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate strongly urges the University of Florida to join the Universities Studying Slavery Consortium (USS) for each reason stated herein.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to University of Florida President Benjamin Sasse, Chairman of the UF Board of Trustees Mori Hosseini, Trustee David Brandon, Trustee Richard Cole, Trustee Christopher Corr, Trustee Olivia Green, Trustee James Heavener, Trustee Daniel O'Keffe, Trustee Rahul Patel, Trustee Marsha Powers, Trustee Fred Ridley, Trustee Danaya Wright, Trustee Patrick Zalupski, Trustee Anita Zucker, Chief Diversity Officer _____, Director of Multicultural and Diversity Affairs Patricia Jordan, Director of Black Affairs _____, Black Student Affairs Program Director Satcha Sanon, Chief Diversity Officer Marsha McGriff

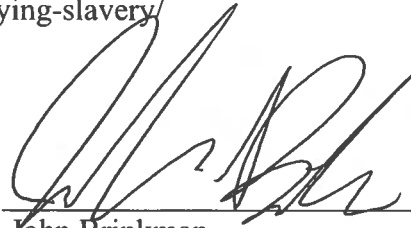
[1] <https://sg.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-2028-Student-Body-Resolution.pdf>

[2]<https://news.clas.ufl.edu/confronting-ufs-history/>

[3]https://oral.history.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/May-10-Task_Force_Report_FINAL_2_422.pdf

[4]<https://news.ufl.edu/2021/01/uf-values-to-serve-as-shared-foundation/>

[5]<https://slavery.virginia.edu/universities-studying-slavery/>



John Brinkman
Senate President

2/1/2024
Date