

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-XXXX

TITLE: Resolution Commemorating the History and Significance of the UF Underrepresented Minorities Mentorship Program (UMMP) and Urging Continued Support Amidst Threats to DEI Initiatives

AUTHOR (S): Senator Laurie Wang, DEI Liaison & Senator Noor Azeem

SPONSORS: YDSA SGEWG Coordinator Ronin Lupien

WHEREAS, the University of Florida (UF) Underrepresented Minorities Mentorship Program (UMMP) has been a cornerstone of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts since its establishment in 1986, initially piloted by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences to address the retention of African American students [1]; and,

WHEREAS, UMMP has consistently evolved to be inclusive of students from all underrepresented backgrounds, expanding to all 16 university colleges by its second year, and transitioning to the Department of Multicultural & Diversity Affairs in 2006, with a subsequent name change to the University Multicultural Mentor Program in 2018 to champion the identities of all students [1]; and,

WHEREAS, the significance of UMMP in fostering inclusivity and academic success is highlighted by its mission to support first-year students through goal-setting, one-on-one mentorship interactions, and active participation in UMMP events, thereby aiding their acclimation to college life at UF [1]; and,

WHEREAS, UF has demonstrated a financial commitment to DEI initiatives, allocating over \$5 million (approximately 0.14% of its annual budget) for DEI and critical race theory programs in the 2022-2023 fiscal year, as revealed in the state-mandated audit [2]; and,

WHEREAS, the political climate, exemplified by the ban on DEI funding, presents potential threats to essential programs and initiatives, as witnessed in the closure of DEI offices and LGBTQ+ centers at other Florida universities, emphasizing the need to safeguard and advocate for programs like UMMP [3]; and,

WHEREAS, the “Stop Woke Act” that was signed and passed in April of 2022 by the Florida government regulates the content of instruction in school settings, including the specific topics discussed by instructors during DEI trainings that were previously used to educate on inclusivity [4]; and,

WHEREAS, the UF College of Journalism and Communications has showcased adaptability by renaming its inclusion, diversity, and equity committee to align with state law, demonstrating the university's commitment to compliance while upholding its dedication to DEI [3]; and,

WHEREAS, potential impacts on graduate school DEI programs, including the closure of the Office of Graduate Diversity Initiatives, raise concerns about the representation of minority students in higher education [3]; and,

WHEREAS, the Center for Inclusion and Multicultural Engagement (CIME), overseeing offices for Asian, Black, Hispanic, and LGBTQ+ student engagement, is at risk of funding cuts, impacting first-year student transition programs, diversity training workshops, a yearly diversity symposium, and the multicultural mentor program [3]; and,

WHEREAS, UF courses promoting DEI or critical race theory may face challenges due to vague definitions in state regulations, potentially affecting academic freedom and the comprehensive education necessary for students [3]; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate commemorates and celebrates the rich history and significance of the UF Underrepresented Minorities Mentorship Program (UMMP) as a pioneering initiative since 1986, fostering inclusivity, community, and academic success among underrepresented minority students.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate acknowledges the potential challenges posed by the recent state regulation on DEI funding, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding and advocating for programs such as UMMP that contribute significantly to the university's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate urges the UF administration to actively resist any potential threats to DEI initiatives, including UMMP, and explore alternative funding sources to ensure the program's continued success.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate affirms its commitment to advocating for the preservation and expansion of DEI initiatives, recognizing the importance of fostering an inclusive and diverse academic environment at the University of Florida.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to University of Florida President Ben Sasse, UF Vice President for Student Life Heather White, Interim Vice President James Tyger, UF Chief Diversity Officer Marsha McGriff, UF Center for Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement Interim

Director Elle Collins, UF Center for Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement Graduate Assistant & UMMP Coordinator Hebron Assefa, Center for New Student, Parent & Family Engagement Director Kristopher Klann, Florida Cicerones President Jacob Fazio, Florida Cicerones Executive Vice President Erin Ennis, SG STAAR Agency Co-Chairs Johanna Moncy & Mahir Rahman, SG Diversity Affairs Executive Secretary Aaron Sidhu, SG Diversity Cabinet Co-Chairs Kayla Sibble & Joshua Thomas, Dean of the College of Agricultural & Life Sciences Elaine Turner, Dean of the College of the Arts Onye Ozuzu, Dean of the Warrington College of Business Saby Mitra, Dean of the College of Dentistry Isabel Garcia, Dean of the College of Design, Construction, and Planning Chimay Anumba, Dean of the College of Education Glenn E. Good, Interim Dean of the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering Forrest Masters, Dean of the College of Health and Human Performance Michael B. Reid, Dean of the College of Journalism & Communications Hub Brown, Interim Dean of the College of Law Merritt McAlister, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences David Richardson, Dean of the College of Medicine Colleen Koch, Interim Dean of the College of Nursing Debra Lyon, Dean of the College of Pharmacy Peter Swaan, Dean of the College of Public Health and Health Professions Beth A. Virnig, and Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine Dana N. Zimmer, Alligator Editor-in-Chief Claire Grunewald, and Alligator reporter Annie Wang, Alligator reporter Sara-James Ranta, and Gainesville Sun Editor Douglas Ray The authors would like to thank Parliamentarian Emeritus Ronin Lupien for his contributions to this resolution.

[1]<https://multicultural.ufl.edu/programs/ummp/about-ummp/>

[2]<https://www.alligator.org/article/2023/01/critical-race-theory-uf-report>

[3]<https://www.alligator.org/article/2024/01/dei>

[4]<https://www.lockelord.com/newsandevents/publications/2022/05/floridas-controversial-stop-woke>