

RESOLUTION ADOPTING BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT FEATHER RIVER COLLEGE

WHEREAS, the Feather River Community College District (“FRC” or “District”), through its commitment to equity and diversity as a District, embraces Black History Month, including its values, importance, and principles;

WHEREAS, the history of Black History Month is deep-rooted and significant to all Americans.

Annually, Black History Month is a recognition and celebration of African American achievements in U.S. history.

In 1915, fifty years after the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery, West Virginia educator Dr. Carter G. Woodson and Reverend Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. They developed National Negro History week in 1926, coinciding with the birthdays of both Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. The event grew, and with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, evolved into Black History Month.

President Gerald Ford officially recognized the event in 1976, and every President since Ford has designated February as Black History Month. Presidents also have adopted a specific theme, with the 2021 theme titled “Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity.”

The original founding group purposefully researched and promoted historical achievements of African Americans and others of African descent. The Negro History Week in February was envisioned to promote a nationwide movement for schools and communities to organize celebrations, history clubs, lectures and performances in recognizing African American achievements. In recognizing Black History Month, President Ford asked the public to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.” (History.com)

WHEREAS, the Feather River College Associated Student Body and Student Population provided the following statement:

On behalf of the student body at Feather River College, we associated students can state that the diverse students of FRC feel represented, accepted, and regarded by the administration, faculty, and instructors at the college. Feather River College takes the opportunity to touch the lives of students from varying backgrounds and we experience the benefit of their endeavors. In honor of Black History Month, we want to bring to the foreground the importance of recognizing and listening to all student voices. At FRC, all of our voices are heard, and our opinions as well as our morals are valued.

WHEREAS, an Equity Pledge was drafted by the FRC Council on Instruction and adopted by the FRC Academic Senate. Resulting activities included: updating faculty job descriptions where new job searches speak explicitly to the importance of equity-focused instruction; creating a revision of the instructional comprehensive program review (CPR) template which now includes equity-minded curriculum audit;

and developing courses in music, sociology, literature, and history which incorporate the newly-adopted CSU Ethnic Studies General Education graduation requirement criteria, including African American contributions.

WHEREAS, the Feather River College Academic Senate adopted the Equity Pledge statement:

The centerpiece of the Feather River College mission requires the removal of barriers to student success and the active pursuit of an equity-minded campus of trust, compassion, open-mindedness, and culture of inclusivity. We acknowledge the systemic barriers that have historically excluded and prevented success for students from diverse, disenfranchised, and vulnerable populations and are committed to addressing the inequities that contribute to their success.

FRC pledges to build an equity framework where the lived experiences of our most marginalized student groups inform our institutional practices and processes.

Acknowledging and eliminating equity gaps includes challenging explicit and implicit biases and perceptions. This will occur through self-reflection and at times, difficult conversations. Becoming equity-minded means all of us being more conscious and aware of the systemic barriers to student success, and creating a more inclusive and culturally affirming institution and learning environment. An equity-minded campus means equipping all FRC employees with the knowledge, skills and abilities to discuss the barriers on our campus that affect student success and student lives.

Our equity pledge is to celebrate diversity, instill hope, and empower our students to transform their lives and their communities.

WHEREAS, Black History Month is not simply about recognizing the struggles faced historically by African Americans in the United States. Black History Month is instead, a recognition and celebration of the accomplishments and achievements of African Americans.

WHEREAS, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan succinctly stated that in celebrating Black History Month, we can learn from shared injustice, freedom and equality experienced from all Americans. Throughout history, African Americans have inspired some of the fundamental principles of what it means to be an American.

WHEREAS, Feather River College celebrates and brings to light the contributions of African Americans who, unfortunately, go often overlooked in U.S. history. In addition, Feather River College is committed to advocate for social justice, with Black History Month celebrations valuing and supporting Black lives and history. FRC celebrates Black History Month through its many activities involving faculty, staff and students to promote, learn about, and honor contributions of African Americans.

WHEREAS, Dr. Earl Lewis from the University of Michigan expressed the statements that describe the FRC commitment to Black History Month:

February is Black History Month when the contributions, customs and achievements of African Americans are celebrated. But as the country deals with racial injustice and civil unrest, these 28 days take on greater importance,

Once a year, the nation pauses to reflect on the contributions African Americans have made to the world, especially the United States. That intentional focus augments what's taught in school and belies the claim that only some have steered this country and made lasting contributions. Such a focus remains all the more important in a world hurting from health crises, economic losses and racial injustices.

Even as we attempt to correct for past neglect, we are learning new things. Take slavery, for example. For years, we have taught slavery as a story about the forced, intergenerational exploitation of Black bodies and labor. While that is true, in his recent book, *The Other Slavery*, Andres Resendez notes that 2.5-5 million Native peoples were also enslaved. Focused attention on one group invites new understandings of others as well as how, in this example, the comparison alters the basic narrative.

I think we will find a continued reason to set aside a specific time to probe various histories more thoroughly. In the end, the interactions among the various peoples give us a better purchase on a deeper, broader understanding of the American past. Such an understanding redounds to the benefit of all who value a healthy democratic society.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Feather River Community College District:

- supports the efforts and statement from the Feather River College Student Body Leadership,
- supports the Feather River College Academic Senate Equity Pledge and related activities,
- recognizes the many contributions of African Americans to U.S. history, and acknowledges that many contributions have been overlooked in their significance,
- understands that knowledge about past inequities provides a starting point for ensuring fundamental equity principles for all,
- re-emphasizes its stance on rejecting racism; promoting a safe, equitable environment free from discrimination; and promoting and supporting diversity among students and staff in support of the intent of Black History Month,
- recognizes the previously adopted Resolution #20/21-03 Rejecting Racism and Supporting Diversity at Feather River College as it complements Black History Month principles and ideals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Feather River Community College District collectively endorses the above statements in its recognition and celebration of Black History Month.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Trustees of the Feather River Community College District, Quincy, California at a public meeting thereof duly called and held on February 18, 2021 by the following vote:

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

I, Dr. Dana Ware, Board President of the Board of Trustees of the Feather River Community College District, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Board at a duly called and conducted meeting held on February 18, 2021.