

The AFCON Sentinel

Newsletter of the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska

Volume 25, Number 4

August 2021

On July 21, in response to a proposal from Regent Jim Pillen opposing critical race theory in the curriculum of the University of Nebraska, AFCON President Todd Schlechte, with the approval of the AFCON Board of Directors, sent this letter to each member of the Board of Regents:

AFCON Letter to Regents Regarding Critical Race Theory Resolution

The Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska, or AFCON, is a coalition of organizations and individuals that has been supporting the intellectual freedom of Nebraska students, teachers, researchers, and librarians since 1988.

We were dismayed when we noticed that Governor Pete Ricketts recently posted a tweet referring to, and including, Jim Pillen’s proposed resolution that concludes “Be it resolved that the Regents of the University of Nebraska oppose any imposition of Critical Race Theory in curriculum.” Jim Pillen retweeted this post, thereby verifying that the proposal comes from him, and that the wording is correct, or is at least a draft of the proposed resolution. This proposed resolution, if adopted, would violate the principles of academic freedom and the Board of Regents’ own bylaws.

Section 4.2 of the Regents bylaws states in part that the work of the University “requires the preservation of intellectual freedoms of teaching, expression, research, and debate. The right to search for truth, to support a position the searcher believes is the truth, and to disagree with others whose intellect reaches a different conclusion is the fiber of America's greatness. It is, likewise, the strength of a great University, and its preservation is vital.”

For a member of the Board of Regents to oppose the teaching of certain materials by NU faculty, and thereby seek to limit intellectual freedom, is therefore deeply concerning, and to do so in the name of promoting “inclusive and honest dialogue and education” makes this resolution even more troubling.

We therefore call on the Board of Regents to reject this proposed violation of its own bylaws and to emphatically reaffirm academic freedom.

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Regents Resolution on Critical Race Theory Proposed by Regent Jim Pillen

Whereas the campus and facilities of a university are places for open reflection, discussion, study, research, and learning and

Whereas America is the best country in the world and anyone can achieve the American Dream here and

Whereas education, free speech, and sound learning are the keys to freedom and opportunity in this country and

Whereas we oppose discrimination in any form and

Whereas Critical Race Theory does not promote inclusive and honest dialogue and education on campus and

Whereas Critical Race Theory proponents seek to silence opposing views and disparage important American ideals.

Be it resolved that the Regents of the University of Nebraska oppose any imposition of Critical Race Theory in curriculum.

Response from U of N Administrators

To the Faculty, Staff and Students of the University of Nebraska:

Recently there has been a great deal of conversation across our campuses about academic freedom and its importance to our university. Today we issue the following unified statement in defense of freedom of expression for all members of the University of Nebraska community:

The free and open pursuit of ideas is a cherished principle in higher education, and its preservation is vital for any great university. As our policies and practices make clear, the University of Nebraska is strongly committed to academic

freedom. We support and defend the liberties our teachers and learners have to freely discuss ideas in and outside of the classroom.

Our central mission is to educate Nebraska's future leaders, and in preparing students to be thoughtful and engaged citizens, our instructors expose them to any number of concepts and ideas. Issues around race, equity and the fight against racism are an important part of our country's story and they have an appropriate place in our classrooms. Our policies guard against the introduction of matters that are irrelevant to the subject at hand. We further expect and believe that in discussing ideas, our instructors make their classrooms places of robust and open debate, where all viewpoints are considered and all may express their opinions freely. That commitment to free expression is at the heart of our work as an institution of higher learning.

Regent Jim Pillen has notified us that he intends to place a resolution regarding critical race theory on the agenda for the August 13 Board of Regents meeting. The meeting agenda will be finalized on August 6. As we have shared with Regent Pillen, we have significant concerns about the resolution and how it would be interpreted by the faculty, staff and students we hope to recruit and retain. We will continue to work together and with the Board to vigorously protect and defend academic freedom at the University of Nebraska.

Thank you for all that you do for our university.

Ted Carter

President, University of Nebraska System

Jeffrey P. Gold, M.D.

Chancellor, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Ronnie D. Green, Ph.D.

Chancellor, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Doug Kristensen, J.D.

Chancellor, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Joanne Li, Ph.D., C.F.A.

Chancellor, University of Nebraska at Omaha

UNL AAUP Response

Governor Ricketts recently announced via social media that Regent Pillen will bring a proclamation before the Nebraska University Board of Regents to oppose the teaching of “Critical Race Theory.” The UNL Chapter of AAUP opposes any such motion and calls on the Board of Regents to dismiss it.

We encourage you to contact Board President Kenny to express your concern about this clear academic freedom violation.

The AAUP’s 1915 Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure, one of the foundational documents in the long and respected tradition of academic freedom in American higher education, begins with a discussion of the trust reposed in university Boards of Trustees or Regents. Noting that all boards of trustees should understand the centrality of academic freedom to the execution of the public trust they hold by virtue of their position, the Declaration warns against a failure to uphold this standard. It quotes then President of Harvard University, Charles William Eliot:

In the institutions of higher education the board of trustees is the body on whose discretion, good feeling, and experience the securing of academic freedom now depends. There are boards which leave nothing to be desired in these respects; but there are also numerous bodies that have everything to learn with regard to academic freedom. These barbarous boards exercise an arbitrary power of dismissal. They exclude from the teachings of the university unpopular or dangerous subjects . . . all too frequently, in both state and endowed institutions, they fail to treat the members of the teaching staff with that high consideration to which their functions entitle them. (1915 Declaration, 294)

The Nebraska University Board of Regents has committed itself in its bylaws and policies to a strict adherence to the principle of academic freedom, “pledg[ing] support of, and direct[ing] all segments of the University community to sustain and follow the . . . principles of academic freedom.” These principles require all researchers and teachers in the Nebraska university system to pursue the truths of their discipline using the most advanced approaches to the best of their professional skills, and to communicate their findings and those of their colleagues to their students. The Regents assert that this right and responsibility of the faculty, “to search for truth, to support a position the searcher believes is the truth, and to disagree with others whose intellect reaches a

different conclusion,” is “the fiber of America’s greatness. It is, likewise, the strength of a great University, and its preservation is vital” (BOR Bylaws 4.2).

The recent claim by Governor Ricketts that Regent Pillen will bring a proclamation before the Board of Regents to oppose the teaching of certain material—any material—by NU faculty is therefore deeply concerning. To do so in the name of promoting “inclusive and honest dialogue and education” is craven political sophistry. The recent politicized attacks on the teaching of Critical Race Theory display a poor understanding of this diverse body of scholarly material by politicians who claim to know it well enough to represent it to the public. Their claims are disrespectful to faculty experts, who sincerely seek to promote the common good via their research and teaching. That one of the University of Nebraska’s own Regents plans to make such a claim and use his position of public trust to undermine the integrity of the university’s mission in direct contradiction to the Board’s own bylaws, rather than to safeguard it, is profoundly upsetting. Perhaps, the Governor was mistaken in his Twitter post and misrepresented Regent Pillen’s stance? If not, we call on the Board of Regents to call this violation of its own bylaws by its name and take the appropriate action warranted by such a violation.

The AAUP chapter at UNL salutes colleagues in the Institute of Ethnic Studies and all other faculty who conduct research and teach, with courage and integrity, at the cutting edge of their disciplines. This also includes Chancellor Green’s Council on Inclusive Excellence and Diversity, charged to play a central role in our institution’s “journey toward addressing anti-racism and racial equity.” Our colleagues often attract the criticism and even vilification of politicians and members of the public because their research, by definition, pushes the bounds of our knowledge beyond the comfortable status quo. While such attacks by public officials are regrettable, it remains the responsibility of the faculty to disregard the political winds of the moment, and instead to remain dedicated to our society overall, to history, and to the advancement of human knowledge. As the Board of Regents Bylaws reminds us, this is our obligation and our responsibility. And it is the responsibility of the Board of Regents to respect and to protect this mission, one that we expect each Regent, regardless of other commitments and aspirations, to take seriously and fulfill.



From the From President
Free Speech Offers Hope

Todd Schlechte



Many people now admit that racism is deeply ingrained in American society. As an example, the Black Lives Matter movement has elicited outrage from many Whites, some of whom feel that when Blacks (or others) dare to note ongoing racial problems in American society, they are being unpatriotic. As shown on the sign in the picture (Twitter photo: StanceGrounded @_SJPeace_): “Racism is so American that when you protest it people think you are protesting America.” Protesting racism, holding events about racism, reading books about racism, and discussing racism in the classroom, are all part of the fundamental First Amendment right of free speech and, far from being taboo or unpatriotic, are part of what can make America better and stronger.

In Nebraska this year we have seen a successful attempt to put a damper on elementary classroom discussion about racial issues when Papillion La Vista Community Schools pulled the book *Something Happened in Our Town: A Child’s Story About Racial Injustice*. At a different level, a member of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents is currently trying to shut down the teaching of a theoretical framework for dealing with racial issues by proposing that the Regents pass a resolution opposing the teaching of critical race theory at the university level. Both are violations of academic freedom.

This is a national phenomenon that is simply also manifesting itself in Nebraska. Members of the library profession, for example, are concerned that “in places ranging from Kootenai County, Idaho, to Ann Arundel County, Maryland, to Lafayette Parish, Louisiana, to the town of Frisco, Texas, local efforts are underway to limit what libraries offer — especially when it comes to promoting racial equity and gender inclusivity.” (<https://truthout.org/articles/right-wingers-are-taking-over-library-boards-to-remove-books-on-racism/>)

These difficulties in our national discussion about race illustrate the need for organizations like the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska. We both encourage free and open speech about racism, in discussions within and beyond the classroom, and oppose attempts to squelch those vital conversations. We know that the free expression of ideas is not something to be feared or deemed unpatriotic. Admittedly, conversations surrounding race can be hard. But these sometimes uncomfortable conversations must occur in order for there to be positive change.

It will take time, but I have hope that we can eventually work our way through the racial issues confronting us if we employ the tools guaranteed to us by the First Amendment. Using our free speech rights for the betterment of our country is, of course, “American” in the best sense of the word.

Critical Race Theory in Nebraska (June/July 2021)

Nebraska Governor Ricketts weighs in on critical race theory (CRT)

https://omaha.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/gov-ricketts-says-he-is-opposed-to-critical-race-theory/article_75734a0e-cdfe-11eb-8164-0764e9d9a0db.html

Buffett Institute denies teaching CRT

https://omaha.com/news/local/education/buffett-institute-denies-promoting-critical-race-theory-in-webinars-for-early-childhood-teachers/article_45e31408-cebd-11eb-8693-7b9d912e9f5b.html

More on the same hearing

<https://www.noiseomaha.com/news-now/2021/6/20/why-nearly-100-people-gathered-to-talk-about-critical-race-theory-in-omaha>

Governor plans a series of town halls to oppose CRT and sex education

https://journalstar.com/news/local/education/ricketts-plans-town-halls-to-oppose-new-school-curriculum-proposals/article_8cabaa0f-de99-5d6c-8643-a499d6442643.html

Gubernatorial candidate Jim Pillen opposes CRT

https://journalstar.com/news/local/education/pillen-opposes-critical-race-theory-as-gubernatorial-candidate-after-groups-call-on-him-to-denounce/article_35f018f7-48c3-5df9-9ee8-d1caad93aba1.html

Regent Jim Pillen turns his opposition to CRT into a formal resolution for consideration by the Regents

https://omaha.com/news/local/education/jim-pillen-asks-fellow-nu-regents-to-formally-oppose-critical-race-theory/article_eedf0a26-5162-5991-916c-6e1366df5b0b.html

Petition from U of N athletes opposes the resolution

https://omaha.com/news/local/education/nu-athletes-oppose-proposed-resolution-condemning-critical-race-theory/article_6a6b116c-e8b3-11eb-8709-43e8193e4bac.html

UNL faculty oppose anti-CRT resolution

https://journalstar.com/news/local/education/resolution-opposing-critical-race-theory-would-violate-nu-policy-faculty-say/article_5582ca2f-bde4-5a95-84f5-2f25e92979bd.html

http://www.dailynebraskan.com/news/unl-faculty-senate-opposes-nu-regent-s-critical-race-theory-resolution/article_cc8b4760-e50f-11eb-bc21-2fad69678cd6.html

Dave Moshman says banning CRT would violate academic freedom even in an elementary school

https://journalstar.com/opinion/letters/letter-educational-ban-is-indoctrination/article_91b7c431-5eed-5be5-b751-9b9db879cb48.html

National AAUP postpones talks on removing UNL censure until after Regents act on resolution

https://omaha.com/news/local/education/unl-could-remain-on-censure-list-due-to-pillens-resolution-against-critical-race-theory/article_8b9a588c-ea68-11eb-804a-13d74dfe412d.html

Top five U of N administrators speak out together for academic freedom

<https://nebraska.edu/president/communications/speeches/2021/07/a-statement-in-defense-of-academic-freedom-at-the-university-of-nebraska>

Article in LJS (also published in OWH) on U of N administrators opposing the Pillen resolution

https://journalstar.com/news/local/education/nu-leaders-say-they-have-significant-concerns-about-resolution-opposing-critical-race-theory/article_49051444-946c-57d3-81d3-5b7f472892af.html

UNL Daily Nebraskan article on U of N administrators with response from Pillen

http://www.dailynebraskan.com/news/nu-president-chancellors-oppose-crt-resolution-uphold-academic-freedom/article_5a72bf26-ea39-11eb-8aca-3f2dfc65110.html

Nebraska State Education Association weighs in

https://omaha.com/news/local/education/nebraska-teachers-union-defends-critical-race-theory-accuses-critics-of-censorship/article_05301c1a-ea44-11eb-8a1b-cf1567b633ab.html

Nebraska gets national attention

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/07/28/nebraskas-critical-race-theory-debate>
<https://academeblog.org/2021/07/23/notes-from-the-crt-front-in-nebraska/>



SAVE THE DATE!

Race, Sex, and Academic Freedom in Elementary Education

Annual Meeting of the Academic Freedom
Coalition of Nebraska (AFCON)

Saturday morning, November 13, 2021

10:00 a.m. to Noon

via Zoom, open to all, no charge

We invite you to join us for a lively discussion of academic freedom in elementary education, featuring a diverse set of panelists, with a focus on three Nebraska issues that have arisen in 2021: (1) the banning of *Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice* from the Papillion La Vista Community Schools; (2) the controversy over proposed state health education standards, especially with regard to teaching about topics related to sex and gender in elementary schools; and (3) the potential elimination of school librarians from elementary schools.

Registration instructions and additional information will be provided in the October issue of the *AFCON Sentinel* and on the AFCON website.

AFCON

www.academicfreedomnebraska.org

The Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska was founded in 1988 to promote intellectual freedom in Nebraska education and research, including freedoms of belief and expression and access to information and ideas.

AFCON Board of Directors

Todd Schlechte, President and Webmaster

Robert Haller, President-elect

John Bender, Immediate Past President

Peggy Adair, Secretary and Legislative Liaison

Rod Wagner, Treasurer

*David Moshman, Policy Coordinator and
Newsletter Editor*

Shee Covarrubias, Communications Coordinator

Kari Bulgrin

Nancy Comer

Laurie Thomas Lee

Wyatt Packard

Vicki Wood

Linda Parker, ex officio, Archivist

JOIN OR RENEW

Rod Wagner, Treasurer

AFCON now accepts PayPal! Use PayPal to join or renew. We offer two ways to pay: you can use the PayPal button on our website <https://www.academicfreedomnebraska.org/join-afcon.html> or send us a check payable to AFCON at 3901 S. 27th St., #47, Lincoln, NE 68502. Memberships are \$120 for organizations and \$15 for individuals.

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Additional Nebraska links

Sex education standards

https://journalstar.com/news/local/education/nebraska-senators-urge-school-boards-to-reject-states-proposed-health-education-standards/article_4bfdad8f-dc01-5b6e-a1e1-14e46189b8c9.html

https://journalstar.com/news/local/education/wih-second-draft-imminent-more-nebraska-school-districts-rally-against-proposed-health-education-standards/article_e7b803fc-e613-59f4-8170-00c4c44f1892.html

https://omaha.com/news/local/education/47-nebraska-school-boards-object-to-sex-ed-topics-in-proposed-health-standards/article_59e986f8-ea3d-11eb-a304-bfbf1fa086f0.html

Teaching about race

https://omaha.com/news/local/education/should-nebraska-schoolkids-learn-1776-or-1619-as-the-nations-birthday/article_da3ee096-d51b-11eb-b631-53ca872428f9.html

Hateful speech at sports competitions

https://omaha.com/news/local/education/hateful-language-could-mean-suspension-for-westside-competitors/article_191be996-e974-11eb-b2e4-07695f977673.html



Teaching about Race and Sex

Statement from AAUP and others, signed by dozens of additional organizations

<https://www.aaup.org/news/joint-statement-efforts-restrict-education-about-racism>

NCAC statement on teaching divisive concepts
<https://ncac.org/news/divisive-concepts-statement-2021>

And much more:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/01/us/politics/critical-race-theory.html>

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/06/09/legislating-against-critical-race-theory-curricular-implications-some-states>

<https://areomagazine.com/2021/06/16/the-trouble-with-banning-critical-race-theory/>
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/16/arts/critical-race-theory-scholars.html>

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/cynical-and-illegitimate-higher-ed-groups-assail-legislative-efforts-to-restrict-teaching-of-race>

<https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/opinion-the-right-and-wrong-way-to-address-concerns-about-critical-race-theory/2021/06>

<https://liber.post-gazette.com/news/crime-courts/2021/06/16/lehigh-valley-county-parents-sue-east-penn-school-district-Black-Lives-Matter-lessons/stories/202106160156>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/28/opinion/critical-race-theory.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/05/opinion/w-e-disagree-on-a-lot-of-things-except-the-danger-of-anti-critical-race-theory-laws.html>

<https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/whos-really-driving-critical-race-theory-legislation-an-investigation/2021/07>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/06/30/racism-academic-discussions-pennsylvania-law/>

<https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/four-things-schools-wont-be-able-to-do-under-critical-race-theory-laws/2021/06>

Mahanoy v. B. L.

U.S. Supreme Court supports student First Amendment rights outside of school

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/23/us/supreme-court-free-speech-cheerleader.html>

After four decades of decisions cutting back the scope of Tinker, which protected the First Amendment rights of students, the Supreme Court reaffirmed Tinker's core holding by a vote of 8-1, though the decision left earlier exceptions in place and left the door open for additional exceptions. The sole dissenter was Justice Thomas, who has consistently maintained that Tinker was wrongly decided and that children have no First Amendment rights.

Most media declined to report what the student actually wrote. The *New York Times* called her language “vulgar” and “colorful.” The majority opinion quoted her actual Snapchat message: “Fuck school fuck softball fuck cheer fuck everything.” There was no discussion of her highly disturbing lack of punctuation.

Court holds that forced speech violates student rights
<https://reason.com/volokh/2021/06/30/assignments-aimed-at-requiring-a-statement-of-ideological-belief-from-students-may-violate-first-amendment/>

Disagreement on how best to protect academic freedom
<https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-to-truly-protect-academic-freedom>
<https://academeblog.org/2021/07/16/adding-more-administrators-will-not-protect-academic-freedom/>



AAUP vs. FIRE (June/July 2021)
FIRE criticized a faculty training session at the University of Oklahoma for advocating unconstitutional restrictions on student speech
<https://www.thefire.org/stop-talking-right-now-university-of-oklahoma-training-shows-instructors-how-to-censor-indoctrinate-students/>

Articles in the OUDaily and Inside Higher Ed
https://www.oudaily.com/news/ou-aaup-rejects-portrayal-of-anti-racist-faculty-workshop-by-foundation-for-individual-rights-in/article_a6aa3f04-df53-11eb-8e8c-df8e90f4785a.html
<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/07/09/aaup-university-oklahoma-challenges-fire-statements-free-speech>

Responses to FIRE on the AAUP’s Academe Blog

<https://academeblog.org/2021/07/13/fire/>
<https://academeblog.org/2021/07/15/why-boundaries-for-classroom-speech-matter/>
<https://academeblog.org/2021/07/15/playing-with-fire/>

Response from FIRE
<https://www.thefire.org/what-exactly-is-the-problem-with-the-university-of-oklahomas-anti-racist-rhetoric-pedagogies-workshop/>

One more
<https://academeblog.org/2021/07/17/harmed-by-crt-this-lawyer-invented-the-practice-area/>

ACLU and its Discontents

Is the ACLU compromising its commitment to free speech? An article in the *New York Times* provides reason to worry, a response from ACLU provides some reassurance, and an opinion column in the *New York Times* suggests the problems are real but not new and that current events, including crackdowns on protests and on the alleged teaching of “critical race theory,” will once again teach progressives the value of a strong First Amendment.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/aclu-free-speech.html>
<https://www.aclu.org/news/civil-liberties/defending-speech-we-hate/>
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/07/opinion/aclu-free-speech.html>

ACLU on CRT bills
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jul/01/aclu-fights-state-bans-teaching-critical-race-theory>

Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska Board of Directors Meeting

Via Videoconference
June 12, 2021

Present:
Nancy Comer, representing Nebraska State Literacy Association
Shee Covarrubias, director at large
Bob Haller, president-elect, chief baker, director at large
Laurie Thomas Lee, representing ACLU Nebraska
Dave Moshman, newsletter editor, policy coordinator, executive vice secretary

Todd Schlechte, president, webmaster, representing Nebraska Library Association
Rod Wagner, treasurer, representing Nebraska Center for the Book
Vicki Wood, director at large
Cynthia Stogdill, guest, representing Nebraska School Librarians Association

MINUTES

President Todd Schlechte called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. and the agenda was approved without dissent.

MINUTES: Minutes of the May Board meeting were approved without dissent.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Wagner provided a written report showing a balance on hand of \$3044. The report will be filed for audit. Moshman reported that AFCON received at his home address (which serves as AFCON's business address) the happy news that AFCON has "been pre-qualified" for a loan of up to \$500,000, no doubt due to the excellent work of our treasurer.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS: Schlechte proposed to appoint Shee Covarrubias to the Board as a director at large. The appointment was approved without dissent. Schlechte noted that Wyatt Packard will be representing the Nebraska Library Association in the future but proposed that until that becomes official he be appointed a director at large. The appointment was approved without dissent.

NEWSLETTER: Deadline for material for the August Sentinel is July 24.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: In the absence of Adair, who was celebrating her 50th anniversary, Schlechte reminded the Board that the student expression bill was killed in the 2021 but, on the positive side, bills we opposed failed to advance.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Schlechte reported that he sent copies of the June *Sentinel*, which focused on the book banning at Papillion La Vista Community Schools (PLCS), to everyone on a list provided by Covarrubias of PLCS

Board members and key administrators, with an offer of AFCON assistance and an invitation to respond in the next issue of the *Sentinel*. He has not yet heard back from any of the recipients but knows from other sources that discussions are in progress within PLCS.

PLCS BOOK BANNING: Following up on the president's report, Covarrubias reported that many people were upset over a self-serving video distributed by the Sarpy County Sheriff's Office to PLCS staff in the wake of this issue. Meanwhile, she has been immersing herself in the arcane intricacies and complexities of the PLCS vetting process. There was discussion about the right of parents to opt their own children out of objectionable books, about the importance of clear policy and process, and about the role of the state Board of Education.

ANNUAL MEETING: It was agreed that the meeting topic would be "Academic Freedom in Elementary Education" and would include (1) the PLCS book banning, (2) the controversy over proposed state health education standards, and (3) the potential elimination of school librarians from elementary schools. After discussion of various options, it was agreed the meeting would be held via Zoom on Saturday morning, November 13. After discussion of some potential speakers, a committee consisting of Haller, Covarrubias, Moshman, and Wood was appointed to report back with a plan.

NEW BUSINESS: Covarrubias suggested AFCON should enhance its visibility through social media. After discussion of potential media, Covarrubias was appointed by consensus to serve as communications coordinator and report back at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m. The next meeting will be July 10 at 10:00.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Moshman, Executive Vice Secretary

**Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska
Board of Directors Meeting**
Via Videoconference
July 10, 2021

Present:

Peggy Adair, secretary, legislative liaison
John Bender, immediate past president, representing UNL Faculty Senate
Nancy Comer, representing Nebraska State Literacy Association
Bob Haller, president-elect, chief baker, director at large
Laurie Thomas Lee, representing ACLU Nebraska
Dave Moshman, newsletter editor, policy coordinator, executive vice secretary
Wyatt Packard, representing Nebraska Library Association
Todd Schlechte, president, webmaster, representing Nebraska Library Association
Rod Wagner, treasurer, representing Nebraska Center for the Book
Vicki Wood, director at large

MINUTES

President Todd Schlechte called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

MINUTES: A motion was made by Haller, second by Wood, to approve minutes of the AFCON board meeting held on June 12, 2021. Motion carried on a voice vote. Thank you to Dave Moshman, executive vice secretary, for preparing the June minutes.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Wagner reported balance on hand as of July 10, 2021, is \$3,089.99. Wagner reported one new organizational membership of unknown origin. Wagner will determine the AFCON benefactor and report back to the board. Treasurer's report will be filed for audit.

NEWSLETTER: Articles for the next issue of the *Sentinel* are due by July 24, 2021.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Schlechte welcomed Wyatt Packard as the new AFCON board member representing the Nebraska Library Association. Schlechte reported he was invited by Wagner to attend the Nebraska Library Commission's State Advisory Council meeting

on Friday, July 16, 2021. Schlechte will speak about AFCON's mission, how our coalition benefits our member organizations, and report on the activities AFCON has been engaged in this year.

POLICY COORDINATOR: Moshman updated the board on the *Mahanoy v. B.L.* Supreme Court decision in favor of student free speech rights off-campus.

ANNUAL MEETING: Moshman presented a report on behalf of the annual meeting committee (Haller, Covarrubias, Moshman, Wood). Discussion followed. A motion was made by Adair, second by Comer, that the annual meeting committee is authorized to work with President Schlechte to select and invite speakers and report back to the AFCON board at the September meeting. Motion carried on a voice vote.

REGENTS RESOLUTION: The board discussed a proposed resolution by Jim Pillen, a member of the Board of Regents, that opposes including critical race theory in university curriculum. Moshman and Schlechte will work together to proceed with a formal response from AFCON to the Regents before the Regents' meeting on August 13, 2021.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AWARD: Moshman nominated Shee Covarrubias for the 2021 Academic Freedom Award. Second by Wood. Motion carried on a voice vote.

There being no further business, the AFCON board meeting adjourned at 11:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Peggy Adair, secretary

The next meeting of the AFCON board of directors will be held via Zoom on September 11, 2021.