

**From:** Helen Moore **Redacted**  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 10, 2021 2:36 PM  
**To:** James Pillen  
**Subject:** Emeriti faculty and Critical Race Theory

### Non-NU Email

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Regent Pillen - as a retired UNL faculty member, I rarely write on NU issues. However, your current proposal to restrict the teaching of Critical Race Theory (which actually umbrellas a number of theories) has practical outcomes you should consider.

One outcome is that you presume to undercut the professional assessments of your campus communities. For four decades I taught at UNL with critical race theory and its early precursors as **one dimension of analysis** of schools and social stratification (my areas of expertise). During that time, I was awarded the (1985) College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Teaching Award, the (2000) NU Outstanding Teaching and Creativity Award, multiple Alumni teaching awards, two national awards from my professional society for teaching, appointment to the inaugural UNL Aaron Douglas Professorship for Excellence in Teaching (2009-2014) and then received the Louise Pound George Howard Distinguished Career Award (2013) from the UNL Faculty Senate. None of these awards would be assigned to me by my campus and national colleagues if I were indeed intent on "indoctrinating" students into one specific theory of social inequality or creating divisiveness among "the races." My challenge was to prepare all students to wield those intellectual tools (across many tools) that best help them to understand their world, defend their knowledge base, and move into positive citizen roles in their communities and professions. My books and scholarly articles have stood the test of multiple anonymous reviews for publication. You call the question on CRT from a very limited lens of analysis and understanding of the many intellectual roots to critical thinking we are assigned to develop in the academy.

The second practical implication is that you will narrow our capacity for NU to recruit faculty, graduate students, post-doctoral researchers and undergraduates who want to include CRT among the frameworks they use to understand history, law and political policy, society, religion, economy, literatures, art and many other disciplines. This violates our land grant mission to serve all Nebraskans (and those we recruit from outside of the state). You are taking a political position that undermines NUs autonomy and reputation.

The third is that many Catholics (as I was raised) find much of CRT theory to be compatible with Catholicism. Watch a podcast if you cannot take time to read the wide range of critical race theorists and analyze how these do or do not enlarge your understanding of the world around you. For my students of diverse faith backgrounds, these ideas are important tools that hone their own world views.

<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2021/07/06/critical-race-theory-catholic-teaching-240972>

For you and Governor Ricketts to deem that one theory is to be banned through vague claims of "Marxism" and

"divisiveness" smacks up against academic rigor, as well as academic freedom. Both of you have interpretations of CRT theory(ies) that would garner a poor grade in my classes for undergraduates and would be failing for any masters or Ph.D. level candidate.

Do not claim the right to restrict our interrogations of our world to your own narrow (and inadequate) definitions of one theory. Being elected a Regent at NU requires you to have a more expansive and nuanced understanding of the role of competing ideas in higher education. That is how you protect the mission and reputation of the University of Nebraska as a land grant institution for all Nebraskans.

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