

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Proposal 67-20

(Voting Units: Full Senate)

“Creation of Racial and Social Justice Days of Service and Learning for Juneteenth and MLK Day Annually”

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I. Introduction and Historical Background

Students, staff, and faculty at universities across the world have been actively watching and critiquing the words spoken and steps taken by administrators at their universities to address the ongoing deaths of Black individuals in the United States (such as Emmett Till, Medgar Evers, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Henry Smith, John Crawford III, Michael Brown, Ezell Ford, Dante Parker, Michelle Cusseaux, Mary Turner, Laquan McDonald, Malcolm X, Tanisha Anderson, Akai Gurley, Tamir Rice, Romain Brisbon, Jerame Reid, Matthew Ajibade, James N. Powell Jr., Frank Smart, Ernest Lacy, Natasha Mckenna, Tony Robinson, Anthony Hill, Mya Hall, Phillip White, Eric Harris, Walter Scott, William Chapman II, Alexia Christian, Brendon Glenn, Victor Manuel Larosa, Jonathan Sanders, Freddie Carlos Gray Jr., Joseph Mann, Salvado Ellswood, Sandra Bland, Albert Joseph Davis, Darrius Stewart, Billy Ray Davis, Samuel Dubose, Michael Sabbie, Brian Keith Day, Christian Taylor, Troy Robinson, Asshams Pharoah Manley, Michael Stewart, Felix Kumi, Keith Harrison Mcleod, Junior Prosper, Lamontez Jones, Paterson Brown, Dominic Hutchinson, Anthony Ashford, Alonzo Smith, Tyree Crawford, India Kager, La’Vante Biggs, Michael Lee Marshall, Jamar Clark, Richard Perkins, Phillip Pannell, Nathaniel Harris Pickett, Benni Lee Tignor, Miguel Espinal, Michael Noel, Kevin Matthews, Bettie Jones, Quintonio Legrier, Keith Childress Jr., Janet Wilson, Randy Nelson, Antronie Scott, Wendell Celestine, David Joseph, Calin Roquemore, Dyzhawn Perkins, Christopher Davis, Marco Loud, James Byrd Jr., Peter Gaines, Torrey Robinson, Darius Robinson, Kevin Hicks, Mary Truxillo, Demarcus Semer, Amadou Diallo, Willie Tillman, Terrill Thomas, Demetrius Dubose, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Terence Crutcher, Paul O’Neal, Alteria Woods, Bobby Russ, Jordan Edwards, Aaron Bailey, Ronell Foster, Stephon Clark, Corey Carter, Antwon Rose II, Tayler Rock, Malice Green, Ramarley Graham, Elijah McClain, Aiyana Stanley Jones, Botham Jean, Pamela Turner, Dominique Clayton, Sean Bell, Atatiana Jefferson, Jemel Roberson, James Lee Alexander, Ryan Matthew Smith, Derrick Ambrose Jr., Addie Mae Collins, Carol Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, Cynthia Wesley, Nicholas Heyward Jr., Christopher Whitfield, Willie McCoy, Victor White III, Marcus Deon Smith, Chavis Carter, Martin Lee Anderson, Christopher Mccorvey, Bradley Blackshire, Timothy Thomas, Reginald Doucet Jr., Danroy "DJ" Henry Jr.,

Karvas Gamble Jr., Eric Reason, Korryn Gaines, Rekia Boyd, Kionte Spencer, Darius Tarver, Wayne Arnold Jones, Manuel Ellis, Victor Duffy Jr., Kobe Dimock-Heisler, Clinton R. Allen, Dontre Hamilton, Timothy Caughman, Sylville Smith, Corey Jones, Tyre King, Eric Garner, Miles Hall, Kendrick Johnson, Charleena Lyles, Michael Lorenzo Dean, Trayvon Martin, Renisha McBride, Kiwane Carrington, Oscar Grant III, Breonna Taylor, Kalief Browder, Darrien Hunt, Troy Hodge, William Green, Ahmaud Arbery, Dion Johnson, Tony McDade, Jamel Floyd, George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, Italia Marie Kelly, David Mcatey, Chris Beaty and millions of other Black individuals murdered by racist violence) and the larger issues of systemic racism and white supremacy in this country.

A 2019 *Time* article titled [Diversity Has Become a Booming Business. So Where Are the Results?](#) notes that institutions of higher education in STEM sectors are increasing positions like the VP of Diversity and Inclusion in an effort to support a more diverse workforce. Despite the growth in these administrative and leadership positions in corporations as well as on college and university campuses, achieving diversity and inclusive excellence in science, technology, engineering and math fields is not flourishing, and success in achieving diversity and inclusion remains an ongoing and systemic issue which disenfranchises those already otherwise underrepresented and underserved.

If Michigan Technological University wishes to be a leader in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the University Senate urges the administration to consider how the Fourth Industrial Revolution will lead not just in technological development but through changing the way we live and work to create a more equitable and inclusive virtual and lived world for **all**.

The University Senate is committed to promoting understanding and change of racial and social injustices on campus. Past actions include Senate resolutions and the creation of an ad hoc committee for promoting and facilitating tolerance and understanding. Ongoing measures are needed to reach our university mission of creating “a diverse and inclusive community of and for scholars that is conducive to excellent teaching, innovative research, and the personal and intellectual growth of its students, faculty, staff, and alumni” ([Michigan Technological University Diversity Statement](#)). To continue realizing this mission, faculty, staff, and students will benefit from institutionally-supported opportunities to explore how racial inequality affects our community.

II. Proposal

Juneteenth is a celebration of the day the last enslaved Black persons in Galveston, Texas were freed in 1865. It is a day meant to celebrate freedom and remember the important contributions of Black people and culture to the development of our nation. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Day celebrates the civil rights leader's life and legacy. It is a federal holiday designated as a national day of service to encourage all Americans to volunteer to improve their communities. Celebrating each by exploring how racism has affected us as a nation, an institution, and as individuals signals to all community members, particularly People of Color, that we are willing to openly and honestly confront racism on our campus. Ideally, both days will spur a campus-wide examination of who we are as an institution and how we perpetuate or break down all systems of oppression. Spending two days in reflection and conversation can and should promote discussions about privilege, power, oppression, and change that last the entire year in classrooms, offices, and departments across campus.

In order to combat individual and systemic racism (and intersectional issues faced by marginalized groups) on campus, we ask the administration to take the following concrete steps:

- create a committee composed of leadership from each academic unit, Student Affairs, and other Staff areas that will work in tandem with the VP of Diversity and Inclusion
- To create and implement annual campus-wide days of service and learning on Juneteenth (June 19) and MLK Jr. Day (3rd Monday of January) that serve as committed days of educational and community engagement among faculty, staff, and students.
- The VP of Diversity and Inclusion (in conjunction with a campus-wide committee composed of at least one faculty member from each academic unit and other nominations from Student Affairs and Staff sectors) will be responsible for overseeing these days of service and learning.

As the University Senate, we are proposing two days annually to be utilized as dedicated institutional days of commitment to education and service to diversity, equity, and inclusion, however, this is only the beginning of what Michigan Technological University must do to demonstrate a true commitment to equity, as two dedicated days of education and service are performative measures and our campus needs action-based measures to follow these observances.

Furthermore, the University Senate asks the administration to consider implementing the following additional action-based measures following the creation of the days of service and learning so we can become a leading STEM institution who leads with equity first: require baseline diversity education to all faculty and staff; create general education courses aimed at equity-based learning for all first-year students; dedicated recruitment of underrepresented groups; dedicated support services for underrepresented students, staff, and faculty; dedicated funding and prioritization of hiring diverse faculty and staff; enhanced campus programming and curriculum dedicated to diverse voices and perspectives; increased fundraising for internal scholarships to support underrepresented identities; administrative consultations with social identity student groups and staff/faculty sectors to analyze issues on campus; action based steps

as informed by the Campus Climate Survey in which many issues around equity are noted. This list is not exhaustive, and additional measures are needed to prioritize diversity and inclusion.