



October 13, 2020

RESPONSE TO EXECUTIVE ORDER ON “COMBATTING RACE AND SEX STEREOTYPING”

Regis University will continue to provide anti-bias training

President Trump announced the “Executive Order on Combatting Race and Sex Stereotyping” last month. The order prohibits recipients of federal grants and contracts, including Regis University, from providing training on academically sound and peer-reviewed concepts such as unconscious bias, systemic racism, white supremacy, intersectionality, and a shared responsibility for past and present inequities on the basis of sex or race.

While the immediate impact of the order is to stifle discussion of America’s history of structural racism and systemic inequity, its implications are far more destructive. The order attempts to suppress advocacy for equity and inclusion and to erode progress toward justice for all marginalized people. It is an attack on intellectual freedom and provides a model for suppressing First Amendment rights. In silencing dissent, the order undermines the core principles of democracy.

Regis University takes its mission from the heart of the Gospel, and above all, Jesus’ command to “bring good news to the poor” and to labor for justice alongside those whose dignity has been violated. Our mission entails the naming and dismantling of racism, bias and inequities, just as our commitment to “transformative education at the frontiers of faith, reason, and culture” requires serious dialogue between history, Catholic social teaching, and the role of the Church in the oppression of people of color. Hence, the order represents a direct attack on religious freedom and on the core identity of Regis as a Jesuit Catholic University.

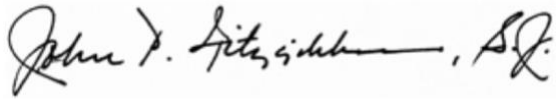
Indeed, we are not alone in our stance. The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU), the national organization that represents Regis and 26 other Jesuit universities in the United States, has joined the American Council on Education (ACE) in denouncing this egregious overstep by the president. At the same time, AJCU is pouring resources into pursuing other avenues of resistance to this order at the highest levels of government. We are stronger together.

In response to this challenge to our fundamental values, Regis University will continue its academically sound diversity trainings without delay. Regis will not allow our First Amendment

rights to be censored. In practicing the Regis value of social projection, we have a shared responsibility to engage thoughtfully, and meaningfully, with academic concepts, even—or especially—if they make us uncomfortable.

I am grateful for the platform to share this message, and to act on our collective responsibility.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John P. Fitzgibbons, SJ". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Rev. John P. Fitzgibbons, SJ
President