



Protecting the Free Exchange of Ideas

How Trustees Can Advance Intellectual Diversity on Campus

American Council of Trustees and Alumni

Institute for Effective Governance



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI

Launched in 1995, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to working with alumni, donors, trustees, and education leaders across the country to support liberal arts education, high academic standards, the free exchange of ideas on campus, and high-quality education at an affordable price.

ACTA's Institute for Effective Governance, founded in 2003 by college and university trustees, is devoted to enhancing boards' effectiveness and helping trustees fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities fully and effectively. IEG offers a range of services tailored to the specific needs of individual boards, and focuses on academic quality, academic freedom, and accountability.

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2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword 1

Intellectual Diversity

Why Trustees Should Care	3
What Is It?	4
What It's Not	6
Where Do Trustees Come In?	8

Best Practices

■ Survey the campus climate.	10
■ Incorporate intellectual diversity into institutional statements and policies.	14
■ Hire administrators who are committed to intellectual diversity.	16
■ Incorporate intellectual diversity into the university's strategic planning.	18
■ Vet (and amend, if necessary) student grievance guidelines.	20
■ Eliminate speech codes and other policies that restrict freedom of expression.	24
■ Encourage visiting scholar programs and guest lecture series.	26
■ Utilize orientation programs for discussion of intellectual diversity.	30
■ Include statements on course syllabi indicating a commitment to the free exchange of ideas.	34
■ Encourage the president to take a stand for intellectual diversity.	38

End Notes 41

FOREWORD

Intellectual diversity is the free exchange of ideas. It is in peril in today's academy, as observers across the ideological spectrum have noted. But in the last few years, many universities, large and small, across the United States, have stepped in to protect and advance it. In many instances, trustees—honoring their responsibility to be the ultimate guarantors of academic freedom and educational quality—have taken the lead.

That is what the American Council of Trustees and Alumni has found, based on an extensive review of major institutions and correspondence from college provosts and presidents. In this report, we feature “best practices” gleaned from these exemplary efforts. Our goal is to commend institutions that have taken action, to urge them to keep at it, and to exhort other boards to play their proper leadership role—working, of course, with administrators, faculty, alumni, and donors—in guaranteeing and enriching the intellectual environment on campus.

Trustees have many important jobs, but one of the most critical is ensuring intellectual pluralism and academic freedom. As the American Council on Education has pointed out, “individual campuses must give meaning and definition to these concepts.” The institutions profiled here have done so. May more follow in their footsteps.

Anne D. Neal
President

INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY

Why Trustees Should Care

Imagine that you are a college freshman—18 years old, fresh out of high school, idealistic, excited about college, and maybe even a bit intimidated by it, too. You are away from home for the first time, in a place both strange and full of intellectual opportunities.

Imagine also that you are deeply interested in understanding the many geopolitical issues facing America today. What better thing to do, then, than to concentrate in American diplomatic or military history? Yet when you search for courses on these topics, you can hardly find them.

Imagine further that you have concern for the poor and distressed—and so you are interested in becoming a social worker. But in one of your classes, the professor demands that you sign a letter to the state legislature with content violating your religious beliefs. If you do not sign, your grade will suffer.

And finally, imagine that when you return to your dorm at night, you are compelled by your residential advisor to attend events in which you must adopt specific beliefs and attitudes about social and political issues and answer intrusive questions about your personal life—or risk intimidation and humiliation.

Sadly, the examples cited above are not fairy tales, but actual situations on campus—incidents that underscore a wider problem affecting higher education today: the lack of respect for intellectual diversity.

At universities, which are supposed to cherish free inquiry as a matter of course, it's hard to believe that these things occur.

But they do. The first situation confronts students at such diverse institutions as the University of Illinois, UCLA, and the University of Michigan.¹ The second and third are actual, nationally publicized cases from Missouri State University and the University of Delaware. And they point to the urgent need for boards to take responsible action on the issue of intellectual diversity.

What Is It?

Intellectual diversity has two basic meanings. First, it means the varied scholarly inquiry that offers students exposure to different areas of knowledge. For example, within the field of American history, there are several sub-disciplines including diplomatic, political, economic, and military history. But on many campuses, it's increasingly hard to find courses in these areas. Within a few years, it might be nearly impossible to study military history at all, as the number of professors in the field and focus of major historical journals on the subject have declined precipitously over the past few decades.² In 2007, out of the top 25 universities as ranked by *U.S. News & World Report*, a mere 21 history professors out of more than 1,000 listed military history as their specialty.³ Brooklyn College history professor Robert David Johnson has researched the issue and concludes that entire subjects like diplomatic and military history have become endangered species.⁴ Similarly, in many English departments classic authors such as Chaucer, Milton, or Shakespeare are being pushed aside by a growing number of courses focused on popular culture, film, and even the human body. Most elite colleges and universities no

longer even require their English majors to take a Shakespeare course.⁵

Second, intellectual diversity means introducing students, in the course of their academic work, to the scope of accepted scholarly opinions in the subject area studied—as outlined in the American Association of University Professors' 1915 *Declaration of Principles*.⁶ For example, classes that cover hot-button academic issues, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or questions about globalization, should air varying viewpoints, rather than serve as platforms for the advocacy of one particular position.

Studies of faculty voter registration and campaign contributions reveal a remarkable level of uniformity within the professoriate. When professors are asked to describe themselves ideologically, they are distinctly on one side of the spectrum. And when they are surveyed on their cultural, economic, and political affiliations, again, they show a decided one-sidedness. This skewing is even more dominant in the social sciences and humanities, whose subject matter relates directly to political and cultural concerns. While a professor may hold strong beliefs and still be a responsible scholar and a fair teacher, it is important to acknowledge that politically homogeneous faculties are intellectually compromised faculties. Espousing nearly uniform political opinions, they predictably lack the variety of outlooks and varied intellectual interests that challenge and sharpen individuals of all political stripes.⁷

Against this backdrop, it is not altogether surprising that numerous surveys have found a climate in the classroom that is neither open to alternative views nor conducive to a robust

conversation. A 2008 self-study commissioned by the University System of Georgia showed that 23 percent of students surveyed took a class in which they felt it was necessary to agree with a professor's point of view in order to get a good grade. Only a little more than a third of the respondents believed they could freely discuss important issues in class to a great degree.⁸ Given that the university campus is the one place where the exchange of ideas should be the freest, this should be cause for concern.

Yet, this is not an isolated case. The American Council of Trustees and Alumni has commissioned independent surveys of students on other campuses around the country, with similar results. For example, in a survey of Missouri's two largest public universities, significant numbers (40 and 57 percent, respectively) of students reported that there were "certain topics or viewpoints that are off-limits," and that "some courses have readings which present only one side of a controversial issue."⁹

What It's Not

Intellectual diversity is not just a nice idea or a catchy phrase. It lies at the very heart of what a quality education is all about. Exposure to a wide range of subject areas and viewpoints gives students a solid foundation of knowledge and creates lifelong learners and critical thinkers. Some argue that intellectual diversity means affirmative action for certain students and professors; others that intellectual diversity means requiring equal time for all ideas, even those that are not intellectually sound: teaching, for example, that the earth is flat, as well as that the earth is round. But it is neither of these things—and to misunderstand or caricature the concept in this way is to

miss a vital point. Properly understood, intellectual diversity is not about managing how many “conservatives” or “liberals” populate a faculty; nor is it about exposing students to every idea or unfounded theory that has ever been produced. Rather, it speaks to matters of professional, pedagogical, and institutional responsibility. Indeed, intellectual diversity might best be described as a crucial component of academic integrity—one in which education means exposing students to a wide range of recognized scholarly viewpoints and equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to evaluate, compare, and choose among those viewpoints. Intellectual diversity, in other words, is the principle that enables students to become informed and engaged citizens.

Faculty members and administrators themselves have acknowledged that there is a problem. In *Save the World on Your Own Time*, professor Stanley Fish criticizes his fellow professors for using the classroom as a political soapbox, and urges them to concentrate on teaching their disciplines. And former Yale president Benno Schmidt, now chairman of the City University of New York Board of Trustees, has noted that the “most serious problems of freedom of expression in our society today exist on campuses. The assumption seems to be that the purpose of education is to induce correct opinion rather than to search for wisdom and liberate the mind.”¹⁰ In this context, former Harvard president Derek Bok has written that “the proper course is surely to rally the entire faculty to consider their responsibilities as teachers and to discourage efforts by particular instructors to misuse their positions by trying to indoctrinate students.”¹¹

Where Do Trustees Come In?

As a trustee, you can ensure that your university promotes and protects intellectual diversity. As a fiduciary, you have the authority and obligation to insist that administrators and faculty examine the climate on your campus and, if there is a problem, take the necessary steps to correct it. In doing so, you will be part of a large and growing group of educational leaders that have taken concrete steps to ensure that their schools protect the free exchange of ideas on campus.

In 2005, thirty higher education organizations representing virtually every college and university in America released a joint *Statement on Academic Rights and Responsibilities*, coordinated by the American Council on Education (ACE).¹² The ACE *Statement* asserted the importance of intellectual pluralism and academic freedom to the academic environment, resolving that “[i]ndividual campuses must give meaning and definition to these concepts within the context of disciplinary standards and institutional mission.” In light of this important statement, ACTA wrote in late 2008 to the presidents of over 200 major colleges and universities throughout the country to ask them what specific actions their institutions had taken to ensure intellectual diversity. In addition, we examined publicly available statements, policies, and other records at a wide range of schools, including the state flagships as well as top national universities and liberal arts colleges as ranked by *U.S. News & World Report*.

We found a number of exemplary institutional efforts to ensure that students have the most vital educational experience possible. Many universities have included affirmations of

intellectual diversity and viewpoint pluralism in their official diversity statements. Still others have sponsored campus debates and acknowledged the importance of the free exchange of ideas in maintaining a vibrant intellectual life.

In the following pages, we feature several colleges and universities that have taken concrete steps to ensure that viewpoint diversity and professional standards are upheld. In light of the actions surveyed, we highlight some “best practices.” It is our hope that this guide will provide insight as to what trustees—working with alumni, administrators, faculty, and donors—can do to further intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas. While much progress has been made, there is still work to be done.

Best Practice

#1

Survey the campus climate.

Institutions regularly undertake campus climate surveys on a range of issues—intellectual diversity should be one of them. A number of prominent colleges and universities have taken this idea to heart, sometimes with self-studies and, in at least one case, with an external evaluation. These studies can provide crucial baseline information for trustees interested in advancing this central principle of education—intellectual diversity on campus.

Missouri State University

A 2006 civil-rights lawsuit brought by a former student prompted MSU to submit its entire School of Social Work to an external review by deans from other institutions. When the results of the study were very negative—noting “bullying” of students by some faculty—the university’s president publicized the information and recommended that specific action be taken to address the issues raised.¹³ Then MSU unveiled a plan for systematic improvement, which it has done much to implement.¹⁴ This candor and openness demonstrate a commitment to the free exchange of ideas. MSU commendably turned an abject violation of intellectual diversity and academic freedom into a catalyst for genuine reform.

University System of Georgia

Following a 2007 informational hearing on intellectual diversity, the USG Board of Regents commissioned a major, system-wide self-study of the campus climate, publishing the results in 2008. The survey—given to students via email—included questions about grading bias, political tolerance, and intellectual engagement inside and outside the classroom.¹⁵

The student grievance policies at all USG campuses also underwent review to determine whether they were clear and accorded the students appropriate channels through which to voice their concerns.¹⁶

In announcing the survey results, USG outlined several areas of concern and indicated it would continue to explore ways to improve the free exchange of ideas on campus. While certain

troubling findings merit further review, USG's open-minded interest in examining how well its 35 institutions protect the marketplace of ideas offers a model for institutions across the country.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

UNC Chapel Hill has taken several steps to examine the state of academic freedom and intellectual pluralism on campus. In March of 2007, the Student Advisory Committee to the Chancellor urged the university to “take an active role in maintaining an atmosphere that promotes intellectual freedom and diverse perspectives”; the chancellor subsequently appointed a Committee on Academic Responsibility, which conducted a study of students’ perspectives on intellectual diversity and academic freedom. While a large majority of students perceived the classroom climate to be welcoming of differing viewpoints, the chancellor concluded that these results did “not justify complacency, since the surveys also revealed that at least 13% of undergraduate students felt they had witnessed at least one classroom situation in which unpopular or provocative ideas seemed to have been unwelcome, either because of the instructor’s viewpoint or viewpoints of the majority of the students in the class.”¹⁷ The committee recommended that the university continue to monitor any incidents of inappropriate classroom conduct and make a report annually.¹⁸

Best Practice

#2

Incorporate intellectual diversity into institutional statements and policies.

A rich variety of viewpoints and respect for diversity of opinion are essential to a solid education. So it makes sense for colleges and universities to acknowledge those goals publicly in statements of institutional purpose. In recent years, a number of institutions have expressly included the importance of intellectual diversity in their official mission statements and handbooks.

Old Dominion University

In 2008, the ODU faculty senate passed a “Resolution Supporting Intellectual Diversity,” declaring that the university should “remain an open marketplace of ideas where free expression is exercised and where diverse views are expressed and debate of those ideas is encouraged.”¹⁹ This unambiguous statement of support for intellectual diversity and freedom of thought is a model for institutions interested in affirming their dedication to fostering a vibrant and stimulating intellectual experience.

Other Institutions

Boston University and the **University of Colorado** have both incorporated strong statements supporting academic freedom and intellectual diversity into official university policies.²⁰

Similarly, **Amherst College**, **Case Western Reserve University**, **Arizona State University**, **Ohio State University**, the **University of Missouri System**, **Muhlenberg College**, and **Rhodes College** have included intellectual diversity in official institutional statements.²¹ In addition, **Mississippi State University** reviewed and revised certain aspects of its operating policies in 2006 and 2008, reiterating the university’s commitment to academic freedom and its conviction that “student performance should be evaluated according to academic criteria, not on the basis of opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.”²²

Best Practice

#3

Hire administrators who are committed to intellectual diversity.

When conducting presidential and other high-level searches, the search committee should seek candidates committed to intellectual diversity, and assess them on that commitment once they are hired.

City College of New York

In 2007, CCNY performed a search for a dean of science. In the job announcement, CCNY specified that applicants “should be responsive to the needs of faculty and the diverse student body, and committed to cultural *and intellectual diversity* [emphasis added].”²³ With just a few words, CCNY sent a clear message that it is making a conscious effort to welcome diversity of all kinds—including diversity of thought.

University of Pennsylvania

In 2009, Penn formed a search committee to find a new provost. In the press coverage of the job announcement, an administrator declared that the best candidate for the job would have a “demonstrated commitment to academic excellence and intellectual diversity,” and in doing so, offered an example worthy of repetition by any institution launching a high-level search.²⁴

Best Practice

#4

Incorporate intellectual diversity into the university's strategic planning.

The strategic plan is the central document of the university. It presents a long-range vision for the university and outlines the practical steps needed to realize it. Including an endorsement of intellectual diversity is important, and trustees—who should contribute actively to the development and implementation of a strategic plan—can insist on it.

Governors State University

GSU's strategic planning process has incorporated a number of initiatives related to intellectual diversity and academic freedom. According to the provost, GSU has committed to reviewing syllabi to ensure that grades are “based solely on considerations that are intellectually relevant to the subject matter under consideration.” GSU also pledged to implement a more rigorous program review system—which the Board of Trustees monitors—to ensure “the intellectual standards of relevant academic and professional disciplines.”²⁵ The strategic plan, *Strategy 2015*, reaffirms the university's mission statement, which includes a commitment to “creating an intellectually stimulating public square.”²⁶ The plan also restates the university's core values, affirming that: “At GSU, we embrace diversity among students, staff, and faculty as well as members of the broader community, and we encourage acceptance of wide-ranging perspectives.”²⁷

Other Institutions

Several other institutions have incorporated considerations of intellectual diversity into their strategic plan. These include **Bucknell University, Western Illinois University, Purdue University, and the University of Maryland.**²⁸

Best Practice

#5

Vet (and amend, if necessary) student grievance guidelines.

Grievance procedures should provide a clear, accessible, and well-publicized avenue for redress if students believe they have been subject to unfair grading due to personal beliefs. The ideal system gives a step-by-step procedure for students to follow and allows them to appeal to a neutral third party if necessary.

City University of New York

In 2007, the CUNY Board of Trustees adopted a streamlined grievance policy for students to address inappropriate professorial behavior. This policy addresses such student concerns about faculty members as “incompetent or inefficient service, neglect of duty, physical or mental incapacity, and conduct unbecoming a member of the staff.” If the matter is not resolved informally, the student may file a complaint within 30 days of the incident, and the procedure allows for investigation by a department chair or other relevant officials. The policy does not seek to interfere in matters pertaining to classroom material or teaching style; however, it does state that “the university recognizes its responsibility to provide students with a procedure for addressing complaints about faculty treatment of students that are not protected by academic freedom and are not covered by other procedures.”²⁹

Fort Valley State University

As outlined earlier, the University System of Georgia called for a policy review of intellectual diversity and academic freedom at each of its 35 campuses during 2007 and 2008. One USG institution, Fort Valley State University, did a particularly exemplary job in asserting its commitment to those principles. FVSU fully adopted the 1940 AAUP Statement of Principles and the 2005 ACE *Statement*. It incorporated the goal of intellectual diversity in university policies and publications, including the mission statement, university catalogs, faculty handbook, student handbook, human resources publications,

the university website, and the staff handbook. In addition, each course syllabus is required to contain a statement telling students they will be graded solely on academic merit. FVSU also revamped its student grievance policy and charged the Director of Human Resources to serve as the university's intellectual diversity ombudsman.³⁰

Oklahoma State University

Following the *ACE Statement*, OSU amended its policy governing grade appeals. Under the policy, students who feel they have been unfairly evaluated may appeal to a mediating body called the Grade Appeals Board, which is charged with determining whether the “evaluation system was not consistently and fairly applied to all students” or “included non-academic criteria.” The relevant policy now states, quite rightly, that the “grading system can be subjective but not arbitrary, capricious or personally biased.”³¹ OSU also adopted an academic integrity policy that grounds intellectual freedom in “the values of honesty and responsibility that preserve our academic community.” It notes that instructors are expected “to fairly and consistently evaluate students and award credit based on professionally judged academic performance established by the instructor.”³²

Best Practice

#6

Eliminate speech codes and other policies that restrict freedom of expression.

The university should be a place where diverse views can be expressed freely. Unfortunately, too many institutions have policies in place that punish “offensive” speech or restrict expression to designated “free speech zones.” While some institutions have dropped these policies, there is still much more to do.

Dartmouth College

While Dartmouth is a private college, it advertises itself as respecting freedom of speech and expression. Materials on its website, however, presented a restrictive interpretation of student speech, meriting Dartmouth a “red light” designation from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, a free speech watchdog organization. During the 2004 and 2005 elections for Dartmouth’s Board of Trustees, three candidates—T.J. Rodgers, Peter Robinson, and Todd Zywicki—raised the issue, calling for Dartmouth to repeal its apparent speech code.³³ All three were elected to the board. Dartmouth’s administration disavowed the previous restrictions on free speech in 2005—leading FIRE to change its “red light” designation to a green one. In this case, trustees were a major force in ensuring Dartmouth adhered to its stated commitment to the free exchange of ideas.³⁴

Northern Kentucky University

In May of 2007, the NKU Board of Regents adopted a free expression policy that clarified student rights regarding freedom of speech and demonstration. Among other things, the new policy eliminated much-criticized “free speech zones” on campus and instituted a content-neutral rule, allowing students to distribute flyers and posters regardless of subject matter.³⁵ This represented a decisive victory for free speech at an institution previously accused of restricting the exchange of ideas.³⁶

Best Practice

#7

Encourage visiting scholar programs and guest lecture series.

Visiting scholar programs can enhance intellectual diversity and re-introduce various scholarly perspectives that are lacking in the university's own academic departments. Visiting fellows can hold seminars and teach undergraduate classes. Lecture series can also be used as forums for different perspectives on matters of intellectual, social, or political importance.

Tufts University

In 2004, Tufts inaugurated the Richard E. Snyder President's Lecture series, which seeks to bring prominent public intellectuals to campus to present varied points of view on national and global issues. The lecture series—endowed by the alumnus and former Simon & Schuster CEO of the same name—aims to bring to campus intellectual figures who “present provocative and perhaps controversial points of view, who challenge conventional wisdom, and who introduce and champion new ways of thinking.”³⁷ Speakers have included Hoover Institution fellow Shelby Steele, former Harvard president Lawrence Summers, author Salman Rushdie, historian David Hackett Fisher, evolutionary biologist Lynn Margulis, and University of Chicago professor Leon Kass.³⁸ The lecture series offers a superb example of how alumni can help enhance the intellectual offerings at their *alma maters*.

Harvard Law School

In 2008, HLS inaugurated its Herbert W. Vaughan Lecture Series, which invites intellectuals and public figures to discuss the founding principles and core doctrines of the U.S. Constitution. The inaugural lecture featured United States Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia speaking on the topic of originalism in constitutional law. Thanks to the generosity of HLS alumnus Herbert Wiley Vaughan, students now hear and engage perspectives outside the classroom that enhance what they learn inside it.³⁹

Other Institutions

Other examples of speaker series and visiting scholar programs include the James Madison Program at **Princeton University**, the Political Theory Project and the Kaleidoscope Lecture Fund at **Brown University**, the Tocqueville Forum at **Georgetown University**, the Janus Forum at **The University of Vermont**, the Committee for the American Founding and Colloquium Series at **Amherst College**, the Center for the Study of Liberal Democracy at the **University of Wisconsin-Madison**, and the Program on Constitutionalism and Democracy at the **University of Virginia**.⁴⁰

Best Practice

#8

Utilize orientation programs for discussion of intellectual diversity.

Orientations for freshmen or new faculty present a great opportunity to communicate the values of intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas at key educational and professional moments.

University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

It has become common in recent years for universities to assign books to incoming students as part of a first-year orientation program. One particularly noteworthy program was launched in 2007 at UCCS. The 2008 summer reading list included Plato's *Apology* and Martin Luther King's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, as well as selections from Alexis de Tocqueville and Frederick Douglass. The program challenged students to "join with the college community in addressing the question of what your responsibilities are as a citizen of a free society."⁴¹ Drawing from varied sources and classic texts, the program showed how orientations can engage students intellectually and encourage them to examine their assumptions without preconceived conclusions in mind.

University of Missouri System

In response to a review of intellectual pluralism initiated by the UM Board of Curators, it was announced in 2007 that each of the system's campuses "will include in student orientation programs information about viewpoint discrimination, and indicate when and how a student can register a complaint on campus." The various campuses have also appointed ombudsmen—typically individuals already on staff—to handle student concerns relating to intellectual diversity and to prepare annual reports on such complaints. Both of these actions are simple, low-cost ways to promote the free exchange of ideas.⁴²

Other Institutions

Ohio State University hosted a program about academic rights and responsibilities by its InterACT Diversity Players theatrical troupe, which is available for orientations and other events.⁴³ At the **University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire**, the academic success section of the orientation website advises students to maintain a respectful campus atmosphere that “encourages an open exchange of opinions.”⁴⁴ **Washington and Lee University** has included professional standards in teaching and scholarship in its orientation programs for new faculty.⁴⁵

Best Practice

#9

Include statements on course syllabi indicating a commitment to the free exchange of ideas.

Trustees can foster greater awareness of academic freedom and intellectual diversity by having course syllabi include a declaration of students' academic rights and responsibilities.

South Dakota State University

From 2005 to 2008, the South Dakota Board of Regents enacted a series of intellectual diversity reforms. The regents now require all public university professors to include a “Freedom in Learning” statement on course syllabi based on a system template. SDSU uses the following:

***Freedom in Learning.** Under Board of Regents and University policy student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in manners unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious standards should first contact the instructor of the course to initiate a review of the evaluation. If the student remains unsatisfied, the student may contact the department head and/or the dean of the college which offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.*

In addition to requiring the “Freedom in Learning” statements, the regents also amended student grievance policies in 2007 and 2008. The policy now delineates a clear process for students who believe that their academic work has been subject to capricious or politically biased evaluation, with a final appeal

to the Vice President for Academic Affairs if necessary.⁴⁶ SDSU also states in the July 2008 version of its student code that “Academic institutions exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students and the general well-being of society. Free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the attainment of these goals. Freedom to teach and to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom.”⁴⁷

These steps show a concerted effort on the part of the regents and the SDSU administration to ensure an environment friendly to diverse viewpoints.

Best Practice

#10

Encourage the president to take a stand for intellectual diversity.

The president of a college or university is the most high-profile figure on campus—and off. A speech or article endorsing intellectual pluralism and academic freedom can go far in underscoring the institution's commitment to those principles.

Cornell University

In the fall of 2006, Cornell president David Skorton took up the topic of intellectual diversity in an op-ed for the university's student daily. In the article, Skorton declared that "we must adhere to the principle that all perspectives and their proponents are welcome on our great university campuses." He went on to say that "no internal perspectives, including those of the faculty, should be suppressed" and to endorse "the fostering and support of exchanges of disparate points of view" at Cornell.⁴⁸ Since then, Skorton has issued several other statements affirming his commitment to the free exchange of ideas.⁴⁹

State University of New York at Albany

In 2005, the late Kermit J. Hall, then president of SUNY Albany, penned "A Cautionary Tale: Academic Rights and Responsibilities," an article stressing the importance of maintaining academic freedom for faculty and students. Hall argued that universities themselves must take decisive action and show visible leadership in fostering the free exchange of ideas if American higher education is to retain the public trust.⁵⁰

Amherst College

In a 2005 interview, Anthony Marx, the president of Amherst, explained his decision to use debates, symposia, and speaker series to enhance intellectual diversity. "If our students are to contend with complex ideas in the world beyond Amherst," he said, "then we should provide opportunities for them to hear these ideas directly and grapple with them here, so that they, and we, can refine our views about how to contribute to society."⁵¹

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