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David Moshman
*University of Nebraska - Lincoln*, dmoshman1@unl.edu

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AAUP JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Back to Volume Eight Contents

# Academic Freedom as the Freedom to do Academic Work[1]

David Moshman

## Abstract

Academic freedom is defined as the freedom to do academic work. It follows that academic freedom (1) includes freedoms of teaching, learning, and inquiry; (2) is a type of intellectual freedom; (3) is specific to academic roles and contexts; (4) is crucial at all levels of education and in all other academic contexts; (5) is individual, collective, and institutional; and (6) is central to the academic integrity of any academic endeavor or institution. This conception, which coordinates multiple traditions and literatures, enables us to explain the nature and limits of academic freedom and to justify it as a necessity for academic work. Specific academic freedom principles and policies, such as those of the AAUP, are largely consistent with this conception.

Academic freedom is often seen as a tradition rooted in the history of European higher education. That tradition, it can be argued, must evolve with changing times and adapt to specific circumstances.

But academic freedom, I argue here, is not just a tradition. It is a necessity of academic work, always and everywhere. Specific formulations of academic freedom—such as those of the AAUP and First Amendment case law—may be evolving traditions, but such evolution must preserve and be guided by a deeper understanding of the nature and purpose of academic freedom.

[1] I am grateful to Frank Edler, Jeff Fraum, Bob Haller, and ReLeah Lent for thoughtful feedback on an earlier draft of this article.

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I provide here a foundation for academic freedom by conceiving it, most simply and fundamentally, as the freedom to do academic work. This leads directly to six additional propositions: First, academic freedom includes freedoms of teaching, learning, and inquiry. Second, academic freedom is intellectual freedom, though it is not the only type of intellectual freedom. Third, academic freedom is specific to academic roles and contexts. Fourth, academic freedom is crucial in elementary, secondary, and higher education, and also in libraries and other academic contexts. Fifth, academic freedom is needed by individuals (including students and teachers), formal groups (such as curriculum committees and faculty senates), and institutions (such as school systems or colleges) to meet their various academic responsibilities. Finally, academic freedom is central to the academic integrity of any academic endeavor or institution.

The resulting conception of academic freedom encompasses and coordinates the diversity of existing traditions, literatures, principles, and policies concerning the freedom to do academic work, which refer variously to academic freedom, academic governance, freedom to teach, freedom to learn, freedom to read, faculty rights, student rights, freedom of research, freedom of publication, intellectual freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of expression, First Amendment rights, and professional or disciplinary ethics. A more coherent understanding of the nature and purpose of academic freedom provides important guidance in formulating and adapting specific academic freedom principles and policies and a stronger basis for explaining and justifying them.

## Academic Freedom as the Freedom to Do Academic Work

Academic freedom is a type of freedom. But not all freedom is academic. Freedom is academic when it is the freedom to engage in academic work. Academic freedom, in other words, is the freedom to do academic work. There are, of course, other important freedoms, but they are not *academic* freedoms. Thus I begin with this simple definition: *Academic freedom is the freedom to do academic work*.

Multiple traditions have sought to formulate the freedom to do academic work, each of which has generated a substantial literature, but these traditions and literatures remain largely isolated from each other, in part because they use different terminology. Some use the term *academic freedom*, but most, although equally concerned with the freedom to do academic work, use other terminology.

The tradition most obviously associated with the term *academic freedom* is rooted in the history of European higher education and represented in the policies of the AAUP, which defines and defends the

academic freedom of college professors.[2] In addition to freedoms of teaching and research, this literature also addresses academic governance as the collective exercise of academic freedom.

Another tradition concerns itself with the intellectual rights of college students.[3] This literature usually addresses students' intellectual freedoms both within and beyond the academic context, often as part of a broader concern with individual rights that includes due process and other civil liberties.

A third tradition is concerned with intellectual freedom in elementary and/or secondary education.[4] This literature usually concerns both teachers and students, whose intellectual freedoms are closely interrelated, but some of it focuses especially on students.[5]

[2] The AAUP's definitive 1940 statement on academic freedom and its 1970 interpretations and elaborations, along with a variety of related policies, can be found in American Association of University Professors, *Policy Documents and Reports*, 11th ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015). For analysis and critique, see especially Matthew W. Finkin and Robert C. Post, *For the Common Good: Principles of American Academic Freedom* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009). Other major works concerning the academic freedom of college professors include Stanley Fish, *Versions of Academic Freedom: From Professionalism to Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Louis Menand, ed., *The Future of Academic Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); William W. Van Alstyne, ed., *Freedom and Tenure in the Academy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993); Joanna Williams, *Academic Freedom in an Age of Conformity* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); and John K. Wilson, *Patriotic Correctness: Academic Freedom and Its Enemies* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2008). For a review of recent books on this topic, see Henry Reichman, "Academic Freedom and the Common Good: A Review Essay," *Journal of Academic Freedom* 7 (2016): 1–19. https://www.aaup.org/JAF7/academic-freedom-and-common-good-review-essay.

[3] Donald Alexander Downs, *Restoring Free Speech and Liberty on Campus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Alan Charles Kors and Harvey A. Silverglate, *The Shadow University: The Betrayal of Liberty on America's Campuses* (New York: Free Press, 1998); Greg Lukianoff, *Unlearning Liberty: Campus Censorship and the End of American Debate* (New York: EncounterBooks, 2014); Bruce Macfarlane, *Freedom to Learn: The Threat to Student Academic Freedom and Why It Needs to Be Reclaimed* (New York: Routledge, 2017); Tom Slater, ed., *Unsafe Space: The Crisis of Free Speech on Campus* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

[4] Jean E. Brown, ed., *Preserving Intellectual Freedom: Fighting Censorship in Our Schools* (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1994); Joan DelFattore, *What Johnny Shouldn't Read: Textbook Censorship in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1992); ReLeah Cossett Lent and Gloria Pipkin, *Keep Them Reading: An Anti-censorship Handbook for Educators* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2013); Gloria Pipkin and ReLeah Cossett Lent, *At the Schoolhouse Gate: Lessons in Intellectual Freedom* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002); Diane Ravitch, *The Language Police: How Pressure Groups Restrict What Students Learn* (New York: Vintage, 2004); Joel Westheimer, ed., *Pledging Allegiance: The Politics of Patriotism in America's Schools* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2007).

[5] Catherine Ross, *Lessons in Censorship: How Schools and Courts Subvert Students' First Amendment Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Bryan R. Warnick, *Understanding Student Rights in Schools: Speech, Religion, and Privacy in Educational Settings* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2013).

Overlapping all of the above, a fourth tradition concerns the First Amendment rights of students and teachers in US public education. The case law in this area is complex, including but not limited to cases that refer explicitly to "academic freedom."[6]

Fifth, there is probably no stronger defender of free access to information and ideas than the American Library Association (ALA). Through its Office for Intellectual Freedom, the ALA has a long history of helping libraries protect the intellectual rights of their patrons and the integrity of their collections.[7]

Finally, a variety of professional and disciplinary organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) have policies that explain and defend what they commonly call "intellectual freedom" in a variety of academic contexts.[8] Related literatures address intellectual freedom in the teaching and learning of specific topics of controversy such as evolution,[9] sexuality,[10] morality,[11] religion,[12] and national histories.[13]

All of these literatures address the freedom to do academic work and are thus concerned with academic freedom under the present definition. But these literatures address other freedoms too. We cannot create a comprehensive account of academic freedom simply by combining them. Instead, starting with a conception of academic freedom as the freedom to do academic work, we must construct a coherent conception of

[6] On the First Amendment rights of students in elementary and secondary education, see Ross, *Lessons in Censorship*. On First Amendment rights in higher education, see Lukianoff, *Unlearning Liberty*; and Robert M. O'Neil, *Free Speech in the College Community* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997). On the special perplexities of academic freedom as a First Amendment right, which are discussed in many of the works cited in footnote 2, a classic and oft-quoted work is J. Peter Byrne, "Academic Freedom: A 'Special Concern of the First Amendment,'" *Yale Law Journal* 99, no. 2 (1989): 251.

[7] The definitive collection of relevant documents and interpretations is ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, 9th ed. (Chicago: American Library Association, 2015).

[8] The NCTE has policies concerning both "intellectual freedom" and "academic freedom." See, respectively, National Council of Teachers of English, "NCTE Principles for Intellectual Freedom in Education," http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/principles-intell-freedom; and "NCTE Position Statement on Academic Freedom," http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/academic-freedom.

[9] Adam Laats and Harvey Siegel, *Teaching Evolution in a Creation Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

[10] Marjorie Heins, *Not in Front of the Children: "Indecency," Censorship, and the Innocence of Youth* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001); Janice M. Irvine, *Talk about Sex: The Battles over Sex Education in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Kristin Luker, *When Sex Goes to School* (New York: Norton, 2006).

[11] Stephen Law, *The War for Children's Minds* (London: Routledge, 2006).

[12] Joan DelFattore, *The Fourth R: Conflicts over Religion in America's Public Schools* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

[13] Gary B. Nash, Charlotte Crabtree, and Ross E. Dunn, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (New York: Vintage, 2000); James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (New York: Touchstone, 1996); Linda Symcox, *Whose History? The Struggle for National Standards in American Classrooms* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002).

academic freedom that overlaps with and coordinates these multiple literatures. Such a conception would highlight and draw on the underlying shared concern with the intellectual freedom to teach, learn, or inquire in institutions devised for these purposes.

In summary, the multiple literatures of academic freedom also address issues that go beyond academic freedom and do not use the term *academic freedom* systematically. Regardless of terminology, however, what we find at the intersection of these literatures is an abiding concern with the freedom to engage in academic work. That freedom, I suggest, should be called *academic freedom*. I consider now the consequences of this definition.

## Academic Work as Teaching, Learning, and Inquiry

Academic work has many aspects and can be described in a variety of ways, but there is no doubt that it includes teaching, learning, and inquiry. It is not clear, moreover, that it includes anything that cannot be encompassed in some combination of these categories. Thus:

*1. Academic freedom includes freedoms of teaching, learning, and inquiry.*

Academic freedom obviously includes the freedom of teachers to teach. This has always been clear in the AAUP's principles of academic freedom, which specify in their definitive 1940 version that "teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject."[14]

But what about the freedom of students to learn? Such a right has long been widely recognized, at least in principle, and has received serious consideration from the AAUP and others.[15] The present approach differs from most, however, in seeing the intellectual freedom of students to learn as fully part of academic freedom, not just a related or secondary consideration. The academic freedom of students is no less important than that of their teachers.

These two aspects of academic freedom, albeit distinct, are closely interrelated. They reflect the complementary roles and responsibilities of students and teachers. Students are expected to learn but have a right not to be indoctrinated. The academic freedom of students thus includes a right to a curriculum devised

[14] American Association of University Professors, 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*. https://www.aaup.org/report/1940-statement-principles-academic-freedom-and-tenure.
[15] The important 1967 *Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students,* endorsed by the AAUP and other organizations, explicitly recognizes the "academic freedom" of college students. See https://www.aaup.org/report/joint-statement-rights-and-freedoms-students.

on academic grounds by teachers and experts. It also includes a right to be taught in a manner that respects students' intellectual autonomy, including their right to academic discussion and dissent.[16]

Teachers are responsible for identifying or developing an academically justifiable curriculum and teaching it in academically justifiable ways that respect the academic freedom of their students. The academic freedom of teachers to determine and implement the curriculum is both justified and limited by their academic responsibility to their students. Academic freedom is not a right to indoctrinate.

Academic freedom, then, is in large part the protection of the academic relation of teacher and student that makes education possible and distinguishes it from indoctrination. Beyond protecting the rights of individual teachers and students, academic freedom protects the process of education.

Academic work also encompasses inquiry, which includes but is not limited to formal research by professional researchers for publication in academic journals. The AAUP's 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* specifies that "teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results."[17] But inquiry also includes less formal processes of seeking, interpreting, and discussing information and ideas with the aim of reaching justifiable conclusions. Freedom of inquiry is central not only to formal research but also to learning and teaching. Learning, even at elementary levels, is in large part an active process of inquiry that requires intellectual freedom.[18] Teaching is to a large degree the promotion of inquiry. Thus free inquiry is a crucial part of academic freedom even in institutions that do not expect formal research leading to publication.

## Academic Freedom as Intellectual Freedom

Teaching, learning, and inquiry are all intellectual activities. Academic work is intellectual work, though not all intellectual work is academic. The freedom to engage in academic work is thus freedom of an intellectual sort. Thus:

*2. Academic freedom is (a type of) intellectual freedom.*

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[16] David Moshman, *Liberty and Learning: Academic Freedom for Teachers and Students* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2009).
[17] AAUP, 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*.
[18] David Moshman, *Adolescent Rationality and Development: Cognition, Morality, and Identity*, 3rd ed. (New York: Psychology Press, 2011); Moshman, *Epistemic Cognition and Development: The Psychology of Justification and Truth* (New York: Psychology Press, 2015).

Intellectual freedom is autonomy in the intellectual realm, including freedom of belief, freedom of expression and discussion, and free access to information and ideas. Intellectual freedom is rightly deemed crucial in a variety of contexts, not all of them academic. Academic freedom is intellectual freedom in academic contexts.

In practice, academic freedom is protected largely through systems of tenure and requirements of due process. Academic freedom is not limited to tenured faculty, however, nor is it simply a guarantee of due process. Tenure and due process serve academic freedom by protecting intellectual freedom.

Intellectual freedom is protected in US constitutional law by the First Amendment, which includes specific protections of religious liberty, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press. Case law based on these provisions broadly protects intellectual freedom from governmental pressure and censorship. Consistent with this, academic freedom cases that end up in US courts are generally argued on the basis of First Amendment law. Courts do not always uphold First Amendment claims in educational contexts and do not always refer specifically to academic freedom even when they do, but the Supreme Court has proclaimed academic freedom to be "a special concern of the First Amendment, which does not tolerate laws that cast a pall of orthodoxy over the classroom."[19]

Three rationales are commonly provided for free speech and, more generally, intellectual freedom. These are (1) the fundamental right of individuals to autonomy and self-expression; (2) the role of intellectual freedom in the quest for truth and the progress of knowledge; and (3) the role of intellectual freedom in democratic self-governance. All three rationales are relevant to academic freedom.

The right of individual autonomy is central to the academic freedom of students. Students have a fundamental right to believe as they will. Teachers may seek to convince them to change their views and may evaluate their understanding of ideas presented in the curriculum but may not penalize them for maintaining their beliefs. For faculty, free expression is limited in the academic context by their responsibility to teach a defensible academic curriculum in a manner that respects the intellectual autonomy of their students. Biology teachers may teach about evolution, for example, and may require that students understand it in order to pass a biology course, but students must remain free to determine their own beliefs.[20]

Concern with the progress of knowledge and the pursuit of truth is central to teaching, learning, and inquiry in any academic context. Academic research relies on intellectual freedom within a community of

[19] Keyishian v. Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York, 385 U.S. 589 (1967), 603.
[20] Laats and Siegel, *Teaching Evolution in a Creation Nation*.

researchers to make progress in understanding through ongoing processes of inquiry and argumentation.[21] In the educational context, intellectual freedom is crucial for teachers and experts charged with the preparation of an academically defensible curriculum. Intellectual freedom is also crucial to learning and plays a central role in students' intellectual development.[22]

Finally, intellectual freedom is central to democratic self-governance. An academic institution is not a democracy in which each person has one vote. But academic institutions must be governed by academics working collectively, not just individually, and this collective governance requires the intellectual freedom to collaborate effectively. Democratic deliberation is central to academic governance.

Academic work is intellectual work, and intellectual freedom is crucial to such work in multiple ways. Combining the definition and first two propositions yields this: *Academic freedom is the intellectual freedom to do academic work, which includes teaching, learning, and inquiry*.[23]

## Academic Roles and Contexts

Intellectual freedom, as already noted, is relevant in many realms of life. Thus not all intellectual freedom is academic. Intellectual freedom is academic when it involves teaching, learning, or inquiry in institutions of education or research. That is:

*3. Academic freedom is intellectual freedom in academic roles and contexts.*

Academic freedom, then, is limited to academic roles and contexts. Intellectual freedoms outside such roles and contexts may be equally important but are not academic in nature. Within academia, it is important to add, there are a variety of academic roles and contexts. Academic freedom is crucial in all of them, but what it protects varies substantially.

Consider a public plaza where people are free to gather and speak. In the United States, First Amendment law protects the equal right of all persons in a traditional public forum of this sort to say whatever they please about whatever they choose to address. Listeners are free to gather around speakers they

[21] Williams, *Academic Freedom in an Age of Conformity*.
[22] Moshman, *Adolescent Rationality and Development*; Moshman, *Epistemic Cognition and Development*.
[23] For a set of principles based on this conception of academic freedom, see Moshman, *Liberty and Learning*.

wish to hear and ignore or move away from those they find objectionable. In an online forum such as Facebook, it is even easier to choose whom to like or friend and whom to ignore.

It is often suggested that the classroom, above all places, should be a forum for free expression. But classrooms differ from public forums in at least three respects central to their academic function.

One difference is the distinction between teacher and student. The teacher has the responsibility and authority to organize class activities in accord with the academic goals of the class. Teachers decide how much time to devote to discussion; they also frame and direct that discussion. The freedom of students to speak in class is correspondingly restricted.

Second, an academic course or unit is devoted to a particular topic and each class session is devoted to some part of that topic. Because students are a captive audience with legitimate expectations about the content of a class, teachers are generally obligated to stick to the topic and to see that students do the same. Occasional digressions may be justified, but academic relevance is a legitimate constraint on the speech of both teacher and students.

The third respect in which a classroom differs from an open forum is that academic work, which is concerned with knowledge and truth, requires a focus on clarity and justification. Students and teachers may be expected to explain and justify their ideas and may be evaluated on the quality of their explanations and justifications.

The classroom, then, is not simply a forum for free expression. Serious consideration of academic work requires a more subtle conception of intellectual freedom than simply free and equal speech for everyone.[24]

Basic principles of free speech and First Amendment law provide the key to protecting intellectual freedom in academic roles and contexts. Teachers can and must discriminate on the basis of content in determining what to present to students and in evaluating the quality of their work. Some ideas are better justified than others, and some students are better at justifying their ideas. But there is no reason to discriminate on the basis of viewpoint itself. Faculty should present what they deem the most important and best-justified ideas on the topic at hand. A student who presents a serious defense of an idea deemed highly questionable should get more credit than a student who presents ideas from the course with little understanding or justification.

[24] Robert C. Post, *Democracy, Expertise, and Academic Freedom: A First Amendment Jurisprudence for the Modern State* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

In the language of First Amendment law, the traditional public forum must be content-neutral (which includes viewpoint-neutrality) in any restrictions it puts on speech. Academic work cannot be content-neutral, but there is an important sense in which it nevertheless can and must be viewpoint-neutral. The classroom is a time and place where speech may be regulated on the basis of content provided there is no discrimination on the basis of viewpoint.

Similarly, intellectual freedom is crucial to the academic integrity of a scholarly journal, but no such journal is a forum for free speech. Journals focus on particular areas of study and rely on peer review to determine whether and when academic standards for publication are met. Such a system is obviously not content-neutral, but it may reasonably be deemed a system of selection rather than censorship provided the selection process is viewpoint-neutral. Content discrimination is inherent in the process, but viewpoint discrimination would undermine the academic integrity of the journal. Manuscripts may and should be rejected if they reach conclusions that they fail to justify, regardless of viewpoint, and should be accepted for publication if they meet proper academic standards, regardless of viewpoint.

To say academic freedom is intellectual freedom in academic roles and contexts acknowledges the existence of nonacademic roles and contexts in which intellectual freedom is important. Intellectual freedom beyond academia may be no less important than intellectual freedom within academia. The purpose of a distinct concept of academic freedom is to distinguish academic contexts from others so the unique features of academic contexts can be taken into account.

Looking beyond academia, all persons should have a right to speak out in public. This includes students, teachers, researchers, and employees of all sorts. Secretaries and janitors in schools and colleges do not perform academic roles and thus do not need or have academic freedom. Nevertheless, they should be no less free than teachers and professors to engage in speech outside their jobs. Employers should recognize the basic right of all employees to public speech, but there is nothing specifically academic about this right. Academic employees must have both the academic freedom to do their academic work and the free speech right of all persons, including employees, to public speech.[25]

[25] I agree with the AAUP about the importance of protecting the right of faculty to public ("extramural") speech but disagree with its long-standing classification of this right as part of the academic freedom of professors, which seems to construe it as a special right of higher education faculty rather than a matter of basic human rights. On the history and complexities of the AAUP's position, see Finkin and Post, *For the Common Good*, chap. 6; John K. Wilson, "The AAUP's 1915 Declaration of Principles: Conservative and Radical, Visionary and Myopic," *Journal of Academic Freedom* 7 (2016): 1–12. https://www.aaup.org/JAF7/aaups-1915-declaration-principles-conservative-and-radical-visionary-and-myopic.

## Levels of Education and Contexts of Inquiry

If academic freedom is the freedom to do academic work, then all who do academic work should have academic freedom. Academic freedom is not a special privilege of an academic elite. Academic work includes teaching, learning, and research. Different roles entail different rights and responsibilities, but academic freedom is crucial for all. It is not just for professors, nor is it limited to higher education.

*4. Academic freedom is crucial at all levels of education and in all other academic contexts.*

The AAUP recognizes the rights of students and does not deny or denigrate intellectual freedom in elementary or secondary education. Its focus, however, is on higher education, especially faculty; it generally reserves the term *academic freedom* for college professors.[26] Some may fear that any conception of academic freedom that includes students will fail to fully protect the freedom of faculty and that any conception appropriate for elementary or secondary education would be inadequate for higher education.

A conception of academic freedom suitable for students and teachers at all levels of education need not be a diluted one, however. The present conception is differentiated in that it recognizes the varied freedoms needed to fulfill various roles and responsibilities. Teachers of young children, for example, properly consider their students' intellectual immaturity and the rights of their parents in ways that make elementary education different from higher education. Nevertheless, the academic freedom of elementary students and their teachers is no less important than the academic freedom of older students and of teachers in secondary and higher education.[27]

Academic freedom, moreover, is not limited to schools and colleges. Libraries are sites for intellectual inquiry, much of which may be academic in nature, and librarians are often responsible for facilitating such inquiry. Regardless of the boundary of academic freedom, librarians should have the intellectual freedom to do their jobs, which include protecting the intellectual (and sometimes academic) freedom of library patrons. The American Library Association does not usually use the term *academic freedom*, but it has a distinguished history of commitment to the formulation and application of principles of intellectual freedom.[28]

What about journalists? Journalism is concerned with determining and reporting the truth, as is academia. Regardless of the boundary of academic freedom, journalists should have the intellectual freedom to do their

[26] But see footnote 15.
[27] Moshman, *Liberty and Learning*; Moshman, *Adolescent Rationality and Development*.
[28] ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, *Intellectual Freedom Manual*.

jobs, not just as a matter of individual rights but out of respect for the profession of journalism and its role in a democratic society. Here too, however, it seems best to restrict the term *academic freedom* to the intellectual freedom to do academic work.

## Academic Freedom as Individual, Collective, and Institutional

Academic work is done by individuals, groups, and institutions. Thus, academic freedom is exercised individually, collectively, and institutionally.

*5. Academic freedom is individual, collective, and institutional.*

*Faculty* is a collective noun referring to a group of teachers or researchers (e.g., the physics faculty) with a collective responsibility (such as approval of the physics curriculum). An individual teacher is properly called a member of the faculty or a faculty member. One can be a teacher or a researcher; one cannot be a faculty. This linguistic peculiarity highlights the collective nature of many academic responsibilities and the importance of respect for the academic freedom of the collective faculty to make and enforce the intellectual judgments for which it is responsible.

The tradition of collective faculty responsibility for academic matters is much stronger in higher education than at elementary or secondary levels, but it is relevant at all levels. Members of the faculty are generally more expert and less politically motivated than are external powers and interests, but individual faculty members have biases of their own. With respect to the overall curriculum of an academic department or unit, the collective faculty is the best source of genuine academic judgments. Students are entitled to a curriculum determined on academic grounds by those qualified to make the relevant academic judgments. Individual faculty must teach the properly approved curriculum but should be free to criticize or supplement it. Thus the academic freedom of faculty is both individual and collective.

Similarly, although individual researchers engage in research, the overall research enterprise in any field of study is best seen as a (collective) process of inquiry and argumentation in an intellectual community. Each of the individuals must have the academic freedom to do his or her academic work, but academic freedom also includes, at the level of a discipline or field of study, the freedom of the relevant academic community to collaborate in the production of knowledge.

With regard to schools and colleges, it is the purpose of an academic institution to do academic work. Thus it is important to respect the intellectual autonomy of schools and education systems at all levels of

education. This does not mean, however, that schools are free to censor their faculty and indoctrinate their students. Academic freedom exists at multiple levels. Its legitimacy at each level depends on whether it protects academic freedom at all levels. The academic freedom of individual faculty members should be respected provided they are respecting the academic freedom of their students. The academic freedom of the collective faculty should be respected provided they are respecting the academic freedom of individual faculty members and students. And the academic freedom of academic institutions should be respected provided the institution is respecting the academic freedom of its faculty and students, and thus operating with academic integrity.

## Academic Freedom and Academic Integrity

Perhaps most fundamentally, academic freedom is a pervasive condition of intellectual freedom that sets the tone for all teaching, learning, and inquiry in an institution. Protecting academic freedom is what makes an institution genuinely academic, as distinct from a center for propaganda and indoctrination.

*6. Academic freedom is central to the academic integrity of any academic endeavor or institution.*

Academic freedom, then, is not just a social convention. Professors quite reasonably appeal to a tradition of academic freedom rooted in the history of German and other European universities and, for the past century, in the AAUP. But we should not assume that this tradition is all there is to academic freedom, nor should we assume that it is nothing more than a tradition. Academic freedom is central to the intellectual and moral integrity of an educational institution. Academic freedom is what distinguishes education and research from indoctrination and propaganda. In the end, we should value traditions of academic freedom not because they happen to be traditional, in some contexts, but because we value academic freedom in all educational and research contexts.

With respect to students, academic freedom is in large part the freedom to study within an educational institution that meets a high standard of academic integrity. Such an institution fully respects the academic freedoms of its faculty, collectively and individually, and its students.

With respect to research, progress in knowledge and understanding takes place through rational processes of examination, reflection, and dialogue. This requires an institutional context of free inquiry.

The bottom line for an academic institution is academic integrity, which requires an institutional context of academic freedom. Without academic freedom an academic institution is not really academic after all, and thus is not what it claims to be.

## Conclusion: The Universal Ideal of Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is traditionally associated with the AAUP, higher education, faculty rights, and Western academic and legal traditions. I have proposed here a broader and more systematic conception of academic freedom as the freedom to do academic work.

The proposed conception does not mandate academic uniformity. Cultural diversity in educational traditions and institutions must be respected. Such diversity, however, need not entail cultural relativism with respect to academic freedom. Teaching, learning, and inquiry are universal human activities that require intellectual freedom everywhere.

Of course, intellectual freedom is also restricted everywhere for a variety of reasons. Some restrictions on the time, place, or manner of expression are legitimate, but we should not rely on intuition in making such judgments. We need principles and policies of academic freedom appropriate for diverse academic roles and contexts. There may be disagreement on the formulation and application of such principles and policies. We will do best, I have suggested, if we are guided by a general conception of academic freedom as the freedom to do academic work.

The present conception encompasses and coordinates the many facets of academic freedom. To see academic freedom whole is to see its value to all engaged in academic work and its role in all academic contexts. The academic world is, ideally, a global world of education and research characterized by academic freedom for all. The challenge is to recognize and coordinate the intellectual freedoms needed individually and collectively for teaching, learning, and inquiry in all educational and research contexts.

*David Moshman is Professor Emeritus of Educational Psychology at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and past president of the UNL AAUP chapter, the ACLU of Nebraska, and the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska. The author of* Liberty and Learning: Academic Freedom for Teachers and Students*, he blogs on intellectual freedom in education for the* Huffington Post *(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/author/dmoshman1-540).*