

Editors' Introduction: Truth-Telling and Propaganda

Michael C. Dreiling and Pedro García-Caro

"Truth" and "propaganda," the two key concepts at the center of this volume, contour a key debate about higher education and the increasingly endangered right of scholars to academic freedom. Accusations of biased classrooms, the depiction of "liberal arts" programs and colleges as sites for "liberal activism" where "the promotion of equity" somehow overrides "the pursuit of truth" (Abrams 2022) have become customary in many quarters. At a time when building blocks of public consensus such as "equity" and "inclusion" have become suspect of radicalism (Gorka and González 2022), and affirmative actions to foster "equal opportunities" have been outlawed and abandoned, such ideological censures show the fractures in the common language of a multiethnic democracy. As meaning and a shared language is debased, so is the possibility of arriving at a consensus on what is true, or what constitutes "truth" itself, and what is simply a partisan agenda, a manipulation of facts, an abuse of power, or even a blatant falsehood, a big lie.

The questioning of academic authority as some sort of partisan ideology extends to a dismissal of scientific innovation and discovery in order to exercise the unchecked rule of confirmation biases. Such mistrust was in full display throughout the recent COVID-19 pandemic, during which conspiratorial theories of every ilk soared to new levels. "Independent research" into the virus, its prevention and cure, cost many skeptical libertarians their lives and popularized memes depicting a tombstone chiseled with the line, "I did my own research." A questioning of research leading to public health measures, and in particular vaccine hesitancy, already ranks among the top ten global health threats according to the World Health Organization (Nuwarda et al. 2022). Antivaxxers join flat-earthers and many other conspiratorial "thinkers" who eagerly disseminate their beliefs in the many unrestricted outlets of social media, where the editorial ethos of fact-checking, peer review, and expertise is replaced by the digital soapbox of immediate self-publication and a vanity press of followers, retweets, and likes. So, while decades of research, and centuries of humanistic and scientific debate and compromise are dismissed as liberal propaganda, demonstrated falsehoods are allowed to emerge as imaginable truths in the so-called marketplace of ideas. Even as life on our planet continues to experience ever more violent weather events resulting from human-caused pollution and global warming, groups of opinionators berate scientific evidence and amplify their deceptively cool antiestablishment mockery.

In the early seventeenth century, when the Catholic Church introduced the Latin term *propaganda* to name its missionary congregation “for the propagation of the faith [*propaganda fide*],” the word had not yet obtained its full current meaning or its derogatory connotation of “ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one’s cause or to damage an opposing cause” (*Merriam-Webster’s*). And yet, its origin, the missionary propagation of a religious creed, allows us to contrast it with the intended universalist principles of academia and the exercise of academic freedom as an explicitly secular, humanistic search for scientific, demonstrable truths, regardless of whether they challenge tradition or are inconvenient for any given status quo. Religious beliefs, by definition protected by tradition and authority, are shrouded in the mystery of unquestionable faith. In contrast, scientific truths derive from and are subject to probing examination and questioning: they are the result of communities of learners and researchers seeking to methodically demonstrate them or break through established truths to create new forms of knowledge.

Academic Freedom Confronts Propaganda

The twentieth century witnessed improvements in the protection and adjudication of academic freedom in many parts of the world, and especially the United States (Bérubé and Ruth 2022; Post 2012; Scott 2019; Tiede 2015). However, recent data, including in the 2023 Academic Freedom Index, indicate a decline in academic freedom worldwide, affecting not just authoritarian regimes but also some liberal democracies like the United States (FAU and V-Dem 2023). In this volume, we document how powerful actors in the United States deploy an authoritarian playbook to amplify divisions and “culture wars,” aided by new technologies and a legal system that allows dark money to channel resources to propagandistic ends.

Republican candidate for vice president JD Vance has offered his justification for this ultraconservative attack on higher education, suggesting that the sector, like the media, stands in the way of a right-wing authoritarian agenda: “There is no way for a conservative to accomplish our vision of society unless we’re willing to strike at the heart of the beast. That’s the universities” (Wilson 2024). A few years ago, in a speech to the National Conservatism Conference, “The Universities Are the Enemy,” Vance echoed Richard Nixon: “The professors are the enemy” (Reichman 2021).

Compounding the impacts of illiberal, authoritarian movements that target higher education and academic freedom, social media platforms and conservative mass media expand the reach of misinformation and propaganda. Artificial intelligence (AI) introduces news to the arbiters and institutions that fortify informed speech in the public sphere. Higher education is clearly at the center of these societal rifts between truth-telling and propaganda, and faculty and students are increasingly affected by malevolent interests seeking to blur the distinction. As disinformation and misinformation are routinely deployed by authoritarian actors on subnational, national, and international stages, these propagandistic initiatives foment hostilities and destabilize public

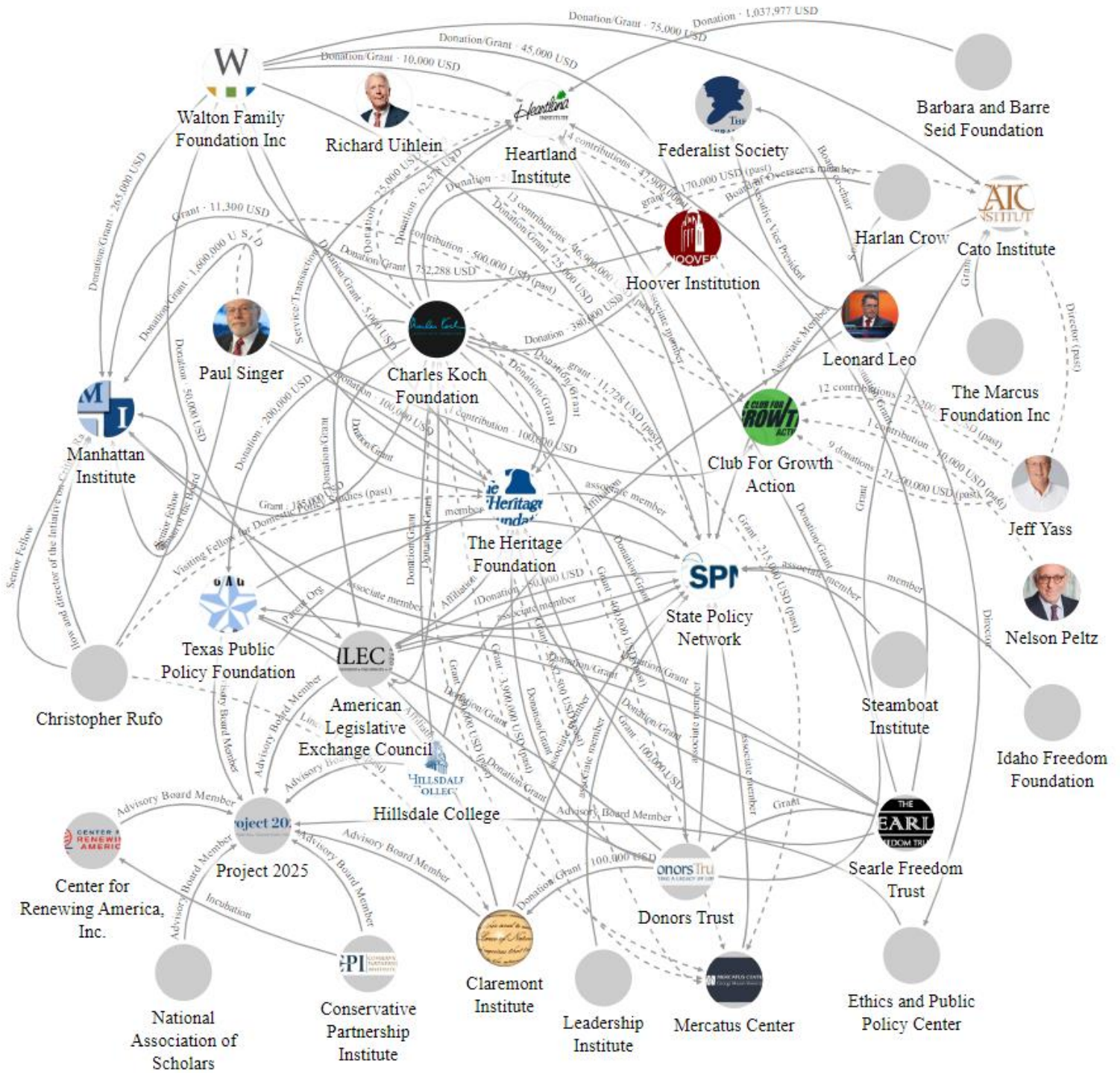
spheres in more open and inclusive societies while quelling inquiry and dissent in authoritarian spaces. Authoritarian attacks on democracy and public truth-telling run parallel to attacks on academic freedom and increasingly deploy new technologies toward these ends.

New media technologies such as deepfakes deliver contemporary propaganda that masquerades as informed speech to manufacture, suppress, or deny factual, inclusive, and validated claims. The ubiquity of these technologies—once thought to have liberatory goals—poses key questions to the critical methods and discourses of academic knowledge production. Who will train future generations to distinguish legitimate truth-telling from fake news, alternative facts, and the vast streams of misinformation and disinformation? Higher education is a clearinghouse for adjudicating truth claims, and academic freedom is the ethical commitment that ensures its integrity. From the peddling of conspiracy theories to the approval of far-right, nonacademic content for public school curricula, the rift is widening between propagandistic, faith-based assertions or partisan opinions and informed, well-reasoned, and externally vetted truth claims. Naming this rift and identifying the propagandists who put power and ideology over sincerity and authenticity is a necessary act in the history of truth-telling—and a defense against threats to a multiethnic democracy.

Power Structures against Higher Education and Academic Freedom

The rifts between propaganda and verifiable truth-telling did not emerge in a vacuum. Political actors pressed propaganda to specifically problematize truth claims about history, science, the environment, and more. To initiate more systematic analyses of the sociopolitical forces behind propagandistic attacks on higher education, the AAUP published *Manufacturing Backlash: Right-Wing Think Tanks and Legislative Attacks on Higher Education, 2021–2023* (Kamola 2024). We highly recommend reading this report. In it, we find an empirically rich and critical examination of the right-wing propaganda campaign against higher education led by conservative think tanks and targeted legislative attacks on universities. The role of dark money and billionaire donations in this tightly orchestrated campaign is notable. The figure below presents a visualization of the key political actors found in this campaign, exposing connections among the primary conservative foundations and allied think tanks, as well as direct ties to the Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025. Links in an online version of this figure provide descriptions of each organization, including details about the data sources (Dreiling 2024).

A Network Visualization of the Donors, Think Tanks, and Foundations in the Manufactured Backlash



Source: Dreiling 2024. See the interactive version at <https://littlesis.org/oligrapher/10008/share/a15111d9676c9d52c192>.

Central to this propaganda campaign is the weaponization of concepts like critical race theory (CRT) and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), which have become the targets of legislative and media campaigns. Like past volumes of *JAF*, the report details how conservative operatives such as Christopher Rufo use media platforms to amplify these concerns, turning CRT into a catchall for a variety of social justice-related topics, fueling a political and cultural narrative that universities are fostering division rather than education. This has culminated in numerous state-level legislative proposals, dubbed “academic gag orders,” aimed at restricting the teaching of CRT and DEI-related content (see *Journal of Academic Freedom*, vol. 13).

Our call for papers for volume 16 seeks to further deepen our understanding of the ways philanthropy, private funding, and the withdrawal of public funding from higher education have begun to profoundly reshape programs, departments, schools, and possibly entire disciplines of thought. For this volume 15, devoted to “truth-telling versus propaganda,” we have organized fifteen selected articles into five thematic clusters—artificial intelligence, authoritarianism, gender, Black history, and philosophical frameworks—outlining different angles from which to approach these debates and their impact on academic freedom.

Artificial Intelligence and Academic Freedom

The arrival of generative artificial intelligence over the last few years has already deeply impacted many elements of university life: from the vetting of academic output by scholars, students, and AI software itself, to the legitimacy of its usage as a viable tool for scholarly work, through to questions about the extent to which these logarithmic data processing technologies are capable of producing reliable and innovative forms of knowledge, that is, the question of how “intelligent” artificial intelligence really is, at least in its current stage of development. The five articles in this section point to some of the many directions in which AI has started to challenge academic freedom and the reliability of intellectual work even as generative AI draws from large repositories of academic production.

In “The Art of Truth in the Social Media Age,” **Amir Hussain** draws from Friedrich Nietzsche’s notion of truth as a form of narrative art that relies on rhetorical tropes such as metonymy and metaphor to be articulated. Hussain contrasts the rapid ways social media and AI generate truth claims and all sorts of misinformation with the slower, disciplined ways academic thought is organized and produced. The proliferation of social media and its implicit destabilization of truths “predicated on authority” has led to a debasement of the social consensus around scientific evidence. As Hussein puts it, “The forces of social media, the internet, and the far-reaching digitization of society have undermined on a general, cultural level the ability of institutions like the university to maintain authority on truth.” In this account, the search for truth appears as a capacious, joyful competition for alternative propositions that ultimately point to the exhaustion of authority and all-encompassing narratives. Hussain’s assessment is ultimately a

balanced approach to the changed landscape of a postmodern proliferation of sources purporting to both claim and debase truth.

We are left wondering, however, whether society will really be able to support for very long the free play of signifiers, conspiracies, deepfakes, and alternate truth claims in the political, technical, medical, and various other domains beyond the literary and aesthetic performances in which postmodernist skepticism was first playfully sprung. Four additional articles in this group address key issues about the material conditions necessary to address the challenges posed by the narratives formulated by AI, from the costs associated with ascertaining misinformation to the impacts of the hallucinatory, artificial creations of generative artificial intelligence.

Jorge N. Zumaeta's approach in "The Economics of Disinformation: Academic Freedom in the Era of AI" helps us to continue probing the impact of artificial intelligence on institutions of higher education. The article sets out to investigate the real cost of AI-generated disinformation, a sophisticated technology that "has evolved from simple automated text generation to more complex forms such as deepfakes, which are hyperrealistic synthetic media portraying events or speeches that never actually occurred." The increasing difficulty to distinguish "between real and fabricated content" and the "automation and scaling of disinformation campaigns," progressively makes them "more efficient and difficult to detect." Zumaeta is concerned with the escalating costs and disruptions, both intellectual and financial, provoked by the proliferation of these cogent and often untraceable machine-generated texts, images, data, and other objects. He proposes a series of formulas and algorithms for calculating the "financial burden" that institutions have to face. Zumaeta not only proposes some groundbreaking formulas to calculate the institutional costs but also lays out some key strategic principles for institutions of higher education to confront AI-generated disinformation while upholding the ethical principles assumed within the paradigm of academic freedom.

In "Artificial Intelligence, Academic Freedom, and the Evolving Debate over Forgery and Truth in the Twenty-First Century," **Natasha N. Johnson, Thaddeus L. Johnson, and Denise McCurdy** introduce readers to the debate on the challenges posed by generative AI, a technology with "the potential to bring about transformative changes" but which also raises concerns about "academic freedom and integrity." In the face of this rapidly evolving harnessing of large database repositories, institutions of higher education "occupy a central position in this discourse, serving as arbiters of truth," with standards and review processes that will help to uphold "core values of truth and integrity." The article also acknowledges AI's undeniable potential and "its ability to process and analyze data, leading to improved decision-making, efficiency, and innovation." At the heart of their arguments is a generalized apprehension about the "integrity of academic work" and finding methods or principles to allow scholars to exploit "AI's benefits for research, teaching, and learning." A necessary corollary to this retooling of academia with generative AI is the issue of recognition and attribution of the role played by these software technologies in the production of academic work. The ethics of integrity and the search for truth,

two foundational principles to academic labor, are also two of the elements that underscore “the urgency of these institutions’ role in defending democratic values” in the face of “the widening chasm between propaganda and scientifically grounded facts, exacerbated by the proliferation of conspiracy theories and the infiltration of nonacademic content into educational curricula.”

The final two articles in this group deal with the issue of integrity of the materials generated by AI and the complementary issues of hallucination and plagiarism. Hallucination refers to the inability of AI to vet all the information it processes and the impact of false or misleading information that contaminates both the raw data and the final output (Shin, Koerber, and Lim 2024). For **Derek Dubois**, in “Paradoxes of Generative AI: Both Promise and Threat to Academic Freedom,” the issue at stake is the challenge to responsibly integrate this technology into the daily practices of academics. Of particular concern is the need to proactively institute measures “to mitigate any perpetuation of discriminatory biases, safeguarding the principles of academic freedom and fostering an inclusive scholarly environment.” **William Arighi** highlights, in “Claudine Gay, Plagiarism, and AI,” the dangers of the “hallucinatory churn” produced by generative AI across contemporary digital culture and beyond. Arighi productively points to recent accusations of plagiarism and the resignation of the first African American female president of Harvard, Claudine Gay, to put into perspective human-made errors and “poorly handled quotations” and to contrast these with the large-scale hallucinatory potential of generative AI. While Arighi demonstrates that the attacks on Gay were politically motivated and not fully grounded on issues of academic integrity, he contrasts this case with the celebratory arrival of AI chatbots despite their inability “*not* to hallucinate.” Arighi offers a cautionary tale of how the value of human actors and of humanity itself is further eroded by the incorporation of these creative informational machines, even as these technologies warp our understanding of reality. Their incursion into educational practices could ultimately erode our ability to critically discern fact from fiction.

Authoritarianism and Academic Freedom

This section groups together three articles that revisit the tensions between political authoritarian practices and the expectations of academic freedom for research and teaching in higher education. These debates continue some of the key themes we have traced over the last two volumes of *JAF* and further explore the penchant of authoritarian regimes to restrict or directly repress the practice of academic freedom.

In her article, “Rising Antidemocracy, Declining Academic Freedom, and Challenges to Evidence-Based Knowledge,” **Eve Darian-Smith** evokes the context in which Albert Einstein was banned from teaching after the takeover of the German state by the Nazi Party in 1933 that led him to become a permanent exile in the United States. Darian-Smith then traces Einstein’s antiracist denunciation of Jim Crow segregation in the postwar United States for which he was interrogated and scrutinized during the McCarthy era. To what extent is our current period, with

its increasing encroachment on academic freedom, comparable to those earlier times? The article points to key differences between the current moment, with authoritarian restrictions on freedom of inquiry—such as the onslaught on critical race theory in the United States, and the proliferation of Putin-styled ethnonationalist authoritarian regimes in Hungary, Brazil, and elsewhere—and the experiences of twentieth-century totalitarianism and McCarthyism. The striking similarities between past and present compel both scholars and citizens to again reflect upon how they should respond to far-right political interference in university education and resist the attacks on academic freedom.

Ross Jackson, Jacqueline Heath, and Brian Heath, in their article “Academic Freedom and Society: Intellectual Critique or Violent Revolution?,” trace the crucial distinction between the modes of operation of academics as they exercise their freedom to teach and research in the search for truth, and the perceived revolutionary violence it contains for those seeking to enforce dogmas and coerce free thinking. As they put it, “Academic freedom is an existential threat to those whose only claim to power is authority.” The article also delineates the key distinction between free speech as “the right to articulate an opinion” and academic freedom, or “the obligation to present an informed perspective.” This notion of the “informed perspective” and academic freedom’s impulse to seek truth allows the authors to define misinformation and propaganda not as a competition within the marketplace of ideas but instead as “an act of repression.” The absence of academic freedom, they surmise, would signify the inception of a totalitarian, authoritarian regime.

The third article in this section traces what intellectual life in such an authoritarian regime looks like. **Ladan Rahbari’s** “Academic (Un)freedom in Iran after 1979: (Transnational) State Suppression of Academia and Risks for (Diasporic) Academics” delineates her own experiences as an Iranian European transnational scholar situated in the differing locations of a theocratic patriarchal regime, such as the postrevolutionary Islamic Republic of Iran, and its contrasts with the Global North, which are “not devoid of biases.” However, the detailed account of intellectual and personal repression in the name of academic allegiance to a religious patriarchal regime is excruciating and points out the many ways academics need to carefully navigate a system that charts and sanctions key areas and approaches that might challenge the ideological status quo. Once more, we have a direct insight into what authoritarianism means for the ability of academics to pursue their research and teaching free of external political and religious oversight. It allows us to see up close the historical and geocultural locations of academic freedom while also cautioning us about the cultural biases of the Global North that may impinge on our own confirmation biases.

Gender and Academic Freedom

This group of articles examines how academic freedom is circumscribed by gendered discourses and inequities, further showing how political manipulation of language and disinformation

campaigns not only threatens the rights of gendered and sexual minorities but also restricts scholarly discourse and sets a dangerous precedent for higher education and broader democratic processes.

In “Gender Identity, Ohio Politics, and Academic Freedom: A Critical Discourse Analysis to Expose Disinformation,” **Dana Oleskiewicz**, **Janice Kroeger**, and **Erica Pelz** examine how academic freedom is under attack through anti-LGBTQI+ legislative actions in Ohio. Specifically, the article employs critical discourse analysis to scrutinize how disinformation is being used to undermine DEI initiatives, with a focus on transgender and gender-diverse individuals. The authors argue that the political discourse surrounding these issues often distorts scientific and medical research, framing gender identity as a threat to societal norms and using rhetoric that bolsters authoritarian policies. Their article highlights two specific Ohio policies: the Ohio State Board of Education’s Title IX resolution, which rejects federal guidelines on gender identity, and the “SAFE Act” (House Bill 68), which bans gender-affirming care for minors. The analysis reveals that disinformation in political language is used to delegitimize the experiences and rights of gender-diverse people, fostering public fear and leading to discriminatory legislation. The authors link these legislative efforts to broader authoritarian movements that weaponize disinformation to undermine academic freedom, particularly around issues of gender and sexuality. **Alice Wieland** and **Amy Jansen**’s article, “The Interplay of Power, Incentives, Academic Freedom, and Gender Equity,” examines the structural barriers that female faculty face in academia, particularly in attaining tenure, and the broader implications these barriers have for academic freedom and gender equity. The authors argue that despite women’s constituting nearly half of all PhD recipients, they are underrepresented in tenured positions and full professorships, especially in male-dominated fields like business. The article explores how embedded power structures in academia—such as the control of course assignments, service responsibilities, and student teaching evaluations—disproportionately affect female faculty. These governance structures are often controlled by tenured, predominantly male faculty, creating a system that inhibits the research productivity of women and limits their chances for promotion. Wieland and Jansen offer several recommendations to address these disparities, including the implementation of clear and consistent criteria for evaluation tenure applications, external oversight by accreditation bodies, and financial penalties for institutions that fail to ensure fair and equitable evaluations. They emphasize that without structural changes, gender bias will continue to undermine women’s academic freedom and limit their influence in institutional governance.

Legislative Targets on Black History

From a Black epistemic position, **Gerald D. Smith Jr.** and **J. R. Caldwell Jr.** bring us an insightful understanding of how censorship in American education, particularly legislative book bans, threatens academic freedom and undermines Black liberation. In “Silencing Wingless Truth:

Confronting the Suppression of Academic Freedom and Black Liberation in America,” they analyze the historical and contemporary intersections of race, censorship, and educational equity, focusing on the increasing suppression of Black-authored literature and curricula that address racism and other social injustices. Using Gholdy Muhammad’s framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy, the article critiques censorship efforts aimed at erasing the Black experience from educational institutions. Smith and Caldwell further discuss how book bans and restrictive policies, such as Florida’s Stop WOKE Act, target literature and curricula that explore race and identity. These policies, the authors argue, are part of a larger authoritarian agenda to silence critical examinations of US history and perpetuate anti-Black racism. They call for a renewed commitment to protecting academic freedom, particularly in the face of political efforts to control educational content and diminish Black voices. By advocating for the integration of “fugitive pedagogy” and Black narratives into curricula, the authors argue for academic freedom as a necessary tool for both individual growth and societal progress.

In “A Precedent Set: Understanding the Florida Assault on Academic Freedom Targeting Black History and the Impact on Leadership Development,” **Kimberly Hardy** examines the implications of recent Florida legislation for academic freedom, particularly regarding the teaching of Black history. Her article focuses on laws like the Stop WOKE Act and Florida Statute 1003(h), which restrict how African American history is taught in K–12 education by limiting discussions on race and racism, purportedly to avoid causing students psychological distress. These laws attempt to reshape curriculum content under the guise of protecting students, but they are seen as a direct attack on academic freedom and racial equity. Hardy explores the legislation’s broader impact on leadership development, arguing that withholding or distorting Black history in education leads to a diminished capacity for empathy and informed discernment, essential traits for leadership. Florida’s curriculum now focuses on “stories of inspiration” that downplay the systemic oppression and struggle of Black Americans, which, Hardy argues, undermines an honest exploration of US history and hinders the development of emotionally intelligent and empathetic leaders.

Philosophical Frameworks, Truth-Telling, and Academic Freedom

The articles in this group contribute to the broader discourse on academic freedom by underscoring the role of truth-telling in promoting justice, democracy, and equity in both educational and societal spheres. We observe combined contributions that simultaneously and thoughtfully grasp the philosophical and ideological shifts that create opportunities for opponents of higher education to attack and restrict social justice education.

“Let’s Recommit to Just and Democratic Truth-Telling Practices” by **Brenda Solomon** explores the complexities of truth-telling within academic and societal contexts, emphasizing the importance of democratic, inclusive, and just approaches to truth. Solomon discusses the tension between established truths, often upheld by those in power, and the need for a more expansive

and democratic process of truth-telling that includes marginalized perspectives. Drawing on critical social theories and institutional ethnography, the article argues that truth is not an absolute, objective entity but rather a social process that involves power dynamics, historical context, and social agreements about meaning. Solomon highlights how truth-telling has evolved, with significant focus on the role of critical theories such as feminist, queer, and critical race theories in challenging traditional notions of truth. These approaches seek to expose how power and privilege have shaped what is accepted as truth, particularly in the academy, and aim to democratize the process by including diverse voices and experiences. The article also warns against the dangers of reactionary forces that exploit critical methods to maintain the status quo, using disinformation and manipulative tactics to resist challenges to established truths.

Gene Straughan's article, "Social Justice Education, Academic Freedom, and the First Amendment," discusses the fundamental role of academic freedom within the framework of US democracy, with a particular focus on the First Amendment's protection of freedom of thought, inquiry, and expression. Citing key judicial precedents, such as *Keyishian v. Board of Regents* (1967), the article underscores how the US Supreme Court has historically protected academic freedom from government overreach, particularly in matters of intellectual inquiry and the autonomy of educational institutions. Recent gag laws banning specific curricula, according to Straughan, constitute viewpoint discrimination by selectively censoring specific academic perspectives, violating the First Amendment's protection against content-based regulation. Straughan's analysis also explains how current political efforts to regulate social justice education echo past government attempts to control academic discourse, such as the anticommunist loyalty oaths of the mid-twentieth century. He warns that these efforts not only chill free speech but also prevent students from engaging with important historical and social issues.

Dennis Arjo's article, "Academic Standards in an Age of Mistrust," explores a three-way debate between Robert Post, Judith Butler, and Stanley Fish on the meaning and value of academic freedom. Arjo carefully examines how their differing interpretations have influenced contemporary skepticism about the concept and contributed to a perceived crisis in higher education. Arjo highlights how these critiques anticipated recent attacks on academic freedom, driven by doubts about the value of higher education in the broader social and economic context. Arjo suggests that contemporary debates about the role of universities and the erosion of public trust in higher education are deeply intertwined with these philosophical disagreements. He calls for a renewed defense of academic freedom that addresses both external threats and internal crises of confidence.

Concluding Remarks

This volume provides a critical look at pressing encounters between universities and an expansive political movement on the Far Right. The latter is well funded and closely tied to a Republican Party increasingly embedded in international networks of authoritarian political parties around

the globe. These political-institutional conditions are unfolding amid a revolution in communication technologies and generative artificial intelligence. Both bring risks to academic freedom and higher education. Additionally, we must consider the potential for AI to become a form of naked extraction, appropriating public and private intellectual property and passing this off as innovation. The risk has been observed by the prescient linguist and political theorist Noam Chomsky—whose death was recently falsely announced through chatbots and lamented in social media only to be denied shortly thereafter. Chomsky (2023) defines AI as “a way of avoiding learning” and as “basically high-tech plagiarism.” Several of the articles in this volume advocate for higher education as the space where truth claims can still be ascertained provided that academic freedom is upheld and the hallucinatory potential of AI properly monitored and acknowledged. Other articles recognize the need for our public politics to protect colleges and universities from these combined risks to democracy. This volume addresses a variety of contemporary debates about what constitutes truth and how to confront propaganda, authoritarian tendencies, and other forms of bias, underlining a widely held consensus about the need for academic freedom as a necessary condition in the search for truth.

Michael C. Dreiling is professor of sociology at the University of Oregon, where he specializes in political and environmental sociology. He served two terms as president of AAUP Oregon and three terms as the inaugural president of United Academics at the University of Oregon from 2013 to 2018. From 2014 to 2020, he worked alongside allies and faculty activists to help unionize three additional bargaining units in Oregon.

Pedro García-Caro is associate professor of Spanish at the University of Oregon, where he specializes in transatlantic cultural relations between the Americas and Spain and previously directed the Latin American Studies program. He has served for over twelve years in the University of Oregon Senate and as secretary and vice president for faculty governance and academic freedom of AAUP Oregon. He was appointed as a 2022–23 provost fellow for academic freedom.

References

- Abrams, Samuel J. 2022. “Liberal Arts Colleges Are More Liberal than Universities.” *Real Clear Education*, October. https://www.realcleareducation.com/articles/2022/10/10/liberal_arts_colleges_are_more_liberal_than_universities_110774.html.
- Bérubé, Michael, and Jennifer Ruth. 2022. *It’s Not Free Speech: Race, Democracy, and the Future of Academic Freedom*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2023. “Chomsky on ChatGPT, Education, and the Unvaccinated.” EduKitchen interview, January 20. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgxzcOugvEI>.

-
- Dreiling, Michael C. 2024. "Manufacturing Backlash—Right Wing Core Network behind Attack on Higher Ed, Courts, and Rights." LittleSis: Public Accountability Initiative, September 10. <https://littlesis.org/oligrapher/10008/share/a15111d9676c9d52c192>.
- FAU (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Institute of Political Science) and V-Dem Institute. 2023. Academic Freedom Index. <https://academic-freedom-index.net/>.
- Gorka, Katherine, and Mike González. 2022. "The Radicalization of Race: Philanthropy and DEI." Heritage Foundation, December 21. <https://www.heritage.org/progressivism/report/the-radicalization-race-philanthropy-and-dei>.
- Kamola, Isaac. 2024. *Manufacturing Backlash: Right-Wing Think Tanks and Legislative Attacks on Higher Education, 2021–2023*. Washington, DC: Center for the Defense of Academic Freedom, American Association of University Professors. <https://www.aaup.org/article/manufacturing-backlash>.
- Nuwarda, Rina Fajri, Iqbal Ramzan, Lynn Weekes, and Veysel Kayser. 2022. "Vaccine Hesitancy: Contemporary Issues and Historical Background." *Vaccines* (Basel) 10, no. 10: 1595. doi:10.3390/vaccines10101595.
- Post, Robert. 2012. *Democracy, Expertise, and Academic Freedom: A First Amendment Jurisprudence for the Modern State*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Reichman, Henry. 2021. "'The Professors Are the Enemy': Right-Wing Attacks on Academic Freedom Have Real Repercussions." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 14. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-professors-are-the-enemy>.
- Scott, Joan Wallach. 2019. *Knowledge, Power, and Academic Freedom*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Shin, D., A. Koerber, and J. S. Lim. 2024. "Impact of Misinformation from Generative AI on User Information Processing: How People Understand Misinformation from Generative AI." *New Media & Society*, 1–31. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/14614448241234040>.
- Tiede, Hans-Joerg. 2015. *University Reform: The Founding of the American Association of University Professors*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Wilson, Jason. 2024. "'Dangerous and Un-American': New Recording of JD Vance's Dark Vision of Women and Immigration." *The Guardian*, August 31. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/aug/31/jd-vance-podcast-feminism-immigration>.