

Defending Academic Freedom in the Era of Trump 2.0

CENTER FOR THE DEFENSE OF
ACADEMIC FREEDOM



aaup

Friday, January 24, 2025

1:30–1:40 p.m.—INTRODUCTORY REMARKS: **Isaac Kamola**, director of the Center for the Defense of Academic Freedom and professor of political science at Trinity College, CT

1:40–3:00 p.m.—PANEL 1: *How Might the Trump Administration Target Higher Education?*

- **Tariq Habash**, founder and director of A New Policy, Leadership in Government Fellow with the Open Society Foundation, and Fellow at the Center for the Defense of Academic Freedom
- **Stephanie Hall**, senior director of Higher Education Policy at the Center for American Progress
- **Don Moynihan**, professor of public policy in Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan and Fellow at the Center for the Defense of Academic Freedom
- **Amy Reid**, senior manager for Freedom to Learn at PEN America
- Moderator: **Vineeta Singh**, professor of interdisciplinary studies at Virginia Commonwealth University and Fellow at the Center for the Defense of Academic Freedom

3:15–4:00 p.m.—KEYNOTE: **Patricia McGuire**, president of Trinity Washington University
Speak Up to Speak Out: We can't defend academic freedom in silence. If we are to have any hope of being able to speak out in the future, we must be willing to speak up now to identify and combat the threats to academic freedom and freedom of speech in the current political climate.

4:15–5:45 p.m.—PANEL 2: *How Can We Organize to Reclaim the Connection Between Democracy and Higher Education?*

- **Sumi Cho**, director of strategic initiatives at the African American Policy Forum and Fellow at the Center for the Defense of Academic Freedom
- **Bethany Letiecq**, professor of research methods in the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University, president of the GMU AAUP chapter, and vice president of the AAUP Local 6741 of the AFT
- **Julie Schmid**, senior director of higher education for the AFT
- Moderator: **Sandy Grande**, professor of political science and Native American and Indigenous studies at the University of Connecticut and Fellow at the Center for the Defense of Academic Freedom

5:45 p.m.–CLOSING REMARKS: **Isaac Kamola**, director of the Center for the Defense of Academic Freedom and professor of political science at Trinity College, CT

6:00–7:45 p.m.–RECEPTION MEET & GREET: guests will take a short walk to the AFT office on the 4th floor in the adjoining building.

BIOS

PANEL 1 SPEAKERS:

Tariq Habash:

Tariq Habash is a founder and director of A New Policy and a Leadership in Government Fellow with the Open Society Foundation. He most recently served as a political appointee and policy advisor in the US Department of Education. Tariq led the policy office's student loan portfolio, regulatory policy planning, and budget development across higher education issues. He was the second government official and the first political appointee to publicly resign from the Biden administration due to its policy on Gaza and unrestricted support for Israel's aggression against Palestinians.

Stephanie Hall:

Stephanie Hall is the senior director for Higher Education Policy at the Center for American Progress and a leading expert on college accountability and the for-profit online higher education industry. Her research and advocacy in these areas have been instrumental in proposed federal and state legislation, congressional oversight, and federal agency action. She previously worked on higher education policy as a senior fellow at The Century Foundation and the University System of Maryland Office of Academic and Student Affairs, where she focused on issues such as teacher education, undergraduate mathematics pathways, and workforce development. She began her more than twenty-year career in education as a middle and high school teacher, first in her hometown of Atlanta, Georgia, and then in the Brazilian cities of Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte.

Don Moynihan:

Donald Moynihan is the J. Ira and Nicki Harris Family Professor of Public Policy at the Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan and co-director of the Better Government Lab. His research seeks to improve how government works and has written on the effects of politicization on public services, as well as tools to improve people's experiences of public services.

Amy Reid:

Amy Reid is the senior manager for PEN America's Freedom to Learn program. She works with other PEN America staff and colleagues from across the country, including the Champions of Higher Education, the Freedom to Learn Network, and a new group of state-based networks, to push back against government censorship in higher education. She is an ardent advocate for public education and the liberal arts. Amy is currently on leave from New College of Florida, where she is a professor of French language and literature and director of the Gender Studies Program. From 2023 to 2024, she

served as Chair of the Faculty and as the faculty representative on the New College of Florida Board of Trustees, working to safeguard the principles of academic freedom in the Florida State University System.

Vineeta Singh:

Vineeta Singh teaches in the interdisciplinary studies program at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she is part of the sixty-two percent of instructional employees who are non-tenure-track faculty hired on yearly contracts. Her teaching and research are grounded in critical and abolitionist university studies, historicizing contemporary conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education by placing today's controversies and confrontations in the context of four hundred years of US racial democracy.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Patricia McGuire:

Patricia McGuire has been president of Trinity Washington University since 1989. Previously, she was the assistant dean for development and external affairs at Georgetown University Law Center, where she was also an adjunct professor of law. She began her career after law school as the project director for the Street Law clinical program at Georgetown. President McGuire serves on a number of boards including the Consortium of Universities, Cafritz Foundation, Greater Washington Board of Trade, and the Ameritas Holding Company. Her prior board service includes the American Council on Education, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Catholic Charities DC, the Meyer Foundation, the Community Foundation of the National Capital Region, and numerous other organizations. In addition to being named Leader of the Year by the Greater Washington Board of Trade in 2007, she has received a number of awards including the Association of Catholic Colleges Distinguished Service Award, the Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence from the TIAA Institute, the Carnegie Award for Academic Leadership from the Carnegie Corporation, the Henry Paley Award from the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and notably the Alexander Meiklejohn Award for Academic Freedom from the AAUP.

PANEL 2 SPEAKERS:

Sumi Cho:

Sumi Cho came out of retirement to serve as the director of strategic initiatives at the African American Policy Forum to fight the war against "wokeness," critical race theory, and DEI. Prior to joining AAPF, she served as a law professor teaching courses on critical race theory and intersectionality in addition to race, racism, and US law, along with other traditional law courses. In 2017, she was awarded her university's highest excellence in teaching award. She was also the inaugural recipient of the Derrick A. Bell Distinguished Service Award from the Association of American Law Schools' Minority Section.

Sandy Grande:

Sandy Grande is a professor of political science and Native American and Indigenous studies at the University of Connecticut. Across her work, she aims to produce more nuanced analyses of the colonial present. She was recently awarded a fellowship through the UConn Humanities Institute for a project on Indigenous elders and aging. She was also a recipient of the Ford Foundation senior fellowship. Her book *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought* was published in a tenth anniversary edition and a Portuguese translation is anticipated to be published in Brazil in 2025. In addition to her academic and organizing work, she has provided elder care for her parents for over ten years and remains the primary caregiver for her ninety-seven-year-old father.

Bethany Letiecq: Bethany Letiecq is a professor in the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University and co-founder of the Anti-Racist and Decolonizing Research Collaborative. She is president of the GMU chapter of the AAUP and vice president of the AAUP Local 6741 of the AFT. She also serves as president of the National Council on Family Relations Board of Directors. She conducts participatory action research in partnership with families experiencing structural marginalization. Her research examines the interlinkages between white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, marriage fundamentalism, and family well-being.

Julie Schmid:

Julie Schmid is the senior director for Higher Education at the AFT. Prior to joining AFT, Julie served as executive director of the AAUP, a position she held for a decade, and as AFT-Wisconsin's chief of staff and higher education organizing director for six years. From 2014–16 she served as an affiliate for the Center for Advancement of Postsecondary Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Julie has published numerous articles on academic labor and is co-editor of *Cogs in the Classroom: The Changing Identity of Academic Labor*. Julie holds a PhD in English from the University of Iowa and has been involved in the academic labor movement since 1993, when she became active in organizing the graduate union there.