

CAFAS Update No. 86

10 April 2017

Council for Academic Freedom & Academic Standards

Website: www.cafas.org.uk

Meeting:

Saturday 22 April 2017

1.30-4.30 pm

The Space Centre

94 Judd Street

London WC1 9NT

Underground: Euston, Euston Square, Kings Cross, St Pancras,

Notes from over the sea -

Conflicts between Academic Freedom and Accountability in American Universities

The fundamental notion of academic freedom in the United States is grounded in the First Amendment of the Constitution.

“Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press ...”

This part, of what for many Americans defines a national outlook, was taken on by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in generating a definition of Academic Freedom that has

stood the test of time as the gold standard of University life and of the critical and creative work of the Arts, Humanities and Sciences. In fact, in many private Universities academic freedom is a matter of contract. These Universities however, account for only about 25% of the 20 million US University students.

The Universities of the 50 states account for most of the rest, and they are not financially autonomous. While their academic concerns are no different from their private counterparts, their financial support comes from varying levels of tuition fees that are supplemented by appropriations from state legislatures and some other interests. But in representing supposed public interests, can legislators and other benefactors restrict the use of funds as a simple matter of accountability?

Cases of some real concern are springing up around the US. Legislators of the state of Iowa would like to ensure that the political orientations of its

University faculty reflect a near 50:50 split, by using voting records in appointing processes. The University of Tennessee was pressed by a legislator to cancel the contract of an associated reporter who had written, unfavorably, about the legislator. But these are likely to be only the beginning of a new wave.

ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council) writes legislation for mostly Republican legislators and apparently has higher education in its sights. In refocusing the intent of higher education from a public good to a sellable commodity, it is likely to succeed in at least some of the now many Republican-controlled state houses. Other interests in 'oversight' include the Koch brothers' investment of millions in teaching programmes of economics, philosophy and politics. How can hard-pressed University administrators refuse such cash even when the strings attached include "help" in hiring the right faculty?

It is an alarming story. Is it a forewarning of more to come to the UK?

Janet Collett

Editors' Note

Greetings to all members. We hope that 2017 is going well for you. This issue contains a 'Note from over the sea', web references and notices. All readers are invited to respond as well as to make their own contributions.

It has been proposed that we create a link with 'Retraction Watch' on Cafas' website. This may be discussed at the next meeting on 22 April.

The UCU website has details of current disputes and campaigns.

As always, Cafas welcomes new members who are willing to assist in the running of the organisation, and with case work.

PB, GT

WEB ITEMS FROM CAFAS MEMBERS

29 March 2017

'The Center For Scientific Integrity

....

The mission of the Center for Scientific Integrity, the parent organization of Retraction Watch, is to promote transparency and integrity in science and scientific publishing, and to disseminate best practices and increase efficiency in science. The goals of the Center fall under four broad areas:

A database of retractions, expressions of concern and related publishing events, generated by the work of Retraction Watch. The database will be freely available to scientists, scholars and anyone else interested in analyzing the information.

Long-form, larger-impact writing, including magazine-length articles, reports and books.

Scholarship on scientific integrity and incentives in science.

Aid and assistance to groups and individuals whose interests in transparency and accountability intersect with ours, and who could benefit from shared expertise and resources.'

<http://retractionwatch.com/the-center-for-scientific-integrity/>

(Accessed 6 April, 3.54 pm)

CAFAS Update seeks to provide an open forum for opinion and discussion.

Items do not necessarily reflect the views of the Council.

26 January 2017

Universities must do more to tackle the unfair, elitist admissions system

https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2017/jan/26/universities-must-do-more-to-tackle-the-unfair-elitist-admissions-system?CMP=share_btn_link

17 January 2017

Time to take on greed: why business schools must engage in intellectual activism

https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2017/jan/17/taking-on-greed-business-schools-must-engage-in-intellectual-activism?CMP=new_1194&CMP=

12 January 2017

**Another University is Possible
By Akwugo Emejulu /**

'The SOAS students' struggle to decolonise their curriculum is a call to reshape and re-imagine what the university is for and whom the university should serve.'

The article is on:

<http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3044-another-university-is-possible>

11 January 2017

Why Grad Students Unionize

daily.jstor.org

Livia Gershon writes with reference to the citation below:

'Columbia University is embroiled in a fight with its graduate students, who formed a union to get better pay and benefits for their research and teaching work. This is a story that's repeated itself at universities around the country since the early 1990s. The graduate student union movement is a fight by low-paid workers to get more money and better benefits, but, as Robert A. Rhoads and Gary Rhoades found in a 2005 paper, it's also a campaign to challenge the growth of cozy relationships between universities and corporations....'

The full article is on daily.jstor.org

4 November 2016

Freedom of Expression?

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/philosophers-talk-cancelled-due-passport-rules>

11 October 2016

Graduates bad for UK economy

https://www.theguardian.com/money/2016/oct/11/huge-increase-in-number-of-graduates-bad-for-uk-economy?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+main+NEW+H+categories&utm_term=194242&subid=13152035&CMP=EMCNEWWEML6619I2

21 July 2016

Letter sent by UCU

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8235/UCU-letter-to-Turkish-ambassador-on-violations-of-academic-freedom-in-Turkey-Jul-16/pdf/ucu_lettertoturkishambassador_21jul16.pdf

Digital Newsletter

CAFAS needs to try and identify areas for reducing its expenditure as it is run by volunteers and on a shoestring budget. We can minimise costs by e-mailing you the newsletters thus making savings on postage. If you would like to receive a digital copy (exactly the same as the hard copy) please e-mail us your full name to cafasonly@gmail.com stating that you would be happy to receive digital copies rather than hard copies. The e-mail address you provide will only be used to send newsletters. Thanks.

NOTICES

Meeting

Saturday 22 April 2017

1.30-4.30

The Space Centre, 94 Judd St

London WC1H 9NT

Agenda

1. Apologies
 2. Minutes of previous meeting
 3. Academic Freedom
 4. Casework
 5. AOB
-

DO YOU BELIEVE

- That academic standards have been dumbed down throughout the higher and further education sector?
- That this decline has been accompanied by the escalating rhetoric of 'excellence' and 'world-class'?
- That the number of contact hours between teachers and students, which the Dearing Report described as a proper measure of the quality of education, has been reduced across the board?
- That there are all sorts of pressures on examiners to pass candidates who would previously have failed?
- That it is far easier to obtain Firsts and Upper Seconds than it used to be?
- That practices which used to be treated as academically unacceptable, or even as cheating, are now widely regarded as normal and inevitable.
- That the effect of the RAE and other pressures on academics is to increase the quantity of research, not the quality, and to restrict innovative and critical thought?
- That there are pressures, often of a commercial nature, to avoid certain areas of research, or to falsify results or to distort their conclusions and significance?
- That, despite lip-service to the importance of teaching, universities and colleges take little account of this in career advancement?
- That academic values have been largely displaced by market values?
- That the stated 'mission' of universities to serve the community has been abandoned in favour of commercial priorities?
- That education in the UK no longer has the status of a right bringing social benefits, but is instead treated as a commodity to be bought and sold?
- That discrimination against women and ethnic minorities is still rife in the employment and promotion practices of tertiary education, despite the multicultural community it is supposed to serve?
- That the work of the union in fighting discrimination and victimisation can usefully be supplemented by specialised advice and support from an organization which focuses on issues of academic freedom and standards?

If you believe that many or most of these propositions are true, you ought to be a CAFAS member and your UCU branch ought to affiliate. Membership Secretary & Treasurer: Kirit Patel, Tel: 0208 427 9770, kiritone@live.co.uk If you would like a speaker from CAFAS to address a branch meeting, contact: John Fernandes, 07551823361 johnfernandes500@gmail.com

CONSTITUTION

CAFAS' aims are outlined on the membership form. The full constitution can be obtained from the Chair or www.cafas.org.uk. CAFAS was founded in February 1994. It depends on subscriptions and an active membership. It meets in March/April, June and September/October.

Have you paid your SUBSCRIPTION?

Please send your cheque or standing order to the Membership Secretary, Kirit Patel, 19 Greenhill Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 1LD kiritone@live.co.uk, Tel: 0208 427 9770

Next deadline: 25 May 2017

Please send letters, news items and articles to:

Pat Brady
patrick.brady28@gmail.com &
Geraldine Thorpe
thorpegm@gmail.com

You can also send us items at any time for earlier publication on the website.

Next Meeting

Please check the website for venue and date.

Committee

Chair:

John Fernandes

76 Bois Hall Rd, Addlestone Surrey KT15 2JN
johnfernandes500@gmail.com, +44 7551 823361;
+44 1932 845071

Secretary:

Please contact the Chair

Membership Secretary & Treasurer:

Kirit Patel

19 Greenhill Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 1LD
kiritone@live.co.uk, Tel: 0208 4279770

Casework Coordinator:

Colwyn Williamson

83 Fairwater Grove West, Llandaff, Cardiff CF5 2JN

029 20195020; m: 07970 838 276

cafascoordinator@gmail.com

Cafas Update Compilers:

Patrick Brady

3 Ingleby Way, Chislehurst BR7 6DD

0208 467 2549; patrick.brady28@gmail.com

Geraldine Thorpe

7 Benn Street, London E9 5SU

0208 986 3004; thorpegm@gmail.com

David Regan Appeal Coordinator:

Dr Janet Collett

Undercliffe House, Malling St, Lewes, East Sussex,

BN7 2RB; Tel: 01273 473 717

janet.collett@gmail.com

Students' Complaints:

Ben Cosin

3 Halliday Drive DEAL Kent CT14 7AX

01304 361074 Brcosin1926@yahoo.co.uk

John Fernandes

76 Bois Hall Rd, Addlestone Surrey KT15 2JN

johnfernandes500@gmail.com

Cafas Legal Advisors

Professor Eric Barendt

74, Upper Park Road,

London NW3 2UX

020 7586 9930; e.barendt@ucl.ac.uks

Dr Amir Majid

32 Forest Drive West, London E11 1LA

0208 556 1990, drmajid47@gmail.com

Health & Safety

Ian Hewitt

Ian.Hewitt@phonecoop.coop

Website

Ian Hewitt, Rashid Mehmood

Founding Members

Michael Cohen

Colwyn Williamson

Defending-Academic-Freedom JISCMail List.

All members are encouraged to participate in the CAFAS discussion list.

It can be accessed through the Cafas Website:

www.cafas.org.uk

or directly through the JISCMail website.