

THE PSA MANIFESTO ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM (adopted by Council Spring 2008)

“COFRAT is concerned with the maintenance of academic freedom among sociologists and with the development and maintenance of fair and equitable procedures and practices for employing, promoting, and terminating the employment of sociologists in the western region of the United States...”

“The...Committee on Freedom of Teaching and Research...seeks information on problems sociologists may be having in protecting their rights to academic freedom of inquiry and expression... There are also pressures on some institutions and departments to adjust their curricula to accommodate the needs of particular corporate interests. Individual scholars who do not conform to these trends may find themselves at a disadvantage when their teaching and scholarship are evaluated for promotion and tenure. If you are aware of similar instances, or of related problems of concern to COFRAT, the committee wants to hear from you...”

(Taken from the PSA Web Site, our emphasis) _____

PREAMBLE: In recent years there has been an immense escalation of attacks on academic freedom emerging from various spheres of American society. In addition to overt attacks on the work of researchers, teachers, practitioners, and others in Academia from conservative evangelical and other anti-intellectual groups, even more insidious intrusions into the freedom of scholars to pursue their inquiries have occurred through the “corporatization of the Academy.” Whether the attacks come from right wing organizations attempting to control curricula and professorial speech, such as occurred in 2006 at UCLA , Columbia, NYU, and a variety of other institutions , or whether the attacks emanate from self-appointed moral entrepreneurs who attempt to control and define scholarly research, they require strong responses from the academic community. Accordingly, the COFRAT, reflecting our deep concern about protections for researchers, teachers, practitioners, and others in Academia, and recognizing the responsibility of scholars as well as institutions of higher learning to act to protect academic freedom, recommends to the PSA that we adopt the following:

MANIFESTO ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM:

The Pacific Sociological Association hereby declares its strong support, and will move when necessary to enforce, the following academic freedom protections and responsibilities of researchers, teachers, practitioners, and educational institutions:

Protections for researchers, teachers, practitioners and others:

- Researchers, teachers, and practitioners have the right to pursue all relevant areas of inquiry, subject only to the review of their peers and institutional review boards where required.
- Researchers, teachers, and practitioners are free to pursue all ideas, ideologies, points of view, and teaching methodologies they deem necessary to conduct their classes and/or research and to do so without any constraint or sanction or threat of constraint or sanction from inside institutional or outside communal or corporate sources.
- Researchers, teachers, and practitioners have the right, without any constraint or

sanction or threat of constraint or sanction from inside institutional or outside communal or corporate sources, to express whatever political position or system of values they choose to express, providing only that such expressions are germane to the subject matter being researched or under discussion in the classroom.

- Researchers, teachers, and practitioners have the right to define their area(s) of expertise, subject only to the review of their peers.
- Researchers, teachers, and practitioners have the right to belong to any organizations they choose without any constraint or sanction or threat of constraint or sanction from communal, corporate, or institutional sources.
- Responsibilities of researchers, teachers, practitioners and others:
- Researchers, teachers, and practitioners should have a thorough scholarly knowledge of their areas of expertise and to be able to conduct research, teach, or practice competently in those areas of expertise.
- Researchers, teachers, and practitioners should respect their institution and/or employer, colleagues, students, and staff and treat those with whom s/he works professionally and with integrity.
- Researchers, teachers, and practitioners should respect and encourage a diversity of opinion/views and speak out and combat any forms of discrimination based on age; gender; race; ethnicity; national origin; religion; sexual orientation; disability; health conditions; or marital, domestic, or parental status.

Responsibilities of institutions:

- Institutions should insure that its researchers, teachers and practitioners are free to pursue all ideas, ideologies, points of view, and teaching methodologies they deem necessary to conduct their classes and/or research and to do so without any constraint or sanction or threat of constraint or sanction from the institution or outside communal or corporate sources.
- Institutions should insure that its researchers, teachers and practitioners are free, without any constraint or sanction or threat of constraint or sanction from institutional or outside communal or corporate sources, to express whatever political position or system of values they choose to express, providing only that such expressions are germane to the subject matter being researched or under discussion in the classroom.
- Institutions should insure that its researchers, teachers and practitioners have the right to define their area(s) of expertise, subject only to the review of their peers.
- Institutions should insure that its researchers, teachers and practitioners have the right to belong to any organizations they choose without any constraint or sanction or threat of constraint or sanction from the institution or external communal or corporate sources and to defend their employees against such constraints or sanctions.

Institutions should insure that structures are in place to guarantee open and transparent communication between its administration and its researchers, teachers and practitioners and, so far as possible, that administration work toward inclusiveness in its decision making.

ENDNOTES

Cf. Glenn A. Goodwin, "Corporatization and the Demise of the Academy," paper presented at the annual meetings of the Association for Humanist Sociology, Covington, Kentucky, November, 2000; Glenn A. Goodwin, "From Blue Jeans to Three-Piece Suits: On the Emergence of Western University*, Inc." *The Other Side*. Vol. I & II, 1989-90. *[Not the real name]; Los Angeles Times, "Wired Into the Curriculum: Tech Titans Gave Millions to Start Sage Hill School in Newport Beach, and They Want A Say in How and What Students Learn", Monday, October 9, 2000, Section C, pp. 1f.

Cf. "Expose 'Radical UCLA Teacher, Get \$100" . Retrieved January 19, 2006 from <http://www.cnn.com/2006/EDUCATION/01/19/ucla.radicals.reut/index.html>

Cf. Alec Magnet, Staff Reporter of the Sun, "Nine Professors At Columbia Are Deemed 'Dangerous'". An interesting recent fictional account of such "control" is found in Philip Roth's novel, *The Human Stain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000). See also, Russell Jacoby, "The New PC: Crybaby Conservatives," *The Nation Magazine*, April 4, 2005, pp. 11-16; Kevin Mattson, "A Student Bill of Rights," *The Nation Magazine*, April 4, 2005, pp. 16-18; Scott Sherman, "The Mideast Comes to Columbia," *The Nation Magazine*, April 4, 2005, pp. 18-24. Concerning teaching, generally, an interesting and increasingly popular method of instruction by colleagues across the country is the "dialogical approach" advocated by Paulo Freire in his *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (N.Y.: Herder and Herder, 1970).