

# Intellectualism and Anti-Intellectualism Act as Barriers to Academic Freedom

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## Abstract

*This manuscript begins with an introduction by the author and is followed with a brief history of academic freedom. The author divides academic freedom into two types: Freedom for the student (lernfreiheit) and freedoms for the faculty (lehrfreiheit). After a brief discussion on modern academic freedom, the author identifies five fear generators that have the ability to negatively affect academic freedom: 1) perfectionism, 2) pugilism, 3) hierarchism, 4) short-termism, and 5) intellectualism. "Intellectualism" was the fear generator of focus for this manuscript. The author also determined that anti-intellectualism is a directly opposite but equally significant fear generator that can affect academic freedoms. Therefore, both intellectualism and anti-intellectualism were explored as threats to lehrfreiheit and lernfreiheit. Examples are provided throughout the manuscript and the author offered recent examples of academics that have had their freedoms suppressed due to fear generated from anti/intellectualism. Next, the paper discusses possible recommendations to maintaining academic freedom and limiting fear from anti/intellectualism. The author concludes with a summary of the negative effects of anti/intellectualism have had on lehrfreiheit and lernfreiheit and makes an appeal to preserve academic freedom.*

## 1. Introduction

This manuscript will explore both intellectualism and anti-intellectualism effects on academic freedoms. The author will begin the manuscript by providing a brief history of modern academic freedom and its importance. The author will divide academic freedom into two categories throughout the manuscript: 1) lernfreiheit: academic freedoms of the student and 2) lehrfreiheit: academic freedoms of the faculty. Next, both, intellectualism and anti-intellectualism will be operationalized for the reader and categories/examples offered exploring how both, as opposite sides of the same coin, effect the freedoms of students and faculty. A discussion is, then, offered to orient the reader as to

how intellectualism and anti-intellectualism are affecting academic freedoms.

The author will present recommendations from multiple sources to the reader. These recommendations are meant to guide and challenge the reader to discover ways in which academic society can maintain its intellectual responsibility while preserving their freedoms. Finally, the author will conclude by determining that both intellectualism and anti-intellectualism have led to obstacles in maintaining academic freedom and makes a final appeal to sustain academic freedoms in the future.

## 2. Modern Academic Freedom

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a Prussian named Willem von Humboldt established a university in Berlin. At the time, it was considered unique in that it was not managed/controlled or beholden to any religious organization and/or government. Instead, Humboldt's university was committed to the tenets of lernfreiheit (the freedom to learn) and lehrfreiheit (the freedom to teach) claims Commanger [1]. Such a focus differed from other European universities and was considered unconventional. However, Humboldt's university, despite the unconventional nature, became very popular due to its commitment to freely pursue academic work. Foreigners, especially, became increasingly interested in attending a university that was committed to scholarly and curricular freedom without interference from the government and dominant religious establishments [1]. The philosophies of lehrfreiheit and lernfreiheit, as a result, began to spread worldwide due to those foreign scholars returning to their home countries with a new disposition on academic institutions.

Regardless of the increasing recognition, Europe witnessed a halt in the growing popularity due to the rise of two totalitarian governments (communism and fascism) and two world wars [1]. Thereby, several universities that had transitioned to the philosophical dispositions of lehrfreiheit and lernfreiheit began to eliminate established policies or even created adverse

policies. In 1915, however, the philosophies had spread and become popular in North America. Specifically, U.S. and Canadian colleges and universities began forming organizations that would advocate for academic freedoms throughout the Americas such as the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). The concepts of *lehrfreiheit* and *lernfreiheit* were, therefore, preserved in North American universities until flourishing again in Europe after the cold-war [2]. In 1997, according to Dea [2], the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) similarly committed to academic freedom and AAUP's four primary tenets to academic freedom worldwide. Those four tenets are: 1) the freedom to teach, 2) the freedom to learn, 3) the freedom of inquiry, and 4) the freedom of both intramural and extramural expression. Regardless of commitments to academic freedoms, there remains impediments to the basic tenets. Therefore, AAUP, UNESCO, and other advocacy organizations consistently monitor and resist intrusions to scholars' academic freedoms.

### 3. Fear Generators and Intellectualism

Mellon [3] has indicated that "intellectualism" is one of five fear generators creating a culture of fear within professional organizations (including colleges and universities). The other four fear generators, according to Mellon [3], are pugilism, short-termism, perfectionism, and hierarchism. The primary focus of this manuscript will be intellectualism. Mellon [3] claims that intellectualism generates fear amongst individuals because intellect without emotion is a cold and uninviting place for humans. Analysis, reasoning, and logic without human emotion leaves many individuals feeling inadequate, foolish, and incompetent.

Brown [4] makes the distinction between intellectualism and anti-intellectualism. Intellectualism is described as pursuit of knowledge for its own sake rather than seeking knowledge in support of economic, religious, or sociopolitical agendas [4]. More succinctly, intellectualism is free and open inquiry. Alternatively, Waters and Dionne Jr [5] have indicated how "intellectuals" have created a culture of anti-intellectualism which is driving a different kind of fear within the disciplinary academies. Anti-intellectualism is a response to "intellectualism" and will be framed in the context of this manuscript as an equal, yet opposite force that also generates fear.

Likewise, Holt [6] uses the famous holiday movie *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street* to distinguish between intellectualism and anti-intellectualism: In this example Holt [6] claims that Maureen O'Hara's character raises her daughter to question the existence of Santa Clause

since the evidence is overwhelming that he would not exist. However, John Payne's character places emphasis on "imagination" and "faith" asking children to believe in Santa Clause due to how it makes them feel (a form of anti-intellectualism) [6]. Therefore, this author considers intellectualism and anti-intellectualism as two equal sides of the same "fear-generating" coin and will explore both as challenges to *lehrfreiheit* and *lernfreiheit*.

In the subsequent sections, this author will discuss both intellectualism and anti-intellectualism as opposite but equally contributing fear generators that can/have negatively affected academic freedoms.

### 4. Intellectualism

Intellectualism is a perspective in which people intentionally utilize reasoning and judgment to find "truth." Alternatively, intellectualism, has been described as a process in which people seek knowledge and understanding for the purpose of being informed [4]. According to Brown [4], intellectualism is rooted in two epistemologies: 1) Rationalism and 2) Empiricism. Rationalism represents knowledge that has been stemmed from rationale and reason; while, empiricism refers to knowledge derived from experiences. Both types of intellectualism are derived from cognitive processes related to the idea/topic.

Intellectuals, then, are individuals that practice intellectualism. In order to classify intellectuals, Greenberg [7] has identified eleven types of intellectuals. In order to orient the reader, this author includes Greenburg's [7] framework in Table 1.

Table 1. Intellectual categories [7]

| <i>Intellectual Type</i> | <i>Classification Definition</i>                                             | <i>Example</i> |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Ideators                 | Generate novel ideas.                                                        | Einstein       |
| Investigators            | Vigorously investigate a topic in order to understand it.                    | Currie         |
| Provers                  | Demonstrate that the ideas of others are sound and strengthen existing work. | Singer         |
| Appliers                 | Explores new and useful application of existing ideas.                       | Ford           |
| Doers                    | Engage in activities using ideas and then reflect.                           | Graham         |
| Critics                  | Dissect ideas to find flaws in them.                                         | Wollstonecraft |

|              |                                                            |          |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Enhancers    | Refine ideas to make better.                               | Botrom   |
| Popularizers | Simplify and explain complex ideas to spread to public.    | Sagan    |
| Activators   | Uses ideas to change norms.                                | King     |
| Storytellers | Convey information and capture the narrative behind ideas. | Gladwell |
| Cataloguers  | Collect and organize information for use.                  | Dewey    |

Greenberg's [7] identified types of intellectuals can apply to both students and faculty members. Students and academic faculty members could find themselves identifying with more than one category of intellectual [7]. However, engaging in any of the intellectual categories potentially has the ability to negatively affect academic freedoms.

In the following sub-sections, the author will explore Intellectualism's negative affects to *lernfreiheit* and *lehrfreiheit*.

#### 4.1. The Student and Intellectualism

The author will investigate two distinct issues with intellectualism's potential negative effects on *lernfreiheit*. This author will discuss both the negative effects of public perception of intellectually engaging students and the negative effects resulting from students failing to engage in intellectual behaviors.

**4.1.1. Perception: Thinkers Not Doers.** As a critic of intellectualism, Berkman [8] has provided an excellent example of intellectualism's effects on the student body: A quick in-class experiment showed that only 1/3 of college students admitted to knowing people in an opposing political party as intelligent. And, those 1/3 only raised their hands after they received reassurance from witnessing other classmates raise their hand. Meaning, approximately 66% of college students were unable to comprehend that a voter for a different candidate could also be intelligent. In other words, Berkman [8] points to a trend amongst college students in which they associate certain political ideologies with being "intellectual," while denying that others can engage in intellectual behaviors and arrive at different sociopolitical conclusions.

Berkman [8] also points to a growing student body that describes those outside of the college/university environment as incompetent, misinformed, misguided, or indifferent. But, they are never described as

"intellectual." College students, therefore, are viewing themselves as more intellectual than their non-college peers and/or generational predecessors.

Berkman [8], again, submits a very specific example: college students are indicating their support and advocacy for efforts to reduce "climate change" and anyone who does not support is labeled a climate change "denier." However, in reality, 85% of polled Americans believe in climate change (thereby, are not deniers) [8]. Even though a large majority of Americans believe in "climate change" and support efforts to reduce (74%), it only ranks as the 17<sup>th</sup> most important issue for American voters. Not prioritizing climate change does not equate to being a "denier." Therefore, those outside college are not climate change "deniers" as much as they are not climate change "prioritizers." The purpose of sharing this information is because college students have selfishly identified their world as having a monopoly on intellectual behavior. College students believe themselves to be "more informed" and more "intellectual" than those currently outside the college environment.

In addition, the post-college workforce is declaring that current college graduates are severely underprepared for the work that they are about to engage, according to Brown [4]. Currently, over 1/3 of employers are claiming that college graduates are underprepared for the workforce and that number has increased steadily [4]. This adds to a perception that college students are spending their preparatory time engaging in intellectual activities that have little relevance on joining the workforce. In other words, students are being trained as "thinkers" but not as "doers." And, that has created a perception that they cannot achieve what is needed/expected out of them in post-college society.

Similarly, Dalrymple [9] expresses how his non-college educated father (a career mechanic) would ridicule college educated individuals (especially engineers) over their consistent inability to grasp basic mechanical concepts. The image is that the current student can "think" but cannot "do."

Current college students are facing an image problem that they are neither effective nor efficient in the post-college workforce. And, such an image has perpetuated criticism about college studies as being too intellectual rather than practical thereby affecting the students' *lernfreiheit*.

**4.1.2. Failing to Engage Intellectually.** Blevins [10] describes college students that are fearful of speaking out in classes. In fact, Berkman [8], claims that 61% of college students report being frightened to speak up in class. This fear stems from a lack of trust since students have been "ridiculed" or "embarrassed" for questions/comments that they have posed in the past

[10]. Students need to trust that both peers and the instructor will refrain from marginalizing responses prior to speaking in class. Fear is generated in the student because their thoughts may fall outside the “norm” of what is being discussed. This also reaches into written work in which students will only regurgitate ideas that have already been stated in order to maintain favor with the teacher [10]. However, when students fail to critically think about ideas and concepts due to fear, they are declining their own freedom to engage intellectually.

Coravos [11] declares that students are faced with a new technological society where they can access information significantly quicker than prior generations. Therefore, young students are experiencing an ability for everyone to expand intellectually online (e.g., blogs, chat rooms, comment sections, etc.) without the fear of “in-person” activities. And, websites like Wikipedia and Google Scholar, for example, provide today’s students with information and knowledge within a matter of seconds. However, Coravos [11] questions if students are actually engaging in intellectual behaviors or if they are just locating and reiterating information? Moreover, with the reassurance that their intellectual behavior remains physically distant, students’ intellectual behaviors are also distant and shallow [11]. For instance, a student may articulate an intellectual thought at the end of an online news story via the comment section; but, do they continue discussing/exploring/challenging their ideas? Or, do they simply express their view once and move on to the next comment section? Technological intellectualism (where information is available at our fingertips), argues Coravos [11] lacks depth: students avoid any type of deeper intellectual analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of the surface information. Just because someone is “informed” does not make them “intellectual [11].” This author compares the afore mentioned example to the common book-club: one who reads a book is “informed,” but those engaged in critical discourse over the book during a book club meeting are stimulating their intellect. Therefore, students are conflating “intellectualism” with their ability to be “informed.”

Penrod [12] asserts that students are viewing “intellectualism” as socially unacceptable. Students value social acceptance over being intellectually challenged. Penrod [12] reinforces his claim by offering evidence that the same Arizona High School that won a state “Football” championship also won titles for the Speech, Debate, and Academic Decathlon teams during the exact same academic year; Yet, while the athletic Football team received multiple celebrations involving the entire school (and community) such as banners, parties, rally’s, etc.; the three academic teams’ accomplishments received approximately ten minutes of recognition from the administration via daily

announcements. Sadly, the image of being an intellectual is that it is socially unacceptable (“not cool”). It is difficult, claims Penrod [12], for students to choose intellectualism over celebrity. Therefore, students are choosing not to engage intellectually.

This author acknowledges that it is challenging for an intellectual community to compete with the growing negative image of intellectualism. Students are failing to engage in intellectual behaviors; therefore, students are self-suppressing their freedoms to learn.

## 4.2. The Faculty and Intellectualism

Intellectualism, expresses Mellon [3], generates fear amongst faculty members. This author distinguishes between, first, fear generated from intellectualism originating from social image of “elitism” and, second, the failure of academic faculty to uphold intellectual responsibility.

### 4.2.1. Perception: Elitism and Intellectualism.

Famous former science fiction author and Professor of Biochemistry, Isaac Asimov, declared in a 1980 op-ed letter to *Newsweek* that there has always been a culture of ignorance in democratic societies. It is fueled by the belief that “my ignorance” is equal to “your knowledge [13].” Moreover, Asimov [13] indicates how intellectuals are labeled as “elitists.” Even engaging in the most basic of subjects: Reading is “elitist,” according to Asimov [13].

Berkman [8] states that higher education is not comprised of an academically “open” body, but rather an academically “elitist” body. The faculty of most universities are “closed” off from the community. In the U.S., for example, Berkman [8] denotes that a majority of academic faculty voted for a candidate that was not elected by the majority of the population (2024 presidential election). Which in turn has led to an elitist belief that those outside academia are intellectually inferior to academic faculty.

Critics like Shah [14], have also indicated that those outside academia are viewing college faculty as “elitist.” Shah further [14] suggests that faculty may portray themselves in an “elitist” way through various characteristics. Those characteristics are included in Table 2.

Table 2. Intellectual Elitism Characteristics [14]

| <i>Intellectual Elitism Characteristic</i> | <i>Description of why it is elitist.</i>                                           |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Complex Language and Vocabulary.           | Using advanced language and vocabulary that is difficult for others to understand. |

|                          |                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Intellectual Superiority | Continual critiquing and questioning of another's ideas send the message that the faculty member is superior to others.      |
| Control and Power        | Deconstructing and challenging norms gives the faculty member power over the discourse.                                      |
| Identity                 | Intellectuals identify themselves as "insightful."                                                                           |
| Intellectual Engagement  | Not everyone wants to intellectually engage (in everything). Sometimes others want to turn the intellectualism off.          |
| Social Recognition       | Many Intellectuals are seen as trying to climb a social ladder and achieve recognition rather than solve every-day problems. |

Shah [14] recognizes that academics face a perception of being labeled "elitist" because of certain behavioral characteristics that they often display. Unfortunately, this perception of "elitism" causes non-academic society to dismiss their teaching and scholarship because they are "out-of-touch." Concurrently, Waters and Dione Jr. [5] assert that academics have increasingly begun to isolate themselves from the lay population adding to the "elitist" label. Thereby, the non-academic community have increasingly begun to identify academic faculty as "arrogant" and having "superiority complexes [14]." Emotional relations are strained when the academic community isolates themselves and/or develops some of the characteristics; and, academic freedoms are reduced because the community no longer wishes to associate with the academic community. Shah [14] indicates that faculty members may be straining their non-faculty relationships because they cannot refrain from focusing on analytical thinking (as opposed to emotional), or thinking abstractly.

Much of the general public see academic faculty as part of an elite society that has "cultivated privilege, preserved inequality, and insulated themselves from any consequences of their decisions [15]." Shaulis [15] has pointed to examples like legacy admissions as preserving privilege and Covid-19 recommendations such as social-distancing (that did not pan out) as isolating themselves from any consequences.

The perception of academic faculty, then, is one of intellectual elitism. And, the lay society is disregarding academic faculty because they cannot relate to non-academic society's needs and ambitions.

**4.2.2. Failing to Engage Intellectually.** Le Cunff [16], however, suggests that the fears faculty experience derive from the intellectual responsibility they bear as academic faculty. Le Cunff [16] describes five types of faculty that experience fear from intellectual traits. This author includes those traits for the reader in Table 3.

Table 3. Academic Faculty Intellectuals [16]

| <i>Category</i>    | <i>Description</i>                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Perfectionist  | Sets impossibly high standards and feels like a failure when 100% of goals are not met.                                                       |
| The Natural Genius | Success typically comes easy; therefore, normal struggles are interpreted as too difficult and they are not fit to learn particular material. |
| The Soloist        | Believes that asking for help to achieve is unacceptable.                                                                                     |
| The Super(Wo)Man   | Works harder to hide what they believe is a lower level of competence.                                                                        |
| The Expert         | Needs to know every last detail (bit of information) prior to sharing ideas.                                                                  |

Cole [18] suggests that academic faculty are facing current challenges to their teaching assignments due to intellectualism. For instance, professors are being asked to avoid topics that could cause controversy [18]. Some institutions are even offering guidelines about how to address certain topics, concurs Furedi [19]. For instance, one U.S. private college has, reportedly, implemented policies designed for faculty to navigate controversial topics [19]. But, restricting how faculty approach a topic is a direct encroachment of academic freedoms.

Mendenhall [20] outright claims that he had to leave the academic institution in order to be an "intellectual." Mendenhall suggests that college/university faculties have gone too far in embracing that all forms of education are equal. And, that all forms of intellectual rigor are equal. For instance, Mendenhall [20] articulates that faculty have been coerced into believing that it is just as intellectually challenging/rigorous for students to analyze the written works of a modern pop-song with the intellectually deeper works of classic literature.

This author acknowledges that whatever the rationale may be, many academics are failing to maintain intellectual responsibilities.

## 5. Anti-Intellectualism

Anti-intellectualism is a form of willful ignorance and it is an oppositional response to intellectualism. While Mellon [3] does not specify anti-intellectualism as a fear generator, other authors have considered anti-intellectualism as an equal (but opposite) manufacturer of fear [6]. Therefore, this author will also address anti-intellectualisms' potential negative effects on *lernfreiheit* and *lehrfreiheit*.

According to Bourne [21], "Anti-intellectualism" is characterized as social attitudes that systemically undermine data-driven evidence, established academic experts, and the pursuit of knowledge. Anti-intellectualism, thereby, is a form of resistance to intellectualism. It is a response that dismisses evidence from those who have deeply studied the content [21].

In its simplest form, anti-intellectualism is an aversion to reason [22]. For example, this author notes that the tobacco industry often dismissed medical data that indicated a rise in probability of health complications when exposed to tobacco products. Frequently, that dismissal was due to lack of "conclusive" evidence. Even though the evidence overwhelmingly indicated that tobacco is dangerous to the health of a human being; the anti-intellectual would claim that it is not 100% conclusive. This author acknowledges that very little academic research is 100% conclusive. Niose [22] indicates that political organizations, religious organizations, and business corporations all encourage anti-intellectualism for some sort of advantage and/or decision-making control. These institutions, claims Niose [22], benefit from a lay society that does not often engage in intellectual behavior. Many of these religious, business, and political organizations claim that their embracing of anti-intellectualism is their freedom to reject intellectual scholarship. Waters and Dionne Jr [5], however, warn that, "there is a danger in mistaking genuinely democratic impulses for wholesale assaults on the life of the mind."

For example, it has become a common occurrence to disinvite/reject speakers from college campuses [19], in part, because anti-intellectualism is succeeding. Exploring diverse ideologies in college is no longer acceptable if it disrupts the anti-intellectual harmony. This author will analyze anti-intellectualism's effects on *lernfreiheit* and *lehrfreiheit*.

### 5.1. Anti-Intellectualism and *Lernfreiheit*

Anti-intellectualism has been present on college campuses for decades, says Trout [23]. College students are actively resisting efforts to educate them. This author includes several ways, according to Trout [23],

that college students commonly defy attempts to educate them in the list below:

- a) Fail to read assigned work.
- b) Unengaged in class discussions.
- c) Complaining about workload and lobbying for less work.
- d) Giving low evaluations to professors with higher amounts of required work.
- e) Skipping class.
- f) Neglecting to prepare for class/assessment.
- g) Shows no interest in ad-hoc (extra-credit) opportunities.
- h) Boast about how little time is spent studying or working toward achievement.
- i) Refusing to take handouts or other printed materials provided by instructor.
- j) Intolerance of feedback or critical assessment.
- k) Condemning intellectual endeavors and ridiculing classmates that engage.

Unfortunately, the trend of growing indifference to learning has become a problem in U.S. universities where institutions have lowered criteria/standards in order to keep student enrollment high [23]. Stone [24] claims that universities have very little incentive to apply rigorous standards upon student learning and instead focus on institutional growth. And, more students mean more tuition dollars and bigger budgets. Thereby, faculty are incentivized to lower achievement criteria (for the good of the university). Faculty are more concerned with recruitment to the institution, department, major program, etc. than they are with learning outcomes. In fact, Stone [24] indicates that "grade inflation" is institutionally profitable. Therefore, colleges/universities are propagating the notion that academic rigor (student intellectualism) is incompatible with the primary business structure of modern colleges.

Concurrently, students have begun seeing themselves as "consumers" of a service industry and any "dissatisfaction" has been ruled out through payment of tuition dollars [23]. If intellectual rigor effects the student's graduation, then the student is dissatisfied and the college/university suffers fiscally. Stone also [24] indicates that student dissatisfaction with "too much" rigor have led colleges/universities to concede former admission standards: Grade Point Averages (GPA), exam scores, and other metrics of intellectual growth have been replaced by metrics of academic popularity. Therefore, students have willfully embraced a culture of anti-intellectualism and college campuses have become a safe place where students no longer have to engage in intellectual behavior [10]. Students are intentionally avoiding their freedom to learn.

Comparably, Dunst [25] makes the distinction between being educated and being an intellectual. Just

because someone is attending school does not make them “intellectual.” In other words, because someone enrolls and attends class, does not mean that the same person is actively engaging their mind in intellectual challenges. Eroding student intellectual rigor on college campuses is a factor adding to a culture of anti-intellectualism. Similarly, Graff [26] asserts that more intellectual behavior is occurring outside the classroom. In this regard, one must consider if academic institutions are, indeed, providing the intellectually stimulating culture that they were once intended?

Noddings [27] also notes that “intellectual” content has been removed from today’s school curriculum. Anti-intellectual decision makers, according to Noddings [27], are pressing institutions to focus on diverse curricula that offer assorted content but do not seem to focus on the intellectual depth of the delivered content. For example, Graff [26] embarrassingly argues that there is more intellectualism occurring between two people debating and analyzing the possibilities of an upcoming sports contest (e.g., baseball game statistics) in a local bar/pub than what occurs in recently observed mathematics courses. In this example, Graff [26] indicates that “hidden” intellectualism is occurring amongst people outside of class because academic institutions have forsaken similar intellectual conversations within the classroom.

Mendenhall [20] declares that today’s students now prefer quick hot-takes over thoughtful, researched arguments. Students no longer show intellectual curiosity but rather seek out moral certainty. Relatedly, Bhardwaj [28] articulates that many college students pretend to understand in class rather than admit not knowing. Approximately 45% of college students admitted to faking comprehension in their courses [28].

All of these examples, according to Hetherington [29], defies academic freedom because intellectual exploration is one of the defining characteristics of *lernfreiheit*. And, without the ability to intellectually investigate, then students have sacrificed their *lernfreiheit*.

## 5.2. Anti-Intellectualism and *Lehrfreiheit*

Asimov [13] suggests that “democracy” means that (falsely) one person’s intelligence is equal to another person’s ignorance. Academic freedom, for better or worse, means that individuals have the freedom to be ignorant. However, academics have a responsibility to engage intellectually.

Shaulis [15] reported that in the U.S. there is currently an anti-intellectual political movement against colleges/universities. The current U.S. President’s war on expertise, critical thinking, and education is about, according to Shaulis [15], dismantling the very idea of an informed citizenry. In an effort to regain authority

over academia, current governments are attempting to discredit higher education by replacing dialogue with propaganda and replacing expertise with loyalty [15]. This movement is not about reforming higher education, it is about eliminating tools of inquiry that fuel social progress [15].

Further, Shaulis [15] argues that universities have had power without accountability. Schools have protected legacy admissions, turned a blind eye to labor exploitation on their campuses, and sat on billion-dollar endowments while many workers scrape by [15]. Colleges are not championing democracy (as they claim) as much as they are guarding a highly stratified status quo [15]. Thereby, institutions are, arguably, nothing more than finishing schools for the “ruling class (policymakers, judges, bankers, etc.) [15].”

Furedi [19] claims that courses are cancelled and certain topics are restricted from discussion on college campuses. For example, “Climate Change” is an intellectual topic breached by most Environmental Studies departments/programs; but, an Environmental Studies faculty member may self-suppress professional opinions, data, and/or objectives in order to meet the “comfort” needs of the community. Concurrently, university campuses have become places intolerant to ideas, especially if those ideas are deemed detrimental to the emotional well-being of a person. Guest speakers are being disinvited, curricula are being removed, rational debate is discouraged, data-collection/analysis is being censored, and faculty are being “policed” by those who want to suppress intellectual freedoms [19].

Disturbingly, suggests Du Toit [17], faculty (academics) have minimal voice in the overwhelmingly growing anti-intellectual culture on college campuses. Consequently, then, faculty are not challenging the administration. Too many faculty members, asserts this author, have become complicit with administrative fiat and have, according to Du Toit [17], conceded faculty governance. If faculty governance has been conceded then there is no more academic freedom as conceptualized by Willem von Humboldt. Faculty are once again beholden to other entities.

This author notes that anti-intellectualism not only subverts the responsibility that academic faculty have assumed but can have long-lasting negative effects on *lehrfreiheit*.

## 6. Recommendations

Colleges and universities should welcome those who wish to freely pursue learning. However, if fear is created, then it is likely, this author concedes, that *lehrfreiheit* and *lernfreiheit* are negatively affected. Therefore, this author has offered recommendations for the faculty, student and college/university culture.

### 6.1. Recommendations for Faculty

The academic faculty are being viewed as “elitist” and causing fear and mistrust amongst the non-academic community. Macleod [30], therefore, suggests academic faculty avoid the following behaviors to regain the trust and faith of the non-academic community:

- a. Unnecessarily telling people about random trivia.
- b. Unexpectedly taking conversations in abstract or philosophical directions.
- c. Getting overly discouraged when others are not enthusiastic about their interests.
- d. Being intellectually arrogant.
- e. Believing they must always look smart.
- f. Inappropriately correcting people.
- g. Being overly argumentative debater.
- h. Being intellectually competitive.
- i. Being too blunt and abrasive.
- j. Being overly skeptical/cynical.
- k. Being too negative
- l. Only interacting with people in an intellectual way.
- m. Buying into the idea that social skills are incompatible with intelligence.
- n. Overthinking.

### 6.2. Recommendations for Students

Students should welcome the opportunity at college/university to engage in intellectualism. Hetherington [29], then, offers suggestions for students to exercise their *lernfreiheit*:

- a. Dive Deeper: Students should exercise their intellect and explore topics of interest more in depth.
- b. Explore New Skills: Students should identify the skills they will need to achieve greater success.
- c. Expand Horizons: Once a student has discovered their interest, they should direct their attention to varied problems and ideas that relate to further topical intellectualism.
- d. Find Passion: Passion or love of a particular discipline/topic means that the student finds pleasure in learning content.

### 6.3. Recommendations for the College Culture

Finally, Bhardwaj [28] suggest three strategies for the entire culture of the university to adopt in order to maintain academic freedoms amongst a growing embrace of anti-intellectualism. Those suggestions are:

- a. Celebrate the process to intellectual growth instead of just the outcome. The deliberate

practice toward intellectual growth is as important as the outcome.

- b. Normalize the struggle by recognizing failure (i.e., such as Einstein’s theories that were rejected).
- c. Embrace metacognition within classrooms and scholarly meetings.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

Intellectualism and anti-intellectualism have created a culture of fear on college campuses. Mendenhall [20] claims that university decay is prevalent because there is fundamental misalignment between the purpose and the practice of education. Education should be a place where students and faculty can freely act to enrich themselves intellectually. However, Mendenhall [20] claims that the result of intellectualism and anti-intellectualism on college campuses has negatively resulted in:

1. Politicization: Academic institutions pressure scholars to conform to customary ideas, usually for political reasons, rather than prevailing thought.
2. Presentism: Universities have become focused on being present rather than being intellectually challenged. The focus has become one of accessible information not one of deeper understanding of that information.
3. Technocratism: Colleges/Universities are being viewed as “preparation” factories rather than intellectual institutions. Thereby, metrics have changed (i.e., how many students graduated instead of GPA, etc.). Current metrics have changed college culture to being accessible rather than intellectually rigorous.
4. Attention Deficit: The inability to sustain focus during intellectual engagement. Too many distractions affect both faculty and students from actually engaging in intellectual development (i.e., need to check social networking comments during class).

This author concludes that both intellectualism and anti-intellectualism have created fear that have prevented students and faculty from freely pursuing intellectual endeavors such as learning, teaching, and scholarly inquiry. Therefore, this author makes a final appeal to the reader to continue upholding intellectual responsibilities while minimizing the fear that can cause barriers to *lernfreiheit* and *lehrfreiheit*.

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