



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 2, 2017

The Folly and Fraud of “Academic Freedom”

If “academic freedom” isn’t the last refuge of a scoundrel, it certainly is a contender. And while academics generally defend the “principle” in principle, one professor who has come to question it is Robert Oscar Lopez.

I wrote about Dr. Lopez and his travails in [2014](#) and [‘15](#). At the time he was a tenured professor at California State University, Northridge and was under withering assault for opposing the homosexual agenda, the adoption of children by same-sex couples in particular. He has since resigned from the university after eight years employment, movingly [citing](#) a desire to be true to God as his motivation. Now, in a piece provocatively entitled “Academia’s Broken, so Why Defend Academic Freedom?” Lopez [writes](#) of another epiphany he experienced:



One year ago, I would have called myself a staunch believer in academic freedom — a free speech purist. I was a tenured professor in California and appreciated the help extended to me by FIRE [Foundation for Individual Rights in Education] and other advocacy groups.

Now things look very different to me. [A recent podcast](#) helped me sort through things. It was with Brittany Klein, my friend who lost work as an adjunct. Academic freedom, I have come to believe, is not a virtue in its own right. The false view of it as an absolute good is an outgrowth of the [United States’ corrupted tenure system](#). Tenure gives no protection to adjunct faculty who teach most classes, then handpicks a small number of people to tenure, who are usually chosen because they hold views favorable to their reviewers.

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Yet it’s not just that academic freedom isn’t a virtue. It’s that it isn’t a reality, as the experience of Prof. Lopez indicates. As he [wrote](#) at his blog, explaining the conspiracy he believes was mounted against him, “Someone who knew the process of campus discipline, knew something about me and where I might be vulnerable, and had experience with Title IX complaints, was coaching the students in the hopes of filing a dramatic charge against me, boldly enough to override my tenure.” I suggest you read his story [here](#) and [here](#) — it’s an eye-opener.

Now for a mind-opener. Academic freedom isn’t a reality for a simple reason: For all intents and purposes, it’s an impossibility.

Would we tolerate a professor enthusiastically advocating pedophilia, genocide, or slavery? How about Nazi beliefs? Is there anyone who wouldn’t draw lines, somewhere?

“Academic freedom” is a lie, a con, and insofar as we accept its legitimacy, we’re conning ourselves.



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Oh, the lure is understandable: It makes a person feel good to trumpet lofty-sounding principles, and academic freedom is a convenient rationale. Yet those professing it don't even try very hard. All a conservative need do to experience ideological persecution is be conservative, as the cases of Lopez, Marquette University professor [John McAdams](#), and many others evidence. Yet being a leftist means never having to say you're sorry. Just consider that while Drexel University assistant professor George Ciccariello-Maher sent a Christmas tweet stating, "All I Want for Christmas is White Genocide" and proclaimed himself a communist, some fellow "scholars" are [defending](#) him, and Drexel is already softening its position on the good professor. Expect him to be teaching, if one can thus characterize his endeavors, this coming semester.

It is, however, somewhat futile to focus on individual academics' asininity. Even if we do succeed in getting a mind molester removed from the classroom here and there, it's like playing [Whac-A-Mole](#). As Prof. Lopez points out:

Higher education is not a swamp to be drained. It is a diabolical machine, and it is time to pull the plug.

... Liberal arts training is accomplishing nothing. Colleges have become a political racket whereby Democrats fork endless cash to tuition extortionists, and lousy scholars impart insane ideas to debt-strapped students who are made [dysfunctional citizens](#) in the process.

Let's stop arguing over whether this or that offensive professor deserves to keep his ... job. Cut off the money to colleges, let higher education grapple with massive layoffs, force the public to see the value of associate's degrees, and end the cycle of inflationary tuition and ruinous debt.

Thus proceeding would also save many students from dashed dreams. While college has become almost a rite of passage, the reality is that the US is creating college graduates faster than our labor markets are creating jobs requiring college degrees, resulting in the phenomenon of highly credentialed hamburger flippers. As I [reported](#) in "Diploma Disaster," trade schools are a better option for many young people — and apprenticeship programs should be encouraged.

Nonetheless, since academia (perhaps trimmed down) must and will always be with us, a question arises: If academic freedom is a lie, what principle should govern what's taught?

Answer: Whether at issue is the Truth or a lie.

No one had to explain this to those birthing the [first universities](#). It was also instinctively understood by American colleges, at one time, as most were founded as Christian institutions. But with today's academy infused with moral relativism and thus robbed of an objective guide for curricula, it has descended into a passion-governed orthodoxy, with shouts of "academic freedom" used to justify its most extreme forays into mind rape.

Bloated and bankrupt morally and intellectually, it's time for a purging of much of academia — and of Academic Freedom™ along with it.



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