Academic Freedom Alliance

On a new initiative to protect freedom of expression on college campuses.

Booker T. Washington would have liked the Academic Freedom Alliance, a newly announced group of college faculty dedicated to protecting freedom of expression on campus. The group, conceived at Princeton last summer, has quickly scaled up into a nationwide network. Although one of its main founders is Robert P. George, himself a conservative professor at Princeton, the alliance is determinedly nonpartisan and includes liberals and progressives as well as conservatives. The actions of the intolerant mob threaten everyone, regardless of political coloration. As a tribe, academics are not conspicuous for their courage. They tend to look the other way when colleagues are attacked for expressing opinions that do not pass muster with the wardens of wokeness. The afa hopes to change that, encouraging its members to act like elephants, not zebras: when hunted by lions, George noted in an interview, herds of zebras “fly off in a million directions, and the targeted member is easily taken down and destroyed and eaten.” Elephants, he said, behave differently. They “circle around the vulnerable elephant” and protect it. Academics need to do likewise and offer support—legal as well as moral—when one of their numbers falls victim to the mob.

We welcome the Academic Freedom Alliance. Like the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (fire), it may well become a beacon of sanity in the stultifying and tenebrous atmosphere that prevails in American academia today. You can find out more about the alliance, and donate to support its activities, at its website, academicfreedom.org.

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