

**LETTER FROM 25 ORGANIZATIONS TO JOHNS HOPKINS PRESIDENT & PROVOST
RE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY**

May 1, 2015

Re: Recommendations for your Academic Freedom Policy

Dear President Daniels and Provost Lieberman,

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on your proposed policy on academic freedom at Johns Hopkins.

We are 25 organizations that are concerned about faculty who, under the mantle of academic freedom, misuse university resources and the classroom in order to promote their own personal political agendas on controversial subjects. We appreciate the statements in your policy that are relevant to this issue:

“Faculty who express their personal views on controversial subjects in the classroom must make it clear that students may disagree with those views. When one is speaking on matters of public interest, it should be made clear that personal views do not represent those of the institution. Professors who express their personal views on a contested issue must make it clear that students may disagree with those views without penalty.”

However, we recommend that three related statements be included in the policy:

- 1) A statement describing a mechanism allowing students to register complaints of activities such as coercion or discrimination by faculty who express personal beliefs in the classroom.
- 2) A statement consistent with the the following sentence from AAUP’s 1940 [Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#): “Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject.”
- 3) A statement affirming that political indoctrination is inconsistent with the university’s mission and core values. This could be modeled after the language of the University of California [Regents Policy on Course Content](#), which states that: “Misuse of the classroom by, for example, allowing it to be used for political indoctrination...constitutes misuse of the University as an institution.”

We are concerned that in the absence of statements such as these, unbridled political expression in the classroom could easily lead to a corruption of your university’s academic mission, by compromising the quality of teaching, limiting the access of students to vital information about topics of global importance and violating their fundamental right to be educated and not indoctrinated. In addition, faculty who use their classrooms as a bully-pulpit for engaging in politically-motivated and directed speech targeting particular individuals or groups for demonization or delegitimization may create a hostile and discriminatory environment for certain students at your university.

Thank you for considering our recommendations and concerns.

Sincerely,

Accuracy in Academic

Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity (AEPi)
AMCHA Initiative
American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists
American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA)
Americans for Peace and Tolerance
BEAR: Bias Education, Advocacy & Resources
California Association of Scholars
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA)
CUFI on Campus
David Horowitz Freedom Center
Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)
Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel
Iranian American Jewish Federation
Israeli-American Council (IAC)
National Conference on Jewish Affairs
Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations
Scholars for Peace in the Middle East
Simon Wiesenthal Center
StandWithUs
The Israel Group
Training and Education About the Middle East (T.E.A.M.)
Verity Educate
Zionist Organization of America

Cc: Members of the Task Force on Academic Freedom