

2019

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Bluebook Citation

Carol M. Swain, *The Sad Spiritual State of American Colleges and Universities*, 15 U. St. Thomas L.J. 431 (2019).

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ARTICLE

THE SAD SPIRITUAL STATE OF AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES*

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All Scholars Shall Live Religious, Godly and Blameless Lives according to the Rules of Gods Word, diligently Reading the holy Scriptures the Fountain of Light and Truth; and constantly attend upon all the Duties of Religion both in Publick and Secret.

—Yale Laws, II, I, 1745¹

Academic freedom and the Christian faith go hand in hand. This has been the case for more than 200 years, a fact that liberal-authored revisionist history cannot change. It was the Christian faith, Roman Catholics and, later, Protestants, who founded most of the great universities of the Western world.² In fact, “the very idea of a university is religious and, indeed, Christian in its inspiration, conception, and fundamental content.”³ Of the nation’s first 108 colleges, 106 had Christian foundations (e.g., Harvard, Yale, and Princeton universities), and they often were led by theologians or other members of the clergy.⁴ It is not uncommon to find private and state col-

* Parts of this article were previously published in Carol M. Swain, *Free Speech, Politics, and Academia*, 48 PS: POL. SCI. AND POL. (SPECIAL ISSUE) 100 (2015).

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1. James Tunstead Burtchaell, *The Decline and Fall of the Christian College*, FIRST THINGS (Apr. 1991), <https://www.firstthings.com/article/1991/04/the-decline-and-fall-of-the-christian-college>.

2. MARY POPLIN, IS REALITY SECULAR? TESTING THE ASSUMPTIONS OF FOUR GLOBAL WORLDVIEWS 35 (2014).

3. Robert P. George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton Univ., Faith and Reason: The Appropriation of Knowledge and Truth, BYU 2015 Spring Commencement 1, 2 (Apr. 23, 2015) https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/robert-p-george_faith-and-reason-the-appropriation-of-knowledge-and-truth/.

4. April Shenandoah, *History of America’s Education Part3: Universities, Textbooks and Our Founders*, THE SIERRA TIMES (Apr. 4, 2002), https://www.tysknews.com/Depts/Educate/history_part3.htm.

leges and universities⁵ with mottos, seals, and buildings embellished with biblical texts and symbols.⁶ Princeton University, originally the College of New Jersey founded in 1746, was a product of The Great Awakening, which was “a series of religious revivals that swept the English colonies in America in the eighteenth century.”⁷ The University was originally established to train ministers and religious workers. Brown, Dartmouth, and Rutgers had similar beginnings. Brown University’s motto “*In deo speramus*” means “In God we Hope.” Princeton University’s “*Dei sub numine viget*” means, “Under God’s power she flourishes,” and the Johns Hopkins University’s “*Veritas vos liberabit*,” “The Truth Will Set You Free,” is a paraphrase of John 8:32, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (KJV).⁸ Clearly, these institutions have secularized and the life and learning at institutions of higher learning have changed in dramatic ways.

Dr. James Burtchaell, Professor of Theology at Notre Dame, observed that the shift for mainstream Protestant universities occurred mostly between 1870 to 1910:

Deploring “Sectarian” narrowness, they bound their campuses’ intellectual and disciplinary life to a generic Christianity rather than to any actual church. A new generation of faculty, with neither commitment to nor interest in joining a community of faith, brought their institutions into a new secular obedience. . . . [T]he initiatives which assured the swift secularization of these campuses were undertaken by educators who were themselves observant believers who failed to foresee that the academy had no way to remain Christian without vital membership in an ecclesiastical fellowship.⁹

Focusing initially on Vanderbilt University’s split with the Southern Methodist Church, Burtchaell uses administrators’ statements and other documents to reveal the backstory of how the splits occurred and the thinking of the administrators and faculty members. In the two-article series, Burtchaell notes that Catholic institutions started similar separation processes between 1950 and 1990. However, the slippery slope started with the Protestant colleges and universities.

5. For ease of reference, and for purposes of this article, colleges and universities will collectively be referred to as “universities.”

6. POPLIN, *supra* note 2, at 35.

7. THE FOUNDING OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, https://etcweb.princeton.edu/CampusWWW/Companion/founding_princeton.html (last visited Jan. 2, 2019); *see also* ALEXANDER LEITCH, A PRINCETON COMPANION (1978).

8. *John* 8:32 (King James).

9. James Tunstead Burtchaell, *The Decline and Fall of the Christian College (II)*, FIRST THINGS (May 1991), <https://www.firstthings.com/article/1991/05/004-the-decline-and-fall-of-the-christian-college-ii>.

Before the move towards secularization and what some saw as greater intellectual rigor and honesty, Christian colleges and universities sought to instill (but not strong-arm) a Judeo-Christian worldview in the next generation. That has long since passed. Now we are witnessing the widespread rejection of Judeo-Christian values and principles even at Catholic and Protestant colleges and universities, where Christ was once honored and revered as Lord and Master. Christ now takes a backseat to the push for diversity and inclusion.

By and large, the emphasis is on creating a comfortable environment for political and racial minorities. If this means compromising on biblical core values and Christian traditions, then so be it. Only the most religiously devout among us dare risk the ostracism that accompanies standing by core biblical values and principles. This is all part of the progressivist manifesto. In some cases, it has led to universities censoring and even attempting to fire distinguished faculty members. Consider the case of Marquette University's John McAdams who was suspended from his tenured faculty position for publicly criticizing a graduate student over Catholic doctrine. It took a ruling of the Wisconsin Supreme Court for him to be reinstated to the faculty.¹⁰

The seriousness of the problem and the attack on intellectualism has gripped colleges and universities to the point that conservative speakers, regardless of their religion, often find themselves snubbed and even threatened (putting it mildly in some cases) when invited to campus by conservative student organizations. I recently experienced this at a small Catholic college in the northeastern United States. It is an institution where faculty atheists and LGBT activists have the numbers, the motivation, and, apparently, the administration's implied consent to hinder and even block speakers. They do this by using activists in the student government (their version of "useful idiots"¹¹) to deny funding for targeted speakers. Thankfully, a doggedly determined student and conservative adviser managed to break through the impasse, allowing me on campus to share my Christian testimony and take questions and answers. Among those "traumatized" by my presence were a few crying activists who felt unsafe from the presence of a conservative senior citizen threatening them with ideas. I was violating their safe zone.

In *Ex Corde Ecclesia*, Pope John Paul II wrote:

10. Karen Herzog & Bruce Vielmetti, *Wisconsin Supreme Court sides with Marquette professor John McAdams in free speech case*, MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL (July 6, 2018, 8:35 AM), <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/education/2018/07/06/marquette-professor-john-mc-adams-prevails-academic-freedom-case/759800002/>.

11. The concept originally referred to "a citizen of a non-communist country sympathetic to communism who is regarded (by communists) as naive and susceptible to manipulation for propaganda or other purposes." *Useful Idiot*, ENGLISH OXFORD LIVING DICTIONARIES, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/useful_idiot (last visited Jan. 2, 2019).

Since the objective of a Catholic University is to assure in an institutional manner a Christian presence in the university world confronting the great problems of society and culture, every Catholic University, as *Catholic*, must have the following *essential characteristics*:

1. a Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such;
2. a continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research;
3. fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church;
4. an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life.¹²

Within higher education, a common thread unites religious Catholic and Protestant voices who have fought valiantly, only to lose some battles that have resulted in their being pushed out of religious universities.

In the Protestant world we have seen universities like Vanderbilt and Belmont shake off their church affiliations to pursue a course that has taken them far beyond the biblical teachings once associated with Methodists and Baptists.¹³ We see the changes in the embrace of the LGBT agenda through hiring and promotion decisions and through the student organizations that are welcomed on campus and those that have been pushed off. The diversity and inclusion agenda often allows and perhaps encourages enforcement tactics that can amount to shaming and silencing students who might be uncomfortable with the aggressiveness and self-righteousness of the liberal agenda that has permeated and begun to dominate many campuses.

To gain or maintain a wider acceptance within some secular universities, students are pressured to jettison their Christian identities and biblical foundations for a softer, more politically-correct form of religion. This occurs through the message sent during student orientations and with policy decisions that marginalize, and in some cases disenfranchise, orthodox Christian student groups.¹⁴ Vanderbilt University, for example, adopted a policy in 2011 that resulted in about half of the Christian groups on campus losing their recognition as registered student organizations. Describing the new policy, the Christian Legal Society posted:

Vanderbilt University has deferred recognition of several religious student organizations because they want their student leaders to agree with the groups' core religious beliefs. Religious groups

12. Pope John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Part 1, Sec. 13 (Aug. 15, 1990), <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=4673#l>.

13. Burtchaell, *supra* note 1.

14. *Vanderbilt University Curtails Religious Liberty*, CHRISTIAN LEGAL SOCIETY, <https://www.clsnet.org/page.aspx?pid=746> (last visited Jan. 2, 2019).

expect their leaders to lead Bible studies, prayer, and worship at their meetings. Vanderbilt claims such an expectation violates university policies. But isn't Vanderbilt the one violating university policies when it harasses religious students for their religious beliefs?¹⁵

After a long public relations battle that involved the conservative media, state legislators, and members of Congress, the University prevailed with its new policy.¹⁶ I will return to this policy later.

Unfortunately, the shutting down of conservative students and faculty is also occurring at Christian universities where the emphasis on Christ, if it is there, is of a Christ that is all-inclusive with an *agape* love that omits discussions of sin and judgment. Christian universities are rapidly mimicking the secular universities and many of them are no longer, if they ever were, safe places for Christian students to grow in their faith. Unfortunately, I have personally encountered too many students who have lost their faith at Christian colleges which they and their parents thought were safe. In my opinion, the situation requires students, parents, and trustees to make it their business to know the messages coming from university administrators and professors of required courses. While it is expected that students will be exposed to other worldviews at Christian colleges, it is problematic if any Christian institution teaches universalism and the notion of one God, many paths. John 14:6 quotes Jesus as saying, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Acceptance of Jesus as the only means to salvation is a core Christian principle of salvation that should not be compromised at any institution simply because it causes great offense. If Catholics and Protestants believe in the Bible and its teachings about heaven and hell, their approach to Christian education would be more serious than it is at many of our Christian universities that have begun to mimic the secular world.

To accomplish radical educational goals, it is necessary to curtail and suppress the Judeo-Christian worldview and the values and principles that once inspired our nation's success and the creation of many great universities. The abandonment of traditional morals is most evident in decisions frequently made by university administrators that prevent the religious freedom of Christian students (discussed later in this article). Under the guise of progress, we in academia have allowed free speech to be stifled and the Constitution and the rule of law to be neutered. The young people whom we are charged with educating and directing are no longer provided a meaningful moral compass.

The trend in higher education is to "turn a blind eye" to the weakening of the rule of law and the undermining of the Bill of Rights. We have seen

15. *Id.*

16. *Id.*

this play out on college campuses such as Evergreen State College, where minority students were allowed for decades to order white people off the campus for a day of absence.¹⁷ It continued until one white professor protested and eventually won a lawsuit against the college.¹⁸ At the University of Missouri, student and faculty protests led to the resignation of the University President.¹⁹ At Middlebury College, unruly students were allowed to block a conservative speaker and in the process injured one of its liberal faculty members.²⁰ Only after much public pressure do we see any of the administrators standing up and defending free speech.

Even while drunkenness and rape are rampant on many campuses, we see “progressive” leaders at institutions accommodating student-initiated drag shows and “Sex Weeks,” such as at the University of Tennessee, three hours east of me in Knoxville, which has a website for its annual event.²¹ Nathan Harden’s *Sex & God at Yale: Porn, Political Correctness, and a Good Education Gone Bad*, describes what he encountered at Yale.²² The modern university has succeeded in replacing norms concerning right and wrong with cultural relativism and moral indifference—that is, unless an act of aggression targets one of its preferred groups. Whereas condoms are freely dispensed on most university campuses,²³ pro-life students have complained about being barred from posting information about pregnancy-crisis centers.²⁴ Such information would give women more choices by providing a full range of options, including—as shocking as it is to progressives—carrying an unplanned pregnancy to term.

At some academic institutions, including Vanderbilt University, from where I recently retired after eighteen years, orthodox Christianity on campus has been abhorred and suppressed while some administrators have embraced other religions and worldviews. How Buddhism was treated was one

17. Scott Jaschik, *Evergreen Calls Off ‘Day of Absence,’* INSIDE HIGHER ED. (Feb. 22, 2018), <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/02/22/evergreen-state-cancels-day-absence-set-series-protests-and-controversies>.

18. *Id.*

19. Nathanael Blake, *What Happened at Mizou Could Happen at Most U.S. Universities*, THE FEDERALIST (Aug. 7, 2017), <http://thefederalist.com/2017/08/07/happened-mizzou-happen-us-universities/>.

20. Peter Beinart, *A Violent Attack on Free Speech at Middlebury*, THE ATLANTIC (Mar. 6, 2017), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/03/middlebury-free-speech-violence/518667/>.

21. SEX WEEK UT, <http://sexweekut.org/> (last visited Jan. 2, 2019).

22. NATHAN HARDEN, *SEX & GOD AT YALE: PORN, POLITICAL CORRECTNESS, AND A GOOD EDUCATION GONE BAD* (2012).

23. Trojan, a major distributor of condoms, sponsors a national contest each year for the school that makes condoms and sex education most readily available. 2015 SEXUAL HEALTH REPORT CARD, http://www.factsaboutcondoms.com/pdf/Trojan_2015_SHRC.PDF (last visited Jan. 2, 2019).

24. This information was relayed to me from several students who described incidents where university administrators removed information from bulletin boards that related to pro-life options.

example of hypocrisy posing as progress. In 2015, Buddhist religious practices were integrated into health care programs as mindfulness meditation. At the time, the University did not offer similar alternatives for Christians, such as a centering-prayer class as a relaxation technique. Christian students and employees who were uncomfortable with their school's focus on Eastern religions were powerless to do anything about it. On many campuses, secularists have made room for everything but orthodox Christianity.

Vanderbilt University's 2015 website for the Center for Integrative Health greeted visitors with a quote that captured the inconsistencies and confusions of the modern university. Under "Vanderbilt Mindfulness," a visitor encountered a Zen sand structure with a quote by Jon Kabat-Zinn: "Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally."²⁵ The purpose of mindfulness is to "provide a portal for mindfulness discovery that opens and enriches the mind and heart, through present moment embodied awareness, one person at a time."²⁶ Vanderbilt's 2019 website is significantly different and the Center is now named the Osher Center for Integrative Health.

Mindfulness Meditation touted by many universities and workplaces is hardly religiously neutral. As Claremont University Professor Mary Poplin observes, "These metaphysical presuppositions are also not subject to scientific verification; they constitute the faith of pantheism."²⁷

Religion first reared its head in a negative fashion at Vanderbilt in 2001. The University made national headlines with two startling acts. It gave official holiday status to the Wiccan religion, and it adopted a new policy for student organizations that impaired the religious liberty of conservative Christian students.²⁸ The inclusion of Wicca meant that faculty members were placed in the position of having to recognize Halloween as a high holy day that would excuse Wiccans and Satanists from an assigned exam. In other classrooms, exams would be moved to accommodate the beginning of Ramadan but could be given without apology on Good Friday. Although the action was eye-catching back then, it is no longer so as other universities have adopted similar policies. Vanderbilt was ahead of the pack with changes that thrust it into the national spotlight.

In that same year, the University adopted a controversial student policy that eventually forced about half of its student Christian groups to relinquish their student organizational rights rather than compromise their core religious beliefs. In an effort to be more inclusive, the University removed

25. OSHER CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE, www.vanderbilthealth.com/integrative/health/37864 (last visited Jan. 2, 2019).

26. *Id.*

27. POPLIN, *supra* note 2, at 166.

28. Tim Ghianni, *Vanderbilt Allows Students to Observe Wiccan Holidays*, REUTERS (Aug. 19, 2011, 11:41 AM), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-wiccan-religion-tennessee-idUSTRE7714VK20110819>.

language from its student handbook that had protected the religious liberty of students. Under the school's new policy, as senseless and prejudicial as it is, student groups are asked to sign statements that require them to abandon core-belief statements and religiously-based qualifications for leadership positions in religious groups.²⁹ That is, Christian groups at Vanderbilt could no longer require their leaders to affirm a belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior,³⁰ lead Bible studies or worship services, or adhere to a biblically-based code of conduct.³¹ Because Vanderbilt is a private university, it was not bound to honor the constitutional rights of the student, so it operated in a manner that subjugated their First Amendment Rights to religious liberty and freedom of assemble.³²

Vanderbilt-like policies are commonplace today at universities, including Tufts University in Massachusetts, the State University of New York at Buffalo, and Rollins College in Florida.³³ However, some universities have chosen to respect students' rights of religious freedom and conscience. The University of Florida, the University of Houston, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Texas are among the institutions that exempt religious groups from the type of "nondiscrimination" policies implemented at Vanderbilt and elsewhere to shut down orthodox Christian groups. When students' rights to freedom of religion and freedom of conscience are squelched, political scientists should boldly and strongly defend student rights and the constitutional values and principles integral to defining us as people of a free nation. At some universities, institutional leaders—who conveniently shield themselves with legalistic excuses—squash these principles. The ideal that the university is a marketplace of ideas embracing pluralism and minority viewpoints has all but disappeared. In this instance, a minority at the helm of the institution imposed its values on a much larger majority by using the language of nondiscrimination. Across the nation,

29. *FAQ Regarding Vanderbilt's Treatment of Religious Students*, CHRISTIAN LEGAL SOCIETY: THE CENTER FOR LAW & RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, <https://www.clsnet.org/page.aspx?pid=784#Quest7>. Variations of what happened at Vanderbilt University are occurring on other campuses. Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, is the only institution that has adopted the Vanderbilt model. See *Legal Challenges*, INTERVARSITY, <https://intervarsity.org/about-us/press-room/campus-access-issues/legal-challenges>. Ironically, it was founded as a Congregationalist institution and Vanderbilt as a Methodist institution.

30. Kim Colby, *Vanderbilt to Christian Student Organization: Drop Commitment to Jesus Christ for Leadership*, CHRISTIAN LEGAL SOCIETY: THE CENTER FOR LAW & RELIGIOUS FREEDOM (Apr. 20, 2012), <https://www.clsnet.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=791>.

31. See *Vanderbilt University Curtails Religious Liberty*, *supra* note 14.

32. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." U.S. CONST. amend. I. The law only applies to state actors and not private institutions. The latter have their own First Amendment rights.

33. Michael Paulson, *Colleges and Evangelicals Collide on Bias Policy*, N.Y. TIMES (June 9, 2014), <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/10/us/colleges-and-evangelicals-collide-on-bias-policy.html>.

nondiscrimination policies have increasingly become a language of discrimination in which minorities use rhetoric and political correctness—sometimes even bullying tactics—to impose their will on orthodox Christians. We often fail to recognize and acknowledge secularism’s aggression in promoting a worldview that its adherents see as superior to the Judeo-Christian perspective that shaped our nation.

Several years ago, journalist William Proctor wrote a provocative book titled *The Gospel According to the New York Times: How the World’s Most Powerful News Organization Shapes Your Mind and Values*.³⁴ Using a content analysis of news stories, editorials, and opinion pieces, he argued the *Times* used its news coverage and the strategic placement of articles to advance a particular worldview more liberal than and contradictory to the views held by most Americans. Some academics’ days are not complete without their daily dose of the *New York Times*. Exasperated by what he described as the ignorance of the female professor he was dating, a blue-collar friend exclaimed: “We can’t communicate. She has no knowledge of the real world. If it wasn’t covered in the *New York Times*, it simply didn’t happen.”³⁵

Many of us who have worked hard according to the unwritten rules for success now find we are complicit and silent. We passively watch the destruction of our nation and its deterioration toward the lawlessness and chaos associated with Third World nations and totalitarian regimes. Like one student wrote in his essay, we think and act as though “there are two main views on political issues—the religious view and the fact-based view.”³⁶ The student missed the competing and contending worldviews of material naturalism, secular humanism, pantheism, and the Judeo-Christian view that Poplin so eloquently distinguished in her book, *Is Reality Secular?: Testing the Assumptions of Four Global Worldviews*.³⁷ Everyone holds one or more of these perspectives on the world, which affect everything we do and the questions we choose to research. We should not pretend we are operating devoid of a worldview and our research is objective and neutral.

Even if we reject the Judeo-Christian worldview, there is a basis for common ground emanating from our shared Western culture. The Secular Humanist Declaration of 1980 affirms this point; it reveals values shared between Christians and secular humanism that should provide a basis for unity, as well as justification for secularists to fight for the values and principles embodied in the Constitution—including free speech and freedom of religion:

34. WILLIAM PROCTOR, *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE NEW YORK TIMES: HOW THE WORLD’S MOST POWERFUL NEWS ORGANIZATION SHAPES YOUR MIND AND VALUES* (2000).

35. Conversation with a personal friend, date unknown.

36. Student essay on file with author.

37. POPLIN, *supra* note 2.

Free inquiry entails recognition of civil liberties as integral to its pursuit, that is, a free press, freedom of communication, the right to organize opposition parties and to join voluntary associations, and freedom to cultivate and publish the fruits of scientific, philosophical, artistic, literary, moral, and religious freedom. Free inquiry requires that we tolerate diversity of opinion and that we respect the right of individuals to express their beliefs, however unpopular they may be, without social or legal prohibition or fear of sanctions.³⁸

Notwithstanding the basis for common ground, we do not find many voices joining in unison when controversies arise in the media and on campuses involving viewpoint discrimination and the suppression of free speech.

If we are true to our profession, more in academia would be concerned about the loss of basic freedoms in America and the intrusive reach of the federal government. This is especially true for those who have read the dystopian novels of George Orwell (such as *1984*) and would easily identify “Big Brother” and the “thought police.”³⁹ If we are honest, we must admit the censorship and rising levels of surveillance do not bode well for the “land of the free and the home of the brave.” We should be able to recognize when Marxism and totalitarianism reach our shores and begin to mutate.

The media exert a major influence on public attitudes and what people are willing to tolerate. In *Ideas Have Consequences*, prescient University of Chicago professor Richard Weaver warned in 1948 of the disintegration of Western civilization.⁴⁰ He sounded an alarm about the rise of nominalism,⁴¹ a worldview that rejects absolute truth and now is recognized on university campuses as cultural relativism. Weaver introduced the “Great Stereopticon,” a three-pronged gadget that included the press, the radio industry, and the film industry.⁴² The Stereopticon he described projected “selected pictures of life in the hope that what is seen will be imitated.”⁴³ “All of us who are within the long reach of technology are sitting in the audience. We are told the time to laugh, the time to cry, and signs are not . . . [lacking] that the audience grows ever more responsive to its cues.”⁴⁴

Too easily, we jump on the bandwagon and follow the group—but it does not have to be this way. We can take up defensive positions and use our skills and talents to educate and motivate the public to make their

38. *Id.* at 116.

39. GEORGE ORWELL, *1984* (1949).

40. RICHARD WEAVER, *IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES* (1948).

41. Nominalism is “a theory that there are no universal essences in reality and that the mind can frame no single concept or image corresponding to any universal or general term.” *Nominalism*, MERRIAM-WEBSTER, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nominalism> (last visited Jan. 2, 2019).

42. WEAVER, *supra* note 40, at 93–94.

43. *Id.* at 93.

44. *Id.*

voices heard by their elected officials and to set the bar higher. Our foe today is an overreaching government which threatens the freedoms that once distinguished America as a nation—freedoms which worked because of a sensible Constitution, a populace that feared God, and a belief in responsibilities to others, both at home and abroad.

I believe we must acknowledge the influence of our worldviews and ask ourselves what kind of world we want our children and grandchildren to inherit. I choose “the road less traveled” for a political scientist. I believe that, on our current path of self-sabotage, core American values will fall apart and the center will not hold.⁴⁵ Political science for me is about using my knowledge and insight to empower the “People” featured in the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution.

There is hope on the horizon. I am encouraged by the actions taken by faculty at Princeton University⁴⁶ and the University of Chicago,⁴⁷ reaffirming their long-standing commitment to the freedom of speech and academic freedom traditionally associated with universities. Rather than coddling the politically correct, the Princeton statement reads, in part:

Of course, the ideas of different members of the University community will often and quite naturally conflict. But it is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive. Although the University greatly values civility, and although all members of the University community share in the responsibility for maintaining a climate of mutual respect, concerns about civility and mutual respect can never be used as a justification for closing off discussion of ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be to some members of our community.⁴⁸

Let us seek such freedom, both for ourselves and for future generations. The survival of the university depends on what we do today.

45. Similar to what W.B. Yeats writes in his 1919 poem, *The Second Coming*. See W.B. YEATS, *THE COLLECTED POEMS OF W.B. YEATS* 200 (Richard J. Finneran ed., Collier Books, 1956).

46. Office of Communications, *Faculty adopts statement affirming commitment to freedom of expression at Princeton*, PRINCETON U. (Apr. 7, 2015, 4:07 PM), <https://www.princeton.edu/news/2015/04/07/faculty-adopts-statement-affirming-commitment-freedom-expression-princeton?section=topstories>.

47. John K. Wilson, *The University of Chicago Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression*, ACADEME BLOG: THE BLOG OF ACADEME MAG. (Jan. 7, 2015), <https://academeblog.org/2015/01/07/university-of-chicago-report-of-the-committee-on-freedom-of-expression/>.

48. Office of Communications, *supra* note 46.