



We Need a New Interpretation of Academic Freedom

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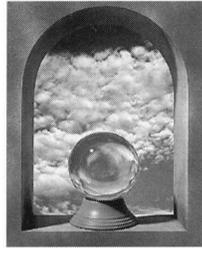
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Academic Freedom and the Future of the University

LECTURE SERIES

We Need a New Interpretation of Academic Freedom

By Ronald Dworkin

(Editor's Note: This article is a condensed version of a lecture given as part of the AAUP lecture series, "Academic Freedom and the Future of the University." The full-length version of the lecture appears in Ronald Dworkin's current book, Freedom's Law: The Moral Reading of the American Constitution, published by Harvard University Press. Copyright © 1996 by Ronald Dworkin. Used by permission of Harvard University Press. In addition, the full-length version and the eight other lectures in the series will appear in a book to be published later this year by the University of Chicago Press.)

THE PHRASE "ACADEMIC FREEDOM" COLLECTS different images and associations now than it did thirty or maybe even ten years ago. We thought then about leftist teachers and McCarthyite legislators and loyalty oaths and courageous and cowardly university presidents. Liberals and radicals were all for academic freedom. Many conservatives thought it overrated or even part of the conspiracy to paint America red. Now it is the party of reform that talks down academic freedom and conservatives who call it a bulwark of Western civilization. Now the phrase makes us think of insensi-

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tive professors and of speech codes that might protect students from their insensitivity. We wonder whether academic freedom forbids such protection, and, if so, whether academic freedom is as important as liberals once thought.

Some examples will be useful to bear in mind. I do not mean that incidents like these are everyday occurrences on American campuses, as some right-wing critics of universities suggest, or even that they have actually occurred as I describe them; I cite them because they are the kinds of events, real or exaggerated, that have generated new suspicion about and new enthusiasm for academic freedom. A professor is disciplined because he teaches that blacks are inferior to whites. Another is punished because he teaches that Jews are the enemy of blacks. A professor is severely criticized because he assigns the journals of slave-owning plantation managers as reading in a course on American history, and he does not receive what many of his colleagues consider appropriate support from university officials when students complain. Another professor is disciplined because, to illustrate a complex point in contract law, he quotes Byron's line in *Don Juan* about the woman who, whispering, "I shall ne'er consent," consented, and another because he describes belly dancing as like holding a vibrator under a plate of Jell-O. Universities adopt speech codes that make "insulting" or "stigmatizing" utterances a punishable offense. Each of these various events is widely deplored and is

said to constitute a violation of academic freedom.

This shift in *causes célèbres* has produced a new uncertainty about what academic freedom actually is. This is not surprising. Political values take their meaning from paradigms of their application, and when these shift, values that seemed obvious suddenly resist clear statement. But if the dimensions and goals of academic freedom are now uncertain, it is important that we attempt to redefine them. We must construct a fresh account of academic freedom that meets two tests. First, it must fit well enough with general understandings of what academic freedom does and does not require so that it can provide a new interpretation of an established value, not a new value altogether. Second, it must justify those general understandings as well as they can be justified; it must show why academic freedom is a value, so that we can judge how important it is, and whether and when it should yield to other, competing values.¹

This interpretive project seems particularly timely when we consider the emotional dimension of the contemporary controversies. According to the most popular view of the matter, these disputes force us to choose between two values: equality—in particular, racial and gender equality—on the one hand and academic freedom on the other. This seems an emotional mismatch. Racial injustice and gender stereotyping have done terrible harm, and many American institutions rightly think it imperative to try to eradicate at least their worst consequences. These efforts, particularly in universities, make great demands on many students. Blacks, for example, are expected to compete in universities from which members of their race were largely excluded, and to pursue studies centered on cultures that they had long been taught owed nothing to and offered nothing for them. We know how raw the sensibilities of some such students must be, and we think it only right to do whatever we can to make their situation less difficult. Academic freedom, in contrast, seems an abstract and bloodless value, something to worry about, if at all, only in the long term, after these more urgent problems have been resolved.

The conventional justification of academic freedom treats it as instrumental in the discovery of truth. According to this view, a system of independent academic institutions and scholars who are independent within them provides the best chance of collectively reaching the truth about a wide range of matters, from science to art to politics. We have a better chance of discovering what is true, it declares, if we leave our academics and their institutions free from external control to the greatest degree possible.

However, this instrumental assumption does not seem strong enough, on its own, to justify the emotional power that many of us feel academic freedom has, and that it must have if it is to hold its own now, against the moral urgency of the competing goals and ideals I mentioned. Why is it not worth some speculative loss of knowledge, at the margin of research, in order to protect people who have been victims of great social injustice from further insult, or to make their opportunity to help themselves and other members of their race or gender more genuine and effective?

Academic freedom has another, different disadvantage in this supposed encounter. In fact, while academic freedom is often defended on the ground that scholars must be free if they are to discover objective truth, the very possibility of objective truth is now itself under challenge from an anti-truth squad of relativists,

subjectivists, neo-pragmatists, postmodernists, and similar critics now powerful in the unconfident departments of American universities. According to these critics, academic freedom is not just bloodless but fraudulent. This relativist challenge is deeply confused. But its popularity contributes to—and is yet more evidence of—the weakness of the grip that academic freedom now has on the sentiments even of many academics.

The Ethical Ground

SO THOUGH THE CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE OF ACADEMIC freedom is important, and at least in general valid, it is not enough. We must connect that defense to something deeper that better matches academic freedom's emotional importance for us, and the outrage we feel when it is violated, even in the name of causes we share. I shall now argue that academic freedom plays an important ethical role not just in the lives of the few people it protects, but in the life of the community more generally. It is an important, structural part of the culture of independence that we need in order to lead the kind of lives that we should. An invasion of academic freedom is insulting and harmful for some because it frustrates satisfying important responsibilities, and dangerous for everyone because it weakens the culture of independence and cheapens the ideal that culture protects.

I mean the ideal of ethical individualism.² This insists, among its other components, that we each have responsibility for making as much of a success of our lives as we can, and that this responsibility is personal, in the sense that we must each make up our own mind, as a matter of felt personal conviction, about what a successful life for us would be. Ethical individualism is the inspiration behind the institutions and attitudes of political liberalism. It supports the central core of liberal ideas that includes both freedom of speech and academic freedom, not just as a wise environment for academic discovery, but as encouragement of and protection for the primacy of individual conviction.

People who accept ethical individualism accept consequent responsibilities. The first is the responsibility not to profess what one believes to be false. This duty is protected, in liberal societies, by a right of conscience that forbids forcing people to religious or moral or political declaration against their will. The second is a more positive responsibility of affirmation: it is a duty to speak out for what one believes to be true. According to ethical individualism, we all have that duty as citizens: it is wrong to remain silent when our society must make a collective decision and we believe we have information or opinion it should take into account. We have that responsibility even when we know that our opinion will not be heeded—when the state acts unjustly, for example, and we know we can only bear witness to our anger at what it does in our name. That sense of responsibility, and of the moral damage done when we are prevented from exercising it, is part of the medley of reasons that together make it so important to us, as individuals, that we have a general right of free speech on political matters.

Some social roles and professions incorporate heightened versions of this personal responsibility. The character of that special responsibility varies. Salesmen should not lie, but need not give their customers commercially neutral advice. Priests are responsi-

ble for the whole truth, but need not remain in the pulpit, after they have lost their faith, to explain why their parishioners should abandon that faith as well. Doctors' duties are more inalienable: they must tell their patients what they believe is in the patient's best interests to hear and must not accept any external limit on that responsibility.

Professors and others who teach and study in universities have an even more general and uncompromising responsibility. They have a paradigmatic duty to discover and teach what they find important and true, and this duty is not, even to the degree that medical responsibility may be, subject to any qualification about the best interests of those to whom they speak. It is an undiluted responsibility to the truth, and it is, in that way, the closest a professional responsibility can come to the fundamental ethical responsibility each of us has, according to the ideals of ethical individualism, to live our lives in accordance with our own felt convictions.

The Culture of Independence

WE HAVE JUST NOTICED PART OF THE ETHICAL justification for academic freedom: the institution protects people in a particular role—students and scholars—from the moral damage of frustration in their special responsibilities. But those responsibilities are imposed by conventional understandings—by institutional assignments that might have been different—so we must now consider whether they serve an important purpose and so should be maintained and protected. Why should we have academic institutions whose professors and students and officials are dedicated to discovering and transmitting truth as they individually, one by one, see it?

Ethical individualism needs a particular kind of culture—a culture of independence—in which to flourish. Its enemy is the opposite culture—the culture of conformity, of Khoumeni's Iran, Torquemada's Spain, and Joe McCarthy's America—in which truth is collected not person by person, in acts of independent conviction, but is embedded in monolithic traditions or the fiat of priesthood or junta or majority vote, and dissent from that truth is treason. That totalitarian epistemology—searingly identified in the finally successful campaign of Orwell's dictator to make his victim believe, through torture, that 2 and 2 is 5—is tyranny's most frightening feature.

Liberal public education; freedom of speech, conscience, and religion; and academic freedom are all parts of our society's support for a culture of independence and of its defense against a culture of conformity. Academic freedom plays a special role because educational institutions are pivotal to those efforts. They are pivotal, first, because they can so easily become engines of conformity as every totalitarian regime has realized, and second because they can provide important encouragement and skills for a life of personal conviction. Part of the point of education, in a liberal society, is learning the importance and depth of an allegiance to personal rather than collective truth. Academic freedom is also important symbolically, because in a free academy the example and virtues of ethical individualism are so patently on display. In no other occupation is it so plainly and evidently the responsibility of professionals to find and tell and teach the truth as they see it. Scholars exist for that, and only for that. A culture of independence values learning "for its own sake" be-

cause such learning is also, in that way, for that culture's sake as well.

I should summarize this part of the argument. Academic freedom represents and reinforces the ideals of ethical individualism. It exhibits those ideals in the most appropriate context by creating a theater in which personal conviction about truth and value is all that matters, and it trains scholars and students alike in the skills and attitudes essential to a culture of independence. So any violation of academic freedom is damaging in manifold ways. It is morally harmful to those whose freedom to speak or write or teach is restricted, because a deep responsibility is thereby thwarted. It is morally harmful to those whose learning is corrupted by the same restriction. It damages the general culture of independence that academic freedom nourishes, because any invasion of academic freedom is not only harmful in itself, but also makes future invasions more likely. And it insults, for everyone, the ideals of ethical individualism, because the scholar serving only his own vision of the truth is a crucial symbol as well as an important progenitor of that ethical ideal. All this is at stake and put in jeopardy every time a teacher is told what or what not to teach or how to teach it.

We may now return to the crucial test that I said any competent interpretation of academic freedom must meet. That ideal insists on distinctions that might seem bizarre at first sight. The key distinction is between the power of politicians and university officials and colleagues to design institutions and appoint scholars, which academic freedom allows, and their power to control what those scholars do once appointed, which academic freedom prohibits. That distinction might indeed seem odd if we thought that academic freedom served only the instrumental goal of encouraging discovery. Then we might have to concede that if it is wise to let officials appoint on the basis of their own judgment about the importance of what a scholar is likely to do, it must also be wise to allow them to correct for mistakes, so far as possible, by disciplining someone already appointed. But from the different ethical perspective we have now developed, the distinction is not only sensible, but also central. The principle of individual responsibility is not violated when politicians choose university presidents or presidents choose professors on the basis of some collective or institutional opinion about where truth lies. But it is violated when they dictate to faculty after appointment, because then people whose responsibility is to speak and write and teach truth as they see it are prevented from doing so. It is the frustration of responsibility in place that seems so outrageous and so offensive to the ethical ideals we ought to cherish.

Should Academic Freedom Be Compromised?

THOUGH ACADEMIC FREEDOM IS A PROFOUND VALUE, for all the reasons we have now noticed, it is nevertheless only one value among many. We wanted a new interpretation of academic freedom in order to respond to new challenges to that old ideal. How do we choose when academic freedom conflicts with something else that is also important, like equality or decency? We should notice, first, an important distinction between two different kinds of argument for resisting the claim of a conceded value. The first argues for a limit to that value: it suggests that on the best interpretation its point or underlying justification has no application in the case at hand. That

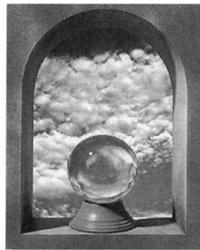
is the claim someone makes, for example, when he insists that the sanctity of human life, which is normally outraged by any deliberate killing, is not outraged when a doctor administers a lethal injection to a terminally ill patient who genuinely wants to die. On this view, the conflict is illusory, because the sanctity of life, properly understood, is not violated by such a killing.³ The second is an argument not for recognizing the limits of a value, but for accepting a compromise of it because though the point of the value does extend to the case in question, its force is nevertheless overridden by a competing value. That is the claim of those who accept free speech as an important value, but nevertheless endorse censorship when it is necessary to protect national security. The distinction is important in our present context, because many of the cases in which people feel strongly that academic freedom must yield to a competing value are actually cases in which the rationale for academic freedom does not apply: they are cases defining the limits of that rationale, not cases suggesting any degraded importance when it really is at stake.

Deliberate insults—by which I mean statements or displays whose principal motive is to cause injury or distress or some other kind of harm—are not even in principle covered by the idea of academic freedom. So when a university prohibits or discourages such insult, it is recognizing the limits of the doctrine, not compromising it. But we must take very great care to distinguish such cases, when the insult is intentional, from cases in which it is not, though the wound may be as great. Intentional harm is generally graver than non-intentional harm; as Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, even a dog knows the difference between being kicked and stumbled over. But the distinction is important now not for that reason but because though intentional insult is not covered by academic freedom, negligent insult must be.

The distinction between the two is often hard to draw in practice, not only because motives are often obscure and hidden even from the agent whose motives they are, but because people often act with mixed motives: someone who declares that women are weak in abstract reasoning may at once express a biological opinion he sincerely believes and at the same time hope to outrage and insult part of his audience. But since we are describing a limit to an important protection, we should define intentional insult narrowly. We should use the counter-factual test: Would the speaker have said what he did if he did not believe it would cause distress? It is easy to answer that question in some contexts. Few people would bother to burn crosses if they believed that blacks would simply be amused at the sight; few people would shout “nigger” or “kike” at someone they thought would be charmed by the sound of the word. I am not of course urging this test as a limit to the general right of free speech, or to the legal protection of the First Amendment. It would be a clear violation of that right for the legislature to outlaw all speech designed to wound. But the distinct point and virtues of academic freedom would not then be in play. A university may properly demand an at-

mosphere of decency in which neither faculty nor groups of students act with the intention of intimidating or embarrassing or hurting anyone in the community, and in so far as speech codes banned only such behavior they would be consistent with academic freedom even when (because the university in question was a public institution) they violated the First Amendment. We can safely extend this limit to academic freedom to include language or display that might be called insulting *per se*, because its meaning in contemporary diction includes insult. Addressing a black student as “boy” or “girl,” or wearing a white hood to class, or blazoning a swastika or a Playboy centerfold on the wall of an office which students are invited or expected to visit, is in itself an insult, and a university can reasonably demand, consistently with academic freedom, that its students and faculty express their opinions in other ways.

Most of the cases that have attracted recent attention, however, are cases in which a student or professor is accused not of wounding some student or group of students intentionally, in the strong sense that the counter-factual test picks out, or of using language that is insulting *per se*, but of acting with what has come to be called, in a new runic phrase, “insensitivity”—acting, that is, without due consideration of the injury his remarks are likely to cause. The professors who assigned slave-owners’ journals and quoted Byron or talked about vibrators were accused of insensitivity, and it is extremely implausible that any of them even expected let alone intended to injure. In other cases, though a teacher with any sense would indeed expect to injure or offend by defending some thesis—that women are not as good at abstract reasoning as men, for example—he would probably not intend to harm either. He would prefer, however unreasonable or silly or unlikely this might be, that women not be offended by his remarks, but take them in a constructive spirit. So the exception for remarks intended to wound, while important, does not reach the cases that have provoked the greatest controversy and pose the most important threats to academic freedom.



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What Should Override Free Speech?

SO WE COME, FINALLY, TO WHAT IS UNDOUBTEDLY the crucial question. What should academic officials do about culpable insensitivity? Compare the “hate speech” code that Stanford University adopted with that of the University of Michigan, which was held unconstitutional. The former forbids speech if it “(1) is intended to insult or stigmatize an individual or a small number of individuals on the basis of their sex, race, color, handicap, religion, sexual orientation, or national and ethnic origin, (2) is addressed directly to the individual or individuals whom it insults or stigmatizes, and (3) makes use of insulting or ‘fighting’ words or nonverbal symbols.” If “intended to insult or stigmatize” is given the strong sense I described—if no one intends to insult or stigmatize unless he would not have spoken as he did if he did not

think the target of his remarks would feel insulted or stigmatized—then the Stanford code does not offend against academic freedom, though, as I said, it is a different question whether it violates the broader and more general moral right of free speech.⁴ Michigan, on the other hand, forbade, “Any behavior, verbal or physical, that stigmatizes or victimizes an individual on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, creed, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, handicap, or Vietnam-era veteran status, and that...creates an intimidating, hostile or demeaning environment for educational purposes.” There is no requirement of intention in the strict sense I described, so Michigan’s code would presumably have allowed the university to punish a lecturer on colonial history who defended the motives of plantation owners or a student’s honest statement that he could not help but think that homosexuals defy nature’s laws. The unvarnished expression of either of these opinions in a classroom might well be felt as insulting and stigmatizing, and might well create a hostile and demeaning environment for some and perhaps many students. Nevertheless their expression falls within academic freedom. Prohibiting or punishing such opinions would violate the principle that people must be free to state what they believe to be important and true, in language they believe most precise and apt.

But that is not the end of the story. For academic freedom is, as I said, only one value among many, and we can recognize and honor it while nevertheless insisting that it must sometimes be compromised to protect what is, in context, a more important or urgent one. The argument that it should be compromised now, to protect students from racial or gender insensitivity, can take two very different forms. The first is an argument of policy. Our political, civil, and commercial societies still suffer from the effects of racism and sexism. Universities have a critical role in helping to reduce the injustice: many of them have changed their admissions policies and their curricula to admit and welcome students who would formerly have been excluded, and to increase the awareness in all students of problems, contributions, and cultures that were formerly virtually ignored. But the insensitivity of some professors and fellow students undermines these important goals. It makes students who should be welcomed feel unwelcome, and it reinforces racist and sexist attitudes that universities aim to marginalize. So, according to this argument of policy, it is irrational to tolerate academic insensitivity, because that is arming the enemy we mean to fight.

Ethical values like academic freedom should yield to public policy only when the need for them to yield is both great and evident, and we do not have clear enough ground for thinking that speech codes or other weapons of censorship would do much to help reduce prejudice. There is no real evidence either way, but it seems equally likely that such measures exacerbate prejudice by allowing its more subtle forms to mask as outrage against censorship.

The second version of the argument for compromising aca-

dem freedom is very different. It is not an argument of policy, which can trump an important value only if the beneficial results are crucial and evident, but an argument of principle which, if it is sound, has much more imperative force. People in a pluralistic society have a right, this argument of principle insists, to work and study and live in an environment that is free from statements or displays they reasonably take to be denigrating or humiliating. On this view, whatever compromises in academic freedom are required to prevent insensitive insults are not limited and temporary adjustments to a special and urgent need, as they are according to the argument of policy. They are rather permanent, structural features of any just community.

This argument of principle has an impressive shape, because it appeals to a competing right rather than an overriding policy, and we know that the closely related value of free speech is sometimes properly compromised out of concern for competing rights. A great literature, it is true, attempts to treat cases in which freedom of speech is set aside as cases of limit rather than compromise. It attempts, for example, to define “speech” so that occasions when censorship is permissible can be treated as cases

in which free speech has not been denied. Someone who uses “fighting words” that are very likely to produce immediate violence, for example, is not protected by the First Amendment, and it is often said, by way of justifying that exemption, that he has crossed the line that separates “speech” from “action.” But the most energetic constitutional scholarship has not been able to clarify this distinction; in fact these and similar examples are better understood as cases of compromise of the right of free speech in deference to other rights that are, in context, more urgently or centrally at stake. We have a right to physical security, for example, and it is that right, rather than any mysterious infusion of “action” into “speech” that best explains why shouting “lynch him!” to a mob with a rope, or putting out a Mafia contract, or falsely shouting fire in a crowded theater, cannot be protected.

The argument of principle I just described, however, goes far beyond justifying limited constraints on speech like that one. It demands prohibiting any expression or display that might reasonably be thought to embarrass anyone or lower others’ esteem for them or their own self-respect. The idea that people have that right is absurd. Of course it would be good if everyone liked and respected everyone else who merited that response. But we cannot recognize a right to

respect, or a right to be free from the effects of speech that makes respect less likely, without wholly subverting the central ideals of the culture of independence and denying the ethical individualism that that culture protects. The dominant opinions and prejudices of any society will always be hurtful to some of its members. Terrible insults are offered every day, in some American community or other, to creationists and religious fundamentalists, to people who believe that homosexuality is deeply sinful or that sex is proper only within marriage, to those who think that God forbids surgery or demands holy wars, to people who think



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that Norman Rockwell was the only great artist of the century, to people who are short or fat or just plain slow. Think of the writers who would have to be censored if there really were a right not to be insulted by other people's opinions: they include Rabelais, Voltaire, Rushdie, Galileo, Darwin, Wilde, and Mencken. People of a thousand different convictions or shapes or tastes are ridiculed or insulted by every level of speech and publication in every decent democracy in the world.

A culture of independence almost guarantees that this will be so. Certainly ridicule is often unjust: people should be ridiculed and despised for some things, but not for others. But we cannot accept a right that would entitle some people to demand that others systematically stifle their opinions about anything. We should be decent to one another, and bigotry is despicable. But if we really came to think that we violated other people's rights whenever we reported sincere views that denigrated them in their own or others' eyes, we would have shattered our own sense of what it is to live honestly. We must find other, less suicidal, weapons against racism and sexism. We must, as always, put our faith in freedom, not repression.

I will attempt no new summary of my argument, but offer a short exhortation instead. I have been guilty of what must seem as an absurd degree of professional hubris and cheerleading. I claim that my own profession—the weak battalions of university teachers—carries much of the responsibility for maintaining a magnificent ethical tradition, and that we must defend our freedom, with passion and whatever strength we all together have,

on that ground. We have lately become less confident of our importance, and less ready to insist on our independence. We have allowed academic freedom to seem pale and abstract and even fraudulent. But we must now remember how easy it has proved, elsewhere, for that freedom to be lost, and how hard it is to regain once lost. We do carry a great responsibility, and it is time we carried it once again with pride. 

Notes

¹ I mean interpreting the social institution of academic freedom, not just identifying how far the law (including, in America, the Constitution) defines and protects that social institution, though the former is pertinent to the latter. There is, so far as I know, no law against the donor of an academic chair reserving the right to name its holders; but that would violate academic freedom. Nor is academic freedom the same as wise academic policy. It might be silly for a university English department to turn itself entirely over to a trendy new form of criticism. But it would be a violation of academic freedom for the legislature to forbid this.

² For a description of ethical individualism (though not under that name) see my *Foundations of Liberal Equality* in the Tanner Foundation Lecture Series, Volume XI, University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 1990.

³ See my book, *Life's Dominion: An Argument about Abortion, Euthanasia and Individual Freedom*. New York: Knopf, 1993.

⁴ A lower court in California subsequently invalidated the Stanford code as violating a state statute forbidding universities to impose stricter speech regulations than governments could impose. See "Court Overturns Stanford University Code Barring Bigoted Speech," *New York Times*, March 1, 1995, Section B., Page 8.

The University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus

Senior Vice President and Provost

The University of Oklahoma invites nominations and applications for the position of Senior Vice President and Provost of the Norman Campus.

Environment: The University of Oklahoma is a major, national research university. The Norman Campus has 11 colleges, 20,000 students, and 900 faculty. Other academic programs are located at the Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City, the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine at Tulsa, and the University Center at Tulsa. The University of Oklahoma has experienced steady growth in recent years in the number and quality of students and the amount of funded research. With nearly 80,000 residents, Norman is the third largest city in Oklahoma and is located 20 miles south of Oklahoma City.

Responsibilities: The Senior Vice President and Provost is the chief academic officer of the Norman Campus and is expected to provide academic and administrative leadership in teaching, research, creative activity, faculty development, student development, continuing education, and public service. ■ The Senior Vice President and Provost is responsible for the Norman Campus academic budget planning, academic planning and program development, the allocation of resources for all academic operations, personnel decisions regarding faculty and academic support staff, and for the integration of all undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs within the academic disciplines. ■ The Senior Vice President and Provost reports directly to the President of the University and serves with the Vice Presidents for Administrative Affairs, Research, Student Affairs, and University Development.

Qualifications: An earned doctorate or equivalent terminal degree; experience in university-level teaching, research and/or creative activity; commitment to the teaching, research and public service missions of a state supported research university; a record of leadership in academic administration at a comprehensive university or equivalent experience at a senior level of a complex organization; commitment to diversity and to Affirmative Action procedures and outcomes; ability to formulate the academic goals of the university and articulate them to all internal and external constituencies; sense of vision for the future of the University of Oklahoma and interest in working in a climate of change.

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