Advances in Nursing Science
Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 3–13

Academic Freedom

Protecting "Liberal Science" in Nursing in the 21st Century

Shawn M. Kneipp, PhD, ARNP; Mary K. Canales, PhD, RN; Nancy Fahrenwald, PhD, RN; Janette Y. Taylor, PhD, RN

Generating new knowledge through science is one of the most valued contributions of American universities, and is wholly dependent on the tenets of academic freedom. This article provides an overview of academic freedom in the United States, lack of attentiveness to academic freedom in the discipline of nursing, and its relevance for advancing nursing science. Three issues are critically evaluated as they relate to "the free search for truth" that is imperative for scientific progress to occur, including (*a*) its importance in a liberal science system, (*b*) recent trends to politically manipulate science, and (*c*) movements to restrict speech on campus. **Key words:** *academic freedom*, *nursing science*, *philosophy of science*, *scientific integrity*

It is easy to forget that American colleges and universities derive their greatness not by echoing the conventional views of society, carrying the partisan banner of governments, or giving aid and comfort to purveyors of prejudices. Rather, they do so by protecting the freedom of professors and students to read widely and explore topics in all their complexity, to think critically and debate issues where there are grounds for reasonable disagreement, and to imagine and express new ideas and new worlds without fear of reprisal or retribution.

—Amy Gutmann[1(pB13)]

As Gutmann[1] contends, academic freedom is a fundamental principle of higher education as we know it in the United States, yet its historical significance and impact on the development and application of knowledge tends to be widely misunderstood, held highly suspect, forgotten—or some combination of these—by the public at large. The subject of much past and recent dialogue in the academic literature, there has been relatively little discussion of academic freedom in nursing. This absence ostensibly reflects a lack of controversy within our discipline, but despite the apparent calm within the walls of nursing schools nationwide, challenges to academic freedom have materialized across the United States, with an intensity that has earned the designation of "The New McCarthyism" by some.[2] Those who witnessed the destructive fallout of past political intrusion in higher education, science, and intellectual standards remind us that complacency in protecting academic freedom necessarily threatens it, and that although the threats of today may be more subtle, they are ever-present.[3]

From the College of Nursing, University of Florida, Gainesville (Dr Kneipp); the College of Nursing & Health Sciences, University of Vermont, Burlington (Dr Canales); the College of Nursing, South Dakota State University, Brookings (Dr Fahrenwald); and the School of Nursing, University of Iowa, Iowa City (Dr Taylor).

An earlier version of this article was presented at the 2005 American Public Health Association Annual Meeting at Philadelphia, Pa.

The authors thank Julie Fairman, PhD, RN, FAAN, at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing for her historical expertise and assistance, Pamela Sherwill-Navarro, MSL, AHIP, for reference search assistance, and Pam Selby for her editorial assistance.

Corresponding author: Shawn M. Kneipp, PhD, ARNP, College of Nursing, University of Florida, PO Box 100187, Gainesville, FL 32610 (e-mail: skneipp@nursing.ufl.edu).

In this article, we appraise the condition of academic freedom in the academy in general, and in academic nursing more specifically, while concentrating on its crucial role for disciplinary self-governance and knowledge development through scientific endeavors. First, we provide an historical overview of the origins of academic freedom in the United States, including events that blatantly disabled these freedoms during the 1950s. Second, the "collective consciousness" of academic freedom in nursing is examined and compared with that of other disciplines. Third, examples of current public controversy over and attempts to impose political restraints on academic freedom via scientific manipulation and restrictions on self-regulation and free expression are described. Finally, we analyze ways in which recent challenges to academic freedom could impede the advancement of nursing science, and argue that greater vigilance in safeguarding the core principles of academic freedom is warranted.

THE FOUNDING OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THE UNITED STATES

As a professor with expertise in US intellectual history, Thomas Haskell[4] reviews the tension between more popular (Foucault-ian) critical analyses of the "power/knowledge" relationship[5] and those that predate the 1915 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* founded by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). The need to distance bodies of power (eg, university administration or politicians) from those responsible for knowledge production and transmission (university faculty) became evident during the first "professional inquiry into an academic freedom case" of fired Stanford University economics professor Edward A. Ross.[4]

This sentinel case of academic freedom was brought forward against Dr Ross in 1900 when tenure did not exist. The case was spawned when Mrs Jane Stanford (left the sole authority to oversee Stanford University following the death of her husband, Leland) became offended by Professor Ross's controversial views.[4] His ideas were, simultaneously, socialist, racist, and eugenicist in nature. Varying historical accounts suggest Mrs Stanford was offended by ideas stemming from each of these 3 bodies of thought.[4,6] Some accounts depict her as being uncomfortable by Dr Ross's ideas that were "socialist" in nature, as they were openly critical of the economic and labor practices upon which the Stanford empire was built.[4] Others indicate his widely publicized racial views (which may now be considered "hate speech," but nonetheless largely protected in academic settings) were deeply troubling to Mrs Stanford, and the impetus for his dismissal.[6,7]

This case—and all of the imbued meaning of academic freedom—is cited as the origin of the AAUP, the 1915 AAUP *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, and *Committee A* of the AAUP.[6] While Dr Ross's racist beliefs conflict with the professional values espoused by many academic disciplines, academic freedom (as currently defined and practiced) would similarly protect his racial views, so long as they fell within the standards for scholarly and scientific debate in his field.

THE AAUP *PRINCIPLES* AS A GUIDE FOR ACADEMIA

Modified somewhat from the 1915 version, the 1940 edition of the *Principles* (supplemented by interpretive statements in 1970) continues to serve as the archetypical guide to defining academic freedom in the United States, and *Committee A* remains the foremost academic body responsible for investigating cases of infringement on academic freedom.[8]

The 1940 *Principles* cover 3 basic regions whereby principles of academic freedom are exercised. These have been duly summarized

by Walter Metzger[9]—a noted historian of academic freedom and long-term member of *Committee A*—as follows:

1. a region in which faculty members who engage in scientific or scholarly research are allowed to pursue their investigations wherever they may lead without fear of institutional censorship;
2. a region in which academic teachers are allowed to teach their students what they specially know and conscientiously believe, even if those teachings run counter to the ideas and beliefs of those who employ them and pay their bills; and,
3. last, but by no means least, a region in which faculty members are allowed as citizens to express their opinions on mooted issues in public forums without the risk of retaliation by campus authorities who hold contrary opinions, even if the subject is outside the purview of the faculty member's acknowledged expertise.[9(p76)]

Each of these regions has been challenged in unique ways over the US academic lifespan. The latter, whereby faculty are allowed to act as citizens independent of the university, was most blatantly violated during the McCarthy era. In contrast, the first, whereby faculty scientific pursuits are to be free from institutional censorship, has been covertly undermined in the recent past. Each is further discussed relative to their historical context in the discussion that follows.

McCARTHY ERA IDEOLOGY AND THE DISTORTION OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM PRINCIPLES

In her book *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities*, Ellen Schrecker[10] traces the influence that widespread public fear had on interpretations of academic freedom during the Red Scare and the subsequent McCarthy House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) investigations. As political pressure mounted to rid all traces of Communist or Marxist thought on university campuses, nearly every state took some action to investigate the political stance of faculty and eliminate them if their views or histories were found to be "red," suspicious, or, in some cases, simply troublesome or complex. Within this climate of fear, censorship, and blacklisting, the 1940 *Principles* did little to protect academic freedom from severe political intrusion.

The University of Washington was first to independently take action and dismiss faculty with Communist views.[10] This provided a model for other universities to follow, whereby institutions began to police themselves before HUACs made their way to one's ivory tower. In many universities, Boards of Regents urged—and presidents willingly implemented—"loyalty oaths," which served the purpose of averting visible federal or state HUAC investigations on campus, public embarrassment, criticism from potential donors for harboring "Communist" professors—and, consequently, a reduced flow of money into the university. Professors (with or without tenure) who were unwilling to sign loyalty oaths were routinely dismissed. With few exceptions, there was little debate or consideration given to whether loyalty oaths impinged upon academic freedom. Even Arthur Lovejoy—a founder of the 1915 *Principles of Academic Freedom*—argued a very different explanation during this time, claiming instead that academic freedom actually "required the expulsion of Communist teachers."[10(p119)]

During the McCarthy period, the AAUP's support for faculty considered "suspicious" sidestepped academic freedom principles—perhaps perceiving such principles as a weak defense against deep-rooted beliefs about the dangers of Communist or Marxist thought. The AAUP's objection to faculty interrogations was premised upon the Communist Party as being a *legally recognized* political party in the United States, rather than upholding the academic freedom principle that allows faculty to engage in activities (political,

religious, etc) separate from their faculty role, so long as they do not purport to be acting on behalf of the university.[8] Critical to the validity of investigations held, there were neither charges nor evidence brought forward during this period that suspect faculty were proselytizing in the classroom, which would, then, have been a valid reason—based on academic freedom principles—to investigate an individual faculty member's ability to teach according to accepted academic standards.

Only two—Chandler Davis at the University of Michigan and Edwin Burgum at the New York University—of hundreds of professors subjected to HUAC inquisitions over their political beliefs refused to answer any questions based on the First Amendment right to free speech.[10] When questioned, the majority of faculty maintained a position of silence based on Fifth Amendment rights. Refusal on the First Amendment right, however, was qualitatively different from invoking the Fifth, as it most closely relates to the principles of academic freedom. This shift in logic, with all of its critical philosophical difference, was lost on members of both university and HUAC alike. The result was that both professors were dismissed from their faculty positions, and Chandler Davis served a federal prison sentence for contempt of Congress.[10,11]

Although estimating the direct effects of academic freedom losses on scientific advancements during this period is elusive, given the magnitude of disruption in the academy, it is difficult to believe that there were only minor or relatively insignificant consequences for science as a whole. What we do know is that many promising faculty careers were cut short, collegial scientific networks were dismembered, and there was likely self-imposed censoring of "sensitive" political research or scholarship practiced by faculty who managed to stay out of trouble and keep their academic positions. It was the norm rather than the exception that once faculty members were dismissed from one institution, they were effectively shut out of the US academy, regardless of their past or potential scientific or scholarly contributions.[11]

ACADEMIC FREEDOM, DISCIPLINARY SELF-REGULATION, AND SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

The 1940 *Principles* rest on several assumptions—2 of which are particularly relevant for addressing recent academic freedom challenges that could transform the role of science in the United States. The first is that universities exist to serve society's common good, and the ability to do this is wholly dependent on the "free search for truth and its free exposition."[8(p1)] The second assumption is most proximal to what most threatens science today. It underscores the role of professional—or *disciplinary*—autonomy as essential for the development and application of knowledge. The authority to judge what constitutes an appropriate knowledge base from which to teach, develop scholarly ideas, and/or practice lies *exclusively within each discipline*.

Dewey and his colleagues originally conceived of the idea of a *disciplinary community*, described as people who agree to follow a certain set of rules in order to be trained. This initial conception has been expanded beyond the pursuit of truth or knowledge per se to encompass the pursuit of understanding. In this context, understanding retains the notion that there is something to be known that is apart from the scholar, and at the same time conveys the idea that interpretation (eg, philosophical underpinnings) always structures what is known.[12] Therefore, disciplinary communities insist on a place for criticism and critical transformation and guarantee the existence of the scholarly critical function that discipline legitimates and academic freedom is designed to protect. "Disciplinary communities, then, share a common commitment to the autonomous pursuit of understanding, which they both limit and make possible by articulating, contesting, and revising the rules of such pursuits and the standards by which outcomes will be judged."[12(p175)]

More specific to science, the broad authority to set targeted federally funded research

agendas—for example, via Requests for Proposals or Program Announcements, or to define research missions within specific National Institutes of Health (NIH) institutes, albeit under broader congressional mandates and lay public participation, to judge what scientific proposals are most meritorious and funded; or to determine whether scientific findings meet accepted criteria for public dissemination via peer review—*lies exclusively within the scientific community*.[13] At any given time, this group may or may not be discipline specific; however, a compulsory feature of any scientific community is that it includes persons with formal education in scientific methods, with expertise in select content areas, and who engage in rigorous critique of scientific findings, proposals, and ideas.

From a societal perspective, Rauch[14] reminds us that "every society must have some prevailing standard for distinguishing between reality and illusion, and between objective knowledge and personal belief. Just what standard is used matters enormously."(p37) Referring to the social processes for determining what constitutes "truth" in the United States as a form of "liberal science," he notes its effective functioning is dependent on "intellectual diversity and the rule requiring that no one have personal authority."(p69) In this context, the word "liberal" in the term "liberal science" is not associated with a political party (eg, liberal democrats). Rather, it refers to open and unrestricted inquiry, and fostering intellectual diversity—such that scientists are free to put forth new (and controversial) ideas without fear of reprisal. This is what academic freedom protects in university settings. These protections at the level of academic units and universities are necessary to ensure diverse ideas are carried forth into the liberal science system at large. Constraints on free inquiry that originate in academia may have consequences for what scientific progress is made at the national and international level. Conversely, constraints imposed at the national level may eventually diminish intellectual diversity within academia, and will likely have indirect consequences for academic freedom via self-censorship and other social practices that foster adherence to a particular intellectual orthodoxy.

The importance of self-regulation as a practice of disciplinary autonomy is critical to the effective functioning of liberal science as well.[4] What becomes "certified," "formal," or "social" knowledge in this system is determined through a collective process undertaken by—and predominantly regulated by—members of scientific communities, with the vast majority of functions carried out independent of the political context and beyond the margins of prevailing political ideology.

Historically, scientific contributions generated by liberal science systems have far exceeded those from countries with tight political reign over government supported research. Although there are different conceptions of what scientific progress means and how it occurs,[15,16] if building a body of empirical knowledge about ourselves and the world around us that can be drawn upon to improve the lives and health of people reflects progress, then liberal science systems are the most functional models to date for making scientific advances. Embedded in the notion of academic freedom, disciplinary and scientific self-regulation are fundamental to the privileges we have enjoyed in the liberal science system in the United States. These freedoms, often taken for granted, require scholarly vigilance to maintain the research infrastructure we have today in order to facilitate scientific progress tomorrow. Yet, academic nursing—in its infancy during the McCarthy inquisitions—has been perilously inattentive to the role academic freedom plays in professional self-determination and disciplinary contributions to science.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM ATTENTIVENESS IN THE DISCIPLINE OF NURSING

Although the first independent, collegiate school of nursing was established at the Yale University in 1924,[17] most nursing schools or colleges that were part of a larger university

did not come into being until the mid-1950s or 1960s. Although the journal *Nursing Research* was chartered in 1950, earnest attention to scientific inquiry (whereby nurses were principal investigators) did not occur until the early 1960s, with doctoral programs in nursing not beginning to flourish until the 1980s.[17] The demographic composition of nursing and widespread perception of nurses as diffident, apolitical, physician monitored, and relatively unscientific meant academic nursing programs were more likely to be viewed as posing little threat in terms of harboring "subversives" during this period. Detailed historical accounts during the McCarthy era do not implicate nursing faculty as being directly subjected to formal university or HUAC investigations in the academy.[10] Thus, as an academic discipline, we appear to lack a "historical consciousness" of the damage that occurs when academic freedoms are breached. This is reflected, in part, by the dearth of scholarly dialogue in the nursing literature on the topic.

The content of scholarly publications provides some insight into issues dominating the intellectual focus of a discipline at any given time. A search of the term "academic freedom" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* yielded 213 published articles addressing academic freedom in some way over the past 3 years: a clear sign there is vigorous discourse in academia as a whole. Another search of the WilsonWeb database from 1985 for the term "academic freedom" in peer-reviewed, feature article titles or abstracts produced 45 articles in the General Science database, 30 in the Social Science database, and 18 in the Humanities database. In contrast, since 1985, 11 publications were found when searching for "academic freedom" (in abstract) and "nurs*" (in text) using CINAHL and PubMed. Of these, 4 were dissertations, and only 4 concentrated on academic freedom as the primary subject (1 editorial, 3 original articles).

Sheehe[18] was the first to publish on academic freedom in a nursing journal, and was the only author to address its relationship to nursing research. Subsequent publications specific to academic freedom examined conflicts between faculty and administrators,[19] the misinterpretation of academic freedom in nursing,[20] and grading written student work in relation to national codes of professional conduct.[21]

With respect to nursing science, Sheehe[18] cited the need to align one's research with the priorities of funding agencies as an academic freedom infringement. We disagree with this interpretation. Academic freedom does not allow one to claim impositions on this freedom because decisions made *by the scientific community* do not support your view, scientific approach, or area of research interest. Rather, with academic freedom comes academic duty[20]—the duty to argue persuasively and logically for theoretical perspectives, areas of research, and new methodological approaches that you, as a member of the scientific community, believe hold merit for advancing science in your field. This includes building an empirically valid case for why your research should be supported given the overall goal (in the case of nursing) of improving health. Many (if not most) agencies funding nursing research in 1994 were composed of members of the nursing science community. Today, nurse researchers are seeking and obtaining funding across disciplinary boundaries, and are being held to the same standards of the broader scientific community. As such, self-regulation is operating as it should, in the full spirit of academic freedom.

CURRENT CHALLENGES TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Unlike challenges to academic freedom in the past, which were overt and generally began outside the university, current challenges are more subtle, and come from inside as well as outside academia. Many of the contemporary threats directly involve the self-regulation function of the liberal science system, whereas others operate more circuitously to erode the scope of what "liberal" means.

Political manipulation of science

With regard to self-regulation as a collective process undertaken by—and predominantly regulated by—members of scientific communities, contemporary efforts by political entities are threatening not only academic freedom but also the health and welfare of the nation. Because specific incidents are too numerous to address, we focus on 3 current tactics that undermine science: (1) weighting and/or ignoring scientific committees; (2) distortion, suppression, and altering of scientific information; and (3) interference with NIH externally funded scientific projects. Alone, each of these tactics poses a threat to scientific integrity and academic freedom; together they threaten the very existence of the liberal science system. Each of these tactics and the consequences for the health of the population are further examined here.

Tactics to undermine science

Of the tactics identified, the weighting and/or ignoring of scientific committees and advisory panels has received the greatest attention from the scientific community, politicians, and the public at large. One of the most egregious examples of this tactic involves Emergency Contraception (EC). Although a 2003 expert scientific panel of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) unanimously agreed that EC was safe, and 23 of the panel's 27 members supported the sale of EC without a prescription, FDA administrators, without the prerequisite scientific expertise, have repeatedly blocked EC over-the-counter sales.[22–24] When the FDA rejected its own panel's recommendations that assured the safety of EC, and in 2005, required further study for over-the-counter sales to minors, the FDA's top scientist on women's health issues resigned.[25]

Although the administration, through its FDA-appointed director, argue that their primary concern is the safety of the medication, it is clear that conservative ideology is usurping scientific evidence. Ideology is also usurping the law, which requires that federal committees should be "fairly balanced in terms of the points of view represented," and "not be inappropriately influenced by the appointing authority or by any special interest."[26(p289)] It is evident from the EC process that not only is this law being disregarded but the health and well-being of women is being disregarded as well. The science, once again, is beholden to political and ideological powers.

The second tactic—the distortion, suppression, and altering of scientific information—has also garnered the attention of the scientific community, politicians, the press, and the general public. One visible example is the controversy surrounding stem cell research and the number of stem cell lines available for study. In 2001, President Bush banned federal funds for research on new embryonic stem cell lines, claiming that the more than 60 existing stem cell lines were sufficient for future research efforts. This "claim" was false; scientists in the field reported that there were fewer than 30 lines available at the time of the ban, with current estimates suggesting that as few as 23 are actually available to the research community.[24] Research involving the use of fetal tissue, although valuable scientifically, has become increasingly difficult to pursue because of the constraints imposed by governmental policies that "reflect extrinsic pressures and not scientific merit or medical merit."[3(p26)] In addition to political intrusion, corporate interests pose similar dangers to the role of academic science. In a recent text, Washburn[27] describes numerous accounts whereby corporate interests have severely compromised research ethics, progress, and the fundamental mission of universities across the nation. Advancing such cases into a theoretical account of academic capitalism, Slaughter and Rhoades[28] examine the role of market-like behaviors being adopted by universities, and the consequences for higher education and science. Given the observations to date, both political and corporate agendas are placing liberal science directly in harm's way.

The third tactic—interference with NIH externally funded scientific projects—is of

greatest threat to the vitality of (or state of) science. The most blatant example was the compilation of an extensive list of NIH peer-reviewed, funded research projects that select members of Congress personally considered "provocative." There were more than 250 grants from more than 150 senior investigators on the list. The subject areas of the grants addressed HIV/AIDS, human sexuality, and risk-taking behavior.[29] Since all of these studies successfully competed in the NIH peer review process, it is clearly the subject matter, rather than the scientific value or merit, that spawned investigations into these studies. The NIH responded by using the list as a basis for further review of the research, contacting individual investigators, and sending a ripple of fear and intimidation throughout the scientific community.[29] The interference of a political body into the domain of the scientific process threatens the role of the disciplinary community in setting its scientific agenda and, more ominously, the scientific enterprise itself.

All of these activities blur the lines of separation between science and politics—eroding self-regulation *and* "liberal" aspects of liberal science. Faculty will self-censor their ideas to conform to standards outside those held by the community of science (eg, political or economic). These outside standards may subsequently lead departments/universities to encourage researchers to "avoid controversial topics," which ultimately will affect the scientific enterprise itself.

As a disciplinary community, faculty can counter the prevailing threats to scientific integrity and work toward reaffirming the principles of academic freedom. For example, the flagrant actions of the current administration, in support of corporate interests and political ideology, prompted the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) to take the unprecedented step of denouncing recent systematic efforts to supplicant science with conservative ideology and big business policies. This action, supported by thousands of scientists, including Nobel laureates, National Medal of Science recipients, and members of the National Academy of Science, is unparalleled in the history of the United States. According to the UCS,[30] "The actions by the Bush administration threaten to undermine the morale and compromise the integrity of scientists working for and advising America's world-class governmental research institutions and agencies. . . . To do so carries serious implications for the health, safety, and environment of all Americans."[1(p8)]

The actions of the UCS, unions representing organized faculty, and individual scientists speaking out in defense of their work and of their disciplines, reflect the impact the disciplinary community can have when united in their efforts to preserve scientific integrity and academic freedom. Our role as scholars in protecting academic freedom is part of our broader professional responsibility to address and work toward the achievement of health for all. The voices of nurse researchers, as members of the scientific community, need to be part of this effort.

LIBERAL INQUIRY AND CONSTRAINTS ON SPEECH

Free speech on university campuses has been the subject of much contentious—and legal—debate over the past 2 decades. At several institutions, broad speech code policies were implemented by university administrations on the basis of genuinely well-intentioned humanitarian principles that, out of fairness and compassion for others, some forms of speech could be interpreted as inflicting harm. As such, *select speech*—referred to as "hate speech" by some—was thought to be particularly harmful to members of nondominant groups (eg, all groups other than white, heterosexual men), and corrosive to the gains made in the racial, ethnic, and gender diversification of the student and faculty bodies.

When challenged in 1989, a University of Michigan speech code was held unconstitutional on the grounds that it was so vague that an interpretation of whether a breach had

occurred was nearly impossible.[7] Moreover, broadly written speech codes are likely to include "a wide range of statements that are part of the exchange of ideas,"[31(p101)] thus violating not only a central function of universities but also the basis of a deliberative democracy, as well. A more narrow version of university speech codes regulating hate speech in the form of epithets or insults directed to an *individual* (as opposed to a group) have yet to be challenged, and are unlikely to restrict the free exchange of *ideas* required for making theoretical or scientific advances.

Formal, or policy-based restrictions on speech, is not the only concern in academia of late. Many argue the pervasiveness of cultural, racial, or gender "sensitivity-related" informal norms do more to erode academic freedom than any official speech policy restrictions, as informal norms are likely to result in ideological judgments *being expressed as a disciplinary ones*.[32] This scenario may occur, for example, when faculty in a department hold similar world views around the causes of inequality (social, economic, health, or other forms), and are interviewing a faculty candidate with contrasting views. Judging the candidate's scholarship on the basis of his or her position taken, as opposed to the theoretical, scientific, or scholarly merit of the position as the basis for hiring reflects ideological, rather than disciplinary standards.

PROTECTING ACADEMIC FREEDOM FOR ADVANCING NURSING SCIENCE

The free exchange of theoretical and methodological ideas is critical to furthering our understanding of health- and illness-related phenomenon, practicing nursing from an evidence base, and improving current practice through empirical investigation. In a recent review, Donaldson[33] described a number of breakthroughs in nursing research that occurred between the years 1960 and 1999. Criteria used to identify a "breakthrough" included "scientific nursing knowledge that changed the prevailing thinking about a human health phenomenon."[33(p249)] For example, one breakthrough described was research conducted by Page and colleagues to better understand the consequences of unrelieved pain on tumor growth using an animal model, which at the time seemed blasphemous to many nurse scientists. Each of these breakthroughs likely resulted only through struggle for the acceptance of new and/or controversial ideas, unfamiliar methodological terrain, and/or the need to venture into sociopolitically sensitive areas from both the nursing and the broader scientific communities. In every step along the way—from discussing initial ideas with colleagues in the hallway, to proposal development, funding, and publication of results—the principles of academic freedom served as the catalyst for scientific advancement overall reflected in the individual breakthroughs made.

In reaping the benefits that academic freedom provides all of us—as members of a scientific discipline and members of a larger society—nursing has the reciprocal responsibility of protecting these freedoms. Increasing awareness of recent political manipulation of the US liberal science system is an important first step. As we seek to build the future generation of nurse scientists, we must ask ourselves what message is being sent to bright, young nurses considering a career in science. As mentors, how do we respond to those who are interested in topics currently viewed as too "politically" risky to be considered, debated, or funded—regardless of the impact knowledge development in that area may have on improving the public's health? Academic research careers tend to attract individuals who are ardently independent, critical thinkers, persistent, and capable of making persuasive arguments grounded in the standards of scientific reasoning. As such, these same characteristics tend to drive individuals away from pursuits where they cannot exercise these qualities. To advance nursing science, we must attract students *with* those qualities, not deter them.

As of this writing, it is unclear how many nurse researchers are involved in

organizations such as the UCS or the AAUP. The UCS has been highly dedicated to preserving "scientific independence" by engaging scientists to actively resist political encroachment on its regulation by those with little understanding of science. The results of their efforts—and the efforts of other organized groups with similar concerns—have had important successes. The "cleansing" of the 2003 *National Healthcare Disparities Report* by nonscientist, political appointees within the Department of Health and Human Services is one such case.[34] Outraged that the findings as written by an independent scientific panel had been altered to paint a less problematic picture of health disparities in the United States, hundreds of scientists mounted a collective response in opposition. Shortly thereafter, an apology by the Department of Health and Human Services Secretary was given, and the original, unaltered report reissued.[35] As illustrated by this example, it is imperative that nurse researchers who believe in the value of "liberal science" become familiar with organizations such as the UCS and the AAUP, work to support their or similar causes, speak out against intrusions in our current scientific system by political or purely economic motives, and work to educate the public about why the independence of science from such motives has been fundamental to the gains made over the past several decades.

Other actions that can solidify our commitment to academic freedom and ensure its future viability include simply *teaching* our doctoral students about it, and publicly supporting it. In our conversations with colleagues around the country, the principles of academic freedom seem to be a widespread missing component of doctoral education; yet, they are fundamental to faculty life, teaching, and research. Public support of academic freedom by our discipline is lacking, as well. On a published list of disciplinary organizations that have endorsed the 1940 AAUP *Principles*, nursing is nowhere to be found among the vast index of supporting organizations representing the arts, humanities, social sciences, mathematics, and other sciences.[36]

CONCLUSION

Nursing faculty, as members of a disciplinary community, need to join with faculty colleagues across disciplines in reaffirming the principles of academic freedom governing the academy, and collaborate with other scientific organizations to ensure that government and private efforts to limit these rights are confronted. Awareness of and increased participation in the UCS movement is one place to begin this work, as is publicly endorsing the AAUP *Principles*. The key requires vigilance in recognizing threats from multiple directions and collaborating to protect academic freedom, regardless of personal beliefs or philosophies. A threat to academic freedom is a threat to education as a hallmark of a democratic society, the advancement of nursing science, and improving the health and well-being of our society. As such, we should heed of the words of Louis Menand spoken a decade ago, yet ever relevant for the challenges faced today:

> Academic freedom is not simply a kind of bonus enjoyed by workers within the system, a philosophical luxury universities could function just as effectively, and much more efficiently, without. It is the key legitimating concept of the entire enterprise.[37(p4)]

REFERENCES

1. Guttman A. Academic freedom or government intrusion. *Chronicle Higher Educ*. 2005;52(3):B13.
2. Cole JR. The New McCarthyism. *Chronicle Higher Educ*. 2005;52(3):B7.
3. O'Neill RM. Academic freedom in retrospect and in prospect. In: Hollingsworth PJ, ed. *Unfettered Expression: Freedom in American Intellectual Life*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press; 2000:19–30.
4. Haskell TL. Justifying the rights of academic freedom

in the era of "power/knowledge." In: Menand L, ed. *The Future of Academic Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1996:43–90.
5. Gordon C, ed. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977—Michel Foucault*. New York: Pantheon Books; 1980.
6. Tierney WG. The roots/routes of academic freedom and the role of the intellectual. *Cult Stud Crit Methodol.* 2004;4(2):250–256.
7. Cohn A. Doe *v.* University of Michigan: a somewhat personal view. *Wayne Law Rev*. 1990/1991;37: 1313–1323.
8. American Association of University Professors. *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure With 1970 Interpretive Comments.* Washington, DC: American Association of University Professors; 1970.
9. Metzger WP. A stroll along the new frontiers of academic freedom. In: Hollingsworth PJ, ed. *Unfettered Expression: Freedom in American Intellectual Life*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press; 2000:73–97.
10. Schrecker EW. *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities*. New York: Oxford University Press; 1986.
11. Hollingsworth PJ, ed. *Unfettered Expression: Freedom in American Intellectual Life*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press; 2000.
12. Scott J. Academic freedom as an ethical practice. In: Menand L, ed. *The Future of Academic Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1996:163–180.
13. National Institutes of Health. NIH research planning. 2005. Available at: http://www.nih.gov/about/researchplanning.htm. Accessed March 31, 2006.
14. Rauch J. *Kindly Inquisitors*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1993.
15. Kitcher P. *The Advancement of Science: Science Without Legend, Objectivity Without Illusions.* New York: Oxford University Press; 2001.
16. Kuhn T. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1996.
17. Kalisch PA, Kalisch BJ. *The Advance of American Nursing*. 2nd ed. Boston: Little Brown & Co; 1986.
18. Sheehe JB. Academic freedom: history, constraints, and recommendations for nursing education. *Nurse Educ.* 1994;19(6):15–19.
19. Larson E. Academic freedom amidst competing demands. *J Prof Nurs.* 1997;13(4):211–216.
20. Bellack JP. Academic freedom, academic duty. *J Nurs Educ.* 2003;42(12):527–528.
21. Snelling PC, Lipscomb M. Academic freedom, analysis, and the Code of Professional Conduct. *Nurse Educ Today.* 2004;24:615–621.
22. Sirota D. Burying Plan B. *The Nation.* 2005;281:8.
23. Steele E. Bad science causes bad US public health policy. *Bangor Daily News.* October 11, 2005.
24. US House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform Minority Staff. The administration's distortion of stem cell science: prepared for Representatives Henry A. Waxman and Louise Mcintosh Slaughter. 2005. Available at: http://oversight.house.gov/story.asp?ID=875.
25. Pollit K. It wasn't all bad. *The Nation.* January 3, 2006;282:10.
26. McKee M, Novotny T. Political interference in American science: why Europe should be concerned about the actions of the Bush Administration. *Eur J Public Health.* 2003;13:289–291.
27. Washburn J. *University, Inc. The Corporate Corruption of American Higher Education*. New York: Basic Books; 2005.
28. Slaughter S, Rhoades G. *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy: Markets, State, and Higher Education*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; 2004.
29. Waxman HA. Letter to HHS Secretary Thompson. 2003.
30. The Union of Concerned Scientists. *Scientific Integrity in Policy Making: Further Investigation of the Bush Administration's Misuse of Science.* Cambridge, Mass: Union of Concerned Scientists; 2004.
31. Sunstein CR. Academic freedom and law: liberalism, speech codes, and related problems. In: Menand L, ed. *The Future of Academic Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1996:93–103.
32. Bauerlein M. The ideological corruption of scholarly principles. *Chronicle Higher Educ.* 2005;52(3):B8.
33. Donaldson SK. Breakthroughs in scientific research: the discipline of nursing, 1960–1999. In: Goeppinger J, ed. *Annual Review of Nursing Research.* Vol 18. New York: Springer; 2000:247–310.
34. United States House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform MSSID. *A Case Study in Politics and Science: Changes to the National Healthcare Disparities Report*. 2004:12.
35. Kaiser J. HHS to reissue report. *Science.* 2004;303(20):1119.
36. American Association of University Professors. Endorsers of the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure. Available at: http://www.aaup.org/Com-a/1940endorsedisc.htm. Accessed November 2, 2005.
37. Menand L. The limits of academic freedom. In: Menand L, ed. *The Future of Academic Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1996:3–20.