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Turner, Harris & Colodny: Academic Freedom in Pittsburgh

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In 1934, Ralph Turner lost his job at the University of Pittsburgh on what can only be called the infringement of his academic freedom rights. Roy Harris, a professor and composer-in-residence at the Pennsylvania College for Women, suffered similar persecution in 1951 but kept his job. Less than 10 years later, again at the University of Pittsburgh, Professor Robert Colodny's position was jeopardized by accusations that he had Communist sympathies.

In short, in less than 30 years, the city of Pittsburgh saw three, fairly high profile cases in which academic freedom was compromised or called into question. Ralph Turner was not reinstated in his position, and yet, in the other two cases, both Harris and Colodny retained their jobs. What changed in thirty years to make the cases so different and have different outcomes? A lot of the reason is inherent to the development of academic freedom and the changes it has faced in its relatively short history. Most of this history revolves around the involvement of the American Association of University Professors (henceforth known as the AAUP). It is obvious that as the AAUP became more powerful, academic freedom became a more prevalent and important issue not only to those in the academic profession, but to society as a whole. Additionally, the rise of the mass media also played a significant role. These elements, combined with the more specific details of each case, are what caused the three cases to conclude differently.

What Is Academic Freedom?

The most important question to answer is probably the most difficult: what exactly is academic freedom? A modern definition states: "Academic freedom is the freedom of the individual scholar to pursue truth where it leads, without fear of punishment or of termination of employment for having offended some political, methodological, religious or social orthodoxy." The 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Comments, drafted by the AAUP and considered to be the foundation upon which the concept of academic freedom has been built, defines academic freedom more loosely.

Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of
Their other academic duties;... Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject... When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations.2

These comments, drafted by the authority on academic freedom, read more like open-ended guidelines than a definition. The nebulous quality of these guidelines has led and continues to lead to confusion as to the true meaning of academic freedom.

The fact that even the definitive source of information regarding academic freedom is unclear is compounded by the fact that the meaning is constantly changing. Academic freedom is intimately tied to society, wealth, and power, and as they change over time, so does the conception of academic freedom. "Ever since the modern university took its present form at the end of the nineteenth century, the concept of academic freedom has been periodically debated and redefined."3 Despite the tension and confusion surrounding its meaning, academic freedom can most clearly be defined as a professor's right to speak his/her mind openly regarding political or religious issues without fearing professional ramifications. There are, of course, qualifications to such a definition, which only serve to complicate the meaning further.

In his book, Academic Freedom in American Higher Education: Rights, Responsibilities and Limitations, Robert P. Poch puts forth the idea that "Academic freedom provides the foundation for faculty scholarship and teaching."4 This may be the prevalent notion today, but academic freedom has not always been a concern of the American University. In fact, academic freedom did not become a general concern in America until after the dawn of the nineteenth century, and not until the late 1940s was it regulated within most institutions.

Academic Freedom in Early American History

Nearly all of the earliest American colleges boasted religious charters. "The charters of Harvard College and the College of William & Mary reflect community values and interests rather than those of scholars drawn together voluntarily over time. The community interest lay in a literate populace that could serve God and the community effectively."5 Many teachers were forced to teach a certain set of religious and moral values, which might have been considered more important than academic course work.

Most early universities were subject to the rule of near-autocratic presidents. Faculty members had very little power in administrative decisions, in
fact, “College presidents, actively seconded by the board of trustees, were the de facto, not just de jure, authority in personnel decisions: they conducted searches, did extensive interviewing, and closely monitored the utterances of professors, both before and after they were hired.” There was a firm belief that once hired by a certain university or college, a professor’s teaching should reflect the views of that institution. This can be seen in Nicholas Murry Butler’s words to the Board of Trustees at Columbia in 1910:

Men who feel that their personal convictions require them to treat the mature opinion of the civilized world without respect or with contempt may well be given an opportunity to do so from private station and without the added influence and prestige of a university’s name.

Stated simply, a professor lucky enough to receive a position at a school like Columbia should know enough to teach the way the institution mandates. It was believed that parents were sending their children to school to learn certain values, and only those values should be taught.

Slowly, these trends began to change. As the nineteenth century advanced, teachers were granted more (although limited) authority and decision-making ability. Also, schools were becoming more secularized and more geared towards academic principles. As the Industrial Revolution dawned, there was a growth of interest in the sciences, which also contributed to a curricular shift within colleges. Another, more remote reason for this shift was that many Americans were receiving their doctorate degrees abroad, and were tasting the freedom that was allowed to academes in other nations. “Once the rewards of academic freedom were experienced abroad, they were not easily forgotten at home.”

The Development of the AAUP

The dismissal of Edward A. Ross from his position at Stanford University in 1900 turned out to be the case that put the idea of academic freedom on everyone’s mind during this period. Ross was a respected economist who frequently gave public lectures on Chinese immigration and the conditions of railroad workers. At this time, Stanford was under the near autocratic rule of Jane Stanford, the widow of founder Leland Stanford, and member of the Board of Trustees. After giving two such ‘radical’ lectures, Ross was forced to resign. The chairman of the History Department resigned soon after, as did six other faculty members, who protested the Board of Trustees’ decision.

For the first time, academic freedom was a sensation. Ross’ dismissal became known throughout America, and consequently, angered professors throughout the nation. Despite their anger, they took little organized action until 1915, when professors met at Columbia University, and founded the
AAUP. It is clear that the Ross’ case was still on the minds of the leaders of the AAUP, as many of its founding fathers had known Ross personally. In fact, the organization’s first secretary, Arthur O. Lovejoy, was one of the faculty members who left Stanford after Ross’ forced resignation.11

The founding document of the organization, the 1915 Report of Seligman, laid out the basic notion of academic freedom and who exactly was entitled to the protection it provided. It made clear that it was a privilege to be a part of the academic community, and professors must strive to live up to the responsibility involved. “They must behave in an appropriately scholarly way, their conclusions ‘must be the fruits of competent and patient and sincere inquiry, and they should be set forth with dignity, courtesy, and temperateness of language.”12 This element is very important, for it established boundaries around what types of behavior would and would not be tolerated by members of the academic community. It also clearly stated that schools that violated the code of academic freedom should not be respected or esteemed in the scholarly community, and their actions should be remembered during any general appeal for funds.13

The AAUP was not the only organization devoted to higher education at this time. The Association of American Colleges, composed mostly of college presidents, (who, at the time, were not allowed membership in the AAUP,) were also dealing with the new-found issue of academic freedom. They initially rejected the AAUP’s 1915 statement, mainly because the two groups had different objectives and agendas.14 This resulted in confusing discrepancies in the guidelines endorsed by the AAUP and the AAC. It also resulted in two different, powerful groups seeking to regulate the development of academic freedom. Because of this, the decision-making process was extremely convoluted in the very period when the foundation of academic freedom was being laid.

Academic Freedom in Pittsburgh: Ralph Turner

Pittsburgh has its own history of academic freedom infringement. In 1934, Ralph Turner, a professor of history at the University of Pittsburgh, was released from his contract for, as then-Chancellor Bowman termed, his “flippant attitude towards religion.”15 The real reason behind Turner’s dismissal was his radical thinking, his involvement with several liberal organizations and his audacity, clearly exhibited in his harsh critique of the wealthy element in Pittsburgh society.

Turner received his appointment in 1923 and by 1932 was voted the most popular professor at the university.16 That would soon change, at least in the opinion of the administration, after Turner made several ‘radical’ decisions. The first involved a student group on campus known as the Liberal Club. Several club members were expelled from the university after they defied a university order, which stated they could not hold their meeting on
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campus property. Turner, who believed the actions taken against these
students were too harsh, not only signed a petition requesting they be
reinstated at the university, but presented it to the administration personally.
This implied—to the administration—that he was a liberal sympathizer. In
1933, Turner was told that his contract would be renewed only if he promised
to resign from the Pennsylvania Security League, a supposed liberal organi-
zation. He was told that he had to decide between a political career and an
academic career—he chose the academic career and resigned from the PSL.\textsuperscript{17}

These two strikes were small compared to his final act. In April of 1934,
he presented a paper to the Western Pennsylvania Historical Society entitled,
"History in the Making in Western Pennsylvania." In it, history is described
as the "... interplay of individual interests under the pressure of social
forces... any historical situation is, therefore, a cluster of more or less clearly
defined special interest groups\textsuperscript{18}\) He clearly illustrates that the greatest and
most powerful of these special interest groups is the wealthy elite, and that
the remaining groups exist to support the dominant group. He says that the
elite, being the dominant group, make the history in this world, and that
history, naturally, serves them. He went as far as to say that, "... the power
of these entrepreneurs extends from the economic sphere to social, political,
religious and educational spheres ..."\textsuperscript{19}\) This was considered a direct attack
against Andrew Mellon, who sat on the Board of Trustees at Pitt.

In May of 1934, Turner's contract had been renewed for another year,
but only two months later, after he finished teaching a summer course, he was
released from that contract. To understand the actions that were taken against
Ralph Turner, one must understand the power structure that existed at the
university at that time. John G. Bowman, then Chancellor of the university,
was a very autocratic leader. Upon coming to the university, he censored the
campus paper, \textit{The Pitt Weekly}, outlawed smoking on campus and mandated
that there be no talk of police brutality or the working conditions of local coal
miners. He also demanded that faculty members not become involved in
controversial social or community issues.\textsuperscript{20} His vision for building a great
university was based on the building of structures instead of the building of
a great academic record.\textsuperscript{21}\) He wanted to leave his mark on the university in
a grand way, and under his leadership and micro-managerial direction, the
Cathedral of Learning was built. His authoritarian leadership style can be
most clearly seen in his decision to abolish tenure. In 1921, he discarded the
standing tenure system and instituted a system of one-year contracts that
were to be renewed annually. This gave him unlimited power over the faculty
of the university, and gave him the ultimate authority to fire Turner.

Bowman explained that the reason Turner was being released from his
contract was because he displayed a flippant attitude towards religion in
many of his classes (this was denied by many of his former students).
Bowman openly admitted that he originally renewed the contract because he
was afraid it would bring bad publicity to the university by discussing
Turner's dismissal during the precious "Complete the Cathedral Cam-
He was afraid that the negative publicity would have an adverse influence on wealthy donors.

The Turner case became headline news in Pittsburgh. It interested not only the academic community, but also the religious community, the local government, the local press and the AAUP, who launched an official investigation into Bowman's decision. After much deliberation, Turner was not reinstated at Pitt because the AAUP could find no evidence for or against his dismissal. They did mandate that Bowman revise the tenure guidelines. Also, the AAUP blacklisted the University of Pittsburgh for 13 years as a disciplinary measure for Bowman's heavy-handed leadership.

The Broadening of the AAUP

Five years after the Turner case occurred in Pittsburgh, the AAUP drafted its 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, which still stands as the foundation upon which the AAUP operates. It also carefully explained that when professors:

... speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution. 

As is obvious from this excerpt, the AAUP reiterated that teaching was a position of honor and as such, it should be fulfilled responsibly. It even went so far as to state that professors should not introduce unnecessary elements into their teaching, especially anything that could be considered controversial.

This same document also laid out guidelines regarding academic tenure, an idea that had become intimately related with academic freedom. In the introduction to the section on academic tenure, the document reads,

After the expiration of a probationary period, teachers or investigators should have permanent or continuous tenure, and their service should be terminated only for adequate cause, except in the case of retirement for age, or under extraordinary circumstances ...

Tenure became protection against the infringement of academic freedom rights. The statement never specified the terms of tenure explicitly, but
obviously felt that each university should be clear in every appointment it makes. It states that all dismissals (outside of someone’s retiring/resigning) should be considered by both a faculty review committee and the governing board of the institution. To avoid any confusion and to assure that proceedings are handled judiciously, a complete stenographic record should be taken and made available to the interested parties. By creating such structured tenure guidelines, the AAUP also reinforced their guidelines on academic freedom.

Challenges to academic freedom were not always simply internal institutional problems or local issues; some resulted from nationwide political movements. Joseph McCarthy’s Cold War-inspired attacks effected many educators who were forced from their jobs due to the belief that they were communists and the fear that they would teach Communist doctrines to their students. The Communist Party had long been a part of the academic profession, and there were “… quite a good number of people, for the nations faculties housed hundreds of men and women whom official and unofficial red-hunters were to single out as undesirable … most lost their jobs.” As post war-feelings changed from that of allies to enemies, circumstances became even harder for confirmed radicals on American campuses. It became more difficult for alleged Communists to be hired by a university; Yale President Charles Seymour made this clear with his quote, “There will be no witch-hunts at Yale, because there will be no witches. We do not intend to hire Communists.”

What made these new challenges even more difficult to regulate was the fact that even though the AAUP was made up of a large number of individual professors, it did not necessarily mean that every American university accepted or supported the AAUP’s guidelines. A publication printed at the University of Pittsburgh proves this point. In 1952, the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom at Pitt issued a report, addressed to the university’s senate, regarding academic freedom. The Committee made it clear that although the situation at Pitt was calm, they saw tension elsewhere. Rather than instituting their own guidelines or addressing those laid out by the AAUP, the pamphlet reads more like advice on how to teach and stay out of trouble:

... colleges and universities must develop leadership for the preservation and improvement of the values which it has taken centuries of struggle to establish in our civilization and which are perhaps now, more than ever before, in jeopardy... use disagreements as opportunities for instruction in fundamental facts, principles and values.

This demonstrates the fact that not all, and in fact, probably very few universities at the time, were following the established guidelines regarding academic freedom, but were still operating individually on such matters.
Roy A. Harris was a victim of a McCarthy era attack. Harris, a talented pianist and composer, came to the Pennsylvania College for Women (now Chatham College) in 1951. He was the recipient of a grant from the A. W. Mellon Charitable Trust, which enabled him to participate in the Project in Creative Musical Ability, a joint effort of the college and the community to bring more respected artists to Pittsburgh. Harris composed very nationalistic, very American music and before coming to Chatham, he served as the musical director of the Office of War, wrote the musical theme for the anniversary celebration of West Point and received a citation from the US Department of Treasury, “In recognition of distinguished and patriotic service to our country rendered in behalf of National defense.”

Harris wrote and performed prolifically while at PCW. He took unprecedented steps when he organized the Pittsburgh International Festival of Contemporary Music, which occurred over a five-day period in November of 1952. Composers from all over the world came to Pittsburgh to showcase new works, and several local and college choirs and orchestras also performed. Harris not only organized the festival; he also saw one of his newer works, his 5th Symphony, performed. The symphony, which was completed in 1943, was dedicated to “... our great ally, the United Soviet Socialist Republic...” Michael Musmanno, State Supreme Court Justice-elect, attended the festival (which was held at Carnegie Music Hall) that day. After learning of Harris’ intended dedication, Musmanno ordered that the audience “sit on their hands” after the piece was finished. He actually ordered that no applause be given until Harris had “torn up his dedication.” The audience did not heed his words, and responded to Harris’ symphony with a standing ovation.

What is most interesting about the whole matter is that David Lawrence, Mayor of Pittsburgh, and John Anderson, President of PCW, both of whom knew about the dedication and the fuss Musmanno would make about it, were waiting in an anteroom near the stage, prepared to make a statement on Harris’ behalf. After hearing the positive reaction from the crowd, they decided to ignore Justice Musmanno and returned to their seats.

When Musmanno’s anger regarding the dedication became known to Harris, he argued that the symphony (which was written during the war) was not dedicated to the Soviet government or the Red Army, but rather to the strong and brave Russian people, for “... their strength in war, their staunch idealism for World Peace, their ability to cope with stark materialistic problems of world order without losing a passionate belief in the fundamental importance of the arts.” This did not appease Musmanno, who began to investigate Harris’ past, looking for any other reference to liberal activity or thought.

What he found was that Harris had forged links with 8 different communist-oriented organizations—the Progressive Citizens of America, the Artists Front to Win the War, the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee,
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to name a few. Despite the fact that most of Harris’ involvement was either during the war or not actually confirmed, these things added up. In December of 1952, Musmanno brought the case to the Allegheny County American Legion to be reviewed.

After an emotional 2-hour meeting in February of 1953, the American Legion Committee tabled discussion of the Harris case, placing it first on their agenda for the meeting to be held the following month. The action of tabling the discussion was clearly their way of neither approving nor rejecting the resolution condemning Harris. Despite the ambivalence of the American Legion, Colonel Schenkel, who presided over the meeting, made it clear that he believed Musmanno was launching an unfair attack on Harris.

After the February meeting of the American Legion, Paul R. Anderson, President of the Pennsylvania College for Women, wrote a very descriptive letter, detailing Harris’ career, his level of involvement with each of the eight organizations, and concluded with this final statement: “To have tolerated irresponsible and unstudied charges against a man of this stature is a blight upon our civic morality.” There was not a single mention of actions being taken against Harris, nor even some statement that would claim it ridiculous to take any sort of action against him. Also, Anderson stated that Harris’ record of service to his country far outweighed the complaints against him. The issue was finally resolved at the March meeting of the American Legion, when Musmanno, knowing he could not win, withdrew his complaint. Not only did Harris have the support of Schenkel, but 92 of 112 Legion members voted in his favor in an informal vote. Interestingly, this resolution came after Anderson had already written and circulated his letter professing Harris’ innocence.

The Case of Robert Colodny, The University of Pittsburgh

The Harris case was an early incident in the McCarthy era. The case of Robert Colodny, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh, is known as “the last case of witch-hunting” related to the McCarthy period. When Robert Colodny was appointed head of the History of Science Department at the University of Pittsburgh in 1959, he was very open about his past activities, some of which could be viewed as ‘subversive.’ He had fought with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War and had worked for the Cardenas government in Mexico for nearly three years after returning from Spain in the late 1930s. Dr. Samuel Hays, the History Department Head, ordered that an informal investigation be launched into Colodny’s past activities. The main question was whether or not Colodny’s past involvement would effect his teaching in any way. The faculty members involved in the investigation found no reason to believe that Colodny was in any way a subversive element.
In 1961, Colodny’s past activities were again the focus of attention, only this time on a much larger scale. In 1960, Colodny’s name appeared in an advertisement in *The New York Times* sponsored by the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. Colodny had signed the ad, along with other supporters, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Truman Capote, Norman Mailer and Albert Camus. Upon seeing this, William Gill, a reporter from the *Pittsburgh Press*, requested an interview. On January 16, 1931, the *Pittsburgh Press* printed an article about Colodny’s controversial views about Cuba on the front page. Gill did not simply present what Colodny had told him. Bob Pelligrini, a reporter from *The Pitt News* who did a follow up story on Colodny in 1976, said the following: “What Gill [did write] was a beautiful hatchet job. With all the subtlety of a flying brick, Gill insinuated that Colodny was a communist and had been one for at least 20 years.”40 Colodny was dubbed a ‘Red’ professor immediately, and John T. Walsh, State Representative from McKeesport, took this opportunity to forward his own career goals (he had Mayoral ambitions): he called an immediate investigation into the Colodny case. Right before the article was published, Governor David Lawrence had budgeted for Pitt to receive $4,000. Walsh was quick to voice his opinion:

> If we continue to appropriate funds for education, we must be sure that these funds will be spent properly, and will be channeled as to aid and abet the American way of life and the high ideals and objectives of decent Americans. To allow supposed educational activity to undercut the objective of our total activity, and for the Commonwealth to appropriate funds to institutions harboring leftists who preach pro-Communist doctrines is a woeful waste of our substance.41

With this, John Walsh started another witch-hunt in Pittsburgh.

Again, to understand the outcome of the case, it is vital to understand the power structure at the university. At its head was Chancellor Edward Litchfield, who ran the university much more democratically than Chancellor Bowman had. He changed the school from a “parochial streetcar college into a first-rate center of higher learning.”42 Litchfield oversaw the building of new dormitories, making the university less of a commuter college. He also oversaw the construction of Hillman Library. After realizing what changes were necessary to building a research university, he made them, but never at the expense of teachers or students. Before he arrived, most of the professors employed at the institution held only Master’s degrees, and most had received them from Pitt. Litchfield instituted the Mellon Professorships at the university in order to draw faculty members with Ph.D.’s to Pitt and therefore improve the quality of the faculty.

Litchfield firmly believed in Colodny’s innocence throughout the entire ordeal. Quick to steer the investigation away from state or federal authorities, he took it on as a university responsibility. Although Represen-
tative Walsh protested vehemently, the local authorities allowed this. Litchfield appointed a three-man investigative committee, which included Dr. Robert Olsen, a faculty member, George Lockhart, an alumnus and Phillip Powers, a member of the Board of Trustees, known as the Powers Committee. A local law firm, Eckert, Seamens, and Cherin, who were assigned to collect evidence, aided them. Despite the fact that the investigation was taken out of the public sector, that did not stop the local community from getting involved. People from the religious community to local government officials voiced their opinions on the case. Two Pittsburgh newspapers, the Pittsburgh Press and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, waged editorial wars against each other, each choosing a side.

After several months of investigation, the Powers Committee reported their findings to Litchfield. Litchfield then wrote a letter to Gwilym Price, Head of the Board of Trustees, relaying the committee's findings and his opinion of them. He prefaced the findings with a general statement regarding subversive elements in American institutions of higher education. He balanced this by defending strongly the idea of academic freedom, stating that “... an American university is by definition a place of free inquiry... The University embraces and supports the society in which it operates, but it knows no established doctrines, accepts no ordained patterns of behavior, acknowledges no truth as given.” The letter stated that Robert Colodny was not a Communist, but a fine teacher and an asset to the university. He stated clearly that no action on the part of the university was warranted, nor would any be taken.

The Growing Power of the AAUP: Academic Freedom and the Supreme Court

One of the biggest reasons these cases played out the way they did revolves around the growing strength of the AAUP. When the Turner case occurred in 1934–1935, the AAUP’s most powerful document, the 1940 Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure, had yet to be drafted. At the time, only the 1915 Report of Seligman, a weak document that gained little power throughout its existence, had been written. This cannot be said of the 1940 Statement, which has become an extremely weighty document since its drafting.

An example of the growing power of this document is evident in the case of Jeffrey Keyishian at the State University of New York. This conflict resulted in the case of Keyishian vs. the New York State Board of Regents, heard before the Supreme Court in 1967. It was the first time academic freedom was linked to the freedoms of the first amendment. A faculty member at the State University of New York, Keyishian’s one-year contract was not renewed after he refused to sign a loyalty oath. By refusing to sign the oath, Keyishian and others had committed what the university deemed (contractually) seditious acts. The faculty members sued on the basis that, “... no teacher can know
just where the line is drawn between seditious and non-seditious utterances and acts.' The vagueness of the law and the attendant danger of unknowingly committing a criminal act under the law constricted free speech.” The court decided that:

Our nation is deeply committed to safeguarding academic freedom, which is of transcendent value to all of us and not merely to the teachers concerned. That freedom is therefore a special concern of the first amendment, which does not tolerate laws that cast a pall of orthodoxy over the classroom.

This case was of great importance to the history and development of academic freedom, as it gave the idea of academic freedom a legal basis for the first time. It was also very important in lending the precedent of law to the 1940 Statement.

Another measure of the importance of the AAUP was the growth of its membership. If the AAUP is thought of as a union composed of university professors, it is easy to see that as the union got stronger and gained more members, it was harder to ignore. This made academic freedom, which was their primary concern, a real issue. In 1934, the time of the Turner case, there were 90 active AAUP members at the University of Pittsburgh. By 1961, the time for the Colodny case, there were 223 active members at Pitt. Statistically, these numbers may not be entirely realistic because it is natural to think that as the university grew and hired more professors, the number of AAUP members would grow as well. Yet, considering that two of the cases did occur at the University of Pittsburgh, the growth in the active membership (which is indicative of the growth of the active membership in universities throughout the country) is important.

The growth of the mass media also had an effect on the strength of academic freedom. There are several newspapers and journals solely devoted to the academic profession, including *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *The AAUP Bulletin*. The fact that there are publications devoted to the academic profession is indicative of the fact that issues in academia were becoming more important to a wider group of people. And since each case of academic freedom received more and more media coverage, individual cases were no longer isolated incidents.

Of course, a main factor that cannot be discounted is the individual circumstances of each case. It must be remembered that each had not only different outcomes, but different actors, different conditions and that all three occurred in different eras. These individual factors played a huge role in each case, and cannot be discarded for or overshadowed by larger trends.

The next logical question is how these past events have affected the future of academic freedom, which continues to change to this day. With the advent of political correctness and sexual harassment, academic freedom has
become even more tenuous. There is also a strong debate about whether or not electronic communication can be safeguarded by academic freedom.

As standards in academic freedom continue to change, so will its history. What is clear is that the AAUP is the force regulating academic freedom. Although the AAUP is a very strong organization, its power is not absolute. “Its resources are limited and so are its tactics. All the organization can do is investigate whether a college violated a professor’s due-process rights and censure it when it has.”48 So, although the AAUP is a powerful organization, the absence of academic freedom related incidents should not be considered a foregone conclusion.

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