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History Roundtable on US Universities and the State: Episodes from the Twentieth Century

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Abstract
This roundtable explores four historical episodes in the history of state–university relations in the United States. In doing so, it addresses issues that also figure prominently in present-day debates, including questions of academic freedom and free speech, the state's role in research funding as well as the international features of higher education. Convened by the journal's editor, the roundtable features individual contributions from four historians, each of whom focuses on a particular document and moment in time: a 1912 report from the US Commissioner of Education, Philander Claxton, that indicated a shift towards an internationalization strategy (Charlotte Lerg); a 1915 statement on academic freedom by the American Association of University Professors (Tomás Irish); Vannevar Bush's 1945 report on *Science – the Endless Frontier* (Christopher Loss); and a 'Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students' from 1967 (Kate Ballantyne). Taken together, these pieces point to a wider question – namely the role and public value that different political and academic actors attribute to academic research and higher education – and to the institutions and individuals that are engaged in it.

In April 2025, academic leaders from a wide range of US colleges and universities issued 'a call for constructive engagement', responding to recent actions by the federal government. In doing so, they expressed their alarm at 'unprecedented government overreach and political interference now endangering American higher education'.[1] Indeed, the tense relationship between the second Trump administration and higher education institutions has attracted widespread attention – not just in the United States itself, but also internationally.[2] While evidently shaped by contemporary political forces and interactions, the issues at the heart of the debate

[1] 'Public statement: A call for constructive engagement', 22 April 2025, American Association of Colleges and Universities website, <https://www.aacu.org/newsroom/a-call-for-constructive-engagement> [accessed 18 July 2025].
[2] For some examples from the spring of 2025, see Arnauld Leparmentier, 'Donald Trump décrète la guerre à l'université Columbia, bastion du progressisme aux Etats-Unis', *Le Monde*, 15 March 2025, <https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2025/03/15/donald-trump-decrete-la-guerre-a-l-universite-columbia_6581148_3210.html>; Simon Kuper, 'Donald Trump vs. the universities: How far will it go?', *The Financial Times*, 3 April 2025, <https://www.ft.com/content/2eedfdc9-c8c8-4223-b17d-ca2f3e5e4e2d>; Victor Loxen,

have a deeper history. Our roundtable therefore approaches the current crisis in state–university relations historically. Each contributor explores this subject from a particular twentieth-century vantage point, shining a spotlight on a specific moment of change. Although we are far from offering a comprehensive treatment of this subject, we seek to encourage further reflection on the forces shaping the public role of universities as well as the experiences of the people within them.

As indicated by the 'call for constructive engagement', questions of academic freedom are a fundamental part of the current debate. In the months since college and university leaders issued their statement, various events have reinforced such concerns, for instance the role of government pressure in effecting the resignation of the University of Virginia's president.[3] Unease with, or indeed alarm about, the nature of state intervention reflects a wider issue: in other countries, attacks on the autonomy of universities have been closely entwined with processes of democratic backsliding.[4] In his contribution to our roundtable, Tomás Irish addresses the question of academic freedom with a focus on the First World War, also noting that external pressure went hand in hand with acts of self-censorship.

There is a particular twist to present-day debates, namely that opposing camps claim that they are acting in defence of essential freedoms. Conservative policymakers and commentators have argued that 'woke ideology' – and its manifestation in programmes for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) – has stifled freedom of speech in higher education settings.[5] These arguments are not unique to the United States, as illustrated by their role in 'culture wars' elsewhere.[6] For example, in the history of UK higher education, the contested nature of 'no-platforming' at universities has generated substantial debate since the 1970s.[7] In our roundtable, Kate Ballantyne takes us back to the preceding decade, highlighting how the issue of 'free speech' arose in relation to American student activism. Such a perspective reminds us that

'Harvard in Trumps Fadenkreuz: Der entscheidende Angriff auf die Universitäten', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15 April 2025, <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/debatten/trumps-angriff-auf-harvard-amerikanische-universitaeten-vor-scheideweg-110421492.html>; Jan-Werner Müller, 'Angriff auf den Geist', *Die Zeit*, 24 April 2025, <https://www.zeit.de/2025/17/universitaeten-usa-donald-trump-regierung-hochschulen-harvard>; 'The Guardian view on Trump vs. universities: Essential institutions must defend themselves, *The Guardian*, 25 April 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/apr/25/the-guardian-view-on-trump-v-universities-essential-institutions-must-defend-themselves> [all sites accessed 18 July 2025].

[3] Robert Reich, 'The Trump administration pushed out a university president – Its latest bid to close the American mind', *The Guardian*, 7 July 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jul/07/james-ryan-resignation-university-virginia-trump> [accessed 21 July 2025].

[4] Ioannis Grigoriadis and Ese Işık Canpolat, 'Elite universities as populist scapegoats: Evidence from Hungary and Turkey', *East European Politics and Societies*, 38/2 (2023), pp. 432–54; Zsolt Enyedi, 'Democratic backsliding and academic freedom in Hungary', *Perspectives on Politics*, 16/4 (2018), pp. 1067–74; Tom Ginsburg, 'Academic freedom and democratic backsliding', *Journal of Legal Education*, 71/2 (2022), pp. 238–59; Selin Bengi, 'Democratic backsliding and universities: Between control and resilience', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 55/3 (2023), pp. 528–36.

[5] For views from two conservative think tanks, see e.g. 'What's driving the free-speech crisis on college campuses', The Heritage Foundation, 8 April 2022, <https://www.heritage.org/education/commentary/whats-driving-the-free-speech-crisis-college-campuses>; Adam Kissel, 'Campus free speech: A cultural approach', The American Enterprise Institute, 19 November 2020, <https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/campus-free-speech-a-cultural-approach/>. In return, political measures against so-called 'woke ideology' have themselves caused concern in terms of their implications for freedom of speech, as indicated by responses to Florida's Individual Freedom Act (commonly known as the 'Stop WOKE Act'): American Association of University Professors, 'Florida's "Stop WOKE" Act sabotages higher education', 23 June 2023, <https://www.aaup.org/news/floridas-stop-woke-act-sabotages-higher-ed> [all sites accessed 21 July 2025].

[6] Charlotte Lydia Riley (ed.), *The Free Speech Wars: How Did We Get Here and Why Does It Matter?* (Manchester, 2021).

[7] Evan Smith, *No Platform: A History of Anti-Fascism, Universities and the Limits of Free Speech* (Abingdon, 2020).

academic freedom, like other freedoms throughout history, is shaped by rivalling claims to authority.[8]

Struggles for equality, mobilization on international causes and debates about freedom of speech have been prominent, and often entwined, features of student activism at different points in history. During the 1960s, campaigners expressed their support for African American civil rights, protested the Vietnam War and articulated visions of a more democratic university.[9] In more recent years, DEI-related concerns have also figured prominently within campus-based activism.[10] Meanwhile, when it comes to international affairs, it has been in one particular case – namely the pro-Palestinian solidarity movement, with campus-based encampments as its tangible expression, that has attracted particular attention.[11]

From one angle, the pro-Palestinian protests seem to perpetuate a wider tradition of student involvement in international solidarity campaigning.[12] Like earlier generations, young activists have experienced multiple clashes with university administrations and political authorities. And, as has been the case with other international causes, such activism – both in the pronouncements of its protagonists and of its critics – tends to get associated with discourses of equity and with concerns about freedom of speech (and its limits). Yet, the recent wave of activism has also triggered very specific allegations not just against the protesters themselves, but against their institutions: according to multiple branches of the federal government, universities and colleges have failed to protect Jewish students from antisemitism.[13] Universities themselves have engaged with both internal and external criticisms on this matter. For instance, a recent task force at Harvard University has acknowledged a rise in campus-based antisemitism, noting that, by the time of the Hamas attacks on 7 October 2023, one could already observe 'a campus with growing animosity against Israel and suspicion, if not downright hostility, towards Israelis, Jews, and others

[8] For an earlier example, see Charlotte Lerg, 'Academic freedom in America: Gilded Age beginnings and World War I legacies', *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 17/4 (2018), pp. 691–703.

[9] See, e.g., Martin Halliwell and Nick Witham (eds), *American Politics, Protest and Identity* (Edinburgh, 2018); Iwan Morgan and Philip Davies (eds), *From Sit-Ins to SNCC: The Student Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s* (Gainesville, FL, 2012). For work that situates US protest within inter- and transnational contexts, see Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956–1976* (Oxford, 2007); and Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton, NJ, 2012).

[10] Robert Rhodes, 'Student activism, diversity, and the struggle for a just society', *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 9/3 (2016), pp. 189–202.

[11] Erica Chenoweth, Soha Hammam, Jeremy Pressman and Jay Ulfelder, 'Protests in the United States on Palestine and Israel, 2023–2024', *Social Movement Studies*, advance access online, 18 October 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2024.2415674>. Such encampments also sprang up in other countries – see for instance the British case: Josh Freeman, '"There was nothing to do but take action": The encampments protesting for Palestine and the response to them' (HEPI Report 185), *Higher Education Policy Institute*, <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Hepi-Report-185_There-was-nothing-to-do-but-take-action-1.pdf> [both sites accessed 24 July 2025].

[12] For examples of student involvement in international solidarity campaigning, see also examples from West Germany and Britain: Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC, 2012); Jodi Burkett, 'The National Union of Students and transnational solidarity, 1958–1968', *European Review of History*, 21/4 (2014), pp. 539–55.

[13] 'Additional measures to combat anti-Semitism', The White House, 29 January 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/additional-measures-to-combat-anti-semitism/>; 'Federal task force to combat antisemitism announces visits to 10 college campuses that experienced incidents of antisemitism', U.S. Department of Justice, 28 February 2025, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/federal-task-force-combat-antisemitism-announces-visits-10-college-campuses-experienced>; 'U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights sends letters to 60 universities under investigation for antisemitic discrimination and harassment', U.S. Department of Education, 10 March 2025, <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-educations-office-civil-rights-sends-letters-60-universities-under-investigation-antisemitic-discrimination-and-harassment>. For concerns about the nature of university protest from non-government sources, see for instance the survey of the Anti-Defamation League, 'Anti-Israel activism on U.S. campuses 2023–2024', <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/anti-israel-activism-us-campuses-2023-2024> [all sites accessed 21 July 2025].

sympathetic to Israel'.[14] At the same time, a separate Harvard enquiry concluded that in a polarized environment, Muslim and Arab students have also faced prejudice and silencing, generating among them 'a palpable sense that free speech and academic freedom are under grave threat and that many forms of student activism may effectively be dead'.[15]

Claims about antisemitism have been used to justify funding cuts and the cancellation of government contracts for universities such as Columbia and Harvard.[16] These measures have extended to efforts to stop Harvard's ability to enrol students from abroad.[17] The latter aspect draws attention to another aspect, namely the insecure status of international students – a constituency whose members are subject to the actions of state agencies, far beyond those of their US peers. In recent months, there have been various cases of international students who have been arrested, placed in detention centres and seen their visas revoked because of their activism.[18] Moreover, in May 2025, the US State Department announced a temporary pause to the issuing of student visas, based on a desire to vet the political views of future incoming students more thoroughly.[19]

A broader historical perspective is instructive because current policies on international students seem to contrast with longstanding policies. For much of the post-1945 period, the United States have been a major destination for international students. For instance, in 1968, 28.3% of the world total of foreign students studied in the United States – a larger share than the next five host countries combined.[20] Importantly, this development was underpinned by both state-led and university-based initiatives aimed at attracting students to the United States.[21] It also reflected the growing attraction of US higher education for foreign student populations as a marker of academic excellence, social prestige and cultural capital. Such endeavours reflected a perception that higher education constituted a powerful vehicle for cultural diplomacy, especially in the context of Cold War competition.[22] Charlotte Lerg's

[14] Harvard University, *Final Report: Presidential Task Force on Combating Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Bias* (29 April 2025), p. 23, <https://www.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/FINAL-Harvard-AMAAAPB-Report-5.7.25.pdf> [accessed 21 July 2025].

[15] Harvard University, *Final Report: Presidential Task Force on Combating Anti-Muslim, Anti-Arab, and Anti-Palestinian Bias* (29 April 2025), p. 6, <https://www.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/FINAL-Harvard-AMAAAPB-Report-5.7.25.pdf> [accessed 21 July 2025].

[16] The responses of both institutions have varied: see Robert Tait, 'Columbia adopts controversial definition of antisemitism amid federal grants freeze', *The Guardian*, 16 July 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jul/16/columbia-antisemitism-trump-administration-funding>; Justine McDaniel and Susan Svrluga, 'Trump vs. Harvard: A timeline how the fight escalated', *The Washington Post*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/interactive/2025/timeline-trump-harvard/> [both sites accessed 21 July 2025].

[17] Kayla Epstein, 'Trump administration ends Harvard's ability to enrol international students', *BBC News*, 22 May 2025, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c05768jmm11o> [accessed 21 July 2025].

[18] Prominent cases have included Rümeysa Öztürk, a Turkish PhD student at Tufts University, who had co-authored an opinion piece in a campus newspaper; and Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian green-card holder who had played a leading role in pro-Palestinian protests at Columbia University. For an example of news coverage regarding visa cancellations, see Madeline Halpert, 'Mario Rubio says US revoked at least 300 foreign students' visas', *BBC News*, 27 March 2025, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c75720q9d7lo> [accessed 21 July 2025].

[19] Nadine Yousif, 'US resumes student visas but orders enhanced social media vetting', *BBC News*, 18 June 2025, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgrxyx0qr7eo> [accessed 21 July 2025].

[20] UNESCO, *Statistics of Students Abroad, 1962–1968: Where They Go, Where They Come from, What They Study* (Paris, 1973), p. 43.

[21] For examples on the extensive literature on this subject, see Sam Lebovic, 'From war junk to educational exchange: The World War II origins of the Fulbright Program and the foundations of American cultural globalism, 1945–1950', *Diplomatic History*, 37/2 (2013), pp. 280–312; Anton Tarradellas 'Pan-African networks, Cold War politics, and postcolonial opportunities: The African Scholarship Program of American Universities, 1961–75', *The Journal of African History*, 63/1 (2022), pp. 75–90.

[22] Ludovic Tournès and Giles Scott-Smith, 'A world of exchanges: Conceptualizing the history of international scholarship programs (nineteenth to twenty-first centuries)', in Ludovic Tournès and Giles Scott-Smith (eds), *Global*

contribution to our roundtable draws attention to an earlier point in the twentieth century, when few students from abroad chose the United States as their destination. Lerg notes conscious efforts to raise the international profile of US universities. It remains to be seen how far the current measures will undermine the international attraction of American institutions. However, there are potential implications not only for US 'soft power', but also for colleges and universities that have received substantial amounts of income from international student fees.[23]

In the current situation, financial matters have also come up in another respect, namely changes to research funding. Both the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) have attracted attention for their decision to terminate grants for projects with DEI dimensions.[24] Research on climate change is another major area subjected to grant cancellations.[25] Yet the spectre of funding freezes and cuts for these agencies mean that, beyond targeted measures, state funding for research is set to decline. The humanities and social sciences are particularly vulnerable in this context: NSF funding for the social sciences was a contested matter even in earlier periods, and the NEH has been subject to calls for its abolition altogether.[26] Within our roundtable, Christopher Loss revisits a key moment associated with movement in the opposite direction: he traces the debates that in 1945 resulted in a shift from a philanthropy-based system to one that saw substantial government investment into research.

Our roundtable is organized chronologically. Each of the four contributors starts by focusing on one document that illuminates a particular aspect of state–university relations. As such, the short pieces cover the international features of US higher education before 1914 (Charlotte Lerg), academia during the First World War (Tomás Irish), transformations in science funding after the Second World War (Christopher Loss) and, finally, campus protests in the 1960s (Kate Ballantyne). Our discussion has some inevitable limitations: different types of institutions, notably denominationally affiliated religious schools, have had distinct relations with federal authority. Moreover, in the US context, the governments of individual US states evidently have their own relationships with, and policies towards, higher education

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Exchanges: Scholarships and Transnational Circulation in the Modern World (New York, 2018), pp. 1–29. On rival efforts by the Soviet Union to attract foreign students, see the work of Constantin Katsakioris, e.g., 'The Lumumba University in Moscow: Higher education for a Soviet – Third World alliance, 1960–91', *Journal of Global History*, 14/2 (2019), pp. 281–300. For the role of postcolonial states in these contexts, see, e.g., Daniel Laqua, 'The politics of transnational student mobility: Youth, education and activism in Ghana, 1957–1966', *Social History*, 48/1 (2023), pp. 87–113.

[23] John Bound, Breno Braga, Gaurav Khanna and Sarah Turner, 'A passage to America: University funding and international students', *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 12/1 (2020), pp. 97–126; Brendan Cantwell, 'Are international students cash cows? Examining the relationship between new international undergraduate enrollments and institutional revenue at public colleges and universities', *Journal of International Students*, 5/4 (2015), pp. 512–25; Niall Hegarty, 'Where are we now – The presence and importance of international students to universities in the United States', *Journal of International Students*, 4/3 (2014), pp. 223–35.

[24] Riley Beggin, 'National Science Foundation eliminates hundreds of grants day after director resigns', *USA Today* website, 26 April 2025, <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/04/26/national-science-foundation-doge-cuts/83282784007/>; 'NEH implementation of recent executive orders', National Endowment for the Humanities, <https://www.neh.gov/executive-orders> [both sites accessed 24 July 2025].

[25] James Temple, 'The Trump administration has shut down more than 100 climate studies', *The MIT Technology Review*, 2 June 2025, <https://www.technologyreview.com/2025/06/02/1117653/the-trump-administration-has-shut-down-more-than-100-climate-studies/> [accessed 29 July 2025].

[26] On social sciences and the NSF, see Mark Solovey, *Social Science for What? Battles over Public Funding for the 'Other Sciences' at the National Science Foundation* (Cambridge, MA, 2020). On the current position of the NEH, see Jennifer Schuessler, 'DOGE demands deep cuts at Humanities endowment', *New York Times*, 1 April 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/01/arts/trump-doge-federal-cuts-humanities.html>; Federation of State Humanities Councils, 'Trump proposes elimination of National Endowment for the Humanities, jeopardizing local cultural programs nationwide', <https://www.statehumanities.org/trump-proposes-elimination-of-neh/> [both sites accessed 21 July 2025].

institutions – an aspect that goes beyond the remit of our roundtable. Taken together, however, the perspectives that we have brought together in this roundtable do highlight one crucial aspect: the dynamism, reach and prestige of US higher education have developed over time, not just because of geopolitical circumstances and developments in the worlds of research and scholarship, but also because of specific political decisions. But while various factors combined to inject US academia with particular dynamism, vigour and international appeal on past occasions, there is a risk that other constellations might undermine it in the future.

America docet? Higher education and the beginning of US global power (*Charlotte A. Lerg*)

In 1908, the Dean of Philosophy at the University of Berlin entertained an auditorium of colleagues with a vision of a future in which the United States had taken the lead in global research and higher education. The world would then no longer look to Germany, as, he insisted, it had for most of the nineteenth century. Instead, the old doctrine 'Germania docet' ('Germany teaches') would be replaced by 'America docet'.[27] The audience snickered, and the Dean himself had intended to make a joke, but just one generation later, by 1938, the United States had indeed become the number one destination of international student flows.[28] In subsequent years, the Second World War drove academic talent from occupied Europe across the Atlantic – continuing a movement that had begun with the exodus of academics from Nazi Germany.[29] Moreover, especially after the US entry into the conflict, the war effort created a close bond between the US government and academic research institutions. After the war, politicians such as Democratic Senator J. William Fulbright viewed higher education and academic exchange as promising tools for advancing the international standing and influence of their nation.[30] The United States had risen to a global power, and the Cold War was shaping up to become a major ideological conflict that needed intellectual ammunition and made the campus a central stage for official US cultural diplomacy, despite the red-baiting of the academic establishment during the McCarthy era.[31]

Before the First World War, the situation was quite different, and universities were not the obvious choice for the US government to project the national image abroad or to host the world at home. Even domestically, higher education was struggling to make it onto the national agenda. By 1869, a short-lived Department of Education, created immediately after the Civil War, had already been demoted again to a Bureau within the Department of the Interior, and it was mostly concerned with schooling.[32] General

[27] Dean Adolf Wagner as quoted in Friedrich Schmidt-Ott, *Erlebtes und Erstrebtes: 1860–1950* (Wiesbaden, 1952), p. 111.
[28] Teresa Brawner Bevis and Christopher J. Lucas, *International Students in American Colleges and Universities: A History* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 61.
[29] Mary Nolan, *The Transatlantic Century: Europe and America, 1890–2010* (Cambridge, 2012); Burghard Ciesla and Matthias Judt (eds), *Technology Transfer out of Germany after 1945* (London, 2013)
[30] Lonnie Johnson, 'The Fulbright Program and the philosophy and geography of US exchange programs since World War II', in Tournès and Scott-Smith (eds), *Global Exchanges*, pp. 173–87.
[31] On US academia and McCarthyism, see, e.g., Philip Deery, '"Running with the hounds': Academic McCarthyism and New York University, 1952–53", *Cold War History*, 10/4 (2010), pp. 469–92; Julian Nemeth, 'The case for cleaning house: Sidney Hook and the ethics of academic freedom during the McCarthy Era', *History of Education Quarterly*, 57/3 (2017), pp. 399–42.
[32] Thelin has suggested that around 1910, the 'almost total lack of federal involvement in colleges and universities, with the important exception of the Morrill Act and related land-grant legislation' had 'mixed' consequences: while 'the lack of a federal ministry of education probably deprived colleges and universities of both government funding a source of substantive regulation', the absence of 'government intrusion' also enabled institutions 'to innovate': John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore, MD, 2004), pp. 153–4.

education – though just as much an arena of various contestations and exclusion – was widely cast as the backbone of democracy. By contrast, college and even postgraduate 'university work' only gradually evolved from a luxury for the bookishly inclined to a tool of social mobility for the sons (and some daughters) of the aspiring middle class.[33] Nonetheless, in the eyes of Elmer Brown, education commissioner between 1906 and 1911, higher education bore great potential. Tirelessly highlighting its wider role in society, he advocated for greater public investment, both in terms of funding and in terms of personnel. When the Association of American Universities started an initiative for the standardization of degrees, particularly with an eye to international comparability and recognition, Brown saw his opportunity.[34] He subsequently announced that the Bureau of Education would take over evaluation processes from the Association of American Universities.[35] Arguably, it had been the international angle that had moved decision makers. US society was engaged in efforts to define a particular 'American' identity while simultaneously trying to emphasize its White European cultural roots, particularly the 'Anglo-Saxon' line.[36] Educators, politicians and philanthropists alike deemed it important that US institutions of higher education measure up to their European counterparts, as they felt it was time the United States took its place among what contemporaries would have called the 'civilized' nations.[37] However, at the same time, the (neo-)imperialist endeavours the United States pursued in Cuba, the Philippines, Puerto Rico and parts of Latin America revealed the other side of the ideology that revolved around a rhetoric of 'civilization'.[38]

When Brown's successor Philander Claxton compiled the annual report of the Education Commission for the year June 1910–June 1911, it included an entire section dedicated to 'International Relations'.[39] The document thus offers insights into the US government's take on global networks in higher education in the early twentieth century, and it illustrates that not all international ties were equal. Much was made of the inclusion of US students in the Oxford-based Rhodes Scholarship programme, which was extolled for promoting 'a racial patriotism broader than national boundaries, and international fellowships based on culture and the social contact'.[40] German, Scandinavian and French professorial exchanges had been established predominantly in public–private endeavours. While they were graciously endorsed by government officials either in the diplomatic corps or in the Bureau of Education, their initiative and execution tended to lie with individual universities, foundations, or associations such as the Germanistic Society or the American-Scandinavian Society, often a mix of academic and ethnic representation. Interestingly, Japan was the only

[33] D.O. Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration, 1915–1940* (Ithaca, NY, 1986).

[34] In 1900, fourteen US universities had bounded together to form the American Association of Universities – see Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, p. 110. For more detail on the Association's work to make US degrees internationally comparable and compatible, see Charlotte Lerg, *Universitätsdiplomatie: Wissenschaft und Prestige in den transatlantischen Beziehungen 1890–1920* (Göttingen, 2019), pp. 72–4.

[35] Brown quoted in Department of the Interior, *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year ended June 30, 1911*, vol. I (Washington, DC, 1912), p. 43.

[36] Srjdan Vucetic, *The Anglosphere: A Genealogy of a Racialized Identity in International Relations* (Stanford, CA, 2011).

[37] Recognition was, for instance, a key motive for staging of the World Congress of Science within the context of the St Louis World's Fair in 1904. See Lerg, *Universitätsdiplomatie*, pp. 161–87.

[38] A. G. Hopkins, *American Empire: A Global History* (Princeton, NJ, 2018), esp. Part II on 'Modernity and imperialism 1865–1914'.

[39] Department of the Interior, *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, pp. 291–8.

[40] Ibid., p. 33. For more on the Rhodes scholarships, see Tamson Pietsch and Meng-Hsuan Chou, 'The politics of scholarly exchange: Taking the long view on Rhodes Scholarships', in Tournès and Scott-Smith (eds), *Global Exchanges*, pp. 33–49; Thomas J., Schaeper and Kathleen Schaeper, *Rhodes Scholars, Oxford and the Creation of an American Elite* (New York, 2010).

non-European partner where academic relations followed a similar pattern.[41] These professorial exchange programmes were predominantly intended to bring prominent European scholars to US institutions; student mobility followed a different dynamic. American students still tended to flock to European centres of higher learning such as Paris, Berlin, or Oxford, though, except for the Rhodes scholars, they usually organized these educational travels privately. There was no structural, let alone a reciprocal, infrastructure. Few European students studied in the United States.

There were, however, considerable numbers of foreign students coming to US campuses – by 1912, their number was already four times higher than in 1905, when their number was first recorded.[42] Not without geopolitical interests of their own, some states, including Venezuela and the Ottoman Empire, directly financed select students to study at US universities.[43] More consequential were those programmes rolled out by the US government or at least with considerable support from Washington. These included the *Pensionado* programme, which from 1901 onward brought Filipino students to the United States.[44] In 1911, similar arrangements were being planned for Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rico scheme – as Anne Tolman Smith, a foreign education specialist at the federal Bureau of Education, proclaimed enthusiastically – would 'make it possible for a bright pupil in the remotest barrio within the island to be carried through to graduation at the best university in the United States'.[45] This example also reminds us that the discourse about Americanism and Americanization was by no means limited to university education. At home, school students were taught a racialized or even racist world view; meanwhile, abroad, English language teaching became a tool in neo-imperialist endeavours.[46] Claxton's commission report also pointed to about 800–900 Chinese students then studying at US universities.[47] About half of them had come privately or through religious networks, the other half held scholarships from the so-called 'Boxer Indemnity Fund'. In the wake of the Boxer uprising (1899–1901), the United States had agreed that a large proportion of the reparation costs China had been ordered to pay would be transmuted into funds to sponsor students to study in America.[48] The fact that Chinese students were exempt from the harsh anti-Chinese immigration policy of the time highlights the immense importance the Roosevelt government, in particular, attached to this diplomatic outreach via higher education.

The development of international relations in US higher education thus reflected the twin trajectories of the nation's ambitions on the international stage. Couched in a language of culture and civilization, it strove for recognition among the

[41] For overview, see Department of the Interior, *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, pp. 291–4. For further examples and conceptual thoughts on patterns of US academic exchange programms, see, for example, Richard Garlitz and Lisa Jarvinen (eds). *Teaching America to the World and the World to America: Education and Foreign Relations since 1870* (London, 2012).

[42] Paul A. Kramer, 'Is the world our campus? International Students and US global power in the long twentieth century', *Diplomatic History* 33/5 (2009), pp. 775–806, at 788.

[43] Regarding Venezuela, see Bevis and Lucas, *International Students*, p. 63. For the Ottoman Empire, see Department of the Interior, *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, p. 292.

[44] For more details on the *Pensionado* programme, see Bevis and Luke, *International Students*, pp. 74–5.

[45] Department of the Interior, *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, p. 431.

[46] The parts of the Educational Report concerned with schooling show this quite clearly. For more on this subject, see, e.g., Donald Yacovone, *Teaching White Supremacy: America's Democratic Ordeal and the Forging of Our National Identity* (New York, 2022). Regarding language teaching, see, e.g., Karen Leroux, 'Sarmiento's self-strengthening experiment: American schools for Argentine nation-building', in Richard Garlitz and Lisa Javinin (eds), *Teaching America to the World and the World to America: Education and Foreign Relations since 1870* (Basingstoke, 2012). With a focus on a later period, see Diana Lemberg, 'The weaponization of language training in U.S. foreign relations, 1941–1970', *Diplomatic History*, 45/1 (2020), pp. 106–31.

[47] Department of the Interior, *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, p. 297.

[48] Bevis and Lucas, *International Students*, pp. 64–5.

European powers, while paternalist notions of social and cultural 'uplift' informed the programmes in areas where the American empire was unfolding.[49] Both strands of the discourse were deeply rooted in a heavily racialized world view, but at the heart of these internationalization efforts on US campuses were visions of US global power spurred by something other than military might and economic prowess. As with Trump, 'soft power' has gone out of style, so has the international campus – indeed, quite the contrary, it now seems to be considered a threat.

Universities, academic freedom and the challenge of the First World War (*Tomás Irish*)

The First World War demonstrated how quickly accepted norms of academic freedom could be challenged and overturned in response to wider political issues. In 1915, the recently founded American Association of University Professors (AAUP) published its statement on academic freedom.[50] It declared that universities could not perform their functions without 'enforcing to the fullest extent the principle of academic freedom', primarily, 'freedom of inquiry and teaching'.[51] However, by March 1918, around eleven months after the US entry into the conflict, the AAUP produced a new statement that undermined many tenets of its previous position. The updated statement asserted that because the US was now at war, members of the academic profession had new obligations. It set out a number of instances whereby the dismissal of an academic might be permissible, which included the promotion of anti-enlistment propaganda or support of the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary) by those of either German or Austrian birth or parentage.[52]

The First World War was central to these developments. Even prior to formal American entry into the conflict in April 1917, universities occupied a peculiar position in the context of a world war because of their international connectedness. Many American academics had either been educated or retained close ties to their counterparts in Germany.[53] The networked nature of higher education meant that many American scholars and institutions felt pressure to clarify their position and were often emotionally, intellectually and politically committed to the war effort long before April 1917.[54] Scholars took sides early on in the conflict because of their belief that the war was a moral cause and because of their revulsion at atrocities alleged to have been committed by the German army in Belgium in autumn 1914.[55] While the majority of American scholars were sympathetic to the allied cause, a small minority, with close connections to Germany, were not. At the same time, the often strident mobilization of scholars in Germany tended to alienate their erstwhile colleagues across the Atlantic.

[49] Charlotte Lerg, 'Epitome: Student cosmopolitanism and the dawn of the "American Century"', in Heather Ellis and Tamson Pietsch (eds), *A Cultural History of Higher Learning*, vol. 5 (London, forthcoming 2025).
[50] 'General Report of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure: Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association: December 31, 1915', *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors*, 1/1 (1915), pp. 15–43.
[51] Ibid., p. 29.
[52] Carol S. Gruber, *Mars and Minerva: World War I and the Uses of the Higher Learning in America* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1975), pp. 166–8; Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* (New York, 1955), p. 504.
[53] Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), p. 85; Emily J. Levine: *Allies and Rivals: German-American Exchange and the Rise of the Modern Research University* (Chicago, IL, 2021).
[54] Tomás Irish, *The University at War: Britain, France and the United States, 1914–25* (Basingstoke, 2015), p. 27.
[55] See John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven, CT, 2001).

American entry into the First World War in 1917 was transformative. It was accompanied by a government-led desire to create a uniformity of opinion in support of the war and a rise in anti-German sentiment across much of the country, with, for example, the teaching of German proscribed by many schools.[56] US universities and colleges took different forms and included elite privately-funded colleges and universities alongside land-grant institutions which received state funding. The vast majority of institutions threw themselves behind the war effort. This took the form of the creation of government-funded Student Army Training Corps (SATCs) at 540 campuses across the United States, the creation of 'war issues' courses, and the decision of many individual scholars to apply their learning and expertise to war issues.[57] In the words of historian Walter Metzger, American participation in the conflict led to the emergence of a 'cult of loyalty' in support of the national effort.[58]

US participation in the war, and the transformation of public opinion in support of the conflict, undermined the recently codified definition of academic freedom. By 1918, college campuses had become, in the words of David Kennedy, 'pre-induction centres where young men could be temporarily held prior to call-up for active military duty'.[59] A number of institutions, including Columbia and the University of Illinois, explicitly suspended academic freedom for the duration of the war.[60] In the summer of 1917, Nicholas Murray Butler, the president of Columbia University, prohibited staff from speaking 'in opposition to the effective enforcement of the laws of the United States'.[61] Columbia fired two high-profile members of staff in 1917, ostensibly due to their position on the war, although longstanding personal antipathies also informed the decision. At least twenty scholars in total, at institutions including the universities of Michigan, Texas, Oregon, Wisconsin, Nebraska and Minnesota, lost their positions for reasons linked to their attitudes towards the war.[62]

The contest over academic freedom did not end with the war, and there were some cases of scholars losing their positions for 'disloyalty' as late as 1920.[63] However, given the relative autonomy of many American universities and colleges, some were able to pursue their own path. Harvard University, and its president, A. Lawrence Lowell, steadfastly defended academic freedom during and after the war, including the institution's prominent German staff.[64]

The issues raised by the First World War were thus not a direct result of the university–state relationship; given the proliferation of private funding to institutions, the US state did not oversee or control higher education as such. However, the conditions created by the state, notably in attempts to ensure that American entry into the conflict had the strong backing of public opinion, occasioned a dramatic transformation in attitudes towards academic freedom. These pressures would recur later in the century against the backdrop of other conflicts and societal upheavals.[65]

[56] David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford, 1980), p. 54.
[57] Thelin,: *A History of American Higher Education*, pp. 200–1; Ronald Schaffer, *America in the Great War: The Rise of the Welfare State* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 127–42.
[58] Hofstadter and Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States*, p. 496.
[59] Kennedy, *Over Here*, p. 57.
[60] Irish, *The University at War*, p. 97.
[61] Ibid., p. 96; Peter M. Rutkoff and William B. Scott, *New School: A History of the New School for Social Research* (New York, 1986), p. 2; Hofstadter and Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States*, p. 499. For more on Butler, see Michael Rosenthal and Nicholas Miraculous, *The Amazing Career of the Redoubtable Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler* (New York, 2006).
[62] Gruber, *Mars and Minerva*, p. 174.
[63] Irish, *The University at War*, p. 124.
[64] Ibid., p. 154.
[65] There is a vast literature on this longer history. See, for example, Hofstadter and Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States*; Louis Menand ed., *The Future of Academic Freedom* (Chicago, IL, 1996);

Has the 'endless frontier' closed? (*Christopher Loss*)

In July 1945, Vannevar Bush, director of the wartime emergency Office of Scientific Research and Development, submitted *Science – the Endless Frontier* to new president Harry S. Truman. Bush wrote the report to convince his boss that the federal government's support for scientific research and development should not stop after the fighting did.[66] Groundbreaking medical and scientific discoveries – from penicillin, antimalarial drugs and vaccines to radar, sonar, the proximity fuse and the soon-to-be-dropped atomic bomb – had helped the United States win the war, and only continued government funding for science could ensure a lasting peace. The radically plural, agency-driven model that eventually emerged was not exactly what Bush had in mind. He wanted a government foundation, not a maze of competing bureaucracies. But the end result of generous support deriving from a range of competing government agencies, institutes, and foundations exceeded his wildest imagination. For the past eighty years, a version of Bush's federal-academic partnership has fuelled economic growth, technological innovation and social mobility, forging notions of the US research university as the 'world's best'.[67]

How much longer the United States can lay claim to this title is anyone's guess. Executive orders from the Trump White House have dramatically altered the US higher education landscape. With the wave of his pen, President Trump has shuttered entire agencies and fired thousands of personnel. He has revoked some US student visas and had their legal status rescinded. He has terminated billions in existing research contracts and cut future research budgets. He has raised the endowment tax, penalizing research-intensive, albeit wealthy, universities, while decreasing access to Pell Grants and to student loans and loan repayment options, penalizing poor students and families who rely on federal aid instruments to finance their education.[68] All of which invites the question: has the once endless frontier of American science finally begun to close?[69]

To answer this question requires an understanding of the research economy prior to the Second World War – a time before vast federal patronage opened up the science frontier. Back then, the American research university was considered good, not great. Annual federal research funding peaked at $70 million for all activities, dominated by the public land-grant colleges and universities and by the government's network of research bureaus and institutes, like the Bureau of Mines, the National Institutes of Health and the US Geological Survey, among others.[70] Most scientists worked in university labs where they privileged basic research and relied on private donations and grants from charitable organizations and foundations, including the

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Matthew W. Fink and Robert C. Post, *For the Common Good: Principles of American Academic Freedom* (New Haven, CT, 2009).

[66] Vannevar Bush, *Science – the Endless Frontier* (Washington, DC, 1945).

[67] Henry Rosovsky, 'Our Universities Are the World's Best', *New Republic*, 13 July 1987, pp. 13–14. According to the recent rankings by the Center for World University Rankings, US universities occupy 18 of the top 25 spots: 'Global 2000 List by the Center for World University Rankings', <https://cwur.org/2025.php> [last accessed 13 July 2025]. For a tally of the research university system's major accomplishments, see Jonathan R. Cole, *The Great American Research University: Its Rise to Preeminence, Its Indispensable Role, Why It Must Be Protected* (New York, 2009).

[68] Lee Gardner, Brock Read and Rick Seltzer, 'What Republicans' sprawling policy bill means for higher ed', *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1 July 2025, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/what-the-senates-sprawling-policy-bill-means-for-higher-ed> [last accessed 13 July 2025].

[69] 'How universities became so dependent on the federal government', *New York Times*, 18 April 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/18/us/trump-universities.html>; Karin Fischer, 'The wrecking of American research', *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 7 July 2025, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-wrecking-of-american-research> [both sites last accessed 13 July 2025].

[70] 'The evolution and impact of federal government support for R&D in broad outline', National Academy of Sciences (1995), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK45556/> [last accessed 16 July 2025].

Carnegie Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, to pursue it. Industrial labs at DuPont, Westinghouse and General Electric, meanwhile, underwrote applied work used for commercial purposes. Some scientists moved between the ivory tower and the corporate world, including Bush, but most hung their hat at one place or the other. For good reason, then, historian Roger Geiger called this the era of the 'privately funded university research system'. Private because most university-employed scientists were uncomfortable with government aid, especially given the negative experiences of the First World War, and worried that it might corrupt the quest for truth, or worse, lead to a government takeover of the scientific establishment.[71]

The Great Depression triggered the end of the old privately funded research system and the emergence of the taxpayer supported public–private system that we know today. The economic crisis spurred emergency federal aid for construction projects, agricultural extension and student work-study that ultimately led to even greater government influence over research and discovery at public *and* private universities during the Second World War, when total federal outlays eclipsed $4 billion, and kept growing.[72] Importantly, the wartime system designed by Vannevar Bush was contractually based – what political scientist Don Price memorably dubbed 'federalism by contract' – to honour the science community's preference for professional autonomy and for decentralized government relations.[73] This was why Bush wanted his fellow scientists to work in their own labs whenever possible, far from the reach of government agents. And why he also ladened each contract with indirect costs that turned sponsored work into a profitable one for participating institutions, allowing them to pour money back into lab space and programs to educate more scientists and generate more science – to make science endless. Bush thought that the future of the country depended on it. 'Scientific progress', implored Bush, 'is one essential key to our security as a nation, to our better health, to more jobs, to a higher standard of living, and to our cultural progress'.[74]

Now, America's scientific progress is at an impasse. The government has decided to offer less support with more strings attached, breaking the original terms of the contractual relationship between universities and the state. Will the partnership revert to some version of the pre-war privately funded model? Or will it move forward, slowly, in its current diminished state – doing less research with less funding and fewer personnel? Or will it evolve into something else entirely? Only time will tell. One thing is for certain: it will never be the same.[75]

Student rights in the US South (*Kate Ballantyne*)

Amidst the wave of campus protests against controversial speakers and racial injustice in the 2010s, and the most recent protests over Israel's war in Gaza in spring 2024, a host of national commentators urged for clarity on students' rights and the

[71] Roger L. Geiger, *To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900–1940* (New York, 1986), pp. 174–245; and Roger L. Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities since World War II* (New York, 1993). On the founding of the modern research university, see Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago, 1965).

[72] Christopher P. Loss, *Between Citizens and the State: The Politics of American Higher Education in the 20th Century* (Princeton, NJ, 2012), pp. 53–87.

[73] Don K. Price, *Government and Science: Their Dynamic Relation in American Democracy* (New York, 1954), pp. 65–94.

[74] Bush, *Science – The Endless Frontier*, p. vi.

[75] On the problems with a privately funded research model, see Mariana Mazzucato, *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Private vs Public Sector Myths* (new edn, New York, 2024 [orig. 2013]).

meaning of academic freedom in this context.[76] This was not too dissimilar from the concerns raised by worried administrators and professors in the wake of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement of 1964 or the Speaker Ban Controversy in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, from 1963 to 1966.[77] Indeed, in 1967, representatives from five organizations issued a 'Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students'. This document was signed by the AAUP, the Association of American Colleges (now the American Association of Colleges and Universities), the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, the National Association of Women Deans and Counselors, and the United States National Student Association (now the United States Student Association).[78] Its creation needs to be seen in the context of both the civil rights movement and mounting protests against the American war in Vietnam. One 1968 publication described the document as 'perhaps the most important, most uncommunicated, and least understood document extant in higher education'.[79]

The Joint Statement, which has since been revised, has surprising relevancy today despite the significant changes to higher education over the last sixty years. It provides guidance for how higher education institutions, in terms of academic freedom, should provide support for students, and what students in turn should expect. This includes, but is not limited to, freedom of speech, freedom of inquiry and freedom of association, both on and off the campus. The point I am focusing on here is the idea of 'freedom of inquiry and expression', as the document phrases it.[80] The document sets out the guidance around inviting speakers to campus in this way: 'Students should be allowed to invite and to hear any person of their own choosing… It should be made clear to the academic and larger community that sponsorship of guest speakers does not necessarily imply approval or endorsement of the views expressed, either by the sponsoring group or by the institution'.[81] The intent of the document was clear: the students' right to hear speakers from outside the campus was a basic right under their freedom of speech.

But there was a gap between the intent of the document and the reality it hoped to create a roadmap for. If we look at 1960s campus protests across the United States – beyond the most prominent cases in the northeast and on the West Coast – we can identify shared national patterns and motivations that were not always, or not directly, connected to Vietnam, international politics, civil rights or Black Power. Instead, it was issues tied to *in loco parentis* (or the university acting on behalf of the parent) that

[76] David Smith and Steven W. Thrasher, 'Student activists nationwide challenge campus racism – and get results', *The Guardian*, 13 November 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/nov/13/student-activism-university-of-missouri-racism-universities-colleges>; Chelsie Arnold, '6 conservatives sparking free speech debates on campus', *USA Today*, 14 March 2017, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/college/2017/03/14/6-conservatives-sparking-free-speech-debates-on-campuses/37428875/>; 'Rights expert urges universities to respect pro-Palestinian protests', United Nations, 4 October 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/10/1155376> [all accessed 15 July 2025].

[77] For Berkeley, see Robert Cohen, *Freedom's Orator: Mario Savio and the Radical Legacy of the 1960s* (Oxford, 2009); and for Chapel Hill, see William J. Billingsley, *Communists on Campus: Race, Politics, and the Public University in Sixties North Carolina* (Athens, GA, 1999).

[78] George Washington University, Special Collections Research Center, American Association of University Professors Records (MS2079), Series 21, Committee S. on Students 1924–1974 (inclusive), Box 2: Committee S 1967–1969, Folder 3: Council Resolution Re-Disruption (Committee S & Student Statement), 'Resolution Adopted at the Council Meeting of the American Association of University Professors October 29, 1967', dated 30 October 1967. The Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students is available on the AAUP website: <https://www.aaup.org/reports-publications/aaup-policies-reports/policy-statements/joint-statement-rights-and-freedoms> [accessed 15 July 2025]. For more on the statement, see Henry Reichman, *Understanding Academic Freedom* (2nd edn, Baltimore, MD, 2025), pp. 28–9, 209–11.

[79] Tulane University Special Collections, Tulane University Office of the President Records (UA-RG-2), Herbert E. Longenecker Papers, Box 37, Student Life: Dean Stibbs, 1967–68, 'Administrator's Handbook: Understanding the Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students', *College and University Business*, 1968.

[80] See section 2 (headed 'Freedom of speech and expression'), Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students.

[81] Ibid.

energized the largest numbers of students.[82] This aspect highlights the limitations of any national statement when so much of such activism was influenced by local actors and issues.

Local controversies over invited speakers to campus were central to 1960s student-organized demonstrations across the South. The controversy in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, led to communists Herbert Aptheker and Frank Wilkinson speaking from a sidewalk across the street from the campus in March 1966, and the speaker ban's withdrawal in 1968 following student protests.[83] Similar controversies occurred at Louisiana State University, Western Kentucky University, the University of South Carolina and Vanderbilt University during the late 1960s.[84]

Things have not changed in the past six decades as much as one might think. During alt-right leader Richard Spencer's speech at Texas A&M in December 2016, the university organized its own counter-event called 'Aggies United'.[85] When presented with a request from the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) organization to hold a protest about the war in Gaza in April 2024, Tulane University originally granted permission until the SDS chapter asked for community members outside the university to also be allowed to attend, at which point Tulane rescinded its permission. The event was held on public, nearby Freret Street instead.[86] Especially at a time of seemingly more frequent and more nationally-acknowledged student activism, the Joint Statement's importance continues to last.

[82] See Katherine J. Ballantyne, *Radical Volunteers: Dissent, Desegregation, and Student Power in Tennessee* (Athens, GA, 2024). For other relevant studies on southern and midwestern student activism, see Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York, 1998); William J. Billingsley, *Communists on Campus: Race, Politics, and the Public University in Sixties North Carolina* (Athens, GA, 1999); Gregg Michel, *Struggle for a Better South: The Southern Student Organizing Committee, 1964–1969* (New York, 2004); Joy Ann Williamson, *Radicalizing the Ebony Tower: Black Colleges and the Black Freedom Struggle in Mississippi* (New York, 2008); Jeffrey A. Turner, *Sitting in and Speaking out: Student Movements in the American South, 1960–1970* (Athens, GA, 2010); Robert Cohen and David J. Snyder (eds), *Rebellion in Black and White: Southern Student Activism in the 1960s* (Baltimore, MD, 2013); Sarah Eppler Janda, *Prairie Power: Student Activism, Counterculture, and Backlash in Oklahoma, 1962–1972* (Norman, OK, 2018); Robbie Lieberman, *Prairie Power: Voices of 1960s Midwestern Student Protest* (Columbia, MO, 2004); Thomas Weyant, *Peace in the Mountains: Northern Appalachian Students Protest the Vietnam War* (Knoxville, TN, 2020).

[83] Jock Lauterer, 'Photo, Frank Wilkinson at the McCorkle Place wall, 2 March 1963, Chapel Hill, N.C.', UNC Libraries, <https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/items/show/130>; Maximilian Long, 'Speaker ban law', North Carolina History Project, <https://northcarolinahistory.org/commentary/speaker-ban-law/> [both sites accessed 9 July 2025].

[84] Joseph A. Fry, *The American South and the Vietnam War: Belligerence, Protest, and Agony in Dixie* (Lexington, KY, 2015), p. 191.

[85] Shannon Najmabadi, 'Texas A&M spent more than a quarter-million dollars to draw attention from Richard Spencer's 2016 visit to campus', *The Texas Tribune*, 9 March 2018, <https://www.texastribune.org/2018/03/09/texas-m-spent-more-quarter-million-dollars-draw-attention-richard-spen/> [accessed 15 July 2025].

[86] Tulane University Special Collections, University Archives Vertical Files, Students: Groups: Political/Protest, Students for a Democratic Society, Michael A. Fitts, "A Message to the Tulane Community", 3 May 2024.