

The Chronicle of Higher Education

The Campus in the Second Age of Trump: What to Expect, and What to do Next.

The re-election of Donald J. Trump was a seismic event for the United States and for the world. Its consequences will be felt everywhere — and not least on our campuses, which have become fraught symbols of the hyper-polarization, anger, and fear characterizing American politics today. We asked eight thinkers what to make of the election. Here's what they told us.

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We Will Have to Resist

BY JOAN W. SCOTT

If the Trump administration fulfills only some of its threats to turn higher education into a factory producing loyal patriots whose allegiance is to the regime in power, we will have to resist.

Their plan is out there: in Christopher Rufo's advocacy, in the 2024 platform of the Republican Party, in Donald Trump's social-media posts, and in the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025. They will use Hillsdale College as the model for a white-supremacist, Christian-influenced curriculum; proclaim our national story to be one of uninterrupted civilizational progress; and purge any critical voices from the faculty and students of our colleges and universities.

They will hound us with subpoenas and investigations, deprive us of what little funding the government now provides, and seek to replace serious educational leaders with political hacks (Florida is the model). They will resurrect longstanding Republican plans to dismantle the federal Department of Education, seek to merge it with, perhaps, the Department of Labor (vocational training would then be the name of the game) or the Department of Defense (which will still need foreign-language instruction to carry out its diplomatic and spying missions), and they will eliminate the accrediting agencies that have maintained a modicum of

responsibility for academic practices. They will surely also level a test of neutrality on the institutions they seek to control.

In the face of this authoritarian — if not fascist — takeover of what has long been the pride of this nation, institutional neutrality is no longer a feasible or ethical position for the leaders of higher education. The question of institutional neutrality is very much at issue these days — I'm part of a subcommittee of the American Association of University Professors' Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure that is writing a statement on it. As an internal institutional practice, it is a complicated issue with many pros and cons. But as a public practice, it cannot serve the interest of higher education any longer. The requirement of institutional neutrality is the Trumpist way of canceling those of us who are committed to the critical role education must play in a democracy.

With the election of Donald Trump, we have arrived at the moment of exception to the principle of institutional neutrality outlined in the University of Chicago's 1967 Kalven Report. Implicitly recalling the capitulation of the likes of Martin Heidegger to Nazi power, the report noted: "From time to time, instances will arise in which the society, or segments of it, threaten the very mission of the university and its values of free inquiry. In such a crisis, it becomes the obligation of the university as an institution to oppose such measures and actively to defend its interests and its values." How many administrators will have the courage to join with Wesleyan University President Michael S. Roth, who, in the weeks before the election, argued that, in the face of those calling for the destruction of higher education, institutional neutrality is neither an ethical nor a responsible political position? My despair in the current moment is that too few of our current college and university administrators will follow his lead.

Joan W. Scott is an emerita professor at the Institute for Advanced Study.