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BOOK REVIEW: NO UNIVERSITY IS AN ISLAND
By Cary Nelson, New York University Press, \$27.95

By Donna L. Potts

As the economy weakens and as faculty grow increasingly entrepreneurial in their approach to the profession, threats to academic freedom are certain to escalate. At my own university, I recently discovered precisely how threatened faculty members feel, when my colleagues were reluctant to sign off on my letter to the local newspaper that merely explained what faculty members do (in response to the governor's call for faculty members to work 10% harder). I had always assumed that faculty members would consider it their responsibility to convey accurately to the public what their jobs entailed, especially when these jobs appeared to be under siege. Cary Nelson's timely book eloquently examines the evolution of the concept of academic freedom as well as the cultural context for the threats that have undermined academic freedom at my university, as well as hundreds across the nation, citing the 2006 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Garcetti v. Ceballos*, which ruled that a public employee's statements about official responsibilities and administrative policy are not shielded from disciplinary action by employers, and thoroughly exploring the chilling climate that led to the decision, as well as its continuing ramifications for faculty.

Nelson begins by defining academic freedom, a concept that he rightly recognizes is lost on most faculty members. He cites AAUP's 1915 Declaration of Principles, which states that Academic freedom "comprises three elements: freedom of inquiry and research; freedom of teaching within the university or college, and freedom of extramural utterance and action..." His first chapter, "The Three-Legged Stool" examines the integral relationship between academic freedom, shared governance, and tenure, arguing that "you cannot really have either professional authority or academic freedom if you can easily be fired or not renewed... But you do not have functioning academic freedom unless the faculty is in charge of the curriculum and the hiring process and can thus control who does the teaching and what they can teach."

Perhaps the most useful chapter in Nelson's book is the second one, "How a Campus Loses its Way: Sixteen Threats to Academic Freedom," among which are instrumentalization (the notion that higher education is first and foremost job training), which ultimately hampers a democracy's capacity to prepare its citizens for full participation in

it; contingency (contingents, who now do two thirds of all college teaching, have no real protection from threats to academic freedom), Authoritarian administration, circumvention of shared governance, and claims of financial crisis.

The remainder of the book continues to explore these threats; to explain collective bargaining's role in protecting academic freedom (whereas faculty handbooks may not be recognized as legally binding documents in court cases, contracts certainly are); and to emphasize AAUP's continuing central role in protecting academic freedom. Nelson reflects on his efforts during his presidency to make AAUP--"the only effective voice for all the faculty that speaks comprehensively on matters of principle and policy"-- more visible among faculty. His final chapter, "Evolution or Devolution," speculates on the future of AAUP, noting that although its founders could not possibly have anticipated the range of threats to academic freedom in the twenty-first century, its 1915 Declaration defines faculty interests and responsibilities as eloquently as anything ever written on the subject. AAUP's continued success, however, ultimately depends on faculty (whose membership in AAUP has declined by more than half since 1970) recognizing their shared responsibility: "Intellectuals need to abandon their guilt about principled activism on behalf of their peers."

Universities in Kansas have certainly encountered most of the threats to academic freedom that Nelson describes, and they, like universities nation-wide, include their fair share of faculty members who appeal to AAUP when their academic freedom is violated. Yet Nelson notes that 80-90% of these faculty are not AAUP members, nor are they likely to join AAUP in appreciation for its efforts on their behalf. These individuals fail to recognize that academic freedom is worth protecting not only for the sake of their own careers, but ultimately, of society as a whole. Nelson's book should thus be read with care by faculty, shared with their administrators, and taken to heart by all of us who have benefited, directly or indirectly, from the principles that AAUP has enshrined and continues to protect.

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