SUMMIT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND ACADEMIC AUTONOMY

Tuesday 4 December, The Auditorium, China in the World, Building #188, Fellows Lane

Wednesday 5 December, The Hall, University House, 1 Balmain Crescent Acton
PROGRAM:

*Please note this program may be subject to change.

Tuesday 4 December
The Auditorium, China in the World, Building #188, Fellows Lane

5pm Introduction and welcome
Professor Mike Calford, ANU Provost
Keynote
Professor Glyn Davis AC, Distinguished Professor
Q and A
Moderated by Professor Jacqueline Lo, ANU Academic Board Chair

Wednesday 5 December
The Hall, University House, 1 Balmain Crescent

8.30am Introduction and welcome
Professor Brian P. Schmidt AC, ANU Vice-Chancellor
8.35am Welcome address
Professor the Hon Gareth Evans AC QC, ANU Chancellor
8.50am Scene setting
Professor Mike Calford, ANU Provost

9am The relationship between academic freedom and freedom of speech

Freedom of speech and academic freedom are different, though related, concepts. However, in debate inside and outside universities, they are often conflated. What is the relationship between the two, and what does that mean for universities?

Chair
Professor Brian P. Schmidt AC, ANU Vice-Chancellor
Panellists
Mr Gary Humphries, Former ACT Senator and Chief Minister
Professor Dianne Nicol, University of Tasmania
Professor Adrienne Stone, University of Melbourne
Ms Eleanor Kay, ANU student

10.15am Morning tea

10.30am How should universities protect academic autonomy?

Universities are designed to be places of robust critical inquiry, where we advance humankind through the exploration of new ideas, revisiting old ideas and challenging norms. However, universities do not operate separate from our wider society, and are heavily reliant on funding from government, students, industry, philanthropic interests and foundations. They are also amongst our most heavily regulated institutions. How do universities maintain their autonomy and the autonomy of their academic community in an increasingly tight financial and regulatory environment?
Who decides what research is conducted?

Research takes place in a complex environment of ideas, ethics, funding, institutional history, accepted truth and societal expectations. Decisions about what research is conducted are made at intersection of this complexity. How do we decide what is researched, and do those decisions dampen academic freedom?

What threatens academic freedom?

A decline in trust of expertise, contested ideas of truth, students demanding speakers not be heard, provocateurs demanding an unchallenged platform for their ideas, public and peer judgements on the legitimacy of research and its interpretation, academic freedom constrained by universities in search of marketing slogan, allegations or foreign influence, and public judgments on what and how universities teach. Is academic freedom really under attack and what does the threat really look like?

Final talk and summit wrap up: The future of research and a commitment to academic freedom

Summary

Closing
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