

I. **Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Accountability**  
(Preliminary notes)

A. **Introduction**

1. Unprecedented Criticism despite central role

Unprecedented torrent of criticism directed at higher ed today.

Books

Articles

Media--file nearly 2" think. Articles and editorials from prominent critics now daily....even the President of the United States.

Seeming paradox that as academia is more engaged in society, more a critical actor, economy, culture, etc., it is increasingly criticized.

But perhaps not so paradoxical.

Perhaps our very engagement in public life and affairs carries with it new perils, new responsibilities and new public accountability / Increased engagement and dependence on resources is drawing us into public eye/political arena. When we take on more mundane engagements, we are subject more to mundane standards.

Important to assess the costs and benefits, not go forward blindly and compromise precious freedoms

Issues are difficult and complex

Increased influence/power/engagement of academic institutions and scholars means that forces are at work to harness academic institutions for non academic ends

We must be more alert to the implications of our engagement in the world, more responsible for our own decisions and accountable for them to ourselves, academia and society.

2. Importance of Academic Values and Traditions

We have evolved a set of traditions and values that over many centuries have attracted people to universities and command their loyalty and devoted service

Educated generations of humanity to value learning as well as to prepare for vocations

Research has advanced human understanding of world and expanding knowledge exponentially

This has command support from societies of many religious, political and ideological orientations

Tried and true methods and standards/

(Use AAUP early statement here)

Theodore Roosevelt at Durham, 1905: "You stand for those things for which the scholar must stand if

he is to render real and lasting service (to the state). You stand for academic freedom, for the right of private judgment, for the duty more incumbent upon the scholar than upon any other man, to tell the truth as he sees it, to claim for himself and to give to others the largest liberty in seeking after truth." (quoted by Terry Sanford in Pullias Lecture)

Fundamental principle is the application of reason to human affairs/Pursuit of truth through reason

scientific method/experimentation

Also methods of non scientific scholarship that call for objective, fair and open assessment of ideas, performance, people

Merit is the ideal whether in judging ideas or performance

Commitment to openness, to debate, to free inquiry--only when ideas can be freely explored, can we hope to find truth

While not fundamental principle, mutual respect and civility, a willingness to respect and consider views of others, is needed for conduct of teaching and research.

We cannot condone those who would shout down a person or idea or who think that opinions should be imposed on others by intimidation, ideas should be judged by the number of their adherents rather in whether they are right.

Over centuries we have found that our objective of seeking truth and our means of seeking it have stood the test.

We haven't achieved perfection but we do have a way of considering questions and problems that yields insight and lights the way to new and better questions. Bok quote "our methods give a sense of what is probably right and do identify what is incorrect. Note: check quote)

What binds us together then is the search for truth, the tested methods, principles and values of scholarship.

Society supports these values because universities over the centuries and across the globe

have managed to teach succeeding generations a respect for the pursuit of truth and an ability to take up the quest themselves and because

Our methods and principles have succeeded in increasing our store of knowledge and understanding over the centuries

We have learned that free inquiry, reason, debate are the best road to truth.

Society has accepted this and has respected the value of academic freedom that is the essential prerequisite to learning and teaching.

**How did we get here.**

Issue is less to respond to critics than to understand underlying issues affecting academic values and relations to society/Critics threaten to undermine us just when we are most needed. Key issue is to understand and renew concept academic freedom in the context of our own times. What exactly are our special freedoms and responsibilities as academics?

**a. Cloistered beginnings**

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For centuries, academic institutions have been sheltered from very much public attention or criticism

Many traditions and values have medieval/ religious origins

Pursuit of learning for its own sake in many traditions is priestly function or at least sacred and set aside from ordinary affairs and object of respect and support.

We in universities have always kept about us this aura of the “sacred” that has been accepted and respected by society/.....at least when it thought about us at all which frankly wasn’t all that often.

Sacred aura derives from unfettered pursuit of truth which is seen by society as something above and apart from the concerns of ordinary life but inherently valuable.

**b. As the ad says “you’ve come a long way, baby**

In fact, universities must be doing something right to be so durable and today arguably one of the few --or only-- truly universal human social institution.

Today, academia has proved to be one of the most durable and pervasive human institutions spanning nearly eight centuries and found around the globe.

See Eric Ashby for quote

What explains the power of the institutional model that has sustained support of the public in so many parts of the world for what we do?

If we understand the source of our strength, perhaps we can see better what might be undermining it today.

c. Sources of institutional strength/fundamental value to society of what we do

Ashby -- Universities are universally accepted as the best means for social investment in human resources-- teaching and research--investment in the future.

Society believes in and supports our fundamental mission of teaching and research/entrusts to us its children, its future

Respects our autonomy when we stick to mission  
Respects our values as institutions and as academics when we stick to mission and values

Values are the glue that bind us together and account for our successful adaptation throughout the centuries

Considering the differences among us and the disputatious nature of what we do, if we didn't collectively subscribe to certain fundamental principles and values, we could not long survive.

And this is what troubles me as I speak to you today.

Are universities, is our university, succumbing to breakdown of consensus that afflicts society at large.

This wouldn't be surprising for we are not fully apart from society but it is cause for us to stop and reflect and to try to reclaim /sustain what is most valuable in our heritage and most essential to our future.

We owe this to ourselves and our students and the public that supports us and we owe it to those who come after us.

**C. Academic freedom is the core value that accounts for our value to society? Without it, we cannot freely search for truth in teaching and research.**

Academic Freedom is not in the constitution and figures in law but not as clearly defined right

(Note Bollinger here: "(Academic Freedom) is a value that exists independent of law.")

Academic freedom is supported by Constitutional rights such as those embodied in First Amendment at least in public universities (don't apply in private institutions but nonetheless the freedoms have been perhaps better safeguarded in them.)

But legal definitions though important are not the bedrock of academic freedom.

Most significant underlying social value of academic freedom is the time tested proposition that free inquiry is the best road to truth.

Academic freedom is too precious to leave to lawyers and politicians. Only we in the academy, only faculty, ultimately can define and defend it.

Academic Freedom more in the nature of a compact between society and academic institutions/a matter of faith and trust/temptingly fragile bond and easily broken by either side.

A compact not for short term benefits (and we make a profound mistake if we suggest expediency as a rationale) such as immediate payoffs e.g., cures for a disease, or economic development, but for longer term gains in knowledge and understanding. The deeper quality of life is benefited by the pursuit of learning.

**D. Therefore, threats to academic freedom are threats to our essence whether internal or external.**

Threats to Academy Freedom--external

Over centuries there have of course been continuing threats to academic freedom from many external religious, political and other sources.

In America, there have been regular assaults on academic freedom largely coming from external zealots who would impose a particular belief or orthodoxy on scholarship and teaching--they are still very much at work and a threat to our institutions and schools

Recently we were reminded of the external threat to the academy represented by McCarthyism. SACUA is to be commended for its concern to recall the excess and wrongs of that disgraceful era in national life. (In principle it is laudable, too, that you were concerned to right wrongs of that time although I myself have a grave concern about the implication that it is possible to judge the complexities of events *ex post facto* without some sort of due process that would attempt to arrive at a reasoned and fair judgment. Problem is that as institutions we are not well equipped to serve as courts of law or arbiters of political issues.)

In Soviet Union, there was the imposition of ideology on science--Lysenko which set science and the Soviet academy back and discredited institutions.

In other regions, faculty and students have been killed, universities closed, libraries burned. Threats to academic freedom/free inquiry are alive and well in our world today.

**Free inquiry cannot be tolerated by tyrants or mobs.**

Many other examples of attempts to impose orthodoxies on academy by political and religious authorities. Over the longer term these have failed because of resisting strength and courage of scholars and eventual understanding of societies that if they want to educate their young to be civilized citizens of the world and want to advance learning as part of the world civilization, they must grant freedoms to scholars and their institutions.

No cause for complacency. It is a delicate balance and like all liberties, it requires eternal vigilance to maintain.

We must not abuse academic freedoms or take them for granted/the price is not just the loss of our particular institutional freedoms and values but erosion of one of humanities finest institutional achievements.

We in universities are privileged but with our privileges come important responsibilities. Therefore, we must constantly alert to threats from right, left and center/from inside and outside our walls.

### **Threats from within the Academy**

#### Conformity

Bollinger "Common to think of threats to academic freedom as something that needs to be protected from (external) official interference or sanctions." ....On the other hand, academic freedom can be inhibited by very subtle interventions, by the atmosphere in which people work, think and teach."

Conformity: "Little actions here and there, insignificant in themselves, may together add up to a feeling that the better court is to conform, to avoid risks in research and teaching."

In this connection, we must be aware of pressures to conformity in admissions, hiring, advancement and conformity in ideas including disciplinary conformity

Conformity can be fostered by the need to please other external masters--civic, commercial, media

But conformity can also be internally generated by erosion of common values of free inquiry, civility due to zealotry from within.

#### Politicization

Politicization: The safeguard for academic freedom has been the principle that academics would conduct their teaching and research ideally free of bias. (We may not achieve this standard but it is one we agree to strive for.) Once scholarship is politicized/ becomes a partisan issue/an arena for political activism/we have undermined a principle argument for academic freedom.

Other forces can threaten the academy, they are internal academic freedoms came in the late 60's and early 70's.

Students and faculty, frustrated at inability to affect national foreign or domestic policy through traditional political activity, abandoned it and turned inward, instead, to universities to make them an arena of intense political conflict. In pursuit of good ideals, all aspects of the the academy are seen to be fair political targets for revolutionary change. No area of university life was left untouched.

The debate about some important questions of human rights and justice and other critical issues was important and positive but the methods employed have left permanent scars and deep confusion about the relation of ends and means. (Some seem to imagine that the

test of an idea is not its merit but the sincerity of the holder)

Some in universities came to accept the truly pernicious idea that a just end, justified the antidemocratic means used to achieve it.

Must leave to scholarship the assessment of that period for academia

But institutions obviously still feeling effects.

Serving too many masters

Temptation: To the extent that academia is overextended and external engagement is at expense of educational and research mission we have a crisis of values that feeds a deeper public unease, rejection or mistrust concerning values and direction of American higher education.

erosion of academic integrity from pressure to produce/have we sacrificed quantity for quality? Short term intellectual payoffs for lasting ones

Extremism

**When extremists are at work of whatever persuasion, truth and freedom are usually their first victims.**

The erosion of fundamental values and purposes and which disrupts the delicate balance necessary for rational consideration, climate that discourages risk taking within and brings with it the increasing loss of public confidence and support.

Debate within the academy has generally been conducted according to time honored scholarly standards and values

Now attempts to influence academia are not by argument, not by persuasion, not by quality of ideas

From Left

Instead, now we see anti-intellectual, anti rational polemic, see a few efforts to impose mob rule

we see intimidation of individuals, of speakers, of scholars and their work

topics are declared off limits, so are individuals and their work declared unacceptable

intolerance and ad hominem attacks, personalizing of issues, vilification of individuals

From Right

And this isn't the only threat to freedoms. Let me also note that we see cruel racial epithets, sexual exploitation and harassment, narrow minded and cruel bigotry, prejudice and defense of unfair privilege.

We also see narrowminded conformity and unwillingness to accept larger more generous and cosmopolitan scholarly vision

**E. Current assault on academy/values is two-fold from those who would undermine and exploit academic institutions, freedoms and values for their own ends:**

•anti-pc'ers

•pc'ers

**Anti-PC'ers**

First, I think it is vitally important that we hear our critics. Their ideas as any others should be freely and rigorously examined.

Granted, a good many of them are extremists, polemicists, and have own political and opportunistic agenda.

Too often what is being written is incredibly superficial, factually incorrect, opportunistic and wildly over-stated

Review selected critics and quotes by PC critics here

D'Souza

A lot of this is pure opportunism and ideological guerrilla warfare.

Just another chapter in the contemporary media debasement of public institutions and discussion of important issues through hype, sound bite simplification, pandering to fads and to basest prejudices. Always on the lookout for a new lightening rod for public dissatisfaction/frustration. This time around we are it.

Part of this anti-pc agenda is old fashioned reactionary. Through polemic try to stop greater inclusiveness of people and ideas and to hold on to privileges of status quo.

The critical thing is not to respond according to theiragenda, not to be distracted from basic debates.

Nonetheless, we would be in grave danger if we don't heed a basic message: What these critics are saying is striking a deep vein of public discontent with academia.

Also demonstrates a growing and worrisome gulf between intellectuals/opinion makers and academics. We have to few allies to alienate important opinion-makers.

We also cannot ignore the fact that there are also a growing number of concerned faculty, students, administrators and other educators and leaders who are concerned that we are losing touch with ourselves and our mission.

They are echoing the famous philosopher Pogo who said: "We have seen the enemy and he is us."

Real issue is values. The public is disillusioned, believes we have lost touch with our mission and values.

If we want to counter critics, it is on values that we should stand.



**Promoting Status Quo:** At the same time, must also note that some anti-pcer's oppose any and or all adaptation to diversity and throw up a smoke screen of polemic to disguise their true aims which are often to protect the status quo.

### So called pc'ers

Really encompasses many things and views

Extremists/right, left and center have always been with us but perhaps never so aggressive and hostile as now. What is different now?

The painful truth is that critics of the politically correct don't lack examples of destructive, even ludicrous, extremism/zealotry on campuses, indeed on our own campus. These don't at all represent the majority. Actually only a small part of community.

- Attempts to impose orthodoxy/ prevent or undermine true debate

- Use of Correct Language

- Sensitivity Training--attempts to teach people not to engage in racism, sexism, etc--but can be seen also as attempt to impose orthodoxy

Perhaps we need to focus more on actual behavior not thoughts/absence of a code is impediment to this

- Required courses on diversity

Need to distinguish between attempts to promote political orthodoxy and legitimate need to educate about other peoples and cultures, nature of prejudice and its role in social and economic relations, etc. Had disciplines been more open to new ideas, this would be a regular part of ongoing campus dialog and not politicized.

- Intimidation of professors who "teach wrong" or research "wrong"

Note case of professor whose research proposal was illegally taken from his desk by students who disagreed with his premise in effort to undermine chances with sponsor.

Note Farley  
Labeling of people and personalizing debate

- Censorship of campus speakers or groups and individuals

either by not inviting controversial speakers at all, by shouting down those with whom they disagree

example: Chief Justice at Law School

Attempts to achieve ends by intimidation and bullying

Regent's meetings

In other words, free speech for me but not for you.

Disrespectful and destructive behavior that personalizes debate through attacks on individuals

Attempts to impose orthodoxy in hiring/professional advancement

- Propagandizing--in classroom abusing privileges of academic freedom or in research

Propagandizing/failure to honor ideal of fair hearing for all sides of issue--attempts to indoctrinate or propagandize students in the classroom.

For example, I was deeply disturbed to learn that students were shown only one side of the argument about the Gulf War by some teaching assistants and faculty. Whatever our personal views on that event, the classroom is not the place for propaganda for one opinion. This is a violation of students rights and undermines credibility respect for academic profession. It is one thing to express ones own views and label them as such and also to then note opposing views, it is quite another to endorse political positions and open the classroom to outright propaganda

Sanford again in Pullias: Referring to AAUP declaration of 1915: "academic freedom....in the context of a teachers responsibility to the student, both in helping lead the student in his won inquiry, and in setting the example. The report suggested that academic freedom meant the setting forth, without suppression or innuendo, the opinion of other investigators. " ....professor "should above all remember that his business is not to provide his students with ready made conclusions but to train them to think for themselves."

Of course, in the end, I have confidence in our students ability to arrive at their own opinions despite misguided though well intentioned efforts to indoctrinate them.

(Actually, I believe that propagandizing more often than not leads to backlash and therefore has an effect opposite of the one intended.)

- Policies/codes/sanctions to define and enforce ban on racially --etc--insensitive speech

At Michigan student policy is "interim" and this is deliberate student'

Faculty sexual harassment policy--difficult matters/potential for abuse but can't deny that abuses are occurring and they are damaging to individuals and to social fabric of trust  
Need to raise the standard of civility/respect so that such policies are unnecessary.

Need to open up discussion on policy issue so that all sides are heard.

•Politicizing the curriculum and research by right--Alan Bloom and by left, half baked Marxist efforts to denigrate Western tradition in favor of third world studies

Critics cite excesses of new fields-- Women's Studies Black Studies, etc. and some proponents are more polemicists than scholars but must also recognize the very considerable contributions and achievements of these fields which challenge disciplinary orthodoxy, and bring fresh perspectives, challenge established paradigms. This is what academic work is about and we should welcome the fundamental debate it brings. Invigorates as long as we are free to consider merit of ideas.

•Affirmative Action policies--preferential treatment of minorities, women in recruitment, admissions, hiring, advancement

UM has nothing to hide or be ashamed of. We will benefit from understanding and debate of our ends and means. Perhaps there is a better way to achieve our goals or even to define them. Let us all speak openly and argue from the facts not prejudice.  
Note facts of minority admissions and graduation here

Critics claim that Affirmative action actually promotes increasing segregation/balkanization/ separate systems of services and policies to serve special interests

Also suggestion that academics apply different standards of judgment to grading or consideration of PC ideas.

Important to debate the basis for academic judgments. No propositions should be off limits. But leave the propaganda out of it.

A lot of this is not new just more strident and overtly political.

Puritan heritage is apparent in need to separate the saved from the damned--the correct from the incorrect and then to try to silence or exile the incorrect.

Half baked interpretations of Marxist theory that reduce all intellectual questions to simplistic expressions of power.

How can scholars deny the importance for creativity, of ideas so powerful that they can change the world?

Of course, there is value in looking at issues of power in the academy, and scholars should be free to express their views, their ideologies freely.

What is not acceptable is the attempt to impose views/ideologies on the institutional of academic or on others within it through intimidation, derision, shouting, disrespect for views and rights of others

Other pressures from within that also undermine academic freedom and inquiry

Market--conformity from self imposed censorship to please internal or external audiences

Intellectual Orthodoxies--conformities imposed by disciplinary orthodoxies or funding agencies or administrative bias that subtly or not so subtly operate against risk taking and unfettered inquiry

#### **F. Academia facing difficult issues and choices/Polemics obscure real and important issues**

Privileges based on Responsibility/Accountability

University is paying for extremists from both pc and anti pc camp.

Creating climate in which it is increasingly difficult to discuss and debate openly critical issues before us.

This threatens to undermine our support with key constituencies and thus our very foundation.

PCer's trivialize and obscure fundamental issues /anti pcer's take advantage to try to intimidate us from coping with fundamental issues. Both undermine climate and values necessary for rational discussion.

Superficial polemics and orthodoxies on all sides, obscures the real issues we ought to be discussing and debating openly and vigorously among ourselves and with larger society.

At bottom, much of the debate reflects a deep and abiding tension between fundamental principles of liberty and justice that both bedeviled and energizes our political system. □ too important to trivialize. Need disciplined reflection that cannot happen amid all the noise and hoopla.

Academia must defend its fundamental values and freedoms: We are engaged in debate about critical issues but it will be useless and even destructive if we cannot agree to adhere to our basic values. If we don't then we can be sure that there will be many more critics where these came from and it won't be long before institutional freedom and autonomy is eroded beyond reclamation.

Need to debate critical Issues and problems but within the context of our values and traditions. Sorting out and evaluating ideas is what we do best.

What is the value of academic freedom to the faculty. Studies repeatedly show that what faculty value most are autonomy and freedom, intellectual interchange and the opportunity to be with students. These are precious satisfactions and worth preserving at whatever cost.

We don't have to like each other or agree with each other. We just have to agree to some basic rules of the road that have served us for generations.

Accountability

We are responsible for handing down to future generations, the freedoms we inherit intact and preferably strengthened.

**What is mission in 21st century/That should be the central issue before us/not the polemics of extremists**

Let us define the terms, the agenda for ourselves  
We are faced with critical choices

Transformations of society, economy, population all signal profound shifts that must be reflected in teaching and research.

Must deal with some of the most difficult and intractable problems.

Debate about curriculum, about new interdisciplinary fields such as ethnic, women, etc, and about aims of diversity and multiculturalism all important and necessary.

thus they have been and always will be the subject of debate and this can be a healthy thing (Hanah Gray :Debate about curriculum is way of criticizing present and inventing the future) We know how to do this in academia.

LS&A debate was a wonderful example of how debate is possible

Extremists don't want or accept compromise or complexity but the rest of us must do so.

Mandate/Diversity: Fundamental questions need to be discussed about teaching and research.

Let us not forget that racism and sexism and other prejudices are real in our society and we see them at work on our campus every day.

Are we offering truly equal opportunity as required by our ideals and aspirations, by law and by social necessity? If not, what do we need to change.

Our world has been transformed --population, internationalization, age of knowledge.

Are our structures, methods, principles, policies open to necessary evolution to incorporate new perspectives and

experiences of many peoples and civilizations into teaching and research.

G. Conclusion: Let us get back to what we do best. Hear all views/apply reason.

What to do?

Turn down the thermostat. Get back to basics.

We must maintain an open and free climate for debate, for teaching and research.

Let us accept the responsibility for keeping our own standards and values. (perhaps fiscal constraint is our friend in this, at least in the sense that we will be forced to look at much of what we do and judge if it is central to our mission of teaching and research. This will let us take a look at the many extraneous policies, tasks, procedures that creep into system and help distract us).

1. Distinguish between political views of individuals-- faculty , students and staff-- and protect their of exercise personal right to advance political and other agendas but also

reject efforts to impose personal views in teaching and research to advance special interest in guise of exercising academic freedom.

Finally, I am convinced we must resist efforts to coerce or persuade the University as an institution to do so.

Petitions come in almost daily for institutional endorsements of one or another political position.

Bok: Universities are not suited to making a reasonable determination of the right or wrongs of many issues however important. Not our mission. Even if we could, would take up excessive time and have little impact on the issues in questions. We are not powerful politically. We are powerful only when speaking from our mission of education and research.

2. The best defenders of academic freedom and integrity are the faculty and they defend best in the exercise of it.

Take personal responsibility for sustaining our freedoms. Encourage open and vigorous debate. Engage and commit to educating about our freedoms and values.

Tenure is not granted as an economic right. It is a protection of freedom and it is intended to be used. Unique right in society and carries heavy responsibility to speak out.

Stand up to those who would undermine our values....including administrators!

Exemplify them in your own teaching and research. No lesson you teach your students will be more important than the example you set yourself for open, fair and rational discussion, respecting the rights of all equally to speak out. This is an example our society desperately needs to revive rational political discussion.

Don't be afraid to exercise your freedoms, that is what tenure is for. It takes courage.

3. Let's restore some balance, humor, civility to community life.

Not that questions aren't important. Because they are so important it is essential that we observe scholarly standards and ethics, that we strive for mutual respect, including for those with whom we disagree. Humor is a small and welcome signal of objectivity and is the enemy of pomposity which afflicts us and charges the atmosphere.

If we observe decent standards of mutual respect for one another then we will not hear demands of policies to curb excesses and abuses.

Best rule is still Golden Rule.

4. Don't look for expedient solution, look for right thing to do. Applies to all of us--administrators, faculty, students and staff. Stick to basic mission and values.

Easier said than done. We aren't dealing with simple questions, conflicting views of what is right.

But must be conscious that what we do today has lasting impact on our University--and because of our influence on higher ed more broadly.

5. We need to reason and work together to educate and renew our understanding of and commitment to academic standards and values. Few higher institutional priorities than stimulating broad based consideration of academic values.

SACUA lecture on academic freedom

Fall leadership retreat

Fall symposium

Let's open up the doors and windows around here and get the debate out in the open.

Can't leave this to courts, media, politicians, ideologues,  
or cranks with an ax to grind.

Let us do what we do best--consider the issues and  
arguments and subject all sides to rigorous scrutiny,  
unafraid, unfettered, concerned only with the defining  
just ends and the merits of the the means of achieving  
them.

### Accountability

Society has granted us exceptional privileges

Ours is a good life full of freedom to think and work according to our  
individual talent and vision

But when we misuse or abuse our freedoms or just fail to defend  
them, society holds us accountable

We set ourselves a high standard, and we are being held to it.

When we stray from it, the price is erosion of public confidence and  
support. In the long term this can spell the of hard won freedoms  
which once lost will be very hard to reinstate.

We represent among faculty, students and staff a tremendous  
range of difference in our views, opinions, beliefs. as individuals we  
are free to express them and to promote them.

This is the stuff of which debate is made

We cannot be all things to all people, to solve all society's problems.

What we can and must do is be true to ourselves and our mission  
and values.

If we do this, then we will preserve our freedoms and serve our  
society in the best way we can. This is the high and best road to  
public respect, confidence and support.

If we do our part to stick to our values Sanford says "Someday the  
peoples of the world will find the confidence to be unafraid of truth  
and openness. Dictatorships and closed societies and intolerance  
and repression of people are the ultimate targets of academic  
freedom. It is the hope of the world".