



THE

AFCON

SENTINEL



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A Quarterly of the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska

September 2015

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Purpose:

To promote academic freedom, defined as intellectual freedom in educational and research contexts. This includes freedoms of belief and expression and access to information and ideas.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—Nancy Comer

In the May issue of the Sentinel, I addressed AFCON's interest in the duties of citizenship, addressed in LB544. AFCON supported this bill which passed the Nebraska legislature in 2011. Section 5c states that these duties include "active participation in the improvement of a citizen's community, state, country and world and the value and practice of civil discourse between opposing interests." These are lofty goals and I set out to learn how Nebraska schools were faring in achieving them.

Those answers were elusive, because measuring these goals is not as simple as taking a test, like those required for citizenship. Sadly, I learned less time was spent on this curriculum due to concentrated focus on reading and math. On the positive side, teachers were requiring more hands-on experiences in the students' community. Dr. Randy Ernst, Social Studies Curriculum Supervisor for Lincoln Public Schools, emphasized project-based service learning and supported new ways to improve student engagement in behaviors of a "healthy" democracy such as registering to vote, voting, discussing politics, contacting public officials, and believing that they can make a difference in their community.

Last week, in a follow up to learning about the schools, I interviewed Senator Adam Morfeld to learn more about the civics education programs he is advocating to help achieve goals of improving student participation in community civic-minded activities. Senator Morfeld wore his Nebraskans for Civic Reform hat for this conversation. One of the purposes of NCR is to create a more modern and robust democracy through youth engagement. Currently in progress is an after school program in Title I schools (Dawes Middle School in Lincoln, and Sherman Elementary School in North Omaha) with plans to expand

to other schools including rural areas within a 45 minute radius of Lincoln. Ninety percent of the students being served are low income.

These programs focus on increasing critical thinking, civil discourse, issue identification and problem-solving skills. Critical thinking is emphasized with two up-front questions: what do you like about your community? and what would you like to change? I asked what students said they wanted to change about their neighborhood/community. Some examples the senator provided were living in the presence of peer gangs, graffiti; a first grade student said safe parks.

Students meet twice weekly and after school choices are student driven. While there are opportunities to engage in civil discourse and leadership activities, it is challenging to be the program students choose. Maybe arts and crafts, or a sport would be more interesting? Raising the money, currently through grants, to expand the program is challenging, too.

Civics education is foundational for academic freedom. Citizens need to be engaged in what is going on in their neighborhoods, cities, states, country and world. Schools have a major role in fostering citizen education beginning in kindergarten and continuing through grade 12. If this happens early on, college professors won't need to worry about raising issues or ideas that might cause students to be upset or traumatized by the introduction of topics. I quote David Moshman's Generic Trigger Warning: "This is college. You will encounter topics, facts, interpretations, ideas, claims, conclusions, metaphors, images, stories, hypotheses, theories and perspectives that upset you. Deal with it."

Upcoming Events

AFCON Board Meetings, **October 24, November 14, December 12, 2015**
Loren Eiseley Library, 1530 Superior, Lincoln, Nebraska; 10 AM

Summaries of AFCON Board of Directors' Meetings—Peggy Adair

The AFCON board did not meet in June or August of 2015.

July 11, 2015 —

Present: Peggy Adair, Dwayne Ball, Nancy Comer, Frank Edler, Bob Haller, Laurie Thomas Lee, Lora Leibrandt, David Moshman, Linda Parker, Rod Wagner.

MINUTES: Minutes of the AFCON board meeting held on May 9, 2015, were approved as presented upon a motion by Moshman, second by Leibrandt and a voice vote.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Cathi McMurtry presented the June-July, 2015 treasurer's report via email. Balance on hand as of July 10, 2015 is \$3,009.15. The treasurer's report will be filed for audit.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Comer updated the board on the issues surrounding the resignation of Rhonda Blanford-Green from the Nebraska School Activities Association.

SENTINEL: Moshman and Edler offered to be interim co-editors of the next issue of the *Sentinel*, due to the retirement of Editor-In-Chief Tom Black. The co-editors set August 25 as the deadline for articles other than those related to the AFCON annual meeting. The September issue of the *Sentinel* will be published shortly after the annual meeting date of September 3.

POLICY COORDINATOR: Moshman reported the American Psychological Association has admitted to colluding with the CIA and the Pentagon in support of tortuous interrogation techniques.

TREAT OF THE DAY: Mahvelous Maple-Bran Muffins. Thank you, Bob!

WEBSITE: Parker reported she has uploaded all edi-

tions of the *Sentinel* to the AFCON website.

ANNUAL MEETING 2015: The ACLU-AFCON annual meeting will be Thursday, September 3, 2015, at The Stockyards Place in Omaha. Parker designed a flier to send out to AFCON organizations and members. Lee will contact Parker when the ACLU events committee finalizes further details. A motion was made by Moshman, second by Edler, to allocate up to \$500 to subsidize annual meeting tickets for AFCON members at \$50 each, for members expressing a financial need. The motion carried on a voice vote.

AFCON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AWARD: A motion was made by Moshman, second by Parker, to nominate Alan Peterson as the 2015 recipient of the AFCON Academic Freedom Award. Motion carried on a voice vote. Haller will be in charge of getting the AFCON Award plaque ordered. Comer will contact Peterson to inform him of his well-deserved recognition.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT: Wagner reported the following nominations for 2016 AFCON officers:

President-elect: Lora Leibrandt
Treasurer: Cathi McMurtry (we hope)
Secretary: Peggy Adair.

MEMBER REPORTS:
CENTER FOR THE BOOK: Wagner reported the annual Celebration of the Book will be held on November 14, 2015, in Lincoln.

UNO FACULTY SENATE: McMurtry reported via email that Jayaram Betanabhatla is the new AFCON representative for the UNO Faculty Senate. Comer will contact him to welcome him and

provide him with pertinent information.

ACLU: Ball contacted ACLU regarding the TIPS reporting program at UNL. The ACLU cannot get involved until a person has been harmed by the secret reporting program. Ball encouraged AFCON members to monitor and report if they learn of any negative situations arising from the secret program. Ball expressed concern over micro-aggression policies at universities. Moshman will research the policies and report back to the board.

MEMBER AT LARGE: Reverend Edler reported he will be speaking at the Unitarian Church in Lincoln on July 26.

NEBRASKA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION: Parker reported the Nebraska Library Association will hold its annual meeting on October 16-17 in Lincoln.

The next meeting of the **AFCON BOARD OF DIRECTORS** will be **Saturday, August 8**, at Eiseley Library, Lincoln, Nebraska.

www.academicfreedomnebraska.org
afcon.nebraska@gmail.com

As the new editor of the AFCON *Sentinel*, I want to thank Tom Black for his 19 years of service as past editor of this newsletter. Filling Tom's shoes will be quite a challenge, but I hope to continue the tradition of professionalism and excellence that he has established during his editorship.

Alan Peterson Presented with the AFCON Academic Freedom Award at the Joint Annual Meeting of ACLU Nebraska and AFCON

On the evening of September 3, 2015, AFCON held its annual meeting jointly with ACLU Nebraska's annual event at the Live-stock Exchange Building in Omaha. AFCON co-sponsored ACLU Nebraska's annual event whose theme was "Beyond Privacy: Liberty and Free Speech in the Era of Mass Surveillance," featuring Ben Wizner, Director of the ACLU's Speech, Privacy, and Technology Project and legal advisor to Edward Snowden.

David Moshman, AFCON's immediate past president and current policy coordinator presented the AFCON Academic Freedom Award to Alan Peterson, long time principal trial counsel and legislative lobbyist for the Nebraska news media. The following are David Moshman's remarks prior to the presentation of the award.

Let me take you back 27 years to September 1988, the first joint meeting of the newly formed Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska with what was then called the Nebraska Civil Liberties Union. The theme of the meeting was the Supreme Court's then-recent decision in *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier* upholding the authority of a high school principal to censor a curriculum-related school newspaper on the very broad ground that the First Amendment does not protect curricular speech. Both AFCON and NCLU had immediately identified this decision as a major threat to student journalism and more broadly to intellectual freedom in education.

The joint meeting featured a keynote address from Nadine Strossen, then General Counsel and later President of the national ACLU, who provided a critique of *Hazelwood* based on her expertise on both First Amendment law and student rights.

Her address was followed by



Alan Peterson (left) receives the AFCON Academic Freedom Award from David Moshman (right)

comments from two respondents, one of whom was Alan Peterson, an attorney with Cline, Williams, Wright, Johnson, and Oldfather, who served as attorney for Media of Nebraska, a coalition of radio, television, and news organizations concerned with freedom of the press. For Alan that included the student press..

Perhaps the most memorable moment of the meeting

(or at least the only moment I remember 27 years later) is when Alan pulled out an infant pacifier to illustrate the Supreme Court's attitude toward high school students. He and his wife Glenda had long been dismayed to see pacifiers used to stifle unwanted toddler expression. Now the Supreme Court, in his view, was enabling administrators to avoid unwanted controversy by stifling the ideas of teens about matters of concern in their lives. Schools should not do this, and a proper reading of the First Amendment would not permit it.

Alan served throughout his career as principal trial counsel and legislative lobbyist for the Nebraska news media, its main source of legal advice on freedoms of speech and press. His First Amendment work has addressed public records, open courts, gag orders, libel, and censorship in public schools.

Beyond this, Alan is a broad-ranging civil libertarian whose many achievements have long been recognized by ACLU Nebraska. What AFCON wants to recognize in particular today is that Alan has been defending intellectual freedom in Nebraska throughout his career and has remained firm in his commitment to the rights of children and students and to the special need for intellectual freedom in education.

Twenty-seven years after that joint NCLU/AFCON meeting, we are delighted to give Alan Peterson our 2015 Academic Freedom Award.

The Question of Academic Freedom for a Nazi Professor at the University of Nebraska

Frank Edler

There is no doubt that one of the most egregious transgressions of academic freedom at the University of Nebraska occurred during World War I. The Nebraska State Council of Defense pressured the university board of regents into putting eleven university professors and one staff member on trial for disloyalty in late spring 1918.

The trial resulted in the firing of five professors. Two of them, Dr. Fred Morrow Fling, professor of European history, and Dr. Minnie Throop England, assistant professor of economics and commerce, were fired for being pro-war instigators of faculty unrest. They were given a chance to defend themselves before the board and were reinstated. The other three were not given that chance and were summarily discharged. They were George W. A. Luckey, dean of the Graduate School of Education; Clark E. Persinger, professor of American history; and Erwin Hopt, professor of agronomy.

The university has never attempted to redress this injustice. It is painful even today to think of professors being humiliated by having to defend themselves on the stand in public against accusations of disloyalty based on hearsay. During the trial such notable faculty members as Harry Kirke Wolfe and Addison E. Sheldon were accused of disloyalty and made to take the stand.

There is, however, another episode in the history of the university that is not as well known and perhaps not as egregious, but it did involve an attempt to abridge the academic freedom of a guest faculty member. It might be informative to compare

Chancellor Harvey Perlman's response to the Bill Ayers case or even the unhiring of Prof. Steven Salaita at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with the one I am about to present which involved the professor exchange between the University of Berlin and the University of Nebraska in 1936-1937.

This exchange may well have been the last one of its kind to take place between the United States and Germany prior to World War II. The two professors who took part in the exchange were Dr. William H. Werkmeister of Nebraska and Dr. Friedrich Schoenemann of the University of Berlin. The UN board of regents approved the exchange at its meeting on April 25, 1936. Schoenemann was hired as "Visiting Professor on German-American Cultural Relations at \$1,268.00 for one semester from September 1st, 1936."

Schoenemann, the nazi professor referred to in the title of this article, not only was an authority on Mark Twain, but he also had written a two-volume work entitled *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika (The United States of North America)* in 1932. He has at times been called the father of American literature in Germany. After receiving his doctorate in Germany, he came to the United States and taught for two years at Hunter College and Wesleyan University. He went on to teach at Harvard from 1913 to 1920; indeed, he was the only German citizen allowed to teach at Harvard after the United States entered World War I.

After returning to Germany in 1920, he taught at the the University of Muenster (Werkmeister was his student at Muenster before "Werkie" emigrated to the United States in 1923), and in the early thirties became head of the *Amerika-Institut* at the University of Berlin. He joined the National Socialist Party in 1933 believing that Hitler was trying to promote a socialist form of

nationalism based on the *Volk* or people.

The chancellor of the University of Nebraska at the time of the exchange was Edgar A. Burnett, former dean of agriculture under Chancellor Samuel Avery. Burnett was a cautious man, keenly aware of public opinion and public funding. The taste of the draconian cuts imposed on the university during the Great Depression was still in his mouth.

About twelve days or so after the board of regents had approved Schoenemann's contract, Chancellor Burnett received the first unsolicited protest of Schoenemann as a nazi propagandist in a letter from Eugene Staley, assistant professor of economics at the University of Chicago and a graduate of Hastings College. Staley's letter included three points about Schoenemann: 1) during his tour of the United States in 1933, Schoenemann told an audience at the International House near the University of Chicago that the May 1933 book burnings in Germany were caused by "the rise of pornographic literature," 2) Staley's Jewish friend who had gotten his doctorate at the University of Berlin was hindered in his degree because of Schoenemann's anti-Semitism, and 3) since German exchange students were required to take a special course on how to impart nazi ideas, Staley reasoned that German exchange professors would be trained even more rigorously and be nothing more than National Socialist agents. Chancellor Burnett sent a note to Staley thanking him for his letter, but he took no action.

The situation changed dramatically when Burnett received a letter on June 18 from university regent Arthur C. Stokes that included a report compiled by the staff of *The Jewish Press*, a weekly newspaper in Omaha.

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A Generic Trigger Warning for College Students

David Moshman

This is a post about trigger warnings. If the mere thought of a trigger warning upsets you, this post will upset you. You may also be upset by references below to the diverse things about which trigger warnings warn. Yes, this paragraph is a trigger warning. Read on at your own risk, or stop reading now.

Still there? Okay, here we go. A trigger warning warns of a trigger, which is anything potentially traumatic. I start here with the problem of trigger warnings in college and end with my solution: the one and only trigger warning higher education will ever need.

In recent years there has been increasing concern that college students may be traumatized by what they encounter in their courses. College courses, after all, may include examples and discussions of—ready?—racism, sexism, rape, abortion, suicide, morality, sexuality, evolution, death, culture, religion, gender, violence, poverty, socialism, capitalism, climate change, colonialism, immigration, slavery, torture, terror, ethnic cleansing, war, and genocide. (Have I left anything out?)

Some people may be upset by the mere introduction of some of these topics. And even for those willing to broach them, these are topics about which many people hold views deeply upsetting to many others. Shouldn't a course syllabus provide fair warning?

The basic rationale for trigger warnings is that the college classroom should be a safe space. Safety, in this context, is psychological, not just physical. It is not enough to protect students from

physical violence. Safety includes protection from psychological trauma. There are microaggressions everywhere; students need to be protected, especially in their coursework.

This isn't how we have traditionally thought about college. The way we talk about college students today reminds me of an old cartoon of deer and antelope home on the range. As the others graze contentedly, one has perked up its ears and says, "I thought I just heard a discouraging word."

Oh no, and without prior notice! The only trigger warnings out on the range, apparently, are those announcing the arrival of Roy Rogers' horse. The deer and the antelope are on their own. But the young innocents who graze the college curriculum, some would argue, deserve better. If we can't censor all the discouraging words, at least we can warn students when one is coming.

But how are we to identify what to warn about? Triggering is a highly subjective psychological process. Anything can trigger something for someone. Traumatic memories may be triggered by an idiosyncratic sound, smell, or image. Any student may request a specific individual accommodation, but there is no way to specify in advance what component of what assignment may trigger something traumatic for someone in a class.

A focus on trigger warnings, moreover, deflects attention from the intellectual and personal benefits of facing cognitive and emotional challenges in academic contexts. Instead teachers are at least implicitly encouraged to minimize student trauma, and their own as well, by deleting anything that may upset anyone. Thus

trigger warnings have a chilling effect on curriculum by encouraging faculty self-censorship.

Let me add as a cognitive psychologist that all of us already, to varying extents, automatically filter out much of what upsets us. We need to compensate for this, not reinforce it, especially in educational contexts.

College should indeed be a safe space, but not in the sense of being safe from upsetting images or ideas. College should be a place where it is safe to explain what you believe and to disagree with others. But no one should expect to be shielded from the reality that the world is full of terrible things or from the equally disturbing reality of deep disagreement about fundamental matters.

I'm not against all trigger warnings, however. In fact, for those who deem trigger warnings necessary, I will now provide one. And this trigger warning, I humbly submit, is all we need. So here is my generic, all-purpose, comprehensive, transdisciplinary trigger warning, suitable for all colleges and universities, or at least those where academic freedom is valued.

Generic Trigger Warning: This is college. You will encounter topics, facts, interpretations, ideas, claims, conclusions, metaphors, images, stories, hypotheses, theories, and perspectives that upset you. Deal with it..

(This article originally appeared in *The Huffington Post* on September 2, 2015.)

Nazi Professor (continued from page 4)

The report was a one-page summary of headlines and bylines about Schoenemann's talks and speeches in the fall of 1933 given at the International House in Chicago, Drew University in New Jersey, and Ford Hall Forum in Boston. One such headline from the *Chicago Daily News* stated "Nazi Spokesman is Cheered and Jeered: Audience Seizes International House Meeting."

Burnett responded to Stokes the same day he got his letter. He informed him that Schoenemann after leaving Nebraska would be an exchange professor during the spring semester at Stanford University. In other words, if we've made a mistake so has Stanford. Burnett went on to say that he felt "rather maneuvered" by Werkmeister who desired to go to the University of Berlin. Although Werkmeister had guaranteed Burnett that Schoenemann was not a German propagandist, he did not relate to him all the incidents that occurred during Schoenemann's U.S. speaking tour in 1933.

Burnett's confidence in Werkmeister was now shaken. The dates and items from *The Jewish Press* had been factually correct. He didn't know which Schoenemann he was getting: was it the Schoenemann who had taught at Harvard for six years and had written well respected books on American culture and literature or was it the Schoenemann who had made stupid remarks about concentration camps and given unabashed pro-Hitler speeches? Nevertheless, Burnett was not convinced that Schoenemann was a raving nazi propagandist.

Before writing his June 18

letter to Stokes, Burnett had consulted with Earl Cline, president of the board of regents, and he now concurred with Cline that the university should allow Schoenemann to carry out his teaching contact; however, it should be made clear to Schoenemann "there are to be no speeches on German culture or Nazism which will be offensive to the public, and should he disregard this admonition to take such action then as might be necessary."

The attempt now was to put a muzzle on him. They could not, of course, refrain Schoenemann from speaking of German culture or nazism since Schoenemann had been hired to give a course on the history of cultural relations between America and Germany. Cline and Burnett apparently wanted to add a muzzle to Schoenemann's contract. In a second letter to Staley on June 19, Burnett confirmed that "had we had the information [about Schoenemann's talks in the East in 1933] [this] would have affected our invitation." In other words, we would not have invited him.

This was very likely the reason why Werkmeister did not tell Chancellor Burnett about the riot that occurred at Ford Hall Forum in Boston where Schoenemann spoke in 1933. What Burnett might have found difficult to grasp was the fact that Ford Hall Forum believed in the fullest and freest open public discussions and that they had deliberately hired Schoenemann to speak "because we knew he was a propagandist for the Nazi government."

The anti-nazi demonstration of 5,000 people outside Ford Hall was staged by the John Reed Club, and Schoenemann was brought into

Ford Hall under police protection. In addition, Schoenemann clearly agitated the audience when he gave responses about the nazi government that were blatantly false.

Although Werkmeister assured Burnett that Schoenemann would not embarrass the university as a nazi propagandist, he must have realized that there might well be protests against him coming to the university. Before leaving for Germany, Werkmeister left a memorandum with Charles Henry Oldfather, dean of College of Arts and Sciences.

In this memorandum ("Memorandum of Professor Werkmeister to C. H. Oldfather"), he referred to his meeting with Chancellor Burnett and his concerns about the proposed invitation to Schoenemann. Werkmeister then wrote directly to Schoenemann conveying the chancellor's concerns, and Schoenemann responded that he would conduct his work "with dignity and tact" although he admitted that he could not deny that he believed "in the new Germany."

He went on to say that he would now and again give talks to local organizations and that he would do it "in a dignified manner ... so that the University will not be harmed in any way." He reassured Werkmeister (and Burnett) that he would conduct his course at UN "in a fair and objective manner." Werkmeister included all this in his memorandum. Dean Oldfather shared it with Burnett on June 26.

This must have felt like rain on Burnett's soul. He had

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Nazi Professor (continued from page 6)

suspected Werkmeister of “maneuvering” him, but here was Werkmeister not only taking him seriously, but writing directly to Schoenemann, telling him of Burnett’s concerns, and getting a response from him that guaranteed his conduct. Indeed, the day after seeing Dean Oldfather, Burnett wrote to Regent Stokes about Werkmeister’s memorandum. Burnett no longer felt that a letter muzzling Schoenemann was necessary: “I am, therefore, inclined to trust to this communication as furnishing us sufficient protection rather than to write him directly on the subject.” Regent Stokes agreed that a letter muzzling Schoenemann was no longer needed.

This, however, did not put the controversy to rest. On June 29 Regent Cline sent a brief cover letter to Burnett with an enclosed letter from Victor B. Smith, vice president of the Omaha National Bank. In his cover letter Cline felt that “there is some merit to what he [Smith] says with respect to an explosion [Smith thought that the university had been played for a “bunch of suckers” and that the episode might be like “waiting for the dynamite to explode”]. I told him I would talk to you and write him again.” For some reason, Cline wanted Burnett to respond to him directly so he can write back to Smith himself. Why not just let Burnett respond directly to Smith? Both Cline’s cover letter and Smith’s enclosed letter are unusual because Smith offered no new information about Schoenemann’s behavior that would motivate the university to try to muzzle him or cancel the exchange.

What Smith offered in his letter was a bribe: he said that he had heard “some further rumblings from some of my Jewish friends” regarding the professor exchange and that “some of the people here, Jews and others, would probably be willing to reimburse the University for a reasonable amount of expense money incurred by either Schoenemann or Werkmeister if the contract should be cancelled.” In other words, if you cancel the exchange,

there are people who would be happy to reimburse you. This was the first time that the idea of cancelling the exchange had been introduced into the conversation. Smith’s own feelings about the bribe was that “it would be beneath the dignity of the University to accept such a contribution.” Nevertheless, Smith had sent it to Cline and Cline had sent it to Burnett.

It is unclear how this scenario among Cline, Burnett, and Smith played out, but Burnett took all his responses he had gotten about Schoenemann from the International House, Drew University, Ford Hall Forum, Stanford University and Harvard University with him to the July 11 meeting of the board of regents. Although there is no mention of any discussion of Schoenemann at the board meeting, Chancellor Burnett wrote a letter to the German professor on July 13 which ended with the following warning: “This letter is only to advise you that no unpleasant incidents may happen while you are a guest at this University.” Burnett sent a copy of the letter to Cline with the following cover letter: “Herewith find a copy of a letter I am sending to Professor Friedrich Schoenemann in accordance with our conversation at the last meeting of the Board.” Apparently, the board of regents did not take the bribe to cancel the exchange, but it was willing to abridge Schoenemann’s academic freedom if any “unpleasant” incident occurred.

What is truly remarkable about the dialogue among Cline, Burnett, and Stokes regarding the hiring of Schoenemann is that the discussion of the whole issue was completely disconnected from the purpose and function of a university. Not once did the idea come up that a university is a community of learning that has the right to hear all points of view, even uncomfortable ones. Although Smith brought up academic freedom, he quickly restricted it when it came to what he called “purposeful propaganda”: “I believe in academic freedom as interpreted to mean the instruction of students in the facts of all things, either agreeable or otherwise. This does not include, however, making an academic institution a pulpit for broadcasting poison in furtherance of a program of purposeful propaganda.” Clearly, Smith was playing on the regents’ fear that the university’s public image could be damaged and

they could be made to look foolish. Today an additional threat to academic freedom may come more from within the university by those who wish to redefine it as a place where students are shielded “from upsetting images or ideas” (see David Moshman’s essay on trigger warnings in this issue and also Greg Lukianoff’s and Jonathan Haidt’s article in *The Atlantic* entitled “The Coddling of the American Mind”).

Surprisingly, it was Eugene Staley who changed his position. Even though he was not a participant in the decision-making process, Staley responded on July 3 to Burnett’s letter. Instead of upholding his previous position that Schoenemann should not have been hired, Staley now advocated for full academic freedom, even for Schoenemann: “[p]ersonally, I’m torn between a desire to put all possible sticks into the wheel of Nazi-ism ... and a desire to see everybody, even the Devil himself, have a chance to defend his views freely. For the latter reason, I should not want to be understood as advocating a prohibition on speaking by Dr. Schoenemann.”

What is ironic is that it can be argued that things today are worse than they were then. At least Cline and Burnett did not cancel the exchange the way Chancellor Perlman cancelled Professor William Ayers’s invitation to speak at UNL and the way Chancellor Phyllis Wise fired Professor Steven Salaita after he was already hired at the University of Illinois. However, I am not convinced that Cline and Burnett agreed to honor their contract with Schoenemann because they were motivated by an interest in promoting academic freedom. They simply may have felt they were locked into the contract and that if they reneged, it would look bad for the university.

As it turned out, Schoenemann did come to the University of Nebraska in September of 1936 and taught at the university for the fall semester.

(All quotations are from the University of Nebraska Archives, in particular, from Chancellor Edgar A. Burnett’s correspondence.)

(Watch for the next installment entitled “A Nazi Professor at the University of Nebraska.”)

AFCON SPEAKER'S BUREAU (As of September 2015)

Peggy Adair: "Banned Books, Black Arm-bands, and School Prayer: The Evolution of Children's First Amendment Rights in America"

impa@century.net

Dwayne Ball: "Threats to Academic Freedom at Universities"

db68516@yahoo.com

Bob Haller: "Civics Education and the Practice of Freedom" and "How Books Can Harm You: Lessons from the Censors"

mshortt@inebraska.com

David Moshman: "Principles of Academic Freedom"

dmoshman1@unl.edu

John Bender and David Moshman: "Student Freedom of Expression/Student Rights"

jbender1@unl.edu

dmoshman1@unl.edu

Laurie Thomas Lee: "Implications of the USA Patriot Act"

llee1@unl.edu

Visit NCTE's Position Statement on Academic Freedom based on David Moshman's five principles:

<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/academic-freedom>

ADDRESS FOR THE AFCON WEB SITE

<http://www.academicfreedomnebraska.org>

Check it out and learn Who We Are and about Our Activities; read our Constitution; learn how to Join Us; see the where and when of our Meetings; meet our Members and Officers;

REQUEST FOR NEWS FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The editor of the AFCON SENTINEL invites all AFCON individual and organizational members to send news about academic freedom issues in Nebraska or editorial comments for inclusion in this newsletter and/or announcements of organizational meetings for the UPCOMING EVENTS column.

Due date for submissions to the December, 2015, issue is November 24, 2015.

Send to Frank Edler, editor, 908 Elmwood Ave., Lincoln, NE 68510 or frankhwedler@gmail.com

AFCON

515 North Thomas Avenue
Oakland, NE 68045.

Mailing
Address
Label

ACADEMIC FREEDOM COALITION OF NEBRASKA

HELP AFCON PROMOTE ACADEMIC FREEDOM

As a member of AFCON, you can help us

- ◆ support applications of the First Amendment in academic contexts, including elementary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, and libraries.
- ◆ educate Nebraskans about the meaning and value of intellectual freedom, intellectual diversity, mutual respect, open communication, and uninhibited pursuit of knowledge, including the role of these ideals in academic contexts and in democratic self-government.
- ◆ assist students, teachers, librarians, and researchers confronted with censorship, indoctrination, or suppression of ideas.
- ◆ act as liaison among groups in Nebraska that support academic freedom.

MEMBERSHIP (To become a member, send dues, organization or individual name, address, and phone number to Cathi McMurtry, 515 N. Thomas Avenue, Oakland, NE 68045)

Organizational Membership (\$120) entitles the organization to one seat on the AFCON Board, one vote in the election of officers and at the annual meeting, eligibility for office and chairing standing committees, provides newsletter subscription for the board member to share with the organization's information director, and reduced rates to AFCON conferences for its members.

Individual Membership (\$15) provides newsletter subscription, eligibility for office and for chairing standing committees, reduced rates for AFCON conferences, and one vote at annual meetings.

Student Membership (\$5) entitles full-time students to the same privileges as provided by the Individual Membership.

**AFCON ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS, PLEASE DUPLICATE THIS NEWSLETTER FOR YOUR MEMBERS.
INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS, PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER TO A FRIEND AFTER YOU HAVE READ IT.
ENCOURAGE HIM OR HER TO JOIN AFCON**