



September 30, 2024

President Maurie McInnis; [president@yale.edu](mailto:president@yale.edu)

Provost Scott Strobel; [scott.strobel@yale.edu](mailto:scott.strobel@yale.edu)

Yale University's Committee on Institutional Voice; [susan.sawyer@yale.edu](mailto:susan.sawyer@yale.edu)

*Sent via e-mail*

RE: Institutional Statement Neutrality

Dear President McInnis, Provost Strobel, and Yale University's Committee on Institutional Voice,

We at [Heterodox Academy](#) (HxA) are thrilled to see Yale University exploring an [institutional statement neutrality](#) policy. We are writing to offer our assistance—completely free of charge—to help you in crafting and implementing a solution that is right for Yale. HxA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization of thousands of faculty, staff, and students advocating for policy and culture changes that ensure our universities are truth-seeking, knowledge-generating institutions grounded in open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement.

As our world and our campus communities grapple with challenging and contentious issues, there is tremendous pressure on institutional leaders to issue statements of support, opposition, solidarity, or concern. But such statements may actually imply that there is a campus orthodoxy, chilling speech and inquiry. Recognizing the divisive and chilling impact these statements can have, we are urging institutions like yours to implement institutional statement neutrality on social and political issues unrelated to core academic matters or operations.

As the University of Chicago [Kalven Report](#) astutely observed in 1967, when institutions of higher education are functioning properly, “[t]he instrument of dissent and criticism is the individual faculty member or the individual student. The university is the home and sponsor of critics; it is not itself the critic.”

Adopting institutional statement neutrality will protect the freedom of inquiry and expression within the academic community by ensuring all members of the Yale

community can freely research, teach, and discuss all sides of an issue without fear of ostracization and repercussions from the university itself. Several top institutions, or their faculty senates, such as [Harvard University](#), [Stanford University](#), [Columbia University](#), [University of Pennsylvania](#), [Cornell University](#), and [Vanderbilt University](#), have already [adopted institutional neutrality policies](#), with more likely to follow.

**It is important to emphasize that an institutional statement neutrality policy does not inhibit individual faculty, staff, or students from expressing their views on controversial issues.** Rather, it ensures that the university, as an institution, remains an impartial forum for diverse perspectives by removing pressure to conform, freeing students and scholars to speak openly and conduct research unfettered by a real or perceived campus orthodoxy.

You will find the [Heterodox Academy Model of Statement Neutrality](#) strikes the right balance between maintaining institutional neutrality and upholding the university's commitment to empathy and support for its community.

We strongly urge you to adopt a policy of institutional statement neutrality and offer our model as a guide as you consider doing so. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you in further detail.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued leadership in making Yale a preeminent leader in higher education.

Respectfully,



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