



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on December 1, 2025

1,000 Professors (Supposedly) Flee the South. Reason? Their Universities Said “NO Wokeness.”

In “a school to-day the baby has to submit to a system that is younger than himself,” observed philosopher G.K. Chesterton in 1910. “The flopping infant of four actually has more experience, and has weathered the world longer, than the dogma to which he is made to submit.” Just imagine what Chesterton would say about college students today. In this case, the undergraduate has to submit to a system that’s younger than his baby brother.



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Try telling this, however, to the college professors — 1,000 of them, *allegedly* — now “fleeing” Southern universities. Many cite “policies that limit academic freedom,” states a summary by Copilot artificial intelligence. But some humans possessing natural intelligence might put it differently: The policies are “separating the weeds from the wheat.”

At issue are laws enacted in some states in recent years that prohibit [“woke” ideology](#) at government-funded universities/colleges. On the chopping block have been curricula involving, for example, DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion), “white privilege,” and “gender.”

Brain Drain — or Just Complain, Complain?

Website Veuer reported on the story Saturday, [lamenting](#):

Many [academics] say new laws and policies make it hard for them to do their jobs, which is causing a wave of resignations. This trend is causing concern about how education in the South will be affected if high-quality teachers continue to leave. [Note: Definitions of “high-quality” may vary.]

... Strict political rules are now part of university life in the South. New laws limit what professors can talk about in class, especially topics like race, gender, and equity. This makes many teachers feel their voices are being silenced.

A recent survey showed that almost 60% of faculty would not recommend their state as a good place to work, reflecting deep concern about political interference.

Some laws are changing the way colleges operate. For example, Texas Senate Bill 17 required schools to close offices focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). This has led to cancelled programs and the removal of faculty from leadership roles.



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This said, how many professors will actually depart is questionable. As InsideHigherEd.com [reported](#) in 2024, for instance, “[E]vidence of a mass faculty exodus from states like Florida is thin....”

But that was last year. So I had Grok AI do some investigating. And Mr. Grok writes that regarding academics leaving their positions over anti-woke policies, there have been

~50-100 confirmed cases across Southern states (FL, TX, GA, etc.) from 2021-2025, based on media-verified reports....

In other words, it may be as with the celebrities who vow to “leave the country” if _____ (fill in the boogeyman Republican *du jour*) is elected president. They never seem to follow through (Rosie O’Donnell being a rare exception).

Doth Complain Too Much?

Now, Veuer states that “[p]rofessors are moving away because they want to work where they have academic freedom....” But the common man expressing common sense may see it differently. For example, a Theodore Whittlinger spoke for many when writing in the Veuer article’s MSN comments section:

The majority of these professors want to indoctrinate not teach. In many cases, they do NOT allow dissent from their believes [sic] and teaching. They will flunk students if they show independence that differs from their agenda!

But the “academic freedom” appeal is interesting. Was the principle applied to Professor Matthew Garrett, disciplined by Bakersfield College in California [for expressing conservative views](#)? (He won a \$2.4 million settlement in 2024.) How about the University of North Carolina Wilmington’s Mike Adams? He was [hounded into resigning](#) his academic position over un-woke tweets last year and later committed suicide. There’s also Professor Allan Josephson of the University of Louisville (Ky.). He was [demoted, harassed, and ultimately fired](#) (in 2019) for speaking out against “gender transitioning” kids.

Academic freedom?

Some other conservative academics nixed for ideological reasons are John McAdams, Gavin Clarkson, Nathaniel Hiers, Johnson Varkey, and Daniel Grossenbach. That’s just a short list, too.

Nonetheless, Veuer claims that “[p]rofessors have always valued the freedom to teach and research honestly.” Perhaps they have — for themselves, anyway. But does pushing [lie-based ideology](#) constitute teaching and researching “honestly”?

“But who is to say what’s ‘lie-based’?” some say.

The answer is that we as a people do — and must.

The Academic Freedom Ruse

To use a twist on a Samuel Johnson line, cries of academic freedom are the last refuge of a scoundrel. In reality, true “academic freedom” has never existed and can never exist. Consider:

Would we and should we tolerate a professor dogmatically teaching the validity of genocide, cannibalism, slavery, or human sacrifice? How about advocating child torture? We could perhaps adopt



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the attitude Chesterton satirized thus:

Whatever we may say about the merits of torturing children for pleasure, and no doubt there is much to be said on both sides, I am sure we all agree it should be done with sterilized instruments.

Then, will any American university be offering a professorship to ex-Klansman David Duke (no relation!)? He has a Ph.D. in history, do note, which he received in Ukraine. His doctoral thesis was *Zionism as a Form of Ethnic Supremacism*.

Academic freedom, right?

The point is that we all do and must draw lines in *everything* — including determining what instructors may teach. We can argue about where those lines should be drawn or what standard should be applied. But behaving as if there should be no lines, or as if we'd never establish them, is dishonest and unserious.

In reality, the academic-freedom ruse is too often rolled out when a professor finds defending his actual views is impossible. Talking about academic freedom usually means the talker is out of arguments.

As for professors supposedly fleeing the South, note that Mississippi's education has improved markedly in recent years. So somehow, I suspect Southern academia will survive.



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