



Board of Directors

John W. Altman, Chairman
Janice Rogers Brown
Heidi Ganahl
Reuben Jeffery III
Paul S. Levy
Judith Messina
Michael B. Poliakoff
Mark Ridenour
Karrin Taylor Robson
Stuart Taylor, Jr.
Stephen Joel Trachtenberg
Edwin D. Williamson

Anne D. Neal
Senior Fellow

Joshua T. Katz
Scholar-in-Residence

Council of Scholars

George E. Andrews
Pennsylvania State University
Mark Bauerlein
Emory University
Marc Zvi Brettler
Duke University
William Cook
SUNY–Geneseo
Paul Davies
William & Mary
David C. Doughty, Jr.
Christopher Newport University
Niall Ferguson
Stanford University
Allen C. Guelzo
Princeton University
Sidney L. Gulick III
University of Maryland
Robert “KC” Johnson
CUNY–Brooklyn College
Joshua T. Katz
American Enterprise Institute
Anatoly M. Khazanov
University of Wisconsin
Alan Charles Kors
University of Pennsylvania
Jon D. Levenson
Harvard Divinity School
Molly Levine
Howard University
George R. Lucas, Jr.
U.S. Naval Academy
Matthew A. Malkan
UCLA
Michael Podgursky
University of Missouri
James A. Sellers
Pennsylvania State University

Dear Governing Board Member:

For over 28 years, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) has helped governing boards promote academic freedom, academic excellence, and accountability at our nation’s colleges and universities.

Today, I write to encourage you to **consider adopting a policy of institutional neutrality** at your institution. Such a policy, exemplified by the University of Chicago’s Kalven Committee Report of 1967, counsels against taking official institutional positions on current social and political events. It is a bulwark against politicization, and, like the Chicago Principles on Freedom of Expression, signals integrity to students, faculty, and the public.

Colleges and universities that remain above the political fray can most effectively help students learn *how* to think, not *what* to think. A policy of institutional neutrality guards this high purpose of our academic institutions. It also shields them from the consequences of becoming embroiled in political disputes.

Institutional neutrality does not mean silence on issues that affect the mission or operations of the university. Nor does it prevent college leaders from articulating their personal views in response to events that violate basic principles of morality and human decency. By avoiding engagement in political disputes, the capacity for appropriate leadership is enhanced.

In the words of the Kalven Report, “The neutrality of the university as an institution arises then not from a lack of courage nor out of indifference and insensitivity. It arises out of respect for free inquiry and the obligation to cherish a diversity of viewpoints.”

We urge you to join the growing movement of universities that have embraced institutional neutrality. We list them on our website, <https://www.goacta.org/kalven-report>, which also includes sample board resolutions and other resources you will find useful. We are at your service to help in any way we can.

Warm regards,

Michael B. Poliakoff, Ph.D.
President

Enclosures

PROMOTING ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND EXCELLENCE