

Universities must stand F.R.M.

Woke ideologues commandeered academia by invoking a trinity of buzzwords. Rallying around freedom, rigor, and merit, it is time for us non-woke to do the same.

by Dr. Marc Champagne

<https://marcchampagnephilosopher.online/>

My university is about to double-down on woke ideology. To generate mock-consensus, it is circulating documents, seeking feedback, and holding consultations—knowing that dissenters will stay silent and only activists who agree will participate. I have had enough, so I have sought a viable countermove. Here is what I came up with.

The acronym E.D.I., in case you don't already know, stands for "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion." We should instead build on F.R.M., which stands for "Freedom, Rigor, and Merit."

Now, the terms in the latter triplet mean a lot of things to a lot of people, so it is a perfectly reasonable academic reflex to request that these terms be clarified before endorsing them. However, such an appeal to reason and precision is precisely the crucial mistake of the non-woke. Being able to define or defend buzzwords like Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion has never been an entry requirement into the woke club. Instead, folks have just marched forward, in lockstep, under a feel-good flag. Say what you will about this brazen tactic, it has proven amazingly successful, as testified by the almost-complete take-over of academia. The non-woke should do the same. We have neglected the psychological and social power of symbolism for too long.

Now, you may be thinking: This is all well and good, but *how* exactly does one “stand” F.R.M.? It is simple: *Catalog everything that E.D.I. advocates do, replace it with F.R.M., and do it too—with as much (or more) confidence and vigor.* So, if you want to reclaim your university, here is a (non-exhaustive) to-do list:

- Circulate a white paper titled “Freedom, Rigor, and Merit (F.R.M.): Recommendations for Institutional Change,” then sit on committees to make sure that your university implements an action plan aiming to 1) support F.R.M. practices throughout the institution by 2) strengthening awareness and understanding of F.R.M.
- Demand that your university include an endorsement of F.R.M. in its mission statement and insist that these concepts are just words unless they are supported by strong, intentional action.
- Copy-paste the prose you find and replace it where appropriate, saying for example: “OurU is committed to actively fostering a free and rigorous learning and working environment that enables every member of our community to thrive based on their merit. Building such an environment is essential to being a highly regarded university that upholds a culture of freedom, rigor, and merit.”
- Establish bursaries for students who have demonstrated a sustained commitment to F.R.M.
- Require F.R.M. statements from job applicants.
- Form F.R.M. Steering & Development Committees that produce reports and make recommendations.
- Start every meeting with a “freedom of speech acknowledgement” (to match “territorial acknowledgements”).

Failing to build on the right principles will steer universities into irrelevance and disrepute. The E.D.I. movement has thus far been mostly unopposed (or opposed ineffectively). With the proper symbolism, this can change. We who disagree are not immoral; we just think universities should espouse a different set of ideals.