

Notion of Academic Freedom – Recent Study in Georgian Higher Educational Space

Ekaterine Bakaradze

PhD, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia, ebakaradze@ibsu.edu.ge

ABSTRACT: Academic freedom is a fundamental principle of higher education, essential for the advancement of knowledge and the preparation of students for the challenges of the 21st century. It is important to protect academic freedom and to ensure that academic and administrative personnel, as well as students, are able to exercise their freedom without fear of reprisal. Academic freedom is guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia, the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, accreditation and authorization standards. However, university community and organizations have different understandings of academic freedom. This can make it difficult to assess whether or not academic freedom is being protected or limited in a particular case. Accordingly, the research aims to clarify the meaning of academic freedom based on the Law of Georgia on Higher Education and identifies some of the challenges that need to be addressed to ensure that academic freedom is protected or limited in practice. The paper argues that academic freedom should be understood as the right of academic and administrative personnel, as well as students, to teach, research, and publish without fear of censorship or reprisal. The author suggests that more needs to be done to educate academic community and administrators about the meaning of academic freedom and how it can be protected. The paper concludes that academic freedom is a guarantor of innovation in educational institutions, which ensures that ideas dictated by freedom of thought are implemented by universities, academic, scientific personnel, and students and creates new knowledge.

KEYWORDS: academic freedom, higher education, university, academic community, law

Introduction

Academic freedom is a fundamental principle of higher education for the pursuit of knowledge, development of critical thinking skills, and advancement of society. It is the right of academic personnel, scientific personnel, and students – the university community to independently carry out teaching activities, scientific work, and study without interference from the state, other external actors, or internal institutional pressures. In short, it is the right to engage in open, honest inquiry and share ideas without fear of censorship or reprisal. It is essential for the pursuit of knowledge and truth and plays a vital role in promoting democracy and economic development.

The Law of Georgia on Higher Education (adopted in 2004, updated in 2023) is the primary legislation governing higher education in Georgia. Additionally, at the national level, academic freedom is protected by the Constitution of Georgia (adopted in 1995, entered into force in 2018), and The Law of Georgia on Freedom of Speech and Expression (adopted in 2004, updated in 2022). The Law on Personal Data Protection (2023) also contains provisions that can be used to protect the academic freedom of university community. It should be admitted that “... although the available studies compare up to 108 different rights and freedom provisions across national constitutions, academic freedom has not yet been among them” (Spannagel 2023), we rarely find the term “academic freedom” in most of the constitutional texts. Implementation of academic freedom in practice is ensured by several by-laws. As a result, academic freedom, as the axis of new knowledge creation, is provided for in the internal regulations of Georgian higher educational institutions, Higher Educational Institution Authorization Standards (2018)¹, but, overall, the Law of Georgia on Higher Education (2023) plays a significant role in ensuring the principle of academic freedom.

¹ “On the Regulation of Authorization of Educational Institutions and Approval of Fees” of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated October 1, 2010 No. 99/N.

Article 2 of the law (Definition of Terms) defines academic freedom – as “the right of academic personnel, scientific personnel, and students to independently carry out teaching activities, scientific work and study” (Law of Georgia on Higher Education 2023).

Law on Higher Education should be the guarantee for protecting academic freedom, though it should be implemented efficiently to ensure that the university community is free to pursue knowledge and express views without fear of reprisal. Accordingly, the study reviews the meaning of the term Academic Freedom according to the law of Georgia on Higher Education, what its definition means for academic and scientific personnel and students, when it can be limited as a right and for what reason.

Supportive Mechanisms of Academic Freedom Specified by Law on Higher Education

To achieve the Goals of Higher Education (Article 3, para. 2), the State should ensure, among others, “access to and openness of higher education and academic freedom in learning, teaching and scientific research” (Law of Georgia on Higher Education 2023).

The law equips academic, scientific personnel, and students with the right to independently carry out teaching activities, scientific work, and study. The law prescribes several mechanisms for its protection, including:

- a) The right of academic personnel to choose their research topics and methods;
- b) The right of academic personnel to publish their research findings without censorship;
- c) The right of academic personnel to teach their courses by their academic judgment;
- d) The right of students to choose their courses, and to express their views freely in the classroom.
- e) The law prohibits discrimination against academic personnel or students based on their academic, religious, political, or other beliefs.

We will discuss each mechanism separately below.

a) The right of academic personnel to choose their research topics and methods

This right allows academic personnel to pursue the research questions they find important without interference from the state, other external actors, or internal institutional pressures, allowing academic personnel to produce innovative research. When academic personnel are free to choose their research topics and methods, they are more likely to ask challenging questions and pursue new lines of inquiry, disseminate knowledge, research and teach about a wide range of topics, even controversial or critical.

In conclusion, it can be said that the right of academic personnel to choose their research topics and methods is a fundamental aspect of academic freedom. Scholars should pursue their research interests without interference. This is a promising beginning for the advancement of knowledge and truth, democracy, and economic development.

b) The right of academic personnel to publish their research findings without censorship

This right allows academic and scientific personnel to share their findings with the world, regardless of whether they are controversial or politically sensitive. This is important for several reasons, including a) Scientific progress depends on the open sharing of ideas and findings in the ‘marketplace of ideas’ (Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. quotation in *Abrams v United States*, 250 US 616, 630, 1919). When scholars are free to publish their research without fear of censorship, other scholars scrutinize their work, to ensure that research is of high quality, allowing them to build on each other's work and progress more quickly. Peer review is essential for ensuring the quality of scientific research; b) Scientific innovation depends on the free exchange of ideas and information. When scientists are not free to publish their findings, they may be reluctant to pursue research on controversial or politically sensitive topics, leading to a loss of valuable knowledge and insights that could benefit society; c) Censorship of scientific research can challenge public trust in science, harm public policy, and hinder social discourse. According to the third mission of

the university referring to universities' contributions to the economic and societal development of territories (Petersen, Kruss, and Rheede 2022), it is essential to educate the public about important issues and to promote civic engagement. Otherwise, a lack of public trust in science can make it more difficult for scientists to communicate their findings and engage in public discourse, which can harm social discourse and the ability of society to address complex challenges.

In conclusion, the right to publish research findings without censorship is a fundamental aspect of academic freedom and is a guarantee of the advancement of knowledge, open and honest inquiry, transparency and accountability, and public engagement.

c) The right of academic personnel to teach their courses under their academic judgment

This right allows academic personnel to choose the topics they cover in their courses, the methods they use to teach, and the materials they assign to their students, which is essential to ensuring that academic personnel can fulfill their core responsibility of teaching and disseminating knowledge in a way that is consistent with their professional expertise and values. This right allows academic personnel to share their expertise with students in an objective and unbiased way, and to present students with a variety of perspectives on subject issues. Additionally, academic personnel are required to comply with the law and internal regulations of their institution. They are also expected to teach in a way that is fair and objective. However, within these limits, academic personnel have the right to teach their courses by their professional judgment.

This right ensures that students are exposed to a diversity of viewpoints and perspectives as there is not always a single “right” answer; it encourages academic personnel to be innovative and develop new teaching methods and approaches; it contributes to the advancement of knowledge to encourage students to think critically about scientific information, and develop their own informed opinions. Under this right academic personnel should be able to choose which topics to cover in their courses and how much time to spend on each topic; decide which teaching methods and materials to use; design assessments that measure students’ learning fairly and effectively; grade students’ work in line with academic standards.

There are very few court cases regarding academic freedom in Georgia, though the US legal practice is very high. When the lecturers’ interests conflict with those of the university, some US courts have held that the university determines the curriculum as long as the university’s decision does not infringe on the First Amendment rights of academic freedom. In the case of *Bishop v. Aronov* (732 F. Supp. 1562 (N.D. Ala. 1990), Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Alabama, constantly talked about his faith (Christianity) and communicated his views to students. He also arranged extra meetings after lectures to talk about religion and discuss with students the influence of religion on human psychology.

The university demanded that the professor stop such meetings, and the latter sued the university for violating his right to free speech. The Eleventh Circuit Court ruled that the university’s decision regarding the composition of the curriculum should allow for a review of individual professors’ decisions. The court also noted that it respects the principle of freedom of the educational process. As we can see, the Bishop case revealed the tension between the professors and the university management. In the case of *Otero-Burgos v. Inter-American University* (558 F.3d 1, 1st Cir. 2009), Professor Otero-Burgos was fired from Inter-American University after he refused to give a student a special opportunity to raise his grade. Otero-Burgos appealed the decision, alleging a violation of his academic freedom. The university terminated Otero-Burgos despite a Faculty Appeals Committee ruling in his favor. Professor sued, and The First Circuit ruled in favor of Otero-Burgos, finding that Puerto Rico Law 80 (2017)², that protects at-will employees, and could not have been intended to apply to

² Puerto Rico Law 80 (the Unjust Dismissal Act) provides that an employer who dismisses an employee without “just cause” need only provide a certain set percentage of the employee’s former salary, but is responsible for no other damages or reinstatement. Puerto Rico is not an ‘employment at will’ jurisdiction.

tenured faculty members. The court affirmed the relationship between tenure, economic security, and academic freedom.

It can be concluded that the right of academic personnel to teach their courses by their academic judgment is essential for ensuring that academic personnel can teach their courses in a way that is consistent with their academic expertise and judgment, and for promoting innovation and creativity in teaching.

d) The right of students to choose their courses and to express their views freely in the classroom

Article 43 of the Law of Georgia on Higher Education (2023) is devoted to the student's rights. Among them are the right to acquire high-quality education; participate in scientific research; use material and technical, library, informational, and other resources of university on equal terms; elect and be elected to the students' self-government body and the management bodies of the university; establish and/or join student organizations independently; transfer to an alternative higher education institution; choose an educational program; participate in preparing an individual educational program; periodically assess the performance of academic personnel; exercise other rights granted to them under the law. The law also protects the confidentiality of students' personal information, unless student authorizes its disclosure or administration has a legal interest in disclosing it to ensure safety or protect the lawful rights of others.

These rights are essential for students to pursue their education freely, develop their critical thinking skills, and participate in the academic community. The right to acquire high-quality education empowers individuals to reach their full potential and contribute to the advancement of society, and protects students from being censored or indoctrinated by their professors. The right to participate in scientific research allows students to pursue their intellectual curiosity and contribute to society through the discovery of new knowledge and the development of innovative solutions. "There can be no reasonable doubt that academic freedom is integral to the process of creating knowledge, on which depends the progress of society" (Ugrekheldze and Bakaradze 2019). The right to use the material and technical, library, informational, and other resources of the higher education institution on equal terms gives students access to the information and resources they need to succeed in their studies, however, this does not mean that the universities are forced to devote equal time to all possible forms of expression of the right, whether it is a performance, lecture, conference or otherwise.

In the case of *Widmar v. Vincent* (454 U.S. 263 - 1981), a student brought a lawsuit against university resources because of the use for the benefit of a particular religious group to hold meetings. In this case, Judge Stevens noted that "since every university's resources are limited, educational institution must make a decision and use its time and space for additional educational activities. For example, if two groups of 25 students each request a room from the university, one to watch a Mickey Mouse cartoon and the other to play Hamlet, in those cases the university would not be required by the Constitution or law to first fill out an application form and then use the room. In other words, the university should give students the freedom of choice to use the university resources according to their interests" *Dibona v. Matthews* (1990). However, the university's choice of curriculum depends largely on the freedom of choice of the professor to the extent that some universities have determined that the university's discretion can be limited based on principles of freedom of speech. Lecturers' choice of curriculum generally depends on individual students' preferences as to what they prefer, as long as the choice is not discriminatory.

The right to choose an educational program allows students to pursue their interests which can lead to higher motivation and academic achievement; develop their unique talents and abilities, which can help them prepare for success in college, careers, and life; become more self-directed and independent learners, which is an essential skill for success in the XXI century. The right to participate in preparing an individual educational program gives students a voice in shaping their education. It also helps students develop a plan for achieving their

academic goals. The right to periodically assess the performance of academic personnel allows students to provide feedback on their professors' teaching and hold them accountable for their performance.

But the most important right that can be considered as a cornerstone of students' academic freedom in the Law is as follows: "Students shall have the right to... express opinions freely and reasonably refuse to share ideas offered during the study process" (Law of Georgia on Higher Education 2023, Article 43). This allows students to engage in intellectual debate, protect own beliefs and values, even unpopular or controversial. It is important to note that this right is not absolute. Universities may have legitimate reasons to restrict student expression, such as to prevent bullying, harassment, or disruption of the learning environment. However, any restrictions on student expression should be narrowly tailored and justified by a compelling government interest.

In conclusion, students' academic freedom is essential for ensuring that students can receive an education that is tailored to their individual needs and interests, and for promoting critical thinking and intellectual discourse. It is also important to ensure that students can prepare for their future careers.

e) Prohibition of discrimination against academic personnel or students based on their academic, religious, political, or other beliefs

The last point, the law prohibits discrimination against academic personnel or students based on their academic, religious, political, or other beliefs, which should be the guarantee of equal treatment. This right ensures that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in higher education; it promotes diversity of thought and opinion and helps to create a safe and inclusive environment for all members of the academic community. The law prohibits discrimination in all aspects of higher education, including admissions, employment, and academic programs. For example, a university cannot deny admission to a student because of religious beliefs or refuse to hire a professor because of political views. Similarly, a professor cannot grade a student differently because of their academic beliefs. The law prohibiting discrimination in higher education is an important tool for ensuring or at least, attempting that all members of the academic community are treated equally and with respect. Some courts have acquitted lecturers when universities have suspended teaching for violating freedom of speech rights. For example, in *Dibona v. Matthews* (1990), an educational complex that was part of San Diego Community College suspended a performance that was supposed to be titled 'Split Second'. The play was about an African-American police officer who shoots and kills a white suspect while in custody after the suspect racially abuses the officer. A police officer pulls a knife on a suspect and fakes an assault scene to shoot the suspect and then plead self-defense. The university administration suspended the performance to avoid coverage of a politically sensitive issue. The play's director filed a suit alleging a First Amendment violation. The court noted in its ruling that the 'desire' of the college to avoid backlash from religious community was insufficient grounds to stop the play. The court ruled that the play, due to its "politically sensitive" content, could not become a victim of censorship. Freedom of speech is guaranteed by the Constitution, and it is through dialogue on difficult and politically sensitive issues that this right can be further protected and strengthened.

In conclusion, the law promotes diversity of thought and opinion and helps to create a safe and inclusive environment for all members of the academic community. The law prohibits discrimination in all aspects of higher education, including admissions, employment, and academic programs.

Restricting Academic Freedom

The law also recognizes that academic freedom is not absolute. The government and higher education institutions have a legitimate interest in protecting the public interest and ensuring that the study process is conducted responsibly and ethically. Therefore, law allows government and

universities to impose restrictions on academic freedom in certain circumstances. Article 3 of the Law of Georgia on Higher Education (Goals of Higher Education) states that “Academic freedom may be restricted only in:

- a) determining organizational issues and priorities to achieve freedom of scientific research;
- b) resolving organizational issues regarding the study process, and the issues concerning the approval of the timetable of lectures and the curricula, to achieve freedom of teaching;
- c) organizing the study process and ensuring high-quality studies to achieve freedom of learning.
- d) in the cases when the implementation of scientific research and publication of its results is restricted under a labor agreement, or when the results contain a state secret” (Law of Georgia on the Higher Education 2023, Articles 2 and 3).

We will discuss each restrictive provision separately below:

a) Determining Organizational Issues and Priorities to Achieve Freedom of Scientific Research

The law states that academic freedom may be restricted only in determining organizational issues and priorities to achieve freedom of scientific research. This means that university may set certain rules and guidelines that researchers must follow to ensure that their research is conducted safely and ethically and that it is aligned with the university’s overall research goals. Research departments of Georgian universities require researchers to submit their research proposals for review by an ethics committee, obtain certain permits before conducting certain types of research, e.g. in the field of medicine, or sign a confidentiality agreement before having access to sensitive research data. The university may also set rules about how researchers can publish their findings, or about how they can share their research data with others. However, it is inadmissible to impose restrictions on academic freedom that are arbitrary or unreasonable. Restrictions must be narrowly tailored to achieve the legitimate goal of protecting the freedom of scientific research, and the university cannot prevent researchers from pursuing unpopular or controversial topics. Generally, the university’s ability to restrict academic freedom is based on its authority to set rules and regulations for its community, though this authority is not unlimited.

Apart from universities, the government may also have a legitimate interest in protecting the public interest and in ensuring that scientific research is conducted responsibly and ethically and it can also impose some restrictions and limitations to certain types of research. In any case, it is important to monitor the situation in Georgia and ensure that the law is implemented in a way that protects the right of academic personnel to conduct their research freely.

b) Resolving organizational issues regarding the study process, and the issues concerning the approval of the timetable of lectures and the curricula, to achieve freedom of teaching

According to the law, academic freedom may be restricted while resolving organizational issues regarding the study process, and issues concerning the approval of lecture timetable and curricula, to achieve freedom of teaching, which is a complex and controversial issue.

Government and universities may not interfere in the content of teaching, but they may impose some restrictions on how teaching is conducted. Universities should have decision-making authority about how to organize the study process and lecture timetable and curricula.

For example, based on the program, university may require all students take certain core courses, or may require certain courses be taught in a certain way. University internal regulations also restrict number of courses that professors can teach, or that professors submit their syllabi for approval before the start of semester. Some universities may have a policy that prohibits professors from discussing certain topics in class or the academic personnel is obligated to use certain textbooks or materials in their teaching.

Universities have a legitimate interest in ensuring that students receive a high-quality education and that the institution can operate efficiently. Universities should balance their

interest with the restrictions not to interfere unduly with the freedom of professors to teach, the freedom of students to learn. However, it is important for universities to be transparent about their policies and have a process in place for professors to challenge decisions that they believe violate their academic freedom.

c) Organizing the study process and ensuring high-quality studies to achieve freedom of learning

Academic freedom may be restricted in organizing the study process and ensuring high-quality studies to achieve freedom of learning. On the one hand, universities need to have the authority to make decisions about how to organize the study process and ensure high-quality studies. On the other hand, without academic freedom, students would not be able to learn about controversial topics or challenge the status quo. It is possible to achieve a balance between these two competing interests. For example, universities could have a process in place for students to challenge decisions about the study process or the quality of their education, which can vary depending on the institution, the discipline, and the student's individual needs. Additionally, universities could develop policies that protect academic freedom of students, even when they are learning about controversial topics.

Specific examples of the mentioned restriction may include cases when the university requires students to take certain courses or complete a certain number of credits to graduate, or a policy that prohibits students from cheating or plagiarizing. It may also have a policy that requires students to attend class regularly and participate in discussions or requiring students to meet certain academic standards to remain enrolled. As universities have a legitimate interest in ensuring that students receive a high-quality education and that they are prepared for success in their future careers, this cannot be considered necessarily a violation of academic freedom. Universities should retain transparency by writing down all processes in the regulatory documents for students to challenge decisions that they believe violate their academic freedom. It is important to ensure that restrictions on academic freedom are necessary and proportionate to the goal of achieving freedom of learning. For example, if a restriction is intended to prevent students from cheating or plagiarizing, it should be narrowly tailored to achieve that goal.

d) In the cases when implementation of scientific research and publication of its results is restricted under a labor agreement, or when the results contain a state secret

Academic freedom may be restricted only in the cases when the implementation of scientific research and publication of its results is restricted under a labor agreement, or when the results contain a state secret is sensible. Even though academic freedom is vital, there are cases where it is necessary to restrict it to protect other important interests.

Labor agreements may restrict academic freedom in cases where scientific research is conducted on behalf of a company or other organization, and the organization has a legitimate interest in protecting its intellectual property or trade secrets. This is because employees have a contractual obligation to comply with the terms of their employment, and this may include restrictions on the publication of research results, especially, when they contain a state secret that, if disclosed, could harm national security. The government may prohibit the publication of research findings that contain classified information. In the case of general labor agreements should not restrict employees from publishing research results simply because the employer does not like the results. Additionally, the government should not classify information as a state secret simply to prevent it from being published. But generally, the universities must have an individual approach, clear and transparent mechanisms and processes for determining when and how academic freedom can be restricted. This process should involve all relevant stakeholders, including university community, employers, and the government. We should consider that any restrictions on academic freedom should be carefully measured and justified.

Academic Freedom in the University Regulatory Documents

As was mentioned above, the notion of academic freedom is new to the Georgian educational and legal reality, and judicial practice or any developmental recommendations in this regard are scarce. However, the Law of Georgia on Higher Education enshrines academic freedom as a fundamental right of academic personnel, scientific personnel, and students. The extent to which the conditions stipulated by the Law are declared in the university regulatory documents varies from university to university but most of them have already incorporated the provisions that enshrine the principles of academic freedom into their internal regulations. In addition to these general provisions, some universities have also adopted more specific policies and procedures to protect academic freedom. Universities that value academic freedom typically have a culture of open inquiry and debate, where students and personnel are free to explore new ideas and challenge the status quo. These universities also have strong mechanisms in place to protect academic freedom of their students and personnel. However, those who are more hesitant to embrace academic freedom may have a more authoritarian culture, where students and personnel are expected to conform to certain norms and beliefs. These universities may also have fewer mechanisms in place to protect academic freedom of their students and personnel and need to make more progress.

Overall, academic freedom allows for the free and open exchange of ideas in the “marketplace of ideas”, which is necessary for scientific innovation, critical thinking, and civic engagement. Georgian higher educational institutions that realize the necessity of academic freedom are more likely to produce positive outcomes for their students, their research, and the community. To ensure the protection of academic freedom, it is important to continue to raise awareness of its importance and provide guidance on how to interpret and apply the law.

Academic freedom Index in Georgia

Based on assessment of the de facto protection of academic freedom, Academic Freedom Index (AFI 2023) and Vdem Institute (2023) (expert surveys and measurement model) provide yearly overview of the state of academic freedom in 179 countries. According to Academic Freedom Index (Kinzelbach et al. 2023), “it is the first conceptually thorough assessment of academic freedom worldwide and a times series dataset going back to 1900” (Spannagel and Kinzelbach 2023). AFI scores rely on five separate indicators each of which is coded by country experts on a predefined scale from 0 to 4 and on a country-year basis – freedom to research and teach, academic exchange and dissemination, institutional autonomy, campus integrity, academic and cultural expression. Among them, index of academic freedom in Georgia from 2012 to 2022 is provided (see Table 1).

Table 1: The state of academic freedom in Georgia in 2022 (0–1, low to high)



According to the report results, Georgia is among top 30-40% of the countries where the index of academic freedom has increased in 2022 compared to 2012 (full index available at <https://academic-freedom-index.net/>). We agree with the researchers Spannagel and Kinzelbach, that “the lack of adequate data has so far prevented researchers from studying the phenomenon more systematically at a global scale, and impeded efforts by policymakers and advocates to monitor and act on such violations” (Spannagel and Kinzelbach 2023). But the most important thing is that research is initiated which in several years’ time will give us more comprehensive picture of academic freedom index in each country. Basically, as can be seen from the Table #1 and general evaluation of the higher educational institutions, the provisions of the Constitution of Georgia and the Law on Higher Education emphasize the value of academic freedom and the need to ensure it, which gives us the picture that academic freedom in Georgia is regulated at the document level and so far there are very few cases in the Georgian courts. This does not mean that the academic freedom is fully protected in Georgia. It will need several years to monitor the progress made by the higher educational institutions and identify at what level is academic freedom of Georgian university community members at risk. Accordingly, we would suggest the recommendations for the reinforcement of academic freedom which are provided below.

Recommendations for strengthening academic freedom in Georgia

Several things can be done to strengthen academic freedom in Georgia. These include activities implemented by the universities, society, and government:

- Universities should explicitly state in mission statements, policies, and procedures that the academic community has the right to freedom of expression and academic inquiry, and provide training on their rights and responsibilities under the law;
- Universities should establish procedures for investigating and addressing complaints of violations of academic freedom and protect the confidentiality of those who report violations of academic freedom;
- Universities should create a culture of open inquiry and debate, where the academic community is free to explore new ideas and challenge the status quo;
- Government should provide adequate funding for higher education institutions to ensure that they can operate independently and create an environment where the academic community can freely pursue their academic interests;
- Government should publicly reaffirm its commitment to academic freedom by ensuring that its policies and practices do not violate this right and work with higher education institutions to develop and implement policies and procedures to protect the academic freedom of the academic community;
- Government should allow higher education institutions to develop their academic programs without strict interference;
- Independent mechanisms should be established to investigate and address allegations of violations of academic freedom. This could be done by establishing a dedicated ombudsperson or by strengthening the role of existing institutions such as the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement in Georgia;
- Non-governmental organizations and civil society groups should monitor the situation of academic freedom in Georgia and report on any violations of this right;
- Raise awareness of academic freedom among the public. This can be done through educational campaigns and by promoting public discourse on the importance of academic freedom.

Conclusions

Academic freedom is essential for the pursuit of knowledge, development of critical thinking skills, and the advancement of society. The Law of Georgia on Higher Education plays a significant role in protecting academic freedom in the country, but there are challenges should be monitored. By taking relevant steps, Georgia can create a higher education system where academic freedom is fully respected and where students, academic and scientific personnel are free to pursue knowledge and truth without fear of interference, higher educational institutions can help to develop democratic processes of governance in universities and form free members of society who will constantly have the desire to seek new ideas and truth.

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