

CAFAS Update No. 49

20 January 2006

Council for Academic Freedom & Academic Standards

<http://www.cafas.org.uk>

Next Meeting:

Saturday 28 January 2006

2.00 p.m.

Room 252

Birkbeck College

Malet Street

London WC1

Underground: Goodge Street, Euston Square, Euston, Russell Square, Holborn

Academic freedom under pressure: Victimisation of Sheffield whistleblower

Many readers will have seen reports on the case of Aubrey Blumsohn, a senior lecturer in the bone metabolism unit at the University of Sheffield.

Dr Blumsohn, one of a Sheffield University team collaborating with Procter and Gamble Pharmaceuticals in research on a drug widely used by the public for osteoporosis, was concerned that P&GP denied him access to some of the data relating to clinical trials in which he was involved. P&GP wanted to use his name on research papers to support their findings in trials but would not allow him access to certain data as this might affect their competitive position. Dr Blumsohn sought support from the University. He was suspended in September 2005.

The views of the University and other individuals involved in the case, and confirmation of the details are to be found in the (Cont. p2)

Is your
Cafas
subscripti

press reports and other records in the public domain listed below. The Slate article (22.12.05) also contains original documents. As readers will see, the then research dean of Sheffield University, Professor Richard Eastell, is among those who disagree with Dr Blumsohn's claims and interpretation of the case.

We reproduce below the article by Phil Baty, published on 16 December 2005 in the Times Higher Education Supplement. There is then an account of Dr Blumsohn's concerns and reasons for taking his case to the public. This is followed by the list of press and other reports.

Aubrey Blumsohn needs all the support you can give. Please email:
aubreyprivate@btinternet.com

He will give a short presentation and discuss issues in his case at the Cafas meeting on Saturday 28 January, 2.00pm in Room 252 Birkbeck College, London.

Gag money rejected

Phil Baty
Times Higher Education Supplement, 16 December 2005
http://www.thes.co.uk/current_edition/story.aspx?story_id=2026780

The whistleblower who raised the alarm about the conduct of a Sheffield University study with the drug company Procter & Gamble rejected a £145,000 payoff from his university.

Aubrey Blumsohn, senior lecturer at Sheffield University's Bone Metabolism Research Unit, said that signing a gagging clause and handing over research data would have compromised the debate over the issue. He is now likely to face disciplinary action by the university.

Dr Blumsohn was suspended in September this year after co-operating with an investigation by The Times Higher into his concerns. It has now emerged that Dr Blumsohn was offered £120,000 compensation for loss of employment and a further £25,000 for "injury to feelings" if he agreed to part company with Sheffield.

The deal, which Sheffield this week tried to keep secret by threatening The Times Higher with an injunction, would have given Dr Blumsohn little scope to discuss concerns about P&G and would have required him to return all clinical and research data.

It would also have stopped him from making "detrimental or derogatory statements" regarding his employment at Sheffield and about any of Sheffield's staff, including Tony Weetman, the medical school dean, and Robert Boucher, the vice-chancellor.

In a letter to the university rejecting the offer, dated December 1, Dr Blumsohn says: "Effectively, I would be accepting £145,000 in exchange for allowing part of the jigsaw of clinical and scientific debate to remain uncorrected, and this would be unconscionable."

The Times Higher reported last month that findings on P&G's osteoporosis drug Actonel had been released under the name of Sheffield researchers although they had not carried out their own, independent analysis of the firm's drug-trial data. P&G said that it was standard industry practice to limit academics' access to its drug databases and that the Sheffield team had sufficient access to support conclusions being drawn.

Dr Blumsohn was suspended in September after a complaint from Professor Weetman, who accused him of conduct "incompatible with the duties of office". The charges included an acknowledgement that Dr Blumsohn had "no trust in the university's procedures".

Dr Blumsohn first raised concerns more than two years ago. In a tape-recorded conversation in September 2003, he was told by the head of his unit, Richard Eastell, "to really watch it" because P&G provided "a good source of income".

Professor Eastell said this week that he did not recognise the comments and could not recall the context of the conversation. In May 2004, Dr Blumsohn made a written complaint to Professor Eastell, who was also medical school research dean at the time, which was copied to Professor Weetman. But the university has never initiated any investigation.

In May 2005, Dr Blumsohn's solicitor wrote to Professor Boucher explaining that he had "serious concerns" and seeking a meeting so that

the university might "support him as an academic confronted with an important external threat to academic freedom and integrity". But the vice-chancellor declined.

Dr Blumsohn then wrote to the director of human resources, Rosie Valerio, in June, copying her into letters outlining the detailed concerns to Professor Eastell and P&G. He told her: "I simply require the support of the university to raise a critical and urgent problem."

Sheffield maintains that it had repeatedly requested that Dr Blumsohn provide evidence of his concerns and raise them under the correct internal procedures, which he declined to do.

A spokesperson for Sheffield said: "The university had entered into formal 'without prejudice' discussions with Dr Blumsohn's British Medical Association representative. These discussions were at Dr Blumsohn's request and had been undertaken in good faith by the university. The university would like to stress that these negotiations are the result of complex matters that have been ongoing between the university and Dr Blumsohn involving a number of different issues, and these negotiations have not occurred as a result of Dr Blumsohn having concerns about the pharmaceutical company that have been recently reported in the press."

phil.baty@thes.co.uk

The issue

Below is an account of Dr Blumsohn's concerns and why this issue belongs to the public domain.

Misrepresentation of research in medicine is of public interest. This account provides a description of a problematical research interaction between a pharmaceutical company (Procter and Gamble Pharmaceuticals, P&GP) and academic collaborators at a University (The University of Sheffield, UK) involving a widely used drug (Risedronate, Actonel).

Academic collaboration with pharmaceutical companies should take place in an intellectual climate that enhances rather than harms patient care. Involvement of a university lends credibility and the appearance of objectivity to research. Academics should not provide such credibility unless they are able to vouch for the research. Harm may be done when academics become assistants in industry's attempts to control the scientific literature.

The Sheffield team's research with P&GP involved an important secondary endpoint in the three key randomized trials designed to demonstrate the efficacy of Risedronate for regulatory approval. It has substantial practical relevance in terms of choice of drug therapy and therapeutic monitoring. It is pertinent to a debate surrounding the interpretation of a recent head-to-head trial of oral bisphosphonates. It is also relevant to a debate about the evidence required for regulatory

agencies to license related drugs.

The pharmaceutical benefactor refused to provide crucial raw data including randomization codes to academic collaborators. This breached the terms of their contract with the University. Data was required by the academics to verify scientific reports, statistical analyses, meeting abstracts, and draft publications "ghost written" in their names. Refusal of access to data under such circumstances is unprecedented, and violates all norms of proper conduct and procedure in science.

It interfered with the ability of academics to discharge their duties as responsible scientists and clinicians, and prevented proper publication and correction of the scientific literature. It appeared that "fair" analysis of the data might not have yielded findings desired by the sponsor. The company violated the norms of science under whose banner they claim to sell their products.

Scientists may disagree about the presentation of data. There can however be no legitimate debate when that data is not available for scrutiny even to authors. Ethical safeguards were bypassed to prevent proper debate and scrutiny of evidence. The issue was not only whether what was claimed could honestly have been claimed, but also whether supposed authors had any reason whatever to believe reported results.

Over time, increasing information emerged to suggest that data analysis and data presentation had been incorrect and misleading, but underlying data was still not disclosed. A

previous publication prepared by P&GP in the name of Sheffield academics also appeared to be incorrect and misleading. It appeared that false declarations as to the independence of the academics involved (including Professor Richard Eastell) had been signed in submissions to a journal. By December 2004 overwhelming evidence emerged that data analysis had been incorrectly presented and that truthful presentation would not have enabled the company to make intended and actual marketing and educational messages. The corrected study findings have still not been published.

Several recent "scandals" have led to increasing scrutiny of pharmaceutical research. This has led (in the UK) to a parliamentary inquiry. There have been revelations about pharmaceutical obfuscation of science in relation to antidepressants and other drugs, and recent legal action against several companies for consequential damage. Denial of access of authoring academics to data has underpinned some of these critical scandals. Scientists who have indulged in such practices are vulnerable to a charge of misconduct, and have faced loss of credibility through media exposure.

The way in which scientific "collaboration" is sometimes described by the pharmaceutical industry differs from commonsense understanding of good scientific practice. This company refused to supply randomization codes and other raw data to authoring academics on several grounds, including that by allowing authors to scrutinize data "industry loses

the opportunity to demonstrate its ability to be a true partner in scientific endeavours". The stated prior intention of the company was to induce a "paradigm shift", and to generate "key messages" for marketing purposes.

The human context of research is important, and may allow inappropriate practice. Science is built on trust amongst researchers, including trust between collaborators. Collaborators disagreed over the right balance between honesty and the need to secure funding from the sponsor. Instances of research misconduct rarely occur in isolation, and when some problems are raised, others may be revealed. Events were brought into focus by poor collegial relationships, conflicts of interest, other misconduct, and increasingly overt and unusual attempts by the University to ignore and to hide allegations of improper conduct involving their Research Dean.

Dr Blumsohn intends to focus on unacceptable scientific procedure rather than detailed aspects of the underlying science. Although laypersons may not understand the intricacies of the scientific debate, the principles of proper procedure and behaviour will be clearly understood. In presenting his case, Aubrey Blumsohn focuses on one easily understood and critical aspect of the science, namely the "shape" of the relationship between change in bone turnover and the reduction in fracture risk with bisphosphonate therapy. The importance of this, and the relevance to the marketing interests of the sponsor becomes clear through the description. He alludes to other important aspects of the science which

were also misleading. He believes that the company not only conveyed misleading information, but also made mockery of proper scientific procedure and the process of truth telling in science. Fair appraisal of evidence in science is rendered impossible if companies or vested interests are able to manipulate crucial elements of the jigsaw of data informing proper discussion. Raising of these concerns about proper procedure is difficult, but he is convinced that it is essential to do so. He believes that he did not object effectively enough at the appropriate time. Initial partial acquiescence on his part was related to some naivety, bullying by a very senior and internationally known colleague, the need to preserve coexistence within a troubled research group, and concern about funding of my junior colleagues. He hopes that his case will contribute to a thoughtful analysis of conditions that contribute to these practices, and the pressures that might face other investigators.

The University of Sheffield, having received all necessary information over more than a year about the improper process in this trial failed to take action and effectively refused plausible and relevant support. Dr Blumsohn claims that the actions of the then Research Dean of Sheffield Medical School and collaborator in this work (Professor Eastell), enabled misconduct in this study to take place. Professor Eastell received a formal letter asserting misconduct in this trial, and failed to properly act upon or convey this complaint. He made inappropriate comment about the primary importance of funding over

research honesty. Other senior University Officials, provided misleading information and attempted to suppress evidence of research misconduct. The University Vice Chancellor declined to meet in response to requests to do so. On 9 September 2005 Dr Blumsohn was suspended from his position as Senior Lecturer within the School of Medicine pending "institution of charges for removal from office". The main grounds for suspension were "refusal to comply with a reasonable management instruction by briefing journalists" (the BBC and the Lancet) about the matter detailed in this document, failure to follow agreed University procedures, making of "unsubstantiated" allegations, and "putting at risk the reputation of the University".

Doctors have a legal and ethical duty to act in the best interest of patients. The conflict between the desire of employers and other obligations (such as those imposed by the General Medical Council) may create dilemmas for doctors. It is up to the individual doctor to decide when institutional mechanisms are no longer acceptable or plausible. In this case, no other course of action was possible.

The problem described raises important issues of patient safety, academic freedom, the obligations of a University, and the particular rights obligations and vulnerabilities of academics conducting research in clinical medicine. These matters are in the public interest. Given the risk to human health and proper understanding of medical therapy resulting from the matters described here, Dr Blumsohn believes that these

failures of proper procedure constitute a crime.

This matter is also of relevance to research volunteers who expose themselves to risk as part of the research process. Altruism underpins clinical research. Clinical research is based on the idea that participants understand that their risk may lead to generalisable new knowledge. Truth telling is central to this process. Participants have the right to expect that data obtained on the basis of their efforts and risk will be analyzed properly. It is unlikely that patients taking part in this particular study were informed that interpretation and analysis of data based on their risk would be closed to enquiry, even to supposed "authors". For such data to be withheld or distorted is an affront to their dignity as human beings.

Other reports on this issue:

http://observer.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,6903,1657302,00.html (Jo Revill, 'Dr accuses drugs giant of 'unethical' secrecy', The Observer, Sunday 4.12.05)

<http://www.ahrp.org/infomail/05/12/11.php>

<http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/cm051208/debtext/51208-18.htm> (Hansard, 8.12.05)

<http://society.guardian.co.uk/health/news/0,8363,1657360,00.html> ('How the drugs giant and a lone academic went to war', The Observer 4.12.05)

http://www.thes.co.uk/search/story.aspx?story_id=2026632 (Phil Baty, 'Journal warned about P&G data', THES 9.12.05)

http://www.thes.co.uk/search/story.aspx?story_id=2026307 (Phil Baty, 'When access to data is a real bone of contention', THES 25.11.05)

http://www.thes.co.uk/current_edition/story.aspx?story_id=2026780 (Phil Baty, 'Gag money rejected', THES 16.12.05)

<http://www.slate.com/id/2133061/> (Jennifer Washburn, 'Rent-a-Researcher: Did a British University sell out to Procter & Gamble?' Posted Thursday 22.12.05. Contains original documents.)

The following report is reproduced with permission from *Information for Social Change*

"an activist organisation that examines issues of censorship, freedom and ethics amongst library and information workers..."

Issue No.22 (Winter 2005-2006)

At:

<http://www.lib.org/ISC/toc.html>

Academic Freedom Post 9-11: An Issues Report

by Toni Samek

September 28-30, 2005, I attended a Conference on Academic Freedom Post 9-11 on behalf of the AAS:UA. The conference was organized by the Harry Crowe Foundation and the Canadian Association of

University Teachers (CAUT).
For full conference
information, see:
<http://www.crowefoundation.ca/>

The Harry Crowe Foundation is a registered charity that undertakes education and research on freedom of academic expression, institutional autonomy and the independence of academic research and scholarship.

As you know, CAUT has an active Committee on Academic Freedom. For the CAUT Policy Statement on Academic Freedom, see page 6 of this report or see:
<http://www.caut.ca/en/policies/academicfreedom.asp>

Speakers included: Kent Roach, Allan Manson, Jonathan R. Cole, Robert M. O'Neil, Peter Leuprecht, Ursula Franklin [words read on her behalf by a colleague], Chandler Davis, Lee Lorch, Jon Thompson, Roland Penner, Maureen Webb, Lee Lorch, Joel Lexchin, Nancy Olivieri and Andrew Bone.

I bring the below "collective conference points" to your attention as they relate to the importance of academic freedom to societies (especially knowledge societies) AND the common and public good. Ursula Franklin noted that the protection of one might well require the promotion of the other.

Some conditions for the production and transmission of new knowledge:

- full and frank debate
- trust
- creativity

- collaboration
- innovation
- freedom of inquiry
- freedom of association
- freedom of expression
- access of citizens to government information
- openness
- willingness to speak truth
- recognition of both our rights AND our responsibilities
- recognition that freedom is more than a collection of privileges ... we need to protect freedom

Some powerful statements:

- The goal of academic research is to not to convey, but to provoke.
- The goal of academic research is enlightenment, not balance.
- We need to uphold our academic spirit and moral intelligence.
- Most academic freedom cases have been about "free association and political movement", not about subjects [such as mathematics].
- Re Canada's Anti-Terrorism Act, the government of Canada can consider anybody a terrorist.
- Health Canada is complicit in keeping information secret (e.g., Nancy Olivieri case).
- Most people inquiring to CAUT don't want to go public.
- Canadian academics HAVE BEEN visited by CSIS agents and asked about who was at a conference and what they talked about.

A disturbing question:

- Could economic security be mobilized against academic research?

Some of the issues raised and addressed in the context of rights AND responsibilities of scholars and scholarly communities include:

- lessons from the Cold War era (personal experiences reported by Chandler Davis and Lee Lorch)
- lessons from today (personal experience reported by Nancy Olivieri)
- anti-terrorism laws, both in Canadian and international perspective
- surveillance
- harassment of foreign students
- denying scholars entry and access to visas
- atrophy of bio-terrorism research (e.g., anthrax, small pox)
- transmodification of speech into punishable action
- vetting of research topics
- peer review under attack
- corporatization of the university
- access to government information
- attack on scientific consensus ("as if scientific knowledge is negotiable")
- criminology in service of the state
- suspect communities (e.g., Muslim, Asian, activist, protestors and dissenters)
- the academic family
- the nexus between universities, employers, and the state
- globalisation market fundamentalism
- democratic authoritarianism
- internationalizing of universities
- secrecy in research (e.g., health/medical/drug)
- the rise of managerialism
- commodification of education
- pressure from private groups and government (e.g., Iran, Iraq,

China, Egypt, Tunisia, Columbia, N. Korea, India, former countries of the Soviet Union)

- climate of fear and the chill
- repressive environment
- self-censorship
- obedience by anticipation
- one voice
- travel advisory re conferences
- security costs of controversial speakers on campuses (yet, “is it not up to the police to protect us?”)
- academic research as insurgency
- the contingent worker model
- censorship
- pre-publication review
- ideological controls
- sharing information across national borders
- data torture
- guidance of students
- regulation of publications
- limits to international exchange of ideas
- Patriot Act and surveillance in libraries
- exaggerated fear of tenure track
- political appointments to national committees
- power of the purse to military to recruit in law schools
- refusal to give information about inquiries
- the Australian model in higher education (no more collective bargaining; each employee negotiates one-on-one)
- risk assessment model
- technological capacity
- stifling workload
- passivity
- global infrastructure of mass registration and surveillance (e.g., biometrics)
- re the UK terrorism bill, researchers can be persecuted based on the papers they are examining
- e-mail archive of intimidation
- removal of possibility of speech

- what is the cash value of your reputation [you need a reputation to mount a defamation case] (e.g., Lorraine Weir case at UBC)
- Board of Governors are becoming more intrusive
- U.S. “Student Bill of Rights” now permeating into state law and students use this to bring suits ... yet there were/are student grievance processes on campuses
- for-profit ethics boards doing the research reviewing
- suppression of publication
- suing to suppress, not necessarily to win ... but to delay and intimidate
- biases in published research
- the independence of journals (to whom are journal editors answerable?)
- human life (e.g., outsourcing of torture/rendering people to countries for torture and death [global gulag]; needless health retesting that harms already sick people, often the poor in developing nations) Some of our needs:
- We need more empirical study AND anecdotal reports on civil disobedience and academic freedom.
- We need to address the fact that we have tremendous imprecision about the concepts of grievance, balance, and intimidation.
- We need to recognize that we are neglecting the research mission of the university in discussions of academic freedom.
- We need to shift from the rights of the individual to examining the institutional structure, because here are the attacks today ... between universities and societies.
- We need to realize that most problems are non-statutory threats (administrative, process, policy, new application of

regulations) and NOT as a result of “sweeping changes”.

- We need to think broadly. Academic freedom is too narrowly conceived (e.g., often, we don’t perceive an issue as an academic freedom issue).
- We need to develop academic freedom training for graduate students and junior faculty.
- We need to improve our rhetoric. Because, for example, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is insufficient in our definitions of academic freedom. (Article 19 states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”)
- We need to recognize that a university culture that breeds disconnect from teaching, breeds other disconnects.
- Every institution should have a policy about visits and interviews by police of academic staff.
- We need to learn to live with dignity and strength and protection for ourselves and for our communities and societies

Note:

For the CAUT travel advisory titled “Travelling to the United States: Your Rights at the Border (June 2005)” see: <http://www.caut.ca/en/publications/traveladvisory/default.asp>
Also Note: The Canadian Library Association (CLA) has a Statement on Intellectual Freedom (see page 7 of this report). And the first directive in CLA’s Code of Ethics is to “support and implement the principles and practices embodied in the current Canadian Library Association

Statement on Intellectual Freedom”.

<http://www.cla.ca/about/ethics.htm>

-- Submitted/presented to the University of Alberta's Association of Faculty Staff Association Council
by Toni Samek on November 3, 2005. Updated Nov. 4, 2005.

CAUT Policy Statement on Academic Freedom

The Canadian Association of University Teachers is dedicated to the promotion and protection of academic freedom. The common good of society depends upon the search for knowledge and truth and its free expression. Academic freedom is essential for these purposes. Academic freedom does not require neutrality on the part of the individual. Rather academic freedom makes commitment possible. Academic staff, like all other groups and individuals, are entitled to enjoy recognized civil, political, social and cultural rights. Therefore, all academic staff must enjoy freedom of thought, conscience, religion, expression, assembly and association as well as the right to liberty and security of the person and liberty of movement. They must not be hindered or impeded in exercising their civil rights as citizens, including the right to contribute to social change through freely expressing their opinion of state policies and of policies affecting higher education. They must not suffer any penalties simply because of the exercise of such rights. Academic staff are entitled to the exercise of academic freedom. Academic freedom includes the right, without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom of teaching

and discussion, freedom in carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof, freedom in producing and performing creative works, freedom to engage in service to the institution and the community, freedom to express freely their opinion about the institution, its administration, or the system in which they work, freedom from institutional censorship and freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies. Academic staff must not be forced to teach against their own best knowledge and conscience or be forced to use curricula and methods contrary to national and international human rights standards. Academic staff must play the predominant role in determining the curriculum and assessment standards.

All academic staff must have the right to fulfil their functions without discrimination of any kind and without fear of repression by the state or any other source. Amended and approved by the CAUT Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee, December 2002; Approved by the CAUT Council, May 2003.

<http://www.caut.ca/en/policies/academicfreedom.asp>

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<http://www.ualberta.ca/~asamek/talks.htm#upcoming>

LIST 98 & LIST 99

In the recent publicity surrounding sex offenders working in schools, a number of registers for the protection of children have featured. List 99 of the Department for Education and Skills contains the names of those barred from teaching for life and it applies throughout the country. It is clear that there is very little coordination between these lists. The crucial problem is that the vetting procedure is in the hands of private companies.

But in all the publicity, there has been no mention of List 98. Members may recall that this list came to light as the result of the case of Majzoub B Ali. List 98 is the name given to a secret blacklist brought into existence in the early 1970s by Essex County Council. Mr Ali did not learn until 2002 that his name had been on this list since 1995 when he was dismissed from a grant-maintained school in Southend-on-sea. He was only told because of the Data Protection Act 1998. He then knew why he had never been short-listed for jobs.

Mr Ali has raised with the Essex County Council whether they share List 98 with other authorities. His view is that if they do not share it, there is no point in having it. If they do share it, why has he not been

told? In the absence of an official reason, *Update* readers might draw their conclusions as to why Essex County Council chose the name 'List 98'.

Mr Ali, a trade union activist, was dismissed from the Cecil Jones High School, Southend-on-sea. He took the school to an Industrial Tribunal under the Race Relations Act but lost. He had failed to win the necessary support from his union, the National Union of Teachers. He believes that the secret black list 98 is intended for ex-employees of Essex County Council. As he was directly employed by a grant-maintained school, it should not apply to him.

Mr Ali has written to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Ruth Kelly, and has asked her to establish the legitimacy of List 98.

Ethnic Minorities in Higher Education

There were some 200 of us attending the well-organised and managed event at London South Bank University on Friday 21 October 2005.

Imran Khan could not attend. However all other Panel Members were very knowledgeable and some made very passionate contributions to the debate especially Dr Robert Beckford, who was actually born in Britain. Some contributions indicated that the Race Relations Amendment Act has so far had

very little impact on improving the opportunities for members of the ethnic minorities. What is more, the Higher Education institutions in general pay lip service to equality of opportunities and have become very adept at winning their cases at Employment Tribunals and the Law Courts. So a frontal attack on these institutions is unlikely to be productive.

<http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/equinet/events.htm>
<<http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/equinet/events.htm>>

Majzoub B Ali
24 October 2005

COMMENT

Happy New Year to all readers.

Education has entered 2006 in disarray. Seldom has government policy on education provoked so much opposition within and outside Parliament. The consequences of the Education Reform Act 1988 and amending Acts since then are obvious. The problems centre on attempts by the government to privatise education. The greater involvement of the private sector in the funding and running of schools, colleges and universities has so far resulted in lowering standards of independent reasoning, negating academic freedom and placing research including that involving human life, at risk.

In the case of Aubrey Blumsohn, the whistleblower at the University of Sheffield, there is clearly a conflict between public interest and

private profit. As he points out, it is the duty of academics to lay bare to the world how they arrive at their conclusions in their research. The giant pharmaceutical company, Procter and Gamble, has shown that in the interest of being 'competitive' they cannot reveal the full story of their research to those in universities who have collaborated with them. Sadly, some universities like Sheffield are going along with this. In so doing, they fail not only to uphold their duty to defend the rights and academic freedom of their academics but they endanger the public as well.

The running of universities is increasingly coming under the control of the bureaucracy called Human Resources and with the unions apparently unable to resist this trend academics are forced to knuckle under or be faced with disciplinary procedures. Aubrey Blumsohn is to be admired for the stand he is making and we urge all members to support him by writing to the vice-chancellor of Sheffield University, calling for his suspension to be lifted.

NOTICES

CAFAS - ISBN Publisher

It was agreed at a Cafas Committee meeting in May that Cafas acquires some ISBNs. Cafas is now a certificated holder of the ISBN Publisher Prefix
0-9550782

We have been allocated 10 numbers two of which are now assigned to:

Michael Cohen & Colwyn Williamson, 2004, *The Mission Betrayed, Cafas.*

ISBN: 0-9550782-0-2

Michael Cohen & Colwyn Williamson, 2004, *The Tangled Web, Cafas*

ISBN: 0-9550782-1-0

Copies of *The Mission Betrayed* can be obtained from Cafas Membership Secretary for £3 (including postage) and of *The Tangled Web* (including the petitioners' final submission) for £2 (including postage).

Academic Freedom e-list and Defending-Academic-Freedom JISCMail List

Readers may recall that Update 47 carried notices for the Academic Freedom e-list run by Cafas member, Sue Blackwell, University of Birmingham and the Defending-Academic-Freedom e-list run by Cafas. Members of the two lists are now in the Defending-Academic-Freedom JISCMail List and Sue Blackwell, s.a.blackwell@bham.ac.uk is now a lead List Owner. Geraldine Thorpe, g.thorpe@londonmet.ac.uk shares this task with her. Several Cafas members are list owners and you can contact them by clicking on 'email list owners' in the link. John Hewitt, john.hewitt22@ntlworld.com is an owner managing the link to it.

There are two ways to join.

I. Go to Cafas website
<http://www.cafas.org>

1. Open the link to Defending Academic Freedom (Email list) on the Home Page.
2. Click on 'Join or Leave the List...'
3. Write your email address and your first and last names in the boxes (complete both) and click on the box that says 'Join...'

II. Email JISCMail directly.

1. Send to:
LISTSERVE@JISCMail.ac.uk
2. Leave Subject blank.
3. Send the text:

Subscribe Defending-Academic-Freedom
YourFirstName
YourLastName

To post a contribution

Either: Send to:
Defending-academic-freedom@jiscmail.ac.uk

Or: Go to the Cafas website, click on the link and then click on 'Post to the List'.

The list is restricted in the sense that only registered members can post and receive messages. The owners of the list will know that you have joined but until you contribute you will remain anonymous. All contributions are held in a JISCMail archive and can be accessed from Cafas website.

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MEETING DATES & ROOMS

**Birkbeck College
Malet Street,
London WC1**

**28 January 2006 at
2.00pm:
Room 252**

**22 April 2006: AGM
1.30pm; Ordinary
Meeting: 2.00pm
Room 252**

**15 July 2006 at 2.00pm:
Room 253**

NEXT MEETING

**Saturday 28 January
2006 at 2.00pm**

Agenda

1. Minutes
2. Matters arising
3. Presentation: Aubrey Blumsohn: Whistleblowing, Victimisation & Academic Freedom
4. Case reports
5. AOB

There will be an officers' meeting in Room 252 at 1.30 pm

Informal lunch and chat from 12.30 in the Junior Common Room, 4th floor, extension wing, Birkbeck College, Malet Street. All welcome.

CONSTITUTION

CAFAS' aims are outlined on the membership form. The full constitution can be obtained from the Secretary or www.cafas.org.uk.

CAFAS was founded in February 1994. It depends on subscriptions and an active membership. It meets in January, April, July and October.

NEAR

Cafas has linked to the Network for Education and Academic Rights (NEAR).

Information is on the website <http://www.nearinternational.org/>

'NEAR's purpose is to facilitate the rapid global transfer of accurate information in response to breaches of academic freedom and human rights in education.'

Next Update

Please send letters, news items and articles to:

CAFAS Update

7 Benn Street

London E9 5SU

e-mail: g.thorpe@londonmet.ac.uk

0208 986 3004

Deadline: 4 April 2006

CAFAS Update seeks to provide an open forum for opinion and discussion.

Items do not necessarily reflect the views of the Council.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Dear Members!

Some of you have forgotten to pay your membership fee.

Could you please be kind enough to check the date of your last payment on the address label? If you should find there "**" or "****!!!" could you please send a cheque without further delay as your contribution is absolutely crucial to the well being of CAFAS.**

Many thanks for your contribution.

**Your Treasurer and
Membership Secretary
Eva Link**

**17 Highcliffe,
Clivesdon Court,**