

Call for Papers

V Conference - Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas (CAFA)

Ottawa, Canada - October 2026

Description

The Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas (CAFA) fosters the promotion, protection, and respect for academic freedom, with the goal of developing relevant human rights standards that serve to protect higher education spaces, to identify best practices, and to strengthen democratic principles in the Americas. CAFA is chaired by the University of Monterrey, the Human Rights Research and Education Center (HRREC) at the University of Ottawa and the Scholars at Risk Network.

Despite the launch of the Inter-American principles on Academic Freedom and University Autonomy in 2021 and its recognition of the importance of academic freedom for free and democratic societies, the higher education sector has continued to experience growing threats. This includes attempts of political and financial control of higher education institutions, the use of force on campuses, the use of civil and criminal legislation to silence academics, censorship of academic discourse, limitations on freedom of research and expression, and impunity with respect to sexual violence in university spaces as a means to undermine academic freedom. Science denialism, disinformation and misinformation further complicate and render oppressive the environments where academics and students learn, share ideas, critically evaluate government policies and programs, and seek to find solutions to societal problems.

With this in mind, the fifth annual conference of the Coalition will take place in October 2026 at the University of Ottawa in Canada, under the theme **“Pathways to Implementing the Right to Academic Freedom across the Americas”**.

The scientific committee for the conference and editorial committee for a special volume produced after the event includes prof. Rafael Ibarra Garza (University of Monterrey), prof. Penelope Simons and Salvador Herencia-Carrasco (HRREC) and Camilla Croso (CAFA).

This call for papers seeks contributions that highlight challenges and opportunities in protection, advocacy, litigation and best practices in academic freedom and university autonomy. Possible topics for papers may be around the following themes:

- University autonomy, political interference and authoritarianism in the Americas.
- Freedom of expression, science denialism and academic freedom in the university space (disinformation and misinformation).
- Hosting scholars at risk thanks to remote and in person schemes.
- Implementation of the Inter-American Principles on Academic Freedom and University Autonomy.
- Sexual and/or gender-based violence and sexual harassment within the university space and academic freedom.
- Student activism and its role in promoting academic freedom and university autonomy.
- Impact of digital technologies and artificial intelligence on academic freedom.
- Participation of marginalized groups in higher education institutions, including governance bodies.
- The corporatization of higher education and its implications for academic freedom.

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The scientific committee will select 9-12 academic papers to compose 3-4 panels for the conference.

Papers

Interested authors are invited to send an abstract (350 words max.) and a 100-word personal biography by March 2, 2026 to annualconference@cafa-claa.org. Individuals whose abstracts are selected will be notified by March 16, 2026. The Coalition accepts proposals in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French. Selected participants will be eligible to submit their papers for publication in a special volume produced by Tirant lo blanch.

A first draft of each paper must be submitted by September 1, 2026. Drafts should be at least 15 pages in length, written in Times New Roman 12, 1.5 spacing, with footnotes. The final versions must be received by December 30, 2026 and will be published in fall 2027.

Note: Financial assistance to attend the conference will be available to authors of papers approved by the editorial committee, subject to budgetary considerations.

For more information about the Coalition's, please [visit our website](#).