
Call for Applications: Regional Director and/or Host Institution Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas

The [Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas](#) (CAFA), in partnership with [Scholars at Risk](#) (SAR), invites applications from candidates for a “Regional Director” role that will lead the growth and development of CAFA’s membership and activities aimed at promoting and strengthening academic freedom in the Americas. Applications are invited from (i) qualified individuals interested in serving as the director, (ii) institutions or organizations interested in serving as host for the director and coalition office, or (iii) combined applications from a prospective director and host. Details on the director role, host institution role, and application process follow. **Please note: applications are due by October 1, 2023.**

Background

Academic freedom is “the right of every person to seek, generate and transmit knowledge, to be part of academic communities and to carry out autonomous and independent work in order to access education, teaching, learning, research, discovery, transformation, debate, and dissemination of information and ideas freely and without fear of reprisals.”¹ Academic freedom is fully and independently grounded in freedom of opinion and expression, the right to education, and the right to the benefits of science, respectively, and has elements of freedom of association, freedom of movement, and other rights. Academic freedom is a pillar of strong, democratic societies and it is crucial to providing important scientific, economic, cultural, and social benefits from which we all benefit.

Too often, however, scholars, students, and their institutions face restrictions on their academic freedom or suffer attacks for their work, ideas, and even their role in society. Violence, wrongful arrest and prosecution, retaliatory dismissals and suspensions, and legislative and administrative actions are among the alarming threats to higher education communities today. Across the Americas, such threats have eroded the space for scholars and students to exercise their academic freedom and provide society the benefits of their work and ideas. Protecting academic freedom and safeguarding the space for everyone to share ideas requires a robust and coordinated response from members of the higher education and human rights communities.

The **Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas** (CAFA) is a regional coalition of higher education and human rights professionals and advocates committed to increasing awareness and advocacy in the defense of academic freedom across the Americas. Since it was co-launched in 2020 by the University of Monterrey, the University of Ottawa, and SAR, CAFA has co-developed and secured the adoption of a set of Inter-American Principles on Academic Freedom and University Autonomy, reported attacks on higher education in the region, held international events and discussions about threats to academic freedom, and promoted research on the same. CAFA continues to build on these activities and achievements by

¹ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, “Inter-American Principles on Academic Freedom and University Autonomy,” December 2021, p. 8, available at <https://www.udem.edu.mx/sites/default/files/2023-02/CIDH-%20Principios%20Libertad%20Acad%C3%A9mica%20Mayo%202022-%20English.pdf>.

identifying strategies to implement the Inter-American Principles, enhance its reporting efforts, and grow its membership.

Scholars at Risk (SAR) is an international network of higher education institutions and individuals dedicated to protecting at-risk scholars and promoting academic freedom. SAR staff and network members support at-risk scholars through temporary research and teaching opportunities; report attacks on higher education through the Academic Freedom Monitoring Project and *Free to Think* report series; conduct advocacy through national, regional, and international human rights systems; and convene stakeholders in higher education, government, and civil society to learn about, research, and discuss academic freedom and its importance.

Requirements and Expectations for the Regional Director

The Regional Director role is an exciting opportunity for a highly organized, strategic, and entrepreneurial professional interested in leading academic freedom advocacy and promotion activities across the Americas.

The Director's principal responsibility will be to grow CAFA's membership, activities, and visibility as the leading regional defender of academic freedom. The director will also represent the coalition in dialogues at the cross-regional and international levels.

Qualified candidates will demonstrate experience in networking and coalition-building, program development, project management, troubleshooting, communications, administration, and fundraising. The Regional Director's **core responsibilities** will be to:

- Grow and mobilize CAFA's **individual membership and institutional partnerships**, including by identifying, recruiting, and cultivating local and regional advocates for and experts on academic freedom. Work with CAFA's Executive Committee and relevant working groups to develop and manage newsletters, bulletins, email lists, social media, and other communications content; coordinate annual and routine meetings and conferences; and organize orientations and trainings for new coalition members (as needed).
- Work with CAFA's Executive Committee and relevant working groups to conceive, plan, support, and refine CAFA's **advocacy, research, and visibility activities**. Maintain internal and external coalition communications relating to programming, decision-making, and opportunities. Present on CAFA's activities at regional and international conferences, workshops, events. Cultivate press relations and respond to media inquiries.
- Manage budgeting, book-keeping, grant-reporting, and maintaining records. Develop in partnership with CAFA members and SAR a **sustainability plan** aimed at securing long-term funding and other program resources.

Desirable **skills, experience, and attributes** for the director include:

- Graduate degree in a relevant field (e.g. social sciences, international relations, law, human rights, international or comparative higher education, etc.) or comparable experience;
- Commitment to supporting academic freedom/free expression, higher education, human rights; experience in international human rights or higher education systems, policies, and movements strongly preferred;

- Strong organizational and project management skills with an ability to prioritize tasks and coordinate multiple projects and competing deadlines; an entrepreneurial and creative approach to problem-solving;
- Strong skills in managing and planning budgets, and preparing financial reports; experience in grant-writing and developing funder relations preferred; ability to generate and present data to coalition committee members, funders, and SAR;
- Flexible and comfortable with ambiguity; ability to navigate evolving situations; sensitivity to a diversity of communities and views;
- Excellent research, analytical, oral, and written communication and presentation skills;
- Professional written and spoken fluency in English and Spanish required.

Requirements and Expectations of the Host Institution

Hosting the Regional Director and coalition is an exciting opportunity to play a leading role in supporting academic freedom across the Americas.

The principal responsibility of the host institution will be to employ the director, to receive and administer funds supporting the director role and coalition activities, and otherwise to support or participate in coalition activities as a member of CAFA's Executive Committee. Such additional support may include, for example, hosting coalition meetings, conferences, and events (online and/or in-person). Prospective host institutions should be based in Latin America and may include higher education institutions (university departments, centers, or institutes), higher education or academic associations or societies, or civil society organizations (e.g. human rights organizations) that can offer a supportive environment for the Regional Director and coalition activities.

Core **responsibilities and attributes** of the host institution include:

- **Committed to supporting academic freedom** and conduct programming that complements or supports the work of the coalition (e.g. advocacy, research, trainings, capacity-building, etc.); a history of developing relationships or otherwise engaging with relevant human rights and/or higher education stakeholders is highly preferred;
- **Able and willing to hire and employ a Regional Director** and other support staff (as needed and as available resources permit; ability to hire international candidates may be preferable); offer desk space and consistent internet access; ideally, can provide access to meeting spaces for coalition meetings and events;
- **Hold, manage, and administer coalition funds**; process payments for domestic and international services or goods the coalition intends to purchase (e.g. translation and interpretation services, printed materials, travel, accommodations, meals, event space rentals, etc.); and
- **Has clear systems, policies, and a track record** for preventing and responding to corruption, conflicts of interest, discrimination, harassment, and other improper or illegal activities.

Principal **benefits** to the host institution include:

- **Demonstrating leadership in promoting academic freedom** in the region and internationally, with increasing visibility as coalition programming grows;
- **Direct access to coalition programming** for the host institution's faculty, staff, students, and community (as warranted); and

- **Multiplying impact of coalition programming** with current or future research, teaching or programming at the host institution (such as joint research activities, conferences, events, trainings, advocacy, etc.).

How to Apply

Interested candidates are asked to submit applications **in English** by **October 1, 2023**. See the below instructions for the different types of applicants. If you have any questions about the application process, please email daniel.munier@nyu.edu.

Joint director/host applications: Candidates for the regional director role are strongly encouraged to propose a suitable host institution and to apply together with that institution in a combined submission. Please note that we will accept joint applications by candidates for the director role who are not currently employed by the proposed host institution. Joint applicants should send their application materials in a **single PDF document** to daniel.munier@nyu.edu (please use the subject line and filename convention “CAFA Regional Director & Host - [Last Name, First Name of Director Candidate]”). **Applications must be in English and must include the following elements:**

- A CV/resume from the Regional Director candidate;
- A cover letter from the Regional Director candidate explaining their interest in the position, relevant experience, and vision for CAFA’s continuing growth and development;
- A cover letter from the Host Institution candidate explaining the institution’s interest in hosting the Regional Director, the proposed hosting arrangement and terms, any relevant experience, complementary activities, or contributions which the host would make in support of the coalition’s objectives, and how the host may support the Director’s fundraising efforts. (This letter should come from the primary institutional officer who would oversee any hosting arrangements and future activities, and it should include the institutional officer’s contact information.)

Director candidate applications: Interested candidates for the director role who do not yet have a partnering host institution may still apply separately, in which case CAFA and SAR may work with select finalists in either or both roles to reach a final director-host arrangement. Candidates for the Regional Director role should send their application materials in a **single PDF document** to daniel.munier@nyu.edu (please use the subject line and filename convention “CAFA Regional Director - [Last Name, First Name]”).

Applications must be in English and must include the following elements:

- A CV/resume
- A cover letter explaining their interest in the position, relevant experience, and vision for the CAFA’s continuing growth and development
- A description of any proposed hosting institution(s) and terms (if applicable).

Host applications: Host institutions who have not yet identified a director candidate may apply separately, in which case CAFA and SAR may work with select finalists to identify a final director-host arrangement. Host institutions (without a director candidate) should send their application materials in a **single PDF document** to daniel.munier@nyu.edu (please use the subject line and filename convention “CAFA Host Institution - [Name of Institution]”). **Applications must be in English and must include the following elements:**

- Position and contact information for the primary institutional officer that would oversee any hosting arrangements and future activities

- A cover letter explaining the institution's interest in hosting the regional director, the proposed hosting arrangement and terms, any relevant experience, complementary activities, or contributions which the host would make in support of the coalition's objectives, and how the host may support the Director's fundraising efforts.

Applications are due October 1, 2023. Candidates identified for first-round interviews will be contacted on a rolling basis.