



## KEY RESULTS OF THE INSIGHTS CAFÉ

### “THE LIMITS OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM”

**Panelists:** Hanoch Gutfreund (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, IS), Thorsten Schwede (University of Basel, SIB Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics, CH), Ruth Morgan (University College London, UK), Frederick Fenter (Frontiers, CH) (Moderation), Robbert Dijkgraaf (University of Amsterdam, NL), Tanja Stadler (ETH Zürich, CH)

Academic freedom—the intellectual autonomy to pursue, teach, and disseminate research without undue interference—is fundamental to the advancement of knowledge. It allows scholars to explore innovative ideas, challenge prevailing norms, and contribute to long-term societal progress. However, this freedom is increasingly challenged by political, economic, and social pressures. Restrictive data-sharing policies, diminished funding for basic research, and heightened societal expectations are undermining open science and the unencumbered pursuit of knowledge. Without proactive measures, overregulation and a lack of open communication could stifle innovation and hinder independent scholarship.

#### THE EXPERT PANEL ARTICULATES THE FOLLOWING CALLS TO ACTION:

##### Protect and prioritise basic research.

- 1 — Ensure robust funding and sustained support for fundamental research without undue restrictions to drive future breakthroughs. Basic research is essential for long-term societal advancement, providing the foundation for future innovations without immediate practical applications.

##### Promote open dialogue between science and society.

- 2 — Engage openly with society to rebuild trust and mutual understanding. Open and respectful communication can bridge misunderstandings and lead to greater acceptance of scientific findings. Universities should lead by modelling constructive dialogue and training the next generation to engage effectively.

##### Safeguard academic freedom through ethical responsibility.

- 3 — Uphold ethical standards to preserve trust in academic freedom. Academic freedom comes with the responsibility to conduct research ethically and transparently. Institutions must proactively address conflicts of interest, uphold ethical standards, and encourage a culture of integrity.

##### Foster international and interdisciplinary collaboration.

- 4 — Collaborate globally and across disciplines to tackle complex issues across borders and disciplines. Academics should have the freedom to choose research partners, even across political or ideological divides, to advance knowledge and innovation.

##### Break down internal barriers within academia.

- 5 — Encourage cross-disciplinary interaction between departments and disciplines, promoting a culture of collaboration and diversity. This empowers researchers to address significant questions and innovate without unnecessary constraints.

## CONTACT

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## THE LIMITS OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Curated by Anke Beck (Frontiers)

Hanoch Gutfreund *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, IS*  
Thorsten Schwede *University of Basel, CH*  
Ruth Morgan *University College London, UK*  
Tanja Stadler *ETH Zürich, CH*  
Robert Dijkgraaf *University of Amsterdam, NL*  
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