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## Review of Eren (2026)

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### Summary

This study presents original survey data from 250 tenure-track faculty at U.S. R1 universities that had not adopted institutional neutrality policies. It examines faculty awareness of institutional political statements, attitudes toward neutrality, self-censorship, changes in professional/extramural engagement, and perceived ideological homogeneity.

Key findings include:

- 78% of respondents are aware of institutional statements; 60% prefer neutrality; and most have disagreed with at least some statements.
- Roughly one-third report self-censorship, mostly for social reasons rather than fear of job loss.
- Nearly half say professional engagement with a topic would be influenced by alignment/misalignment with the university's position.
- Formal sanctions are rare; perceived consequences are mostly social.
- Untenured, non-white, and public-university faculty report greater constraints.
- Statements do not appear to improve sense of belonging, and many faculty perceive ideological homogeneity among administrators and students.

Despite a low response rate, the study offers a useful empirical contribution to a debate dominated by normative and historical arguments.

### Overall Evaluation

This is a credible, timely, and worthwhile study. It should be publishable with modest revisions.

The main areas needing attention concern framing (especially avoiding causal language), clarifying methodological limitations, and improving presentation of results.

## Major Comments

### 1. Causal language (“effects”)

The manuscript (including the title) uses “effects” and other causal terms, but the design is cross-sectional and self-reported. I recommend reframing results as associations or perceived impacts. The title would benefit from a more descriptive phrasing. Similarly, anecdotes (e.g., leaving Florida due to policy changes) should be presented cautiously—respondents may retrospectively attribute motives aligned with political priors.

### 2. Nonresponse bias

The manuscript acknowledges the low response rate but should expand briefly on the likely direction of bias. For instance, faculty with strong views on academic freedom or those affiliated with HxA may be overrepresented. This could inflate estimates of neutrality support or self-censorship. A short paragraph addressing who is most likely to respond would strengthen the methods section.

### 3. Presentation of findings

The section listing which items showed significant majorities is difficult to follow. I strongly recommend converting the one-sample tests into a simple table with rows for each item and columns for proportion “yes,” N, and significance. The existing tables (Tables 1–4 and appendices) should also be cleaned up to meet standard publication formatting.

### 4. Tone and terminology

- “Degrees of Chill” reads somewhat informal for an academic paper; consider a more neutral title.
- Refer to the work throughout as “this study,” not “this article.”
- Ensure consistent spelling of names, e.g., Whittington (currently misspelled as Wittington in the text).

### 5. Abstract clarity

The abstract contains some syntactical issues and could be revised for clarity and flow.

## Minor Comments

- A few sentences throughout would benefit from tightening or clarification, especially where discussing results that are not statistically significant but are still substantively large (e.g., 44–48% modifying professional behavior).
- The manuscript could briefly note that 22% of faculty are unaware of any statements—a surprisingly high figure that deserves one sentence of interpretation.

## **Recommendation**

### **Revise and resubmit (minor to moderate revisions).**

This is an important empirical study on a timely subject. With improved framing, clearer presentation of results, and attention to the issues noted above, it should be well-suited for publication.