

Society for Academic Freedom & Scholarship NEWSLETTER

Number 1

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This is the first issue of the Newsletter of the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS).

The PURPOSES of the SAFS are:

1. To resist the ideological misuse of teaching and scholarship.
2. To support rigorous standards in research and teaching in university hiring practices.
3. To preserve academic freedom and the free exchange of ideas, regardless of popular doctrine.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES ATTACK THE UNIVERSITY

At least three professional societies in Canada are attacking the very foundations of universities. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and the Ontario Confederation of University Teachers (OCUFA) are lobbying both provincial and federal governments for laws requiring employment and student policies to be based on considerations of ancestry, sex, and mental or physical disability, and for curricula to be based on the ancestry, sex, and mental or physical disability of those who work in

¹*Measure*, the Newsletter of UCRA (University Centers for Rational Alternatives, 570 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10018) in the issue of March 1992, number 104, reports on a similar problem in the United States with the AAUP (American Association of University Professors): "Whom does the AAUP Represent Today? A Revolt of the AAUP's California Section Against its Central Office."

disciplines. The Canadian Philosophical Association (CPA) will vote on the recommendations of a May 1991 "Report to the Canadian Philosophical Association to Study Hiring Policies Affecting Women" at the CPA annual business meeting May 26, 1992 at the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown, P.E.I. (The Humanities division of the Learned Societies will be considering "Aboriginal Peoples and Humanities Scholarship.")

The CAUT Brief Judy Wubnig

The CAUT submitted a brief entitled "Review of the Employment Equity Act and the Federal Contractors Programme" in January, 1992, to Monique Hamilton, Employment Equity Act Review Committee, House of Commons, in Ottawa. Its proposals would use law to prevent universities from employing individuals on the basis of their knowledge, but instead on the basis of ancestry, sex, and disability.

A. Constitutional Background

The Charter of Rights adopted in 1982 with the Constitution provided a self-contradictory section, Section 15, dealing with Equality Rights, the result of efforts by groups wanting "affirmative action" with no constitutional prohibitions. Subsection (1) guarantees every individual equality before and under the law

"without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability,"

contradicted by Subsection (2)

"Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups, including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."

(Subsection (2) not only contradicts Subsection (1), but is itself self-contradictory since individuals and groups who are designated as "disadvantaged" are to have an advantage over those who are not.)

B. The Employment Equity Act of 1986 and The Federal Contractors Program

The Federal Government of Canada in 1986 passed an *Employment Equity Act* which applies to any person who employs one hundred or more employees on or in connection with a federal work, undertaking or business, with some qualifications. The *Federal Contractors Program* applies its provisions to those with federal contracts of \$200,000 or more. It applies to many universities.

The stated purpose of the Employment Equity Act reflects a utopian illusion about the ability of government to guarantee employment based solely on merit. However, the real effect of the Act is to impede employment based on personal merit by requiring employment policies of those with Federal contracts of over \$200,000 to be based on irrelevant criteria of race, sex, ancestry, appearance or disability, the numbers depending on the equally irrelevant criterion of percentages of these traits in the population:

"The purpose of this Act is to achieve equality in the work place so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability and, in fulfillment of that goal, to correct the conditions of

disadvantage in employment experienced by women, aboriginal peoples, person with disabilities and persons who are, because of their race or colour, in a visible minority in Canada by giving effect to the principle that employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences.

Section 4 spells this out, using the euphemism "positive policies and practices" instead of "affirmative action."

"An employer shall . . . implement employment equity by a) identifying and eliminating each of the employer's employment practices, not otherwise authorized by law, that results in employment barriers against persons in designated groups; and b) instituting positive policies and practices and making such reasonable accommodation as will ensure that persons in designated groups [women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and persons who are, because of their race or colour, in visible minority in Canada, §3] achieve a degree of representation in the various positions of employment with the employer that is at least proportionate to their representation i) in the work force, or ii) in those segments of the work force that are identifiable by

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qualification, eligibility or geography and from which the employer may be reasonably expected to draw or promote employees."

C. The Brief of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, January 1992

The Status of Women Committee of the CAUT prepared the brief which was submitted to the Employment Equity Act Review Committee. Its first recommendation is "That the phrase [in the Employment Equity Act] 'No person shall be denied employment opportunities or employment benefits for reasons unrelated to ability' be expanded to state - - 'and shall be granted a work environment free of personal harrassment and discrimination.' " (The only "abilities" it refers to are those of sex, ancestry, ethnic group, skin colour, race, and *dis* ability. The word "knowledge" never appears.)

It maintains, for example, that

"Sexism and racism are entrenched in the dominant culture and these aspects of our culture are reflected in the work force. . . . Harrassment based on gender and race is also part of the university culture. It is imperative that the work place climate be free of personal harrassment and discrimination to its growing diversity."
(p. 3)

(It is the CAUT policy which would "entrench" "sexism and racism "by having law force employers to treat individuals differently, according to sex and race.)

Although the authors claim to represent "some 26,000 university teachers, librarians and researchers across the country," they at the same time show that they do not represent their views. ". . . it is largely because of the pressure from various sources, including Federal and Provincial Governments, that universities have made the progress [in Employment Equity] they have." The CAUT wants to use government to force universities

to do what the individuals who constitute and run the university, including the faculty, researchers, and librarians the CAUT claims to represent - would not choose to do.

The CAUT requests government action to "guarantee a work environment free of personal harrassment and discrimination." They are really promoting the opposite, however: personal harrassment of individuals who do not conform in speech and behavior to the dictates of "authorities" and discrimination on the basis of sex, ancestry, skin colour, and disability.

Although the CAUT brief alludes to the financial problems of universities, it wants both the Government of Canada and the universities to spend *more money* to hire people (establish "structures") to administer employment equity plans, the Government of Canada to bear all the additional costs to employers (Recommendations VI, C, XIII, XIV, XIX, XX, and XXVII, XXVIII).

D. The SAFS Opposes The CAUT

April 27 1992

Monique Hamilton

Employment Equity Act Review Committee

House of Commons

Ottawa Ontario

Dear Madam:

Our society represents university faculty of both sexes at almost every university in Ontario and several universities outside the province. We are a group concerned with maintaining standards of excellence, and academic freedom. We are opposed to "employment equity" policy as applied to universities. We are thus unequivocally opposed to the position taken by both the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), and the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA). Indeed our organization was formed in part as a reflection of the discontent many university teachers have with CAUT and OCUFA, whose

claim of representing us is unjustified.

In fact, the CAUT, in supporting the extension of employment equity beyond the point of ensuring equal opportunity for all individuals, is contradicting its own basic tenets. These include the right to freedom of teaching and research, regardless of prescribed doctrine, and freedom from institutional censorship; and the guarantee of appointment, promotion and tenure on the basis of merit rather than extraneous criteria such as race, sex, religion, etc.

None of those laudable aims, which are basic to the mission of an institution of higher learning, can be achieved within a framework which puts group-membership before excellence as a criterion for hiring. Nor can free discussion proceed in the atmosphere of intimidation which has already been generated, and which would be exacerbated by making official a recognition of the so-called "chilly climate," one of the proposals put forth by OCUFA.

The claims of "chilly climate," and worse still, of discrimination by men as the cause of the less-than-50% representation of women on faculty complements, are based largely on anecdotal reports by biased observers with a political rather than an academic agenda. At least three recent objective analyses (Brown, Irvine, Ryten, see references below) reject this claim. Until we collect adequate unbiased data on the sex, number *and quality* of applicants to university positions, we have no factual basis for claims of discrimination. Both the Brown and Irvine analyses indicate, on the contrary, that women have already been hired on a percentage basis above that predicted by the proportion of qualified women applicants.

The fact that women hold less than 50% of the faculty positions at universities is most probably a historical consequence of differing priorities and circumstances experienced by both women and men. There are objective and valid ways of determining qualifications

and productivity, and further study is the only means of answering these questions. We cannot justify currently penalizing bright young men because of imagined injustices on the part of others in the past; particularly when there is no benefit to the quality of university education in doing so.

This country is already seriously underfunding research and scholarship, and the situation is discouraging people from entering academic careers. If we add to this already negative environment the element of systematic discrimination in favour of certain groups, ignoring academic quality, we will eventually destroy the university as an institution of higher learning. Most of us already know of young men who are leaving graduate school because they see no future in a university career. Others have spent over 10 years of their lives acquiring a Ph.D. and publishing in their field, to pursue an academic career. Now they see positions they apply for offered to less qualified women applicants, who have no such degree, no publications, and less teaching experience. The waste in human resources is appalling.

The university was never meant to be a parliament in which members were elected by proportional representation. It thrives as a competitive endeavour in which free discussion and criticism between colleagues is encouraged, and the best-defended ideas prevail. There is no place in it for quotas based on political agendas. Indeed, one might ask whether the federal government would support the concept of a Parliament based on proportional representation, proportions based on sex, race, ethnic origin, etc., rather than on the willingness of potential Members of Parliament to take the initiative and stand for office. If not prepared to tolerate such a system where it might in fact be more rational (since no other qualification are specified for membership in the House of Commons), how can it be justified in the academic arena, where there are pertinent and valid prerequisites for appointment?

The extremist feminist agenda, unfortunately promulgated largely by persons who have political rather than academic priorities, has succeeded in representing women contemptibly, as individuals who demand privileges without responsibility. It calls for a "person-friendly" university, where there are no "expectations of longer work hours" (Scott, COU Committee on the Status of Women), and for "supportive" measures which would effectively curb the freedom to criticize preferential policies or indeed any policies which are not in tune with the politically correct programme. The members of our organization reject this view of women academics. We believe that appropriate allowance can be made for pregnancy and childbirth, without prejudicing the fairness of evaluation of progress through the academic ranks. Moreover, we see the "chilly climate" campaign as a truly negative movement which generates antagonisms between men and women in academia, rather than as a legitimate force for equity.

We also deny the validity of the claim that only women may act as role models for women academics. In our opinion, the best role model for an academic of either sex is the scholar who is committed to excellence. Whether this person is a man or woman is irrelevant.

We obviously deplore any alteration of employment equity policy which would put a schedule on the enforcement of preferential hiring which we find *a priori* unacceptable. We sincerely believe that the long-term effect of preferential hiring of women (or minorities), which minimizes academic standards, will be to diminish respect for such preferred groups. It is guaranteed to lower, not raise, the status of women in universities. Indeed, there is already a just perception about some recent women appointees in universities, that they have been hired as women rather than as qualified faculty. This is just one of the many reprehensible consequences of quotas, their basic injustice being the most objectionable.

We urge the committee to consider seriously the negative consequences to universities of inappropriate application of rigid employment equity policies.

Sincerely,
Doreen Kimura, Ph.D., FRSC
President, Society for Academic Freedom & Scholarship

References.

- Brown, G. A., Faculty of Management, Univ. Lethbridge: Preferential policies for women in Canadian universities.
Irvine, A. D., Dept. Philosophy, Univ. British Columbia: Jack & Jill and employment equity.
Ryten, E., Assoc. Can. Med. Colleges, Ottawa: Women in academic medicine in Canada: Are women subject to discrimination?

The Canadian Philosophical Association: Socrates vs. Thrasymachus Judy Wubnig

The Committee to Study Hiring Policies Affecting Women, established by the executive of the Canadian Philosophical Association in November, 1990, published a report to the CPA in May, 1991.

It takes as ideal a department of philosophy in which the ratio of men to women at all ranks is 50-50 and makes the following recommendations to achieve this:

"(1) By the year 2000 at least twenty-seven percent of permanent or probationary faculty in any unit should be female, and by the year 2010 at least forty percent should be female.

(2) In any decade in any department, at least fifty percent of new permanent or probationary positions should be filled with women.

(3) The first goal takes precedence over the second. (So, for example, if achieving twenty-seven percent female faculty by 2000 requires a hiring rate for women that is higher than fifty percent, the higher rate should be implemented.)"

I. The Recommendations

A. The Ideal of the Fifty-Fifty Ratio of Men and Women

The Committee's report, like that of the CAUT, implies that the purpose of jobs is to provide money and prestige rather than to accomplish anything, such as studying philosophical problems and teaching philosophy.

The Committee judges a department by the ratio of the sexes, not the ratio of good philosophers. Insofar as it claims not to sacrifice quality, it seems to assume that if everyone had been judged by their philosophical merits in the past, then the present ratio of the sexes in departments of philosophy would be fifty-fifty. This is an assumption based on no scholarly evidence. In any case, what *might have been* is irrelevant. The only criterion of the philosophic knowledge and ability of an individual is his own performance, not what happened in the past.

B. Knowledge

Although the Committee seems to hold a "feminist" theory of knowledge, it reflects another version of the irrationalist theories which have dominated the twentieth century, which judge ideas by traits of the thinker instead of by standards of reason. The "feminist" theory maintains that ideas depend on sex, rather than on Marxist economic classes, "bourgeois" or "proletarian," or on race, "Aryan" and "non-Aryan."

The Committee maintains that one's sex is a criterion of merit because "there is compelling evidence that philosophy's gender imbalance is the source of bias and partiality in many of its theoretical products." (No evidence is given.) "It must be recognized that quality and gender cannot be entirely separated. Female philosophers may bring to a predominantly male department perspectives

and methods that are underrepresented." (Why *must* it be recognized that "quality and gender cannot be entirely separated"? If women can avoid "partiality and bias," men can as well. The theory that it is impossible to avoid partiality and bias is logically self-refuting.)

The Committee wants to redescribe "philosophy" so as to hire women of one political persuasion, "feminism." "Many women are simply not comfortable with the social behaviors associated with adversarial philosophy. Other models of philosophic discourse should be legitimated and explored." (p. 17) In other words, if many women are not "comfortable with" ("interested in"?) what is now called "philosophy," including the great works (in many styles), like Socratic dialogues, other pursuits should be called ("legitimated") "philosophy" and invented ("explored") if they do not yet exist.

"Above all, try to avoid advertising positions in areas known to be overwhelmingly dominated by men." (p. 18) "Recognize that feminist scholarship is an important focus for scholarly work. Feminist interests in research and teaching should not be undervalued, and publications in feminist journals should be assigned full credit." (p.19) (The Committee, in other words, calls on departments of philosophy not to consider philosophic knowledge, in order to hire women, but to call what satisfies political criteria "philosophy.")

If departments of philosophy need to have individuals with specialties in, say logic, they must not seek them because it is a field "overwhelmingly dominated by men." (Or if departments of public works need to build bridges, in order to hire women they must not seek for specialists in engineering - because that is a field "overwhelmingly dominated by men")

II. Facts

The Committee makes claims about employ

ment of women in Canadian universities which have been shown in several reports to be false. (See the references in the SAFS brief above.)

Other References

- G. A. Brown, Author, Faculty of Management, Univ. of Lethbridge, "A Critique of the Report to the C.P.A. from the Committee to Study Hiring Policies Affecting Women."
Graeme Hunter, Author, Dept. Philosophy, Univ. of Ottawa, "The Feminist Hijacking of Public Space: Canadian Case Study."

General References

- Paul R. Gross, "On the 'Gendering' of Science," Academic Questions, Spring, 1992
Joan Harrison, "The New Feminism: Harbinger of Totalitarianism?" Measure, September 1991.
Jan Narveson, Author, Dept. Philosophy, Univ. of Waterloo, "Forced Affirmative Action."
Thomas Sowell, Preferential Policies
Judy Wubnig, "The Rule of Ignorance in the United States & Canada," Measure, March 1991.

Academic Freedom At Risk At U.T.

John Furedy

(Under the heading, "Academic Freedom At Risk," the University of Toronto's newspaper, *The Bulletin*, published the following letter, April 27, 1992.).

In a periodicals digest, The Council for Advancement & Support of Education (CASE) cites evidence that political correctness (PC) is not widespread on American campuses. Its support is based on a survey that shows a low percentage of faculty and administrators have received complaints about PC (Notebook, March 23.)

I am not familiar with the CASE survey but I suggest that those who answered on behalf of universities may not have conveyed an accurate picture of how PC pressures can undermine academic freedom of faculty and students. The CASE data are based on instances of *publicized* controversies.

However, those unpublicized instances where individuals opt to accommodate PC requirements to avoid trouble or to exercise self-censorship go unreported.

At U of T the formation of the 36-member Presidential Advisory Committee on Race Relations (PACRR) could be considered an example of PC. Its broad mandate is to check for any material in texts or lectures that "may be offensive to a member of some minority or disadvantaged group." In cases where this has been deemed to occur, the committee is "to consult" with the responsible parties.

Before the committee's formation, its co-chairs made a presentation to the Academic Board and were asked for a specific example of what might constitute a case for such consultation. One of the two presenters provided, as an example, a text on research methods in sociology that referred to a comparison of black and white households. Both this example and the wording of PACRR's mandate suggest a policy so vague that there is considerable potential for a threat to academic freedom.

I suggest that PACRR's existence, its large membership, its broad terms of reference and (relative to these times of financial crisis) its generous budget of \$100,000, all constitute evidence that PC is gathering strength on our campus. In such an environment, organizations like the recently formed Society for Academic Freedom & Scholarship have a role to play in defending the principle (first defended by Socrates against the Athenian democracy's charge that he was "corrupting the youth") that, especially in education, all opinions should be open to critical examination.

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