

Society for Academic Freedom & Scholarship

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NEWSLETTER

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PURPOSES of SAFS

1. Maintaining freedom in teaching, research and scholarship;
2. Maintaining standards of excellence in decisions about students and faculty.

INTRUSION OF EXTRA-ACADEMIC CRITERIA INTO SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING?

John J. Furedy
University of Toronto

Many of the cases that SAFS has taken up concerning academic freedom have been relatively straightforward. Issues relating to scholarship are often more complex. The affair described in this note is a case in point, and hence my title is in the interrogatory mode.

The SAFS Board of Director's letter to *University Affairs* (which was emailed on Feb. 25, 1998, and accepted for publication with some minor editorial changes), is given below, and summarizes the situation from SAFS perspective. The Dec. 18, 1997 email to Ms. Woolfrey of Wilfrid Laurier University Press (WLUP) requested WLUP to reconsider its exclusion of four of the papers from a volume that was supposed to be a report of the proceedings of a scholarly conference has not been reproduced here, as it is mostly redundant with the text of the letter to *University Affairs*. However, both this email to Ms. Woolfrey and my email correspondence with Prof. Groarke are available from me on request.

Letter from SAFS Board to *University Affairs*:

The Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS) is an independent organization devoted to safeguarding the independence of post-secondary teaching,

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May 9, 1998

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scholarly research, and academic decision-making. An incident recently brought to the attention of the Board of Directors should be of interest to your readership. It concerns a volume of papers read at the "First Laurier Conference on Business and Professional Ethics" (October 1996) published by Wilfrid Laurier University Press (WLUP).

Continued on page 2...

1998 Dues

Membership fees (\$20 regular; \$10 students/retired) are now due. SAFS dues cover a calendar year (Jan. - Dec.) so to gain the maximum benefit, early payment is advised. Paid up membership is necessary to vote at the AGM and to receive newsletters, mailings and emails from SAFS.

Keeping up our membership strength is vital to achieving our goals. It saves us considerable expense and time if we can avoid having to send out reminder notices for the annual fees. So please take the time now to show your commitment by completing the enclosed form and mailing your cheque today.

Please note: As detailed on p. 12, after the 1998 AGM, *Ruth Gruhn* will assume the presidency.

FUREDY...continued from page 1

The original conference included a session on downsizing and employment equity that included anti- as well as pro-equity positions. Professor Louis Marinoff, a SAFS member and well-known opponent of employment equity, was invited to participate. Subsequently, the conference organizer and editor of the proceedings, Professor Leo Groarke of WLU, worked closely with the author to revise the paper for publication, pronouncing the result a “good strong contribution” to the projected volume. Yet six months later he rejected it, indicating the WLUP had made exclusion of this and three other papers a condition of publication.

The case of another rejected paper (whose author wishes to remain anonymous) was apparently similar. The editor was required to drop this paper too (it took a controversial stand on an issue unrelated to employment equity), despite having initially expressed himself very positively about the revised and edited version. We have no information about the content of the other two papers, but it appears that the decision to exclude them was also made by WLUP, overruling the considered judgement of the editor and conference organizer. The latter acquiesced, subsequently defending the Press’ decision in correspondence with the authors.

On learning of this matter, the president of SAFS directed an inquiry to Prof. Groarke. He initially welcomed the inquiry, declaring his wish to cooperate and provide

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“misrepresentation of the facts,” declining even to read Prof. Marinoff’s response to his initial account of the affair unless a series of demands were met which, in the circumstances, were both inappropriate and unreasonable. The Board of SAFS then contacted the Director of WLUP, Ms. Sandra Woolfrey, to inquire whether the decision of the Press had perhaps been motivated by relevant academic considerations that Prof. Groarke had not mentioned, and, if not, whether the Press would reconsider its decision. Ms. Woolfrey neither acknowledged the inquiry nor replied.

WLUP is a University Press devoted to “publishing scholarly excellence.” The same scholarly and academic considerations which prompted the organizer/editor to include an anti-equity perspective in the conference and to edit it extensively for publication would, it seems, dictate its retention as (in the editor’s judgement) a “strong contribution” to the projected volume. SAFS is still unaware of any substantive *academic* reasons for its exclusion. The decision regarding the controversial papers raises disturbing questions about possible intrusion of extra-academic selection criteria into scholarly publishing in the Humanities and Social Sciences, questions we believe to be of vital concern to the wider Canadian academic community. 9

SAFS Board of Directors (1997/98)

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further information. Within a short time, however, he unaccountably charged SAFS with partisanship and

SELF-CENSORSHIP

*Michiel Horn
York University*

Taking advantage of a shortage of qualified academics, faculty associations in the 1960s secured increased protection for tenure and thereby, presumably, for academic freedom. By 1975, many universities had procedures protecting due process and tenure that would have seemed unimaginable thirty years earlier. Nevertheless self-censorship continued to flourish. The reasons had changed, however. I recall A. E. Malloch, Chair of the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, saying at the CAUT National Council meeting in 1972 that the main threats to academic freedom had once come from board members and outsiders such as politicians and business leaders. More recently the threat came from professors and academic administrators seeking to introduce "a new age of orthodoxy." Outsiders cared less what academics said; insiders cared more. (One recalls the attempts made by "radical" students around 1970 to prevent the expression of views they held to be offensive). Malloch quoted a comment made to him by the head of a department: "Yes, but how do I recognize a good radical sociologist when I see one?"¹ Peer pressure has always tended to reinforce the habit of self-censorship. By the 1970s that pressure was the dominant form.

This is still the case. Recent assertions that some research should be regarded as an abuse of academic freedom rather than an exercise of it, should be restricted because it is sexist or racist, originate within the academy. Sex and ethnicity have become for many academics what capitalism and the Empire once were: topics best avoided unless what one has to say is clearly unobjectionable.

An example emerges from an affair that originated in the "Out of Africa" exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto in 1989-90. Some people regarded it as racist; in the fall of 1990 a few of them disrupted the classes of its curator, the anthropologist Jeanne Cannizzo, at Scarborough College ... [O]ne thing should be stated plainly: the heckler's veto has no place in the university. Yet some academics were reportedly afraid to say so. In time the University of Toronto Faculty Association and the governing council of the university spoke out on Cannizzo's behalf. But Cannizzo's husband, the historian David Stafford, wrote to me: "When several professors at U of T were asked by CBC radio to comment on Jeanne's harassment in the classroom, *not one* agreed to speak! 'Too sensitive' they said!" The mildew of discretion still lies heavy upon some.

A university is not a repository only of approved ideas and attitudes. Yet some assert that ideas that are "hurtful" or "offensive" should be suppressed in the interests of civility, of not making people feel unwelcome. Although such views seem to be stronger in the U.S. than in Canada, they are not absent here. The objections to it are that universities do not exist to make people feel "at home" and that academics must acknowledge a loyalty to something more important than agreeable manners. They commit themselves to the pursuit of truth as they see it. This may sometimes be unpleasant, but I concur with Benno Schmidt, until recently president of Yale University:

...I don't think the university is first and foremost a community. It's not a place, first and foremost, that is about the inculcation of thought [and] habits of mind that I might agree are correct and constructive.

The university has a fundamental mission which is to search for the truth. And a university is a place where people have to have the right to speak the unspeakable and think the unthinkable and challenge the unchallengeable.²

Like others, professors are subject to the laws governing speech and publication. They should not face greater restrictions than are imposed by law.

Universities must protect those who pursue their various truths. Among other things this may mean putting up with research that is ill-conceived, with ideas that seem offensive, foolish and perhaps dead wrong. Those who want to *enforce* civility and to limit research or the expression of ideas, even for what may seem to be the worthiest of motives, are enemies of academic freedom. And those who censor themselves to avoid trouble are not freedom's friends.

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2. Quoted in: Hentoff, Nat. *Free Speech for Me -- But Not for Thee*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992: 152.

The above extract is from the article "The mildew of discretion: academic freedom and self-censorship," published in the *Dalhousie Review*, Vol. 72, No. 4, Winter 1992-93: 439-466. 9

**INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR AWARDS WIN
FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM
OVER CULTURE OF COMFORT**

*John J. Furedy
University of Toronto*

The "racist" epithet rightly produces nervousness in those

members of the academic community (faculty or students) who are charged with it. If the charge is true, and the accused is a member of faculty, the academic crime involved is perhaps the most serious of all: allowing a particularly ugly form of prejudice to influence one's teaching of one's discipline. But the criteria for determining whether the racist epithet has been justifiably applied must be academic rather than comfort-based. The fact that some, or even a majority, of students *feel* offended, or are made uncomfortable by certain opinions advanced in the classroom should never justify the accusation of racism if Canadian universities and colleges are to be institutions of higher education rather than indoctrination.

The recent case of sociology professor Ken Westhues clearly contrasts the principles of academic freedom with those of the culture of comfort. One of Prof. Westhues' colleagues, Prof. Jeffrey Shallit (who is a member of the University of Waterloo's Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee of the university's Faculty Association), has described the case in the following opinion piece that was submitted to, but not published by, *The Globe and Mail*.

In terms of the distinction that I made between academic administrative errors of judgement versus professional misconduct in an earlier newsletter piece (*Newsletter* #15, Dec. 1996: 9-10), I think that the Waterloo administration is guilty of the latter with respect to such actions as allowing Prof. Westhues' academic reputation to be smeared without adequate justification, and recommending "re-education" sorts of punishments. On the other hand, the independent adjudicator who is also an academic administrator provides welcome evidence that some administrators have not forgotten what the mission of an institution of higher education should be, and are prepared to speak clearly when a gross abuse of academic freedom has occurred. Congratulations are also due to Prof. Westhues for refusing to cooperate with an unprincipled "investigation," and for demonstrating that genuine academics value their scholarly reputation over their reputed "sensitivity" to the culture of comfort.

resulting in a flood of criticism. In 1994, more censorship of computer newsgroups led the late Supreme Court Justice John Sopinka to issue an extraordinary caution:

"One must ask whether it is not preferable to permit the expression and allow the criminal or civil law to deal with the individual who publishes obscene, defamatory or hateful messages rather than prevent speech before it can be expressed. Otherwise, individuals may be putting themselves in the positions of courts to determine what is obscene and what is acceptable."

In February 1998, UW -- an institution some are now calling 'Censorship U' -- received yet another strong rebuke from Peter Mercer, Vice-President of the University of Western Ontario, for its heavy-handed treatment of a professor accused of racism.

Mercer warned that UW teetered on a "very slippery slope where academic freedom of expression is censored in the name of countering racism." In quashing separate penalties imposed on sociology Professor Kenneth Westhues by Waterloo's Ethics Committee and Provost Jim Kalbfleisch, Mercer stressed that "expressions of opinion are sometimes offensive, even hurtful, but that is sometimes the price of guaranteeing the free expression of ideas in the university."

Westhues' troubles began in April 1996, when a student objected to the way he had treated the concept of "bio-politics" in a sociology class. The student complained formally to the University's Ethics Committee, alleging that Westhues had made "racist and unbalanced arguments" and that he had not defined his terms.

Although university policy requires "every reasonable effort to resolve the matter informally," the Ethics Committee insisted on a formal hearing. Westhues, believing that policy was not being followed, refused to cooperate further. The Ethics Committee found Westhues guilty of being "insensitive," and, in a decision reminiscent of Stalinist re-education, recommended that he be required to take counselling, write letters of apology,

Continued on page 6...

'CENSORSHIP U' GETS ANOTHER REBUKE

Jeffrey Shallit
University of Waterloo

In 1988, the University of Waterloo (UW) banned computer newsgroups dealing with tasteless jokes,

**FIFTH ANNUAL SAFS CONFERENCE AND
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Saturday, 9 May 1998**

Except for the lunch and post-lunch paper and panel discussion, sessions will be open to paid up SAFS members only. **(Be sure you have paid your membership dues!)** For lunch only, registration is \$20; full registration is \$25, if received before April 20, 1998. Registration fees after April 20 will be \$30 and \$35, respectively. A registration form is included with this newsletter, as is a membership form for those who have not yet renewed for 1998. Conference sessions will be held at the **University of Toronto, Room 2118, Sidney Smith Hall, 100 St. George Street, Toronto**. The lunch, which is open to the public, will be held in **Seeley Hall, Trinity College, 6 Hoskin Avenue**.

PROGRAM

9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Registration and Coffee -- Main Foyer

10:00 - 10:45 a.m.

President's Remarks: "SAFS Past and Present"

10:45 - 11:00 a.m.

Coffee

11:00 - 11:45 a.m.

"Pacific Developments in Academic Freedom and Scholarship 1995-98"

Peter Suedfeld, B.C. Chapter coordinator and SAFS Board member

12 noon - 2:00 p.m.

**Lunch with paper on: "Exam Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities:
Some Steps Toward Reestablishing the Role of the Instructor"**

Steve Lupker, Coordinator, SAFS Chapter, UWO

Followed by Panel Discussion: Problems of 'Learning Disabilities' for the Academy: Tactics
Chair: Doreen Kimura, Past President, SAFS; Panelists: Marty Wall (Chair, Psychology, U. Toronto),
John Yeomans and John Furedy (involved in recent Special Services discussions at U. Toronto)

2:15 - 3:15 p.m.

Annual General Meeting

3:15 - 3:30 p.m.

Coffee

3:30 - 4:15 p.m.

President Elect Ruth Gruhn: "The Future"

4:15 - 5:15 p.m.

Discussion Groups

(Suggestions for topics are welcomed. Send suggestions to Chris Furedy, SAFSN@PSYCH.UTORONTO.CA)

Enquiries at the SAFS office: (416) 978-7062, or by email: SAFS@PSYCH.UTORONTO.CA

**DOES YORK'S ADMINISTRATION JUDGE
FACULTY ON THEIR ACADEMIC
COMPETENCE?**

The case of the denial of tenure to Prof. Nancy Nicol at York University is complicated, but there is at least the appearance that then president Prof. Susan Mann employed dubious criteria in overturning the *academic* decisions of other committees that recommended tenure. The student newspaper of the University of British Columbia, *The Ubyyssey*, recently published an article that defended president Mann's decision on academic grounds, and thereby produced further damage to Prof. Nicol's reputation.

The letter reproduced below was published in *The Ubyyssey*, and illustrates again that interventions by SAFS in cases of this sort does not imply agreement either with the opinions or the politics of the faculty member concerned, but seeks only to protect the principles of Canadian scholarship and academic freedom. In this case, Prof. Nicol's right to be fairly evaluated in terms of her academic performance appears not to have been satisfied by York University's administration.

January 27, 1998

In your January 13 issue, you published an article about the tenure denial of Prof. Nancy Nicol at York University. It has been suggested that the negative decision by York's then president, Susan Mann, which went contrary to the recommendation of Prof. Nicol's department, as well as all academic committees reporting below the presidential level, may have been influenced by anonymous student complaints about Prof. Nicol's feminist approach in class lectures.

We are writing as officers of the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS), a national organization comprised mostly of university faculty and students, which supports the right of faculty members to be judged on the basis of their academic competence.

In its public statements, York University has not demonstrated that Prof. Nicol's performance as a teacher or scholar has been inadequate, nor has it cited systematic evidence that she attempted to indoctrinate her students with her own political or social beliefs. SAFS calls upon the administration of York University to address the issue of a tenured appointment for Prof. Nicol on the basis of the quality of her teaching and scholarship, without undue

weight to a small number of anonymous student criticisms or other complaints based on academically irrelevant criteria.

John J. Furedy, Ph.D., President, SAFS

Dale Beyerstein, Ph.D., Coordinator, SAFS BC Chapter 9

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and attend a workshop entitled "Smart Strategies for a Safe Open Classroom."

Westhues then appealed the Ethics Committee's decision to Jim Kalbfleisch, UW's Vice-President Academic and Provost. Kalbfleisch overturned the Ethics Committee's decision, but then decided to impose his own disciplines.

First, Kalbfleisch objected to Westhues' failure to cooperate with the Ethics Committee. Kalbfleisch also claimed that Westhues had violated the confidentiality of the proceedings, by circulating documents that named the student and by using the student's words in a pamphlet that Westhues published entitled "The Risks of Personal Injury in Liberal Education." For these reasons, Kalbfleisch imposed on Westhues a suspension of one month without pay.

Mercer, an independent adjudicator appointed by UW President James Downey, overturned every one of these sanctions. He determined that the student's complaint was incoherent and failed to cite any grounds for believing Westhues had behaved unethically, that the process used by the Ethics Committee was flawed, and that Westhues had not in fact circulated documents in violation of confidentiality. Finally, he also overturned Westhues' suspension without pay, noting that there was nothing in university policy permitting Provost Kalbfleisch to impose such an arbitrary penalty. Mercer also ordered the university to pay Westhues' legal expenses and gave Westhues a 6-month special paid research leave.

Will Mercer's strong decision in favour of free expression cause any significant changes at Waterloo? It is too early to say with certainty, although President Downey coincidentally announced soon thereafter that he would not stand for a second term. But, unless Waterloo acts quickly to repair its failed policies, 'Censorship U' may gain a black eye it will find hard to mend.

This opinion piece was submitted to but not published by the *Globe and Mail*. 9

INTRODUCING SAFS CURRENT BOARD OF ADVISORS

Last year we announced our new Board of Advisors. We thought members would like to know something about this distinguished group.

Steve Balch. Steve is the President (presently on leave of absence) of the National Association of Scholars (NAS), our American "sister" organization. Given the differences in age, size, and operating budgets, perhaps "big sister" is more appropriate. NAS has supported SAFS both financially, and in terms of advice, of which the most valuable was that pertaining to raising funds for SAFS-related activities.

Gordon Chong. Gordon is a councillor in the new Toronto City Council. He has been a member of SAFS since 1992, a former newspaper columnist, past member of the North York Race Relations Committee, and a critic of employment equity. At the SAFS Conference and AGM in 1996, Gordon gave the after-lunch address on "Ideological trendiness." He illustrates the importance of having SAFS members who, though not academics, are nevertheless vitally concerned about institutions of higher education.

Jack Granatstein. Jack is a Distinguished Research Professor of History Emeritus at York University, Rowell Jackman Resident Fellow at the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, Toronto, and the author of many books on 20th century Canadian national history. He has been a member of SAFS since 1992 and served on the Board of Directors 1993-96. He gave the after-lunch address at the 1995 SAFS Conference on "Academic freefall: whatever happened to free speech?" (published in *Newsletter* #7, June 1994).

Alan D. Gold. Alan is the Senior Partner at Gold & Fuerst, Barristers, in Toronto. He has held part-time teaching positions at various law schools and was recently awarded the G. Arthur Martin Award for Contributions to Criminal Justice. He has been a member of SAFS since 1995 and addressed the SAFS Conference in 1995 on "Alumni-initiated defences of academic freedom."

John Meisel. John is the Sir Edward Peacock Professor of Political Science Emeritus at Queen's University and Past President of the Royal Society of Canada. He is also senior Research Fellow in the Centre for the Study of Public Opinion at Queen's University. John is of Czech origin, and since 1995 has been involved in efforts of the United Nations to find solutions to the crisis in former Yugoslavia. He has been a member of SAFS since 1992.

Eva Ryten. Until recently, Eva was the Director of Research, Association of Canadian Medical Colleges. While in that position, she argued publicly (and hence courageously) for merit as the sole criterion of evaluation in medical schools. She has moved to the United Kingdom, but continues to maintain an interest in SAFS, of which she has been a member since 1995.

FURTHER READINGS

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**EQUITY STUDIES:
EDUCATION IN A DISCIPLINE OR
INDOCTRINATION IN IDEOLOGY?**

*John J. Furedy
University of Toronto*

Phil Sullivan and I recently raised this issue at the University of Toronto. In January, the editor of the student paper, *The Varsity*, contacted me for a comment on the “new equity studies program” that was going into operation. As a member of the university’s academic board, I was surprised to learn of this program, but was informed that it had already gone through, and that the editor had a copy of the program description. She faxed the description to me, underlining some of the points that struck her.

The description had been prepared by the director of women’s studies, Ms. June Larkin, and reproduced below is the header, first paragraph, and first sentence of the second paragraph, including the underlining by *The Varsity* editor. Most telling for me was the reference to the inability of any discipline in the university being “immune” to equity studies, as if this was some sort of disease. It also struck me as odd that it was deemed necessary to have a whole program to “study” the “physical basis of ... sexual difference.” Did we really need an academic program to tell us that males and females look different? Or was this a reference to biological differences, and an allusion to one of the equity doctrines, namely that biological differences are not real, but are only “socially constructed?” Who knows. All in all I found the program description conceptually primitive, but decide for yourself:

The Program in Equity Studies Defined

The Program in Equity Studies will focus attention on social diversity and equity. The Program will draw on literatures and debates on equity from a broad range of academic fields. In the social sciences, the study of equity can include the study of its place in public policy, in social life or in political action. In the humanities, the study of equity can include the study of ethics, of canon formation, of Eurocentrism, and of historical revisionism. In the natural and medical sciences, the study of equity can include study of the physical basis of racial or sexual difference, of traditional medicine, or of scientific codes of practice. In mathematics-related disciplines, the study of

equity can include study of statistical bias, of equity measurement techniques, and of alternative pedagogies in mathematics. In technological studies, the study of equity can include study of mechanical accommodations of diversity, of ergonomics or of alternative understandings of human interactions with the natural world.

The theoretical core for equity studies lies within the social sciences and humanities, but its impact and relevance may extend to such diversity of human knowledge and behaviour that there is no discipline within the modern university that can claim immunity from its scope.

Following an interview that was published in *The Varsity*, where my position was not met with enthusiasm by Ms. Larkin or New College’s principal, SAFS board member Phil Sullivan wrote the following letter that was published in the January 29, 1998 issue of *The Varsity*.

No Fan of Equity Program

Society for Academic Freedom president John Furedy contends that the recently approved Equity Studies program is flawed because it is based on social ideology and not on logical relevance. Although New College Principal Clandfield suggests that Furedy’s stance is “anti-intellectual,” there is ample evidence to support Furedy’s view. I cite four examples.

First, the stated academic aim of the program is activist; it is to study methods for “conceptualizing social inequities and for bringing about equity.” Amongst activists, the term “equity” usually means the adoption of policies enforcing equality of outcome as opposed to equality of opportunity. This was certainly the objective of the Rae government’s employment equity legislation; it was based on the assumption that employment patterns not reflecting demography are entirely the result of discrimination. As others have noted, such a view ignores a mass of evidence and reduces the concept of discrimination to a meaningless tautology. Worse still, it emphasizes biological employment criteria, which many condemn as intrinsically immoral.

Second, Women’s Studies is cited as a model for the

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program. In *Professing Feminism*, former women's studies professors Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge present a searing indictment of the US version of such programs. They describe both naked promotion of controversial ideologies and pedagogical techniques amounting to brainwashing, with some women students subsequently saying that the courses were an intellectual swindle. I do not know if the Canadian experience has been as disastrous, but a woman sociology professor commented to me that the justification given at a major Ontario university for starting a women's studies program was purely political and devoid of any genuine academic rationale.

Third, the suggestion that the program would look at issues such as "alternative pedagogies in mathematics" is yet another sign that the programme is ideologically driven. In *Higher Superstition*, biologist Paul Gross and mathematician Norman Levitt reveal that these new pedagogies amount to nothing more than changing elementary examples for the "Dick and Jane finance a house" to the "Heather's two mommies" variety. While this may reflect changing values, the fact remains that students who are unable to extract the mathematical essence from unfamiliar contexts will never learn mathematics. Furthermore, Gross and Levitt note that a test of the genuineness of the pedagogical reasons, as opposed to promotion in a classroom of an ideology irrelevant to the subject being taught, is to ask equity advocates if they would be willing to include examples depicting abortion as evil.

Finally, the program description asserts that "no discipline ... can claim immunity from its scope." This suggests that the promoters have uncritically adopted a controversial doctrine which is almost an article of faith amongst equity advocates and which others consider inimical to scholarship: all knowledge is said to be "socially constructed." Thus, even though Canadian indigenous peoples' myths about their origin conflict with the modern anthropological idea based on hard archaeological evidence, namely that "homo sapiens" came to North America across an Asia-Alaska land-bridge, the two accounts must be equally respected. That is, the scientific account is demoted to just another myth. Such an approach to scholarship raises interesting questions; for example, what position should one take towards the two mutually contradictory creation stories in

Genesis?

I infer that the program deserves closer scrutiny than was apparently given by the Academic Board.

Sullivan's letter was commented on by two proponents of equity studies, and my letter, reproduced below as an opinion piece in the February 23, 1998 issue, continues the debate. To be continued

The Silent Equity Studies Debate

Based on the program description written by June Larkin, director of Women's Studies and chair of the committee responsible for initiating the new program, I suggested in an interview ("Equity studies degree hits campus," Jan. 19) that the program appeared to be more of an indoctrination in an ideology than an education in a discipline (or disciplines).

The presentation of the program to the academic board certainly did not follow the usual procedure: the sub-committee in charge of considering such programs presented its acceptance of this program to the board "for information" only rather than debate and approval, and admitted that they did not have Larkin's program description before them when making the decision.

Whether I am right or wrong in my assessment of the equity studies program, I think most will agree that in a university that values its academic reputation, the academic status of new programs should be a matter of open debate. In this respect, although it disagrees with my views on equity studies, *The Varsity* in general, and its editor Meg Murphy in particular, deserve commendation for raising the issue. No other campus papers (including *The Bulletin*) even mentioned it.

The debate has continued, however, in the letters section of *The Varsity*, with Professor Philip Sullivan taking my side on the question ("No fan of equity program," Jan. 29), and with Vilko Zboagar and David Orenstein ("Old boys, little kids" and "Sullivan way off," Feb. 5) arguing for the opposing view of equity studies.

In this article, I would like to continue the debate by correcting some inaccuracies in Zboagar and Orenstein's letters, and supplying some relevant details concerning Professor Sullivan of which they and the readers may not

FUREDY...continued from page 9

be aware.

One assertion that Zboagar makes is that “equity studies cannot be reduced to logic.” This appears to be quite a concession. Does it not suggest that his defense of equity studies is based, as I said at the outset, “not on logical relevance,” but on “social ideology?”

The other assertion that Zboagar makes is in the form of a counter-conditional hypothetical, namely that Sullivan would not be a full professor earning his salary if he were “black, female, or raised in a ghetto.” Well, as it turns out, Professor Sullivan is quite close to qualifying on the last count. His father was an electrical fitter at the Australian navy’s naval dockyard in Sydney, and an unpaid union president for many years; this did not provide a privileged background. I would argue, of course, that such considerations are irrelevant for assessing academic merit, and that unequal representation of certain groups in a profession is not, per se, any evidence of discrimination, just as the low representation of short white males (like me) in the NBA is not evidence of discrimination against that (non-designated) group.

Finally, as to Zboagar’s last sentence and admonition (“Hey, old boys, grow up!”), I hope that when he begins his practice of law, he will frame his arguments in a less *ad hominem* manner. Indeed, were Sullivan and I to be touchy on the subject, could we not complain to some tribunal about the ageism inherent in that admonition?

Orenstein makes a number of points, and I’ll just comment on four of these. The first is the assertion that Sullivan “declares his total ignorance of the U of T program,” and, by implication, Canadian women’s studies. As I read his letter, he did not claim that, but only that the American women’s studies programs have been more thoroughly documented (e.g., books have been written about them). And as to the empirical basis of Sullivan’s research, it was apparently good enough for him to be included in the U of T team that advised NASA on how to bring the Apollo XIII crew safely back to earth.

The second of Orenstein’s assertions is the announcement that he feels insulted by Sullivan’s remarks on “feminist” mathematics. Orenstein’s feelings aside (as they are irrelevant), even if the dropout rate decreases and the students have more fun (in his classes, as he asserts), they may not learn the actual discipline of mathematics. If so, then this constitutes a serious problem both for institutions of learning, and for the society that funds these institutions. These logical considerations are not negated either by teachers feeling insulted or by their students “having more

fun.”

The third of Orenstein’s comments that requires a response is his attack on Sullivan’s “own discipline of Aerospace Studies” on the grounds that it is “clearly influenced by the needs of war and industrialism.” This may be true, but the mark of a genuine discipline that is not mere ideology is that there is a body of knowledge (that is under constant critical examination) that constitutes it. In the case of Sullivan’s discipline, these concern matters like flight paths and trajectories. These have to be independently learned about both for the understanding of the discipline, and for such applications as rescuing missions like the Apollo XIII one.

Finally, in his reference to the “Society for Academic Freedom,” Orenstein has omitted the crucial words “and Scholarship” from the name of the organization. It is the scholarship aspect that is most relevant for considering whether equity studies is genuinely academic or whether it is merely a form of indoctrination.

Although I have been less than impressed by the quality of arguments brought to bear by the defenders of “Equity Studies,” it is still noteworthy (and somewhat ironic) that *The Varsity* and some of its readers have paid more attention to this important academic issue than have most members of the academic board. 9

CORRECTION

In Kenneth Hilborn’s article, “Academic freedom, unwelcome conduct, and speech codes” (*Newsletter* 18, Feb. 1998: 3-5), several words were omitted from the final sentence of the second paragraph in the section “Privacy and Power” (p.4, second column). The sentence should have read: “As a whole, his comments left me with the impression that he did not wish to endorse Dean Neary’s apparent assumption that alleged discourtesy or incivility in private conversation may justify some form of decanal action, but neither did he wish to say anything sufficiently unequivocal to be interpreted as a clear repudiation of Neary’s letter to Ben Singer.”

SFU UPDATE: VIGILANCE STILL NEEDED

*David Finley
Simon Fraser University*

Simon Fraser University (SFU) has a new president, new legal advisors, a new harassment office director and a new harassment policy, all growing out of the abuse of power scandal reflected in the case involving the mishandling of the complaint of a female student (Rachel Marsden) against a swim coach (Liam Donnelly). Donnelly has been reinstated, with SFU agreeing that both evidence and procedures were severely flawed.

Further, the policy contained a number of apparent improvements such as the provision that major penalties such as suspension or dismissal could be imposed only on a finding of clear and convincing evidence of misconduct; if nothing else, this should be useful in appeals. The new policy endorses academic freedom in fairly broad and glowing terms, and attempts to stay out of personal relationships. For the first time, there are possible penalties for false or frivolous complaints. So far it is all to the good.

But serious problems remain. I will describe just a few of them here. (1) The procedures for formulating the new policy were altered in such a way as to defeat any efforts at broader reform. This was done by forming a task force that essentially had zero faculty representation (there were two administrators and an undergraduate student who had endorsed the persecution of Donnelly). (2) The policy and procedures still place a heavy emphasis on secrecy, which, of course, poses obvious dangers, and shows a failure to correct a pervasive weakness that led to the previous problems. (3) The emphasis on academic freedom is offset by an all-out unqualified endorsement of the NDP's Human Rights Act with its notable assault on free speech; there are a number of obvious dangers here. (4) There are still vague definitions of what constitutes harassment. (5) There are still procedural provisions that are slanted in favour of accusers. (6) There is still an aura of political correctness in the policy document. (7) It is going to be much too easy to convict persons on minor offenses, where vague rules and low standards of proof create a dangerous combination. (8) The new policy still provides for the payment of bounties, with the danger of purchased testimony.

One final problem is that there has been no systematic reporting on the previous abuses. While endorsing enforced apologies as one form of punishment for harassment, the administration has never apologized to anyone (including Donnelly) for the gross abuse of rights

of accused persons that prevailed throughout the system. Many important actions involving abuses are being meticulously covered by broad interpretations of privacy laws. A promise to explain (made by then President Stubbs) has been conveniently forgotten. The struggle continues. 9

LETTER TO THE EDITOR**Secular Indoctrinational Interference in Religious Higher Education?**

On October 3, 1997, the British Columbia Supreme Court ruled that the British Columbia College of Teachers (BCCT) had to approve the education program of Trinity Western University. Trinity Western University is an independent coed school in Langley, BC which is associated with the Evangelical Free Church of America. The school has an honour code for staff and students which requires them to "refrain from practices that are Biblically forbidden" including premarital sex and homosexual practices.

In previous years, Trinity Western students registered in the education program took their required courses off campus at Simon Fraser University. Trinity Western established its own teacher education program but the BCCT, which sets standards for teachers in BC, refused to approve Trinity Western's program, not because of any deficiency in the program itself but because the BCCT believes that the school's honour code makes Trinity Western graduates intolerant and hence unfit to teach in public schools. According to the BCCT, the promise not to engage in homosexual activity while at Trinity Western was discrimination against homosexuals.

The court found that there was no "reasonable foundation" to support the withholding of approval by the BCCT. The BCCT is considering an appeal to this decision. What makes this a matter of concern to SAFS is that it appears that it is not the honour code of the students which the BCCT finds upsetting, but the honour code of the faculty.

There is the potential, if the BCCT position prevails, that the beliefs of faculty members will become subject to examination by outside professional licensing boards, with approval of courses being based on the beliefs of instructors rather than on the instructors' expertise or on the content of the course.

*Sid Knowles
Mississauga, Ontario*

Submissions to the SAFS Newsletter

The editor welcomes short articles, case studies, news items, comments, readings, local chapter news, etc. Longer items are preferred on a 3.5" (MS-DOS) disk in Word Perfect, or by email. Address: **Chris Furedy**, c/o John Furedy, Department of Psychology, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 3G3. Fax: (416) 962-4253; email: SAFSN@PSYCH.UTORONTO.CA

SAFS OFFICE

After May 9, Ruth Gruhn will be taking over as President of SAFS. Our increased level of activity during my tenure was at least partly due to a generous three-year grant from the Donner Canadian Foundation, a grant that included covering 50% of my salary for that period. This, together with support for secretarial assistance for running the SAFS office, allowed the Society to become an academic force both in Canada and in other countries. SAFS owes a great debt to our founding president, Doreen Kimura. And, I myself am especially indebted to my Boards of Directors whose advice (mostly via email) I constantly sought (if not always accepted) and whose continuing support was invaluable. I look forward to remaining on the Board under Ruth's leadership, and plan to focus my efforts on international academic issues.

*John J. Furedy
President, SAFS*

As a result of the handover of the Presidency from John Furedy to Ruth Gruhn at the AGM on May 9, 1998, the Toronto office of SAFS will close.

As Secretary-Treasurer, I have been fortunate to have had professional assistance to run the office with the grant from the Donner Canadian Foundation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank both the Donner Foundation and the University of Toronto for providing office space and some services.

At press time, a new Secretary-Treasurer had not been appointed and the new SAFS office address had not yet been announced. For the convenience of our members, we will maintain the Toronto address, phone and fax numbers and email address until May 31, 1998.

I wish the new President and the Board my best wishes for the continued success of SAFS.

Until May 31, 1998:

Box 581, Station P, 704 Spadina Ave., Toronto, M5S 2T1
Phone: (416) 978-7062; Fax: (416) 978-4811
Email: SAFS@PSYCH.UTORONTO.CA

*Laurie MacKay
Secretary-Treasurer, SAFS*

ABOUT THIS ISSUE...

Our editor, Chris Furedy, chose the articles and specified their order for this issue of the *Newsletter*, but both she and Laurie MacKay left for Australia while the issue was being put together. Lianne Carley and John Furedy take the responsibility, but not the blame, for any errors that this issue may contain.

The Donner Canadian Foundation's financial support for the *Newsletter* ends with this issue. However, Chris Furedy has agreed to continue producing future issues, with limited resources, at least until the end of 1998.

NOTICE OF CONFERENCE

A two-day working conference entitled "Academic Issues in Canadian Institutions of Higher Education: Focus on Fundamentals" will be held at the University of Toronto, June 20-21, 1998. (Sponsored by the Donner Canadian Foundation, the Jackman Foundation, and the University of Toronto).

Presenters: Paul Axelrod, Peter Emberley, John J. Furedy, J. L. Granatstein, Michiel Horn, Rhoda Howard, Patrick O'Neill, Philip Sullivan. Presentations will include both pro- and anti- SAFS positions. Following the presentations there will be full audience discussion.

Registration is \$50 (includes one lunch). Abstracts of the presentations are included in the program that is provided with registration. Contact: Laurie MacKay at (416) 978-7062; Fax: (416) 978-4811; email: SAFS@PSYCH.UTORONTO.CA.