

SAFS Newsletter

Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship

Maintaining freedom in teaching, research and scholarship
Maintaining standards of excellence in academic decisions about students and faculty

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April 2006

UPEI CENSORSHIP

Open Letter

February 13, 2006

Dr. Wade MacLauchlan
President, University of Prince Edward Island
Charlottetown, PEI
C1A 4P3

Dear President MacLauchlan:

I am writing to you as president of the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship. We are a national organization of university faculty members and interested others who are dedicated to the defence of academic freedom and reasoned debate. For further information, please visit our website at www.safs.ca.

We are writing to strongly protest the actions of the UPEI administration in seizing copies of the student newspaper, *The Cadre* (issue dated February 8), and preventing their distribution. UPEI's public statement of February 8 that censorship of *The Cadre* can be justified "on grounds that publication of the caricatures represents a reckless invitation to public disorder and humiliation" is contrary to the duty of all university presidents to maintain their campuses as places where debate of controversial issues may take place. Fear of possible 'mob action' must not be allowed to dictate to UPEI or any other Canadian university what ideas its students and faculty may express, disseminate and debate. By censoring this debate at your campus rather than taking the necessary steps to provide appropriate security to allow debate to happen, you have encouraged the view that the threat of violence, real or imagined, is an effective way to challenge ideas with which one disagrees.

SAFS 2006

CONFERENCE ISSUE

SEE PAGE 11
FOR PROGRAM AND OTHER
INFORMATION

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 UPEI Censorship: (continued)
- 6 Saint Mary's University: Censorship
- 7 Censorship at Science
- 8 Free Speech
- 11 Conference Program and Information
- 13 Affirmative Action: Minority Aid?
- 15 U of T: Equity Program
- 16 Harvard's Future
- 17 Publication Culture

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The decision as to what is to be included in a newspaper must be made by the editorial board, based on their understanding of the newsworthiness of the story. Those who disagree with the newspaper's coverage or viewpoint can register their opposition through writing letters to the editor, demonstrating, or simply by refusing to read the paper or to advertise in it. Disagreeable speech should be countered by opposing arguments. Censorship is not an acceptable response to the expression of contrary opinions, and especially not on a university campus. Sending the campus police to confiscate copies of the student newspaper is an overreaction and a victory for potential censors who seem to have intimidated the administration of UPEI.

UPEI has given the impression that vigorous debate is to be avoided whenever offence may be taken, or at the very least that such debate is to occur only on terms decided by the university administration. Surely, this is not the image of UPEI that you want to promote.

We call on you to reverse your decision and to let *The Cadre* do its job.

Sincerely,
Clive Seligman, President
CC: Ray Keating, Editor, *The Cadre*

Published in the *National Post*, February 16, 2006, p.A20, and *The Cadre*, February 22, 2006, p.14.

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President MacLauchlan's response to SAFS

February 21, 2006

Dear Dr. Seligman,

The Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship misjudges or deliberately minimalizes the harm arising from the publication of the controversial cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed.

SAFS favours publishing the cartoons despite the fact that there have now been almost 50 deaths world-wide, including more than 25 on the weekend of February 18. SAFS would say these events are far removed from UPEI's campus – in effect, that we are free to engage in reckless free speech in Canada because we have a tolerant, civil society. Perhaps that was the thinking of the Danish cartoonist.

How would SAFS respond to a PEI Muslim woman who describes the hurt caused by the cartoons to be "... as if I had been raped out on the street while the people surrounding me watched." I expect SAFS would say that she should develop a thicker skin. UPEI takes seriously these feelings of hurt and humiliation, as well as those of Muslim students and colleagues at UPEI and the broader Muslim community on PEI and across Canada.

The SAFS letter fails to credit the UPEI Student Union with a leadership role in the withdrawal of *the Cadre*. The Student Union withdrew support for publication of the cartoons and, as owner of the paper, asked for its return, acknowledging "we must take into account the overwhelming reaction that these cartoons have caused worldwide."

While SAFS appears to prefer an academic environment where shouting and disorder are barometers of freedom, I believe we must continually strive for an engaged and positive learning environment. Universities must become ever better and richer places of learning and animated debate. The discourse on our campuses, including what we model for our students and future leaders, should include speaking *and* listening (which includes respect), courage *and* curiosity (which includes humility), discretion and a sense of proportion.

At UPEI, there are ongoing animated debates about the cartoons, about press freedom and responsibility, about

the intensely integrated nature of our global community, and about the quality of the tolerant, dynamic and robust community that we enjoy and must continue to build.

Today, in the aftermath of the cartoon controversy, Muslim students at UPEI tell me that they are engaging with other students about their religious beliefs. *The Cadre* will appear this week with a full debate (including an interview with myself). Students will hold a colloquium to reflect on issues of expression and diversity raised by the controversy. Professors and students are actively talking about all of the issues, in and out of class.

I am absolutely convinced that the climate on campus at UPEI and the quality of our debates are much the richer today than they would be if the cartoons were still in circulation. Apparently, SAFS would say that I am overstepping my bounds as president to act to support this safe and positive learning climate. With respect, I disagree.

Sincerely,

H. Wade MacLauchlan
President and Vice-Chancellor
University of Prince Edward Island

Published in the *National Post*, February 23, 2006, p.A17 and *The Cadre*, February 22, 2006, p.1, online.

Letters to the Editor

*W. Bruno, J. Edwards, D. Kimura, R. Awrey,
and P. Featherstone*

Campuses must uphold free speech

Re: Campus Cartoon Debate Underway, Letter, February 23.

1) President H. Wade MacLauchlan of the University of Prince Edward Island makes egregious mistakes in his letter responding to the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS) and raises doubts about the integrity of his campus. In effect, he admits to not knowing what debate is, or how to defend it. He makes preposterous analogies and parrots silly hyperbole from an unnamed "P.E.I Muslim woman." His use of smear language ("I expect SAFS would do this, would do that...") is dishonest discourse. How

would Dr. MacLauchlan respond to a militant who threatened or blackmailed his campus? I suspect he'd rush to cave in.

Walter Bruno, Calgary.

2) Recent actions by administration officials at the University of P.E.I. should disturb us all. Their assault on free expression is a disturbing development for any university. President MacLauchlan needs to reconsider his decision, restore the confiscated papers to *the Cadre*, issue an apology for the administration's actions and reassert publicly his and his university's support for free speech. The intrepid actions of *the Cadre* should be a model to all of Western media. The actions of its editor and staff stand in contrast to so many newspaper people, who for decades have loudly proclaimed their and others' inherent rights to free speech but who now act in cowardly ways in the face of real threats to those rights.

Sensible and open-minded people reject the blatant lie that the reason many in the media and elsewhere refuse to reprint the Danish cartoons is a matter of "sensitivity." They see that lie for what it is and reject it, because they know that the real reason is fear.

UPEI's administration has the opportunity to make their university an example to other universities in Canada and all of North America. They should restore *the Cadre's* copies of its paper and, in so doing, help promote both free speech and courage among their fellow Canadians.

Jack Edwards, Toronto.

3) President MacLauchlan responded to the SAFS letter by citing the almost 50 deaths worldwide allegedly related to the circulation of the Danish cartoons – as if this were an expected and defensible consequence of political commentary! Far more offensive cartoons are published in our newspapers daily, some of them with religious themes (e.g., references to the Pope). Arab papers frequently depict Jews and Israelis in horrific and hateful ways. It seems it is only when Muslims are portrayed in unflattering terms that we must be sensitive. Could this be because they are so ready with death threats? The suggestion that it is SAFS that is promoting shouting and disorder is disingenuous indeed.

We in Canada expect people who take offence to express their objections in any number of non-violent

ways. Since when, in the politically correct world in which Mr. MacLauchlan seems mired, is killing people deemed a pardonable response? Yet by preventing the circulation of copies of the student newspaper, he tacitly approves violence as a means of influencing the press.

I would respond to the P.E.I. Muslim woman's reaction that the "hurt" is tantamount to her being raped in the street while people watched, by saying, "Get a grip. This is a cartoon!" Giving credence to such an overblown claim is a complete abandonment of common sense. It appears that in his eyes any imagined offence at any utterance, no matter how puerile, automatically trumps freedom of speech.

Mr. MacLauchlan had a great opportunity to demonstrate that freedom of the press and thus of speech is an important value at UPEI. Instead, he has done a grave disservice to his university and to public discourse generally.

Doreen Kimura, PhD, FRSC, LLD (Hon), Burnaby, B.C.

4) After reading and rereading Dr. MacLauchlan's letter in the *National Post*, I first thought it was a joke – the outline for a Monty Python script. Then it struck me that he was serious. I can only conclude that Dr. MacLauchlan is a moral coward. God help the students at UPEI under his so-called leadership.

Ralph Awrey, Toronto.

5) Dr. Wade MacLauchlan's placing of blame for the recent destruction of Danish and Norwegian embassies on 12 satirical cartoons is simplistic.

If Dr. MacLauchlan were to read books in the University of Prince Edward Island's libraries instead of burning newspapers in the university's quadrangles, he would see a pattern in the recent destruction.

The bombings in Madrid and London, the riots in France and the sacking of North Europe's embassies follow geographically the humiliation of past Muslim aggression: Spain in 1243, and England, France, Denmark and Norway during the Crusades. If this pattern is followed, then P.E.I. has less to fear than Austria, which defeated Muslim forces in 1529, and Poland, which did the same in 1683.

Universities are a key reason why Christendom pros-

pered while Islam grew only in poverty and ignorance. I hope that in future UPEI will choose the traditions of Europe over those of Arabia.

Or perhaps he should remove Austrian and Polish histories from his libraries' shelves, lest he offend more sensibilities.

Peter Featherstone, Surrey, B.C.

National Post, p.A17, February 24, 2006.

Letters to the Editor

J. Furedy, A. Irvine, and S. Lupker

Free speech at risk, professors warn

1) As an academic – and one, who as a child, was fortunate enough to have his parents take him from a "fear" to a "free" society – I suggest that the principle of freedom of speech must be treasured over all other principles, especially in universities, whose fundamental function is the search for truth through the conflict of ideas. It is precisely those opinions that are deeply offensive that any university administrator must protect, unless the aim is to establish the institution that is not a real place of higher learning, but a sort of adult daycare centre where comfort is the criterion of what can be thought and said.

Some individual faculty or students may not understand that this freedom not to be punished for offensive opinions is the hallmark of the university in a free society, but high-level administrators, be they presidents of the university or of the student union, have a special responsibility not to abuse academic freedom, because, just like dictators in fear societies, they have the power to inflict such abuse.

John Furedy, Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto, Sydney, Australia.

2) So Wade MacLauchlan, the president of the University of Prince Edward Island, believes that censoring student newspapers is the best way to prevent potential violence and help his university strive towards "an engaged and positive learning environment."

If there really is the threat of potential violence, it might be slightly more expensive to post the

occasional guard outside *The Cadre's* editorial office than to confiscate student newspapers, but if UPEI can afford to hire campus security guards to ticket illegally parked cars, it can also afford to protect something much more essential to the mandate of the university: free speech.

Andrew Irvine, Professor, University of British Columbia; Director, Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship.

3) I found it difficult to believe that the president of a Canadian university would come out so strongly against freedom of the press – or as Wade MacLauchlan refers to it, "reckless free speech." What I found most offensive, however, was the way he tried to defend himself by using the statement of a P.E.I. Muslim woman that the hurt caused by the cartoons was "as if I had been raped out on the street while the people surrounding me watched."

I'm sure that the woman in question said this in all sincerity even though, according to press reports, she has never seen the cartoons. For someone like Mr. MacLauchlan, however, to endorse the claim that 12 cartoons are equivalent to a public rape is unconscionable.

Steve Lupker, Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Western Ontario.

National Post, p.A21, February 25, 2006.

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UPEI Faculty Opposes Gag Laws

Henry Srebrnik

The threat of censorship lately has hung over the campus of the University of Prince Edward Island. Last month, the president of the school, Wade MacLauchlan, had the February 8 issue of *The Cadre*, the student newspaper, confiscated after it published the notorious Danish cartoons of the Muslim prophet Muhammad.

MacLauchlan stated that he ordered the papers removed from "the property" to prevent "the possibility of a reckless invitation to public disorder and humiliation." He cited the deaths that had already occurred elsewhere in the world – though PEI is one of the most peaceful corners of the globe.

MacLauchlan met with the president of the Student Union four times in the days that followed, and the Student Union finally agreed to destroy the offending issue of the paper, although at first they had rejected the idea. MacLauchlan afterwards praised the Student Union for its wisdom in seizing and destroying the papers, insisting this had been their decision, not his.

"I was especially proud of the leadership shown by the Student Union in addressing a situation that was obviously not of its choosing," he remarked.

A few days after the controversy began, MacLauchlan staged a meeting with a Muslim woman on PEI, someone entirely unconnected with the university, who had written a letter congratulating him. He had the local paper, the Charlottetown *Guardian*, cover their conversation. She appeared in a photo with him, reading her letter as he looked on benignly.

"It was very honourable on your part to stand up to do what is right," she wrote. "Your action has set a great example of integrity, courage, justice, and wisdom, as befits a strong chief administrator of an educational institution." MacLauchlan then posted her lengthy letter on the official university website for a week.

An "open letter" from SAFS published in the *National Post* on February 16 criticized his action, and his behaviour also met with negative comments locally. But he continues to justify his actions.

"Is UPEI a more positive, dynamic and animated learning environment today than we would be if the

cartoons had been left in circulation for the intervening three weeks, and their publication defended by the University as free speech?" asked MacLauchlan in a letter to faculty on February 28. Of course! "I am absolutely convinced that our learning environment is better for having limited the publication of the caricatures."

Things looked like they might get worse. The university administration is currently in negotiations with the Faculty Association over a new collective agreement. They were particularly insistent that the new contract include a "Code of Conduct" which would obligate the faculty to be respectful, punctual and reliable – do some professors arrive hours late to class? – and to "act in a manner that will contribute positively to the overall vision, mission, and reputation" of UPEI.

But who, pray tell, would determine whether the "reputation" of UPEI has been harmed? Note that the administration was not proposing that they also be bound by this code, though one could argue that the president has done more damage to UPEI than anyone on faculty or staff. Yet it would be the professors who would be, to say the least, discouraged from criticizing university policies.

One doesn't need a PhD in political science to be troubled by such developments. This was an obvious attempt to infringe on the basic right of freedom of speech, something every Canadian should hold dear. No other faculty collective agreement in Canada contains such language.

The president of the Faculty Association, Wayne Peters, told the membership that this clause alone was sufficient reason to go on strike – after all, if it were now in effect, I presume even a tenured full professor like myself would be liable to dismissal for writing this very article.

Due to the publicity generated by those opposing this code, which included letters of support from, among others, the Harry Crowe Foundation, the administration dropped its demand for the code. It was clear the faculty would never accept such a draconian clause.

A university is the very last place where one should try to stifle debate with gag laws. Where there is no check on power, those in control can act in arbitrary and

capricious ways. This is an old tale.

I've been teaching a course on African politics at UPEI this semester, and we've been dealing with the many sad stories of the so-called "big men" who ruled their countries in totally arbitrary and capricious ways, and brought them to the brink of ruin. I guess that's why all this sounds so drearily familiar.

Henry Srebrnik is a professor in the Department of Political Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown.

A shortened version of this article was published as a Letter to the Editor, *National Post*, March 15, 2006. □

ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY CENSORSHIP

Open Letter

February 13, 2006

Dr. Terrence Murphy
Vice-President, Academic and Research
Saint Mary's University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3H 3C3

Dear Vice-President Murphy:

I am writing to you as president of the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship. We are a national organization of university faculty members and interested others who are dedicated to the defence of academic freedom and reasoned debate. For further information, please visit our website at www.safs.ca.

We are writing to strongly protest your order to Professor Peter March to remove the controversial material placed on his office door. In your memorandum of 9 February to the Saint Mary's University community, you offered as justification for your action that you "thought their public display without context was a matter of concern. Given the strong, and in several cases violent, responses to the cartoons in many parts of the world, there was a reasonable apprehension of risk to the safety of members of the campus community."

By censoring debate at your campus in this way, rather

than taking the necessary steps to provide appropriate security to allow debate to happen, you have encouraged the view that the threat of violence, real or imagined, is an effective way to challenge ideas with which one disagrees.

Violence is not an acceptable response in debate. Those threatening violence are the ones who must be restrained, not the individual whose speech allegedly may provoke violence. Should Saint Mary's University wish to remain a place of open debate, it is important that the university show that it is willing to provide the appropriate security rather than opting for censorship.

Although we are pleased that you and the Saint Mary's University administration recognized Professor March's academic right to discuss and show the controversial cartoons in his current class on Critical Thinking, we are puzzled by the inconsistency in your administration's treatment of the academic freedom issue in the two instances. By seeking to find a middle ground between academic freedom and public safety, we believe you have compromised both.

We urge your administration to reconsider the decision to regulate and censor the free expression of ideas on the Saint Mary's campus. Those of us who work in universities have a special obligation to maintain the Academy as a marketplace of ideas, a place where unfettered debate can take place both inside and outside the classroom.

Sincerely,

Clive Seligman, President

CC: Professor Peter March, Department of Philosophy.□

CENSORSHIP AT SCIENCE

Scientists are split on the different ways men and women think

Roger Highfield, Science Editor

An academic row has erupted after one of the world's leading scientific journals refused to publish an article which claims that men and women think differently.

Peter Lawrence, a biologist and fellow of the Royal

Society, accused Science of being "gutless" after it explained that its decision was because the piece did not offer "a strategy on how to deal with the gender issue".

In his paper, Mr. Lawrence questioned why, when 60 per cent of biology students are female, only 10 per go on to become professors.

This "leaky pipeline" has been blamed on discrimination and a lack of choice which, if corrected, will produce equal numbers of men and women in science.

But Mr. Lawrence dismissed "the cult of political correctness" that insists men and women are "equivalent, identical even" and argued that "men and women are born different".

The journal considered the article for seven months and, after making a number of changes, gave Mr. Lawrence a publication date, proofs and a chance to order reprints.

But at the last minute he received an e-mail from Donald Kennedy, the editor-in-chief, in which he said that the journal was not going to publish the article.

The piece "did not, at least for us, lead to a clear strategy about how to deal with the gender issue," said Kennedy.

"So much has been written on all sides of this problem that it sets a very high bar for novelty and persuasiveness, and although we liked your essay we have had to decide to reject it."

Mr. Lawrence, a developmental biologist who works at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, said: "It was a lame excuse. I could not get it published for reasons that I think were political."

Mr. Lawrence's piece – Men, Women, and Ghosts in Science – has since been published online by the Public Library of Science Biology and has become one of the most popular articles over the past few days, attracting about 60 e-mails, almost all from women.

One woman reader said that the men who want to avoid the issues the article raises "are simply running scared of getting lynched like Larry Summers", a reference to the Harvard president who caused a furore with a speech in which he raised the issue of whether

women have less innate scientific ability.

The most vociferous criticisms of Mr. Lawrence's ideas have come from Nancy Hopkins, a professor of biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who accused him of "mashing together true genetic differences between men and women with old-fashioned stereotypes. In so doing, he perpetuates the very problem he is trying to address about why so few women get to the top in science."

Science is reeling from having published two papers that contained the most notorious fraud of recent years, Prof Hwang Woo-Suk's human embryonic stem cell research.

Over two years ago, the journal was also criticised for trying to influence a Congressional debate by publishing a widely reported paper linking the drug ecstasy to brain damage, which was subsequently retracted.

Telegraph.co.uk (online news), February 6, 2006. □

FREE SPEECH

Freedom for the thought we hate

Jeff Jacoby

Funny people, the Austrians. If you're Kurt Waldheim – a former Nazi military officer linked to a genocidal massacre during World War II – they elect you president. But if you're David Irving – a British author who claimed that there never was a Nazi genocide during World War II – they throw you in the slammer.

On second thought, not funny at all. Austria disgraced itself when it elected Waldheim president in 1986, apparently unconcerned by the revelation that he had served in a German military unit responsible for mass murder in the Balkans and been listed after the war as a wanted criminal by the UN War Crimes Commission. In a very different way it disgraced itself again last week, when a Vienna court sentenced Irving, a racist and an anti-Semite, to three years in prison for denying that the Nazis annihilated 6 million European Jews.

Irving is a man of great intellectual gifts who devoted his life to a grotesque and evil project: rehabilitating

the reputation of Hitler and the Third Reich.

Necessarily, that meant denying the Holocaust and ridiculing those who suffered in it, and Irving has long done so with relish. "I don't see any reason to be tasteful about Auschwitz. It's baloney, it's a legend," he told a Canadian audience in 1991. "There are so many Auschwitz survivors going around – in fact the number increases as the years go past, which is biologically very odd to say the least – I'm going to form an association of Auschwitz Survivors, Survivors of the Holocaust, and Other Liars, or A-S-S-H-O-L-S."

Presumably Irving had in mind people like my father, whose arm bears to this day the number A-10502, tattooed there in blue ink on May 28, 1944, the day he and his family were transported to Auschwitz. My father's parents, David and Leah Jakubovic, and his youngest brother and sister, Alice, 8, and Yrvin, 10, were not tattooed; Jews deemed too old or too young to work were sent immediately to the gas chambers. His teenage siblings, Zoltan and Franceska, were tattooed and, like him, put to work as slave laborers. Zoltan was killed within days; Franceska lasted a few months. Of the seven members of the Jakubovic family sent to Auschwitz in the spring of 1944, only my father was alive in the spring of 1945.

So on a personal level, the prospect of David Irving spending his next three years in a prison cell is something over which I will lose no sleep. He is a repugnant, hate-filled liar, who even as a child (so his twin brother told the Telegraph, a British daily) was enamored of the Nazis and had a pronounced cruel streak.

But as a matter of law and public policy, Irving's sentence is deplorable. The opinions he expressed are vile, and his arguments about the Holocaust – perhaps the most comprehensively researched and documented crime in history – are ludicrous. But governments have no business criminalizing opinions and arguments, not even those that are vile or ludicrous. To be sure, freedom of speech is not absolute; laws against libel, death threats, and falsely shouting fire in a crowded theater are both reasonable and necessary. But free societies do not throw people in prison for giving offensive speeches or spouting historical lies.

Austria, the nation that produced Hitler and cheered the Anschluss, may well believe that its poisoned history requires a strong antidote. Punishing anyone

who "denies, grossly trivializes, approves, or seeks to justify" the Holocaust or other Nazi crimes may seem a small price to pay to keep would-be totalitarians and hatemongers at bay. But a government that can make the expression of Holocaust denial a crime today can make the expression of other offensive opinions a crime tomorrow.

Americans, for whom the First Amendment is a birthright, should understand this instinctively. "If there is any principle of the Constitution that more imperatively calls for attachment than any other it is the principle of free thought," wrote Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. in 1929. "Not free thought for those who agree with us, but freedom for the thought that we hate."

It is popular in some circles to argue that the United States should do certain things -- adopt single-payer health insurance, abolish capital punishment, etc. -- to conform to the practice in other democracies. Those who find that a persuasive argument might consider that Irving is behind bars today because Austria doesn't have a First Amendment. Neither do Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Israel, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, or Switzerland -- all of which have made Holocaust denial a crime.

"Freedom for the thought we hate" is never an easy sell, but without it there can be no true liberty. David Irving is a scurrilous creep, but he doesn't belong in prison. Austria should find a way to set him free -- not for his sake, but for Austria's.

Jeff Jacoby is an Op-Ed writer for the Boston Globe, a radio political commentator, and a contributing columnist for *Townhall.com*.

Posted at townhall.com, March 2, 2006.

Letter to Editor

F. Dreyer

Pigs will fly when Warren Kinsella learns to curb his talent for ad-hominem rant. Today he justifies the punishment of Holocaust deniers because Holocaust deniers are rabid neo-Nazis. What they say is not necessarily wrong perhaps, but it is said for bad reasons. What then can justify the punishment of someone who might say it for better reasons?

Like all ad-hominem artists, Kinsella attacks not the merit of the argument but the merit of the arguer. Kinsella's facts may be right. His logic is stupid. In the real world, bad people sometimes say things that are true and good people things that are false. I think the Holocaust did in fact happen and the evidence for it is compelling. But anything that can be proven with reference to evidence can also be disproven if different evidence turns up. The punishment of Holocaust deniers ultimately threatens the credibility of the Holocaust as a verifiable event. Like all other historical events, it can defend itself without the help of the policeman.

Frederick Dreyer, Professor emeritus, Department of History, University of Western Ontario

National Post, p.A21, February 25, 2006.

Blasphemy has set us free

Robert Fulford

We may not be able to prove George Bernard Shaw's claim that all great truths begin as blasphemies. Still, it's closer to accuracy than the opposite, which would be something like: When in doubt, consult the authorities.

As we know too well, the authorities often get it wrong. History demonstrates the priceless value of blasphemy. That's one reason why anyone now trying to revive anti-blasphemy laws should be seen as an enemy of progress as well as an enemy of freedom.

In 1633 Galileo was tried for heresy by the Roman Catholic Church and forced to repudiate his claim that the Earth moves around the Sun; 359 years later, in 1992, a Vatican commission decided that, on second thought, Galileo had it right. Everyone agreed that was very nice of the Vatican, admitting they were wrong and all. In the middle of the 19th century Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection looked clearly blasphemous to many Christians; it still does, to some.

But then, Christianity began as blasphemy. In the Gospel (Mark, 14:61) the high priest asks Jesus, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" and Jesus answers Yes. The high priest claims that's proof enough -- "Ye have heard his blasphemy"; crucifixion follows.

Blasphemy, or something like it, stands near the centre of modern culture. The first page of Joyce's *Ulysses*, the greatest 20th-century novel, plunges us into what any Catholic will recognize as a parody of the Eucharist, with an appropriate Latin quote to underline the point. Denunciations of religious practice in Strindberg's early stories drew a costly, complicated but finally unsuccessful suit for blasphemy. (Strindberg was often said to have a persecution complex, but he was, after all, persecuted.)

The major figures in modern cinema, from Luis Bunuel to Martin Scorsese, assume that religion can be treated with the same abrasive imagination they bring to other subjects. In *Viridiana*, the film that created Bunuel's mature reputation 45 years ago, a gang of drunken, slobbering beggars play a record of Handel's *Messiah* in a rich man's house while they enact their own Last Supper, following Leonardo's seating plan. Scorsese (a Roman Catholic by heritage, like Joyce and Bunuel), moved deep into blasphemy with *The Last Temptation of Christ*, which he made 18 years ago from the famous/notorious Nikos Kazantzakis novel. People like the Monty Python gang in England correctly consider it their right to parody religious belief, as in their *Life of Brian*.

Many countries have anti-blasphemy laws, which long ago fell into disuse. Today many Muslims, and some non-Muslims, want to make it a crime, once more, to deny the existence of God, scoff at scripture or otherwise offend the faithful, any faithful. A Muslim lawyer in Norway said the other day that his adopted country needs anti-blasphemy regulations to protect minorities against derisive and hateful expression.

"The point," he said, "is not to restrict freedom of speech." (A good rule: anyone who says that is in the process of doing just that.) We are heading toward the creation of a new human right, the right not to be offended. But surely we all know that to live is to be offended. As a humanist I'm offended by a rule forcing women to cover their faces.

The proposal to punish blasphemy implies that we should avoid showing disrespect for any religion. But what (to put the question in a way that many Muslims will instantly understand) if a religion doesn't deserve respect? What if it deserves to be treated as, for example, Christianity is treated in Pakistan? That's one place that won't need any new rules in this field,

Pakistani law being already more than adequate.

In 2003 a court in the Punjab city of Faisalabad sentenced Ranjha Masih, an illiterate 52-year-old Roman Catholic floor-sweeper, to life in prison because he may have thrown stones at a wall on which were written Koranic verses mentioning Mohammed – and, just to prove they were serious, the police tore down his house as well, leaving his wife and five children homeless. He had been arrested five years earlier, during a memorial procession honouring Bishop John Joseph, who committed suicide to protest Pakistan's treatment of Christians.

This should make Muslim propagandists hesitate to seek legal remedies: The more we discuss the subject, the more we will learn about religious laws in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and other centres of bigotry. As for the West, it can maintain its integrity only if it insists that freedom of religion includes the freedom to blaspheme.

National Post, February 18, 2006.

Pushing The Limits Of Free Speech

Sarah Vanderwolf

After being elected Opinions Editor of the *Dalhousie Gazette* for the 2005-6 academic year, I was looking forward to producing a weekly forum for open discussion of a wide range of topics that would be of particular interest to university students. There were a few subjects I was particularly interested in writing articles about, including the creation vs. evolution debate, religion and spirituality, and freedom of speech. While an article I wrote about creation vs. evolution received only one angry letter from a member of Campus Crusade for Christ, and an article about religion and spirituality received no attention at all, my two articles about freedom of speech caused a minor uproar.

While I originally intended to write one article discussing the importance of expressing one's opinions freely and without fear of reprisal, I realized I had so much to say about the subject that I wrote two articles, both of which were published in the *Dalhousie Gazette* in October 2005.

Continued on page...12

Please give notification of attendance by **MAY 5th**, so that we can arrange appropriate catering.
Addresses given below.
Thank you!

SAFS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, May 13, 2006, 9:00 am – 3:30 pm

University of Western Ontario, Somerville House, Room 3317

9:00 am – 9:30 am	Registration and refreshments, meet other members
9:30 am – 9:45 am	President's introductory remarks (Clive Seligman)
9:45 am – 11:50 am	“It is essential to support free speech, BUT it must be exercised responsibly.” <i>Speakers:</i> Larry Cornies , Editor, London Free Press Jan Narveson , University of Waterloo Charles Rackoff , University of Toronto
11:50 am – 12:00 pm	Break
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm	Buffet lunch (in Somerville House, Rm. 3320)
12:45 pm – 2:30 pm	<i>Keynote Speaker</i> Salim Mansur , University of Western Ontario Has The Danish Cartoon Controversy Pushed The World To A Tipping Point In The Clash Or Crash Of Civilization?
2:30 pm – 2:40 pm	Break
2:40 pm – 3:30 pm	Annual Business Meeting (members only) (Somerville House, Rm. 3317)

REGISTRATION FEE: \$30.00 per person, may pay at the door. Members must have paid their dues. (Registration includes coffee and lunch, but not parking).

GETTING THERE: From the 401, take Wellington Road North to end, then jog one block west to Richmond Street, go North to University gates (on your left), just North of Huron Street. On campus, follow this road over the bridge, turn left at the light and continue to traffic circle. Visitor parking is on your right next to Alumni Hall once you are almost around the circle. Rate: \$4.00 flat rate. From Highway 7, take Highway 4 South (it becomes Richmond Street) At the fork after Fanshawe, you can either stay left on Richmond to University gates (now on Richmond Street) as above, or stay right and go down Western Road, turn left at 3rd light (Lambton Drive). Visitor parking is on your right as you enter traffic circle. Somerville House is across the traffic circle, 2nd building on Oxford Drive [On Saturday there is usually no one at the Information booths, but check SAFS website: www.safs.ca/annual meeting for a campus map.]

ACCOMMODATION: On-campus rooms at Essex Hall are \$44.00 per night including breakfast. A modern, air-conditioned residence, situated at the corner of Western Road and Sarnia Road. (1-519-661-3476). The Station Park Inn on Richmond North at Pall Mall (1-800-561-4574) and Windermere Manor (1-519-858-1414), have UWO rates at under \$100.00 per night.

TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AND FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: E-mail: [saifs@saifs.ca](mailto:safs@saifs.ca), or write to SAFS, 1673 Richmond Street, #344, London, ON, N6G 2N3. For further info contact: Daniella Chirila, e-mail: dchirila@uwo.ca, or (1-519-661-2111, ext. 84690).

Please reply by May 5, 2006



See you at the SAFS Conference

Vanderrwolf...continued from page 10

The headlines for the articles were “Freedom of speech not to everyone’s taste” and “Academic freedom under attack.”

An excerpt from the first article:

“Freedom of speech [...] is integral in any society because it allows for the free exchange of ideas, open discussion, and ultimately discoveries and progress.

“Despite its unarguable importance, freedom of speech is slowly eroding in our society, and will likely continue to do so unless we do something about it.

“Examples of stifled freedom of speech abound, even here at Dalhousie. When I stopped at an awareness booth for the Take Back the Night march in the SUB [Student Union Building] a couple weeks ago, I saw that the young women running the booth had clipped a recent *Streeter* from the *Gazette* and had circled a response to the question, “What is your frosh name?” This particular frosh said her name was “Sensor,” meaning that girls at Shirreff Hall have legs that are like automatic doors – when something moves, they open.

“Freedom of the press, or incitement to rape?” the women at the Take Back the Night booth had scrawled across the newspaper clipping.

“I told them I thought this was clearly freedom of the press, but they were having none of it. I quickly made my exit.

“Later, I thought of a scene from the television show *Roseanne*. Roseanne’s sister Jackie is sitting at the kitchen table reading a newspaper when she says to Roseanne, ‘A woman has been charged with stabbing her husband 57 times!’

“‘I admire her restraint,’ Roseanne responds.

“Is this considered incitement to murder? Maybe Roseanne should be arrested as a man-hater and barred from appearing on television ever again! If the women at Take Back the Night had their way, I suspect this might come true.”

I thought that this incident perfectly illustrated the impossibility of preventing offense through censorship because, according to Dr. Andrew Irvine, a philosophy professor at the University of British Columbia,

‘almost any comment in any context might be viewed by someone to be offensive.’

I did not intend for this article to be offensive, but the *Gazette* received angry responses from several students at Dalhousie, especially from members of the Women’s Center. Because the Center organizes the “Take Back the Night” march each year, they felt I was personally attacking their organization and attempting to defame them. The *Gazette* received several unprintable emails from the director of the Center, who was livid. She threatened to take her case to the Board of Directors in an attempt to initiate legal action against the newspaper, on the grounds of libel.

To this day, I see nothing libelous in this article, never mind the fact that I never once refer to the Women’s Center. The entire text of the article remains posted on the Women’s Center’s website.

An excerpt from the second article I wrote: “While the freedom to express thoughts that are potentially offensive is an important aspect of freedom of speech, the freedom to express controversial ideas in academia is just as important – and just as vilified in some cases.

“At the convocation ceremony at Simon Fraser University last May, Dr. Doreen Kimura delivered a speech praising the importance of freedom of speech among academics.

“Kimura cited several examples of threatened freedom, such as a York University professor who had “observers” attend his lecture on the evolution of behavioural differences between men and women. These observers were ‘members of special interest tribunals,’ who were clearly determined to ensure that the lecturer made no comments that could be construed as sexist.

“Dr. Kimura also referred to a watchdog committee set up at the University of Toronto ‘to ensure that no reference is made in textbooks that could be construed as unfavourable to any minority, no matter how factual or well established such references are.’

“Two particular instances of ‘factual and well established’ ideas receiving widespread criticism spring to my mind.

“The first is an idea that I discussed in a previous issue: namely, the controversy regarding evolution and intelligent design. The disgust and hostility many

people have toward the evolutionary theory is comparable to how the public responded to other scientific ideas when they were first introduced.

“For instance, the Catholic Church condemned Galileo for suggesting that the earth moves around the sun, and Alfred Wegener’s theory of continental drift was initially rejected and even ridiculed within the scientific community almost a century ago.

“More recently, Harvard University president Larry Summers received a backlash of criticism upon his suggestion that the reason fewer women than men participate in science is because of innate differences between the sexes.

“In an article in the *Vancouver Sun* last year, Kimura wrote, ‘The responses to Summers indicate once again how little respect many in academia really have for the principles of academic freedom and rational discussion. Even had he been mistaken, the reaction should have been more moderate, but as it happens, he was not.’

“Kimura explained in her article that ‘men are, on average, better on such spatial tasks and on mathematical reasoning than are women. Women, in contrast are better, on average, on tasks requiring verbal memory.’

“Since spatial and mathematical ability are essential in fields such as physics and engineering, this seems to account for the disparity between men’s and women’s participation in these subjects.”

Respondents to this article accused me of being sexist, among other things, as this letter from a journalism student at the University of King’s College shows:

“I couldn’t believe what I was reading in Sarah Vanderwolf’s opinion piece on freedom of speech last week [...] Universities are supposed to be centers of intellectual exploration. If a professor or student is so irresponsible as to use statistics to describe the nature of an entire group of people, then I fully support and will engage in any criticism against them.

“Larry Summers was criticised for assuming that just because not enough women were in the sciences, they weren’t good at it [...] [he] took an observation and created an assumption about that group of people. This is faulty logic, and should not be tolerated – especially at a university.”

I found the arguments in this letter ridiculous.

Admitting that there are demonstrable differences between people of different races and genders is not racism or sexism. But in our politically correct world, free speech is too often defined as “not the right to say anything, but instead to express your opinion so long as it does not offend or harm individuals based on race, sexual orientation, gender, etc” as another respondent wrote to us.

While most of my colleagues at the *Gazette* were relatively supportive of the difficult situation, a fellow editor told me that my articles were “unethical,” “unprofessional,” and “reckless”; he twice demanded that I apologize (which I did not), and he told me in an email that “I personally think you should quit,” (which I also did not).

The recent global crisis regarding the Danish cartoons of the prophet Mohammad, and the smaller-scale controversy here in Halifax regarding Professor Peter March, are another reminder of the controversial, yet integral role free speech has in our society.

I hope that my experiences regarding free speech, and the current global crisis, will not scare us from away from free expression, but will rather solidify our determination to maintain the right to speak freely.

Sarah Vanderwolf is graduating from Dalhousie University with an honors degree in English. She begins a journalism MA program this spring at Western. □

COLLEGES OPEN MINORITY AID TO ALL COMERS

Jonathan D. Glater

Facing threats of litigation and pressure from Washington, colleges and universities nationwide are opening to white students hundreds of thousands of dollars in fellowships, scholarships and other programs previously created for minorities.

Southern Illinois University reached a consent decree last month with the Justice Department to allow nonminorities and men access to graduate fellowships originally created for minorities and women.

In January, the State University of New York made white students eligible for \$6.8 million of aid in two

scholarship programs also previously available just for minorities. Pepperdine University is negotiating with the Education Department over its use of race as a criterion in its programs.

"They're all trying to minimize their legal exposure," Susan Sturm, a law professor at Columbia University said about colleges and universities. "The question is how are they doing that, and are they doing that in a way that's going to shut down any effort or any successful effort to diversify the student body?"

The institutions are reacting to two 2003 Supreme Court cases on using race in admissions at the University of Michigan. Although the cases did not ban using race in admissions to higher education, they did leave the state of the law unclear, and with the changing composition of the court, some university and college officials fear legal challenges.

The affected areas include programs for high schools and graduate fellowships.

It is far too early to determine the effects of the changes on the presence of minorities in higher education and how far the pool of money for scholarships and similar programs will stretch.

Firm data on how many institutions have modified their policies is elusive because colleges and institutions are not eager to trumpet the changes. At least a handful are seeking to put more money into the programs as they expand the possible pool of applicants.

Some white students are qualifying for the aid. Last year, in response to a legal threat from the Education Department, Washington University in St. Louis modified the standards for an undergraduate scholarship that had been open just to minorities and was named for the first African-American dean at the university. This year, the first since the change, 12 of the 42 first-year recipients are white.

Officials at conservative groups that are pushing for the changes see the shift as a sign of success in eliminating race as a factor in decision making in higher education.

"Our concern is that the law be followed and that nobody be denied participation in a program on account of skin color or what country their ancestors

came from," said Roger Clegg, president and general counsel of the Center for Equal Opportunity, which has been pressing institutions on the issue.

"We're not looking at achieving a particular racial outcome," Mr. Clegg added. "And it's unfortunate that some organizations seem to view the success or failure of the program based simply on what percentage of students of this color or that color can participate."

Advocates of focused scholarships programs like Theodore M. Shaw, president of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Inc., challenge the notion that programs for minority students hurt whites. "How is it that they conclude that the great evil in this country is discrimination against white people?" Mr. Shaw asked. "Can I put that question any more pointedly? I struggle to find the words to do it because it's so stunning."

Mr. Shaw said protecting scholarships and other programs for minorities was "at the top of our agenda."

Travis Reindl, director of state policy analysis at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, said hundreds, if not thousands, of scholarship and fellowship programs historically used race as a criterion. Mr. Reindl estimated that as many as half of the four-year colleges in the United States had reviewed or modified such programs.

Neither the Justice Department nor Education Department, nor organizations on all sides of the discussions over affirmative action, have gathered statistics tracking the trend. In January, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* named more than 12 institutions that had made the changes.

Mr. Clegg said that since 2003 his center had sent 200 challenges to colleges and universities over race-based scholarships and other programs, warning of legal action if changes were not made. He said more than 150 institutions had broadened their programs in response.

The two Supreme Court affirmative action decisions that are worrying the institutions involved the University of Michigan. In *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the court upheld the use of race in admissions decisions at the law school. It found that there had been a "highly individualized, holistic review of each applicant's file" in which race could be properly considered.

In *Gratz v. Bollinger*, the court struck down the use of race in undergraduate admissions, finding that those applications used a scoring system that should not have awarded points based on race.

"When the Gratz and Grutter decisions came down, that was really kind of a mixed bag," Mr. Reindl said. "It's still a very murky environment, and it's also a very contentious environment."

New York Times, March 14, 2006. □

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO EQUITY PROGRAM

High time equity program subject to detached review

In *Exploring Equity*, Professor Angela Hildyard, vice-president (human resources and equity), apparently takes pride in our accumulation of no less than 13 equity officers (Forum, Jan. 23). But to others, who have witnessed the consequences of seemingly endless annual budget cuts, this raises troubling questions. Assuming an average salary of \$70,000, and allowing for fringe benefits and overheads, suggests that the annual equity budget exceeds \$1.7 million. But this estimate is conservative; a decade ago one of us, who served on Academic Board, was (reluctantly, it must be said) quoted \$1.5 million. A more recent quoted estimate was \$3.5 million. This is huge sum to assign to activities most of which are – at best – controversial.

Professor Hildyard's rationale for this expenditure is "systemic discrimination." To justify such a claim, advocates repeatedly point to "equity-seeking" groups' lack of proportionality to some allegedly representative population. They usually ignore the implications of demographic trends and rarely cite evidence such as outdated employment criteria. Over three decades ago, in her analysis of gender differences in employment patterns, University of Oxford psychologist Corinne Hutt concluded that, even then, the differences could be largely ascribed to non-discriminatory factors and observed that, in the absence of evidence, proportionality arguments reduce the notion of systemic discrimination to a meaningless tautology.

The ongoing brouhaha over the Canada Research Chairs is a textbook example. A paucity of female and "visible minority" appointments in the disciplines

deemed important by Industry Canada has led to a Canadian Human Rights Commission investigation. While current discipline representations may reflect past discriminatory practices, given the heightened sensitivity to this issue, it seems incredible to assert that there is ongoing discrimination, direct or otherwise. Yet the Canadian Association of University Teachers demands quotas, thus simultaneously attacking academic excellence and subverting responsible government.

Debates over such issues are muddied by advocates who, imbued with an overweening sense of moral superiority, display a penchant for abusive, ad hominem charges. An ugly example is the reaction to Harvard president Lawrence Summers' exploration of possible reasons for the low number of women in certain mathematically based disciplines. Yet, as anyone familiar with the literature on sex and cognition knows, Summers' suggested explanations cannot be so easily dismissed.

Another concern is that the job security of equity officers depends on finding problems: their position parallels that of the Spanish Inquisition, which survived by confiscating the assets of its victims. None if this is to deny that there are issues that need to be addressed, or individual problems to be rectified. But we nevertheless believe that our current equity program is mostly against the university's academic interests — and a waste of taxpayers' money. In these respects, our search for excellence requires departments and divisions to be regularly reviewed as part of the administrative appointment process. It is high time that our equity apparatus be subject to an equivalent detached review.

Philip Sullivan, Aerospace Studies
John Furedy, Psychology Department

University of Toronto Bulletin, February 20, 2006. □

SUBMISSIONS TO THE SAFS NEWSLETTER

The acting editor welcomes articles, case studies, news items, comments, readings, local chapter news, etc. Please send your submission by e-mail attachment.

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HARVARD'S FUTURE

Academic, Heal Thyself: What went wrong at Harvard?

Camille Paglia

Tomorrow, Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences will meet for the first time since the resignation of the university's president, Lawrence H. Summers, two weeks ago. The dean of Arts and Sciences, William Kirby, resigned in late January, reportedly after clashing with Mr. Summers. When Mr. Summers leaves on July 1, there will be a serious leadership vacuum at Harvard, which has been torn by strife during his short five-year tenure.

Larry Summers, a former Treasury secretary, assumed the presidency with a high sense of mission. Determined to effect change, he took bold and confrontational positions. He endorsed proposals to expand the campus across the Charles River to Allston, attacked anti-Semitism and rampant grade inflation and laudably argued for the return of R.O.T.C. to Harvard.

But whatever his good intentions, Mr. Summers often inspired more heat than light. His stellar early career as an economics professor did not prepare him for dealing with an ingrown humanities faculty that has been sunk in political correctness for decades. As president, he had a duty to research the tribal creeds and customs of those he wished to convert. Foolishly thinking plain speech and common sense would suffice, he flunked Academic Anthropology 101.

While many issues are rumored to have played a role in Mr. Summers's resignation (including charges of favoritism in a messy legal case involving foreign investments), the controversy that will inevitably symbolize his presidency was the manufactured outcry early last year over his glancing reference at a conference to possible innate differences between the sexes in aptitude for science and math. The feminist pressure groups rose en masse from their lavishly feathered nests and set up a furious cackle that led to a 218-to-185 vote of no confidence by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences last March.

Instead of welcoming this golden opportunity to introduce the forbidden subject of biology to academic gender studies (where a rigid dogma of social

constructionism reigns), Mr. Summers collapsed like a rag doll. A few months later, after issuing one abject apology after another, he threw \$50 million at a jerrybuilt program to expand the comfort zone of female scientists and others on campus. That one desperate act of profligate appeasement tells volumes about the climate of persecution and extortion around gender issues at too many American universities.

In a widely reported incident four years ago, Mr. Summers's private conversation with Cornel West, one of Harvard's short list of distinguished scholars who have the title of "university professor" (because they teach across department lines), resulted in Dr. West angrily decamping to Princeton. Whatever critique of affirmative action Mr. Summers intended was lost in what became a soap opera of hurt feelings and facile accusations of racism.

There was a larger issue of campus governance at stake. While it is certainly in Harvard's best interests to ensure that its university professors remain productive at a high scholarly level (the president reportedly slighted Dr. West's recording of a rap CD), it is unclear on what authority Mr. Summers was challenging Dr. West in the first place. The provost, not the president, is the chief academic officer of any university. But Harvard reinstated a provost only in the early 1990's, and the weakness of that position is suggested by the provost's near invisibility through the public battles of the Summers regime.

The ideological groupthink of Harvard's humanities faculty does patent disservice to the undergraduates in their charge, but it is the faculty alone that should properly determine curriculum and academic policy, a responsibility that descends from the birth of European universities in the Middle Ages. Over the past 40 years, there has been a radical expansion of administrative bureaucracies on American college campuses that has distorted the budget and turned education toward consumerism, a checkbook alliance with parents who are being bled dry by grotesquely exorbitant tuitions.

Mr. Summers's strategic blunders unfortunately took the spotlight off entrenched political correctness and changed the debate to academic power: who has it, and how should it be exercised? Nationwide, campus administrations faced with factionalized or obdurate faculties have in some cases taken matters into their own hands by creating programs or reducing and even

eliminating departments. The trend is disturbingly away from faculty power.

Hence more is at stake in the Harvard affair than merely one overpriced campus with an exaggerated reputation. Support for Larry Summers was strong among Harvard undergraduates and outside the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, which constitutes only one of Harvard's many colleges and professional schools. The Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz protested that Mr. Summers had been removed by "a coup d'état." But by his failure to provide a systematic rationale for his words and actions, Mr. Summers gave the impression of governing by whim and impulse. The leader of so huge and complex an institution cannot be a whirling dervish.

IT now remains to be seen whether Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences is capable of self-critique. Will its members acknowledge their own insularity and excesses, or will they continue down the path of smug self-congratulation and vanity? Harvard's reputation for disinterested scholarship has been severely gored by the shadowy manipulations of the self-serving cabal who forced Mr. Summers's premature resignation. That so few of the ostensibly aggrieved faculty members deigned to speak on the record to *The Crimson*, the student newspaper, illustrates the cagey hypocrisy that permeates fashionable campus leftism, which worships diversity in all things except diversity of thought.

If Harvard cannot correct itself in this crisis, it will signal that academe cannot be trusted to reform itself from within. There is a rising tide of off-campus discontent with the monolithic orthodoxies of humanities departments. David Horowitz, a 1960's radical turned conservative, has researched the lopsided party registration of humanities professors (who tend to be Democrats like me) and proposed an "academic bill of rights" to guarantee fairness and political balance in the classroom. The conservative radio host Sean Hannity regularly broadcasts students' justifiable complaints about biased teachers and urges students to take recording devices to class to gather evidence.

These efforts to hold professors accountable are welcome and bracing, but the danger is that such tactics can be abused. Tenure owes its very existence to past intrusions by state legislatures in the curricular business of state universities. If politicians start to meddle in campus governance, academic freedom will be the victim. And when students become snitches, we

are heading toward dictatorship by Mao's Red Guards or Hitler Youth.

Over the last three decades of trendy post structuralism and postmodernism, American humanities professors fell under the sway of a ruthless guild mentality. Corruption and cronyism became systemic, spread by the ostentatious conference circuit and the new humanities centers of the 1980's. Harvard did not begin that blight but became an extreme example of it. Amid the ruins of the Summers presidency, there is a tremendous opportunity for recovery and renewal of the humanities. Which way will Harvard go?

Camille Paglia is the university professor of humanities and media studies at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

New York Times, March 6, 2006, Op-Ed Contributor. □

THE PUBLICATION CULTURE

Richard Holmes

University culture is, for most faculty members, formed primarily by the pressure to publish. It is a publication culture. Although lip service is paid to "good teaching", what is measured as good teaching is faculty members' popularity with their students and then we pretend it is the same thing. Good teaching is one way to be popular with students, but there are other easier ways, and it would require a saint to take no advantage of those easier ways in order to influence the survey results. Faculty members have many good qualities but saintliness is not one of them. The result is that our measures of good teaching fail to discriminate properly. This is generally understood (if not admitted) so that "good teaching" ratings have very little bearing on most of the deliberations of most promotion and tenure committees. What is all-important in most of those deliberations is the publication record of the faculty member.

The emphasis on publication has the good effect of stimulating research output by university faculty which is a very important benefit for the university and for the sponsoring society. However, there are some costs implicit in this publication culture, as it now exists.

One of those costs is that faculty members become

reluctant (and sometimes adamantly refuse) to take on important committee assignments. Not only is the time spent (sometimes very substantial time spent) on those committee assignments not rewarded in tenure, promotion and salary decisions, but it actually results in a penalty to the faculty member because of the fewer resulting publications. Faculty members who pay this price once, quickly learn that if you wish to promote your own career, then you refuse all time-consuming committee assignments and spend all of your time on academic publications.

This disincentive to take on important committee assignments is a cost of our publication culture, as it presently exists, and is detrimental to the best interests of the university and of the sponsoring society.

Another cost of our publication culture, as it presently exists, is that many faculty members are encouraged to become very narrow in their focus. The best way for many faculty members to gain a strong publication record is to focus exclusively on a very narrow range of their discipline and to work at the forefront of that narrow range. This results in learning a great deal about a very small part of their discipline and almost nothing (beyond what was learned in graduate school) about the much larger part of their discipline. This would not be a problem if the limitations of this narrow focus were generally understood, but often they are not. A faculty member who establishes a strong publication record and a national or international reputation as an authority in one narrow area of a discipline is often considered (particularly by people outside the discipline) to be an authority in all areas of the discipline, when, in fact, that person may know very little about these other areas beyond what was learned in graduate school many years ago. This failure to recognize the limitations of narrowly accomplished faculty members' abilities, enables them to do damage sometimes by sneering at general (rather than publication-oriented) discussion of important social issues outside their area of expertise, by lending credence to ideas which are many years out of date, or by failing to understand the importance of, or even opposing, recent developments in these other areas of their discipline. Narcissism (the academic's occupational disease) often prevents a hugely but narrowly accomplished faculty member from recognizing his or her limitations, which is likely to ensure that the potential damage from their narrow focus is realized.

This is another cost of our publication culture, as it presently exists. One of the consequences of the very narrow focus of many faculty members, and of the narcissism which seems to be promoted by our occupation, is that communication is impaired. The narrowness of the focus limits the ability, and sometimes the interest, in discussion of important social issues outside the narrow area of specialization. Narcissism creates conversation which is more likely to be about one's own importance rather than about how one's own work bears on important social problems. Narcissism also involves a craving for approval which impairs the expression of opinion lest offense be given, and to taking criticism of one's ideas (however wrong) as a personal affront. Instead of meeting a challenge to ideas with better ideas, or alternatively, learning from others' ideas, the more likely response to criticism is, in the publication culture, as it presently exists, to clam up, shunning or demonizing the critic and shutting down the conversation. Political correctness prevails in discussions of broader issues. This should not be. The university should be a marketplace for ideas, not only within narrow focus groups, but also among disciplines.

It should not be, as it is now, a place for a multitude of narrow focus groups and a parade of egos.

Changes are needed. I know I do not have a solution, but there is one thing which could obviously be done to make our publication culture less of a navel-gazing rat race designed by and for narcissistic workaholics.

Greater attention should be made to make available to all faculty members, non-technical descriptions of the social implications of the research results and methodology of our outstanding researchers at SFU. Not enough is generally known, for example, about the important research on pine beetle control by John Borden, about the important work by Parzi Copes on the East Coast fisheries, about the important work by Herb Grubel on unemployment insurance or about the important work by Don Devoretz on immigration. We should take much greater pains to disseminate detailed non-technical descriptions not only of the results but also of the methodology employed in all of this important research. I am sure that there is much more important research that has been conducted at the university that I, and many others, know nothing about. This illustrates the problem. As a community of scholars we should take much greater care to achieve

non-technical communication with others in the university community but outside our field of specialization. As it presently exists, too much of the conversation in our publication culture is between specialists, much too little between different fields. Too much of the conversation is about one's own importance rather than the importance of one's work. Part of the problem, as I see it, is that we are generally too little interested in the social implications of our work, too much interested in our own reputations, too much interested in blowing our own horns and too little interested in learning from our colleagues.

We are too contemptuous of others' ignorance of our specialized knowledge. We are too full of ourselves. We need to learn that there are more important things than establishing our own reputation. The university is too much a multitude of independent focus groups and a parade of egos. The parade should be much more of ideas and much less of egos and there should be much more interaction among the focus groups than there is at present.

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DUES 2006

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