

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 2008

SAFS CONFERENCE

Clive Seligman

This year's conference will address both of SAFS goals: the protection of academic freedom and the promotion of the merit principle in academic decisions. Our keynote speakers are Jim Côté and Anton Allahar, professors of sociology at the University of Western Ontario, who will speak on the topic of their recent, well-received book, *The Ivory Tower: A University System in Crisis*. They will present data to support their contention that grade inflation and lowered expectations of student performance have combined to create student alienation and decreased academic standards. In their presentation they will address the impact of these trends as well as some thoughts about how to improve the situation.

The morning panel session will focus on the potential threat of collective agreements to academic freedom. Collective agreements frequently contain effective articles on academic freedom, but they also include articles dealing with various kinds of harassment, such as discrimination, sexual, speech, and bullying. In theory no one wants these articles to collide, with the effect that a gain in protection in academic freedom comes at the expense of a decline in protection against harassment, or vice versa. But sometimes there are, or appear to be, genuine conflicts. Our panelists will examine the ways in which such conflicts can occur and what may be done to remedy the situation.

Murray Miles will describe his recent, personal experience at Brock University, where a collective agreement article on *Respectful Workplace and Learning Environment Policy* was used to challenge his academic freedom.

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SAFS 2008

CONFERENCE ISSUE

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His descriptions of the process of defending against such charges and how the procedures to investigate the charges can be 'suspect' serves as a reminder of how fragile our rights to academic freedom really are, and why they must be defended vigorously.

Albert Katz, who is a former president of the faculty association at Western and who also served as chief grievance officer for a couple of years, will describe the collective agreement in the context of a unionized university, the grievance process and duty of fair representation, and how can member to member conflicts can be handled.

Phil Sullivan will try to place these issues in the larger context of societal trends that he believes are undermining the core purpose of the university: the search for knowledge and its transmission through research and teaching. Sullivan will discuss two trends that he thinks are problematic: 1) the emergence of the managerial university that focuses administrators on trendy pursuits that may conflict with scholarship, such as promoting equity and inclusiveness, and 2) the influence of relativism, which he believes has led to a decline of standards in some disciplines.

I hope our members will join us this May for what promises to be an intellectual feast. Further details about the conference and its program are provided on page 10. □

SAFS STATEMENT ON PREVENTING CAMPUS DEBATE BY LEADERS OF THE YORK FEDERATION OF STUDENTS AND ITS STUDENT CENTER

March 10, 2008

The website of the York Federation of Students (YFS) boasts that 'students are the university.' Yet, the leaders of the YFS (and its Student Center) seem to have no problem denying the students they purport to represent their basic academic freedom to hear debates on controversial issues, even when those debates are organized by their own debating club. Sadly, the YFS does not understand that authoritarian control of ideas is directly contrary to the main purpose of university education, namely, the development of skills necessary in seeking the truth from among contested ideas.

A more reasoned view of this situation would suggest that even if we believe some ideas are bad, debating them serves several crucial purposes: 1) discovering why some ideas are bad sharpens our understanding of why other ideas are good, 2) discovering the details of our opponents' views helps us articulate more accurately why we believe they are mistaken, 3) demonstrating that all ideas can be debated freely and openly within the university signals that thinking outside of the box is valued, and some novel, provocative ideas, which otherwise may have remained unexplored, may come forth and prove to be of immense value, 4) confronting bad ideas teaches us to defeat them on intellectual grounds rather than by recourse to hurt feelings, censorship, or violence, and 5) by debating apparently "bad" ideas, we may discover that some are, in fact, good ideas, and knowledge will be advanced.

Whatever the intentions of the YFS and its Student Center, they have violated the academic rights of the students they serve, and by their actions they have characterized their own university as an indoctrination center rather than a place of learning. We call on them to reverse their decision, and, if they don't, we encourage the students of York University to elect wiser representatives at the next election.

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IS ABORTION TOO HOT A TOPIC FOR CAMPUSES?

Both sides say it was wrong to cancel York U event

Joseph Brean

The abortion debate that never happened at York University last week was, by all accounts, a typical campus affair. The small room in the student centre had been dutifully booked, the fliers stamped for approval, and the head of the York Debating Society was ready to moderate. In these respects, it was virtually identical to an upcoming debate in the same building on the existence of God. But, as is increasingly common at Canadian universities, one student politician saw potential for offence and brought the whole thing to an abrupt end.

"This debate, over whether or not women should be able to have an abortion, is not acceptable in the student centre," said Kelly Holloway, president of the York University Graduate Students Association and vice-chairwoman of the student centre.

From the posters, she had recognized the anti-abortion speaker -- Jose Ruba of the Canadian Centre for Bioethical Reform in Calgary -- and knew that his strategy is to show gruesome photos of aborted fetuses (which she believes to be faked), and to make gross comparisons to genocide and the Holocaust.

And so Ms. Holloway hastily convened four members of the centre's executive for a vote, and the debate was officially nixed, to the dismay of the 50 or so students who showed up.

"It would be equivalent to having a debate over whether or not you can beat your wife," Ms. Holloway said. "People in this country have had the debate over abortion. The Supreme Court made a decision, and that's good enough for me.... I think we should accept that the debate is over."

This kind of thinking, and the bureaucratic actions it motivates, is evident in abortion discussions around the country but especially on campuses, where student pro-life groups have been marginalized -- even voted out of existence -- by the unilateral and often capricious decisions of their student leaders.

The situation has become so frustrating that these

groups have started appealing off-campus to human rights boards, which are typically unfriendly to social conservatives.

This January, for example, a pro-life group at Lakehead University decided to appeal to the Ontario Human Rights Commission after the student government banned it from handing out leaflets, using the school's name, or engaging in any "unsolicited conversations." By coincidence, Mr. Ruba is at Lakehead today to conduct a similar debate, though he fears it, too, will be cancelled. "I have this tendency to get pro-life clubs attacked or cancelled after debating," he said.

Also in January, the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal delivered verdicts on two college pro-life groups that had been denied student club status. Incredibly, one lost and the other won. And last month at the University of Toronto's law school, a day-long symposium to mark the 20th anniversary of the Morgentaler decision, attended by the 84-year-old Dr. Henry Morgentaler himself, did not include a single speaker who dissented from the dominant view of abortion as an emancipatory boon for women.

Abortion, obviously, does not lend itself to breezy debate. Indeed, "life" and "choice" appear to be irreconcilable opposites.

But Ms. Holloway's claim that abortion should be completely undebatable does not sit well among the students she represents.

"The analogy to beating your wife simply doesn't hold, because no one beats their wife and then makes a moral argument about why they should do it," said Michael Payton, a York student of cognitive science and philosophy and a member of a student group Freethinkers, Skeptics and Atheists, who was slated to argue the pro-choice side against Mr. Ruba.

Mr. Payton said he knew that Mr. Ruba's organization has "a bad history of being deceptive" and using manipulative propaganda, especially gruesome videos of abortions, but "videos and pictures are not arguments, and at the end of the day, if I can speak after him and show that it's a fallacious argument to show pictures instead of actual philosophy, actual science, then it wouldn't matter if he wasted everyone's time with 20 minutes of horrific videos, because he's not making an argument.

"If we don't let people know the reasons why we have abortion legalized in Canada, and the ethical theory behind it, then we risk losing it. I think [Ms. Holloway] had every good intention, but I think she was dead wrong [to cancel]," Mr. Payton said. "You don't get anywhere by simply ignoring the debate that happens in the hearts and minds of everyone at some point or another."

In an interview yesterday, Ms. Holloway said that neither Mr. Payton, nor Amir Mohareb, the scheduled moderator and president of the York Debating Society, knew very much about Mr. Ruba and his positions, and that their ignorance made her intervention necessary.

But both said they were well-informed, and Mr. Mohareb said he had approached the student government to inform them of the event and the possible controversy. In discussions with Mr. Ruba, Mr. Mohareb also established ground rules about the format of the debate and especially the use of images, which were to be prefaced with a warning. Video was not allowed, he said.

Ms. Holloway said there is no way to appeal her decision to cancel the debate, but every indication is that she now has a fight on her hands, one that threatens to spill beyond the borders of the student centre. After the cancellation on Thursday afternoon, Mr. Mohareb said he went to all levels of student government to try to broker a compromise.

"I made it quite clear that I'll get rid of the images, and I'll get rid of this external speaker, and we'll just have this debate on our own. I said we can still have the debate, and either we'll have a student debate the pro-life, which wouldn't be difficult to find, or we'll just get rid of both groups [Mr. Payton's and Students for Bioethical Awareness, which invited Mr. Ruba], and we as a debating society will just host the debate ourselves, between ourselves, which we do all the time," Mr. Mohareb said.

But he was told that the topic itself is "out of line," and that "debating abortion would be as much of a violation as debating the Holocaust."

He said that he and the other members of the debating society were "wholly unconvinced," and so he asked for an official, written statement clarifying which topics he is forbidden from debating. He was promised that one would be delivered today.

"To be completely neutral, it's a little too soon to say that we are banned from debating abortion on student space. However, it's clear that a number of executives of the student union feel that way, and I have made it quite clear that if that's how they feel, then the debating society would take this up further," Mr. Mohareb said.

National Post, March 4, 2008.

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OUR STUDENT LEADERS ARE HARDLY TOTALITARIAN

Re: Campus totalitarians, March 10

When the executive members of the York University Student Centre decided not to allow student space to be used as a platform to advocate criminalizing women, we were aware that there would be objections.

We were also aware that anti-choice campaigners would attempt to cloak themselves as defenders of "free speech" to avoid admitting that they do not think women should have the right to choose what they do with their own bodies. We were not aware that a traditionally reputable publication like the *Citizen* would stoop to demonizing students' representatives by calling us "totalitarians."

The anti-choice campaign event was proposed by representatives of the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform, a group whose mission is to "make abortion unthinkable." This group has harassed students on a number of Ontario university campuses with graphic images and materials that compare abortion to the Holocaust as part of a campaign that it calls the "Genocide Awareness Project."

These anti-choice campaigners propose that women in Canada should not be able to access the medical procedure of abortion without being prosecuted.

Most York University students recognize that every woman has the right to choose. They also understand that moral considerations about abortion are a very personal matter.

The York University Student Centre executive committee is committed to the right of all persons to

the freedom of expression that is guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

However, all persons are also entitled to function in an environment free of harassment and intimidation tactics that anti-choice campaigners continue to employ. Since the Student Centre is accountable to students, not York University administrators, not conservative pundits and certainly not anti-choice campaigners from an organization external to the York University community, it was decided that no student resources (i.e. the free use of the Student Centre space) would be allocated to support an anti-choice campaign of intimidation and harassment.

York University can make its own decisions and, if the York University president wishes to host a debate organized by these anti-choice campaigners, the university will have to take responsibility for that.

Kelly Holloway, Vice-chair, York University Student Centre, Toronto.

Ottawa Citizen, March 17, 2008. □

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2007 – 2008

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FREE SPEECH HAS TO BE FOR EVERYONE

Margaret Wentz

University of Toronto president David Naylor confesses that this isn't his favourite time of year. "It is the consistently worst week of a president's life," he sighs. Yes, it's Israel Apartheid Week - the annual Israel-bashing fest with the usual small band of activists and crackpots, and speakers from that champion of universal justice, the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Needless to say, many, many rich and influential alumni do not like Israel Apartheid Week, which, although neither sponsored nor condoned by the school, is organized by students who are allowed to use the campus. "The e-mails that one receives cause a pretty serious degree of unhappiness," Dr. Naylor masterfully understates.

Despite the pain, the president is standing firm. The university even ran a full-page newspaper ad in response to objections from Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies. "We do, in fact, recognize that the term 'Israeli Apartheid' is upsetting to many people," reads the statement, signed by Dr. Naylor. "We also recognize that, in every society, universities have a unique role to provide a safe venue for highly charged discourse." Dr. Naylor is absolutely right. Unless people are prepared to put up with obnoxious (even hateful) speech, they have no leg to stand on when they denounce the Muslim law students who have taken Maclean's magazine to various human rights commissions for printing a piece they didn't like. They have no grounds to denounce the human-rights commissions either, or the Montreal university that cancelled appearances by two Israeli politicians because of "safety" concerns. Free speech is a two-way street.

The truth is, we are a nation of cowerers and wimps. We'd rather censor speech than allow feelings to be hurt. We live in fear that a few obscure bigots will incite an orgy of violence and send an entire civil society crashing to its knees.

Why are we wasting time and money dragging disgraced native leader David Ahenakew through the courts? Back in 2002, he likened Jews to a "disease" and was immediately ostracized from polite society.

That should have been enough. Instead, he was tried and convicted in the courts on a charge of willfully promoting hatred. The verdict was overturned because it wasn't clear whether he was being willful, simply deranged or drunk. So now, we're going to try him all over again.

Are anti-Semites a threat to public safety? Here in North America, the answer is surely no, so long as they don't go round firebombing synagogues. Are anti-homosexuals? No again, so long as they're not physically engaged in gay-bashing. So long as equality before the law is the law of the land, we don't need hate-speech laws to protect people. And no matter how words hurt, there's a difference between words and blows.

This distinction appears to have been lost on Alberta's Human Rights Commission, which recently ruled against a conservative Christian who'd written a letter to the Red Deer Advocate in which he called gays "immoral." The commission ruled that his letter was "likely to expose homosexuals to hatred and/or contempt," and even linked it to the beating of a gay teenager, acknowledging the link was "circumstantial." But now, the Christians are claiming equal rights.

A tiny group called Concerned Christians Canada is vowing to take the Alberta Conservatives to the commission for refusing to endorse two of its nominated candidates, which they claim encourages Christian-bashing and is "reflective of wartime Germany." There's another problem with prosecuting hate talk. It gives the haters notoriety. "The sad reality is that were we to cancel this event or refuse a booking, it would turn a relatively small event into a cause celebre," Dr. Naylor says. Besides, universities (unlike rights commissions) are supposed to value free speech. What a concept! Maybe this country should give it a try.

Globe and Mail, February 12, 2008, p. A21.

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Bequest to SAFS

Please consider remembering the Society in your will. Even small bequests can help us greatly in carrying on SAFS' work. In most cases, a bequest does not require rewriting your entire will, but can be done simply by adding a codicil. So please do give this some thought.

Thank you.

Clive Seligman, President

ISRAELI APARTHEID WEEK

Barbara Kay

In her Feb. 12 *Globe and Mail* column, Margaret Wente leads off with a sympathetic salute to University of Toronto president, David Naylor, who admits that "this isn't his favourite time of year." Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), which just withdrew its troops after its annual invasion of his campus is, he says, "the consistently worst week of a president's life."

I can sympathize somewhat as well. Dr. Naylor, like all university presidents these days, is a magnet attracting angry filings from students, community leaders and disgruntled high-flying donors, who are disgusted by the obsessive anti-Zionist vitriol being pumped across the campus like a week-long oil spill on a Caribbean beach.

Dr. Naylor has nailed his colours to the mast of free speech. In response to objections from Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, Dr. Naylor signed a statement declaring, "We do, in fact, recognize that the term Israeli Apartheid is upsetting to many people, [but] we also recognize that, in every society, universities have a unique role to provide a safe venue for highly charged discourse."

I couldn't agree more. And yet somehow this seemingly high-minded declaration rings a little hollow when one considers just how far Dr. Naylor is prepared to go to guarantee a "safe venue" for what everyone knows, but is not allowed to characterize as hate speech, incitement to hatred and in all but the title of the law, incitement to violence.

Consider, for example, a Feb. 9 session of IAW, which took place at the Ontario Institute for the Study of Education of the University of Toronto (OISE), entitled "Founding Conference: High schools Against Israeli Apartheid (HAIA). Appended were the words "Note: this conference is for high school students only."

By this it meant that the organizers of the session were only allowing into the building for five solid hours youngsters with high school student cards. What they undoubtedly did in those five hours – we can't really know, since it was closed to the public – was to pump

as much hatred of Israel as possible into those young, impressionable minds.

Now the organizers of the session were not high school kids themselves – if they were, I wouldn't be writing this post – but adults. So what we have here, with the university's blessing, is a "safe venue" for the probable proliferation of hate by adult activists to a group largely composed of children (legally speaking), with attendance by their parents or guardians or other members of the public forbidden.

The right to freedom of speech in a free society implies that one is prepared to say what one has to say in the public forum. In this way those who disagree can have their say as well. To protect the rights of those who abuse the privilege of free speech to spew hatred is one thing; to give a "safe venue" for the protected indoctrination of the most vulnerable minds in our society is quite another.

One of the more harrowing scenes in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* has the elite pigs appropriating the puppies born on the farm in order to train them secretly to become attack dogs and protect the pigs in their nefarious scheme to seize total power.

Dr. Naylor should reread *Animal Farm*. He must be more vigilant in drawing the line between freedom of speech and facilitating the corruption of youthful minds. If the IAW organizers want to speak to high school kids next year, let the light shine in on them. No more closed IAW sessions on the University of Toronto campus!

Posted by Yoni Goldstein, February 14, 2008, *National Post*, Full Comment.

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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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READING BETWEEN THE FREELY SPOKEN LINES

David Naylor knows which side his fatwa is buttered on

George Jonas

When people feel strongly about something, they dig deep into their wallets (or someone's wallet) and publish open letters as full-page ads in the newspaper. Which is what University of Toronto president David Naylor did last week.

Prof. Naylor was responding to Avi Benlolo and Leo Adler's open letter from two days earlier. The two braves from Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (is the acronym FSWCHS, I wonder?) had dug deep into their wallets to voice their dismay over the University of Toronto hosting a series of events called "Israeli Apartheid Week."

Nothing wrong, of course, with putting one's money where one's mouth is. Full-page ads beat requests for "equal space," such as a group of Muslim law students demanded last year from *Maclean's* magazine -- feature us, kafirs, like you do Mark Steyn, or we sic the Human Rights Commission on you.

Open letters, in comparison, are a breath of fresh air.

"We understand that the University has an unflagging commitment to freedom of speech," write Messrs. Benlolo and Adler. "However, we would hope that the University would never allow this principle to be hijacked by a blatantly racist event sponsored and conducted on its campus."

Hmm. There could be a bit of a problem with this. Sprinkle some magic dust on it, and the subtext reads: "Yeah, sure, the University has an unflagging commitment to freedom of speech, blah, blah, but why can't you flag a little when faced with abhorrent speech by anti-Semitic bullies?"

To which, in a fairy-tale version, Prof. Naylor would reply: "Because you can't, old shoe. Free speech means freedom for speech you abhor. Speech you adore requires no protection," and so on. Stuff worthy of John Stuart Mill.

In real life, Prof. Naylor prefers a disclaimer: "The University does not sponsor, organize or even implicitly endorse these events."

Oh? So U of T only provides a roof and a postal code for a blatantly racist event --because, you notice, Prof. Naylor takes no issue with Messrs. Benlolo and Adler's characterization of Israeli Apartheid Week as racist, anti-Semitic, whatever. It's just that U of T doesn't sponsor it.

Well, thank God for small mercies. OK. Does U of T feel obliged to provide a venue for all groups that demand one?

Prof. Naylor leaves that door open a crack. "In every society," he writes, "universities have a unique role to provide a safe venue for highly charged discourse."

Great. Free inquiry, no taboos, academic freedom: I'm on board. But, wait? is Prof. Naylor on board?

Ah! Tricky. "We work to help student organizers understand the difference between free speech and hate speech and monitor events very closely if there is any chance they will cross the line."

What line? Messrs. Benlolo and Adler seem to think Israel apartheid is way across the line. Is their GPS on the fritz?

What exactly is the difference between hate speech and free speech? Some may think Israel apartheid is hate speech. Hell, I might think Israel apartheid is hate speech -- not that I would deny it a forum. But could it be that free speech is hate speech U of T permits, and hate speech is free speech U of T prohibits?

Excerpts from the original Naylorese: "Year after year, events on our campuses have been far quieter than the storm surrounding them outside our community?"

"Why does U of T's approach succeed? It succeeds because we have the resources to respond to complaints of racism promptly and thoroughly, and because our policies prioritize safety and are based in Canadian and Ontario law?"

"Our approach also works because we do not, in fact, simply refuse controversial bookings." My translation:

"Political fashion is our middle name? We know which side our fatwa is buttered on? We know racism that's in demand, racism that's tolerated and racism that's anathema. U of T's approach succeeds because we're in touch with the times. We know who are likely to riot, and it isn't the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies? You're listening to the Voice of the U of T. Shalom. Salaam. Peace. Boycott Israel, and have a nice day."

National Post, February 16, 2008. □

PEN CANADA CALLS FOR CHANGES TO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION LEGISLATION

PEN Canada calls on the federal and provincial governments to change human rights commission legislation to ensure commissions can no longer be used to attempt to restrict freedom of expression in Canada.

Recent complaints in Alberta against journalist Ezra Levant and in Ontario against *Maclean's* magazine and its writer Mark Steyn raise disturbing questions about the degree to which human rights commissions have taken it upon themselves to become arbiters of what constitutes free speech.

PEN Canada believes this is not the role of human rights commissions and that governments across the country need to make that clear both to their commissions and to Canadians.

Neither Mr. Levant nor *Maclean's* magazine and Mr. Steyn published anything that incited violence against the Muslim community although both have been subject of complaints to commissions. Nor did their comments violate anyone's human rights.

As the Canadian Civil Liberties Association has suggested, human rights legislation was designed to prevent discrimination in workplaces, in accommodation and in providing goods and services to individuals. Commissions were created to adjudicate complaints about such issues when they arose. They were never designed to restrict the free expression of opinions.

"Whether you agree with Mr. Levant's decision that

the *Western Standard* should publish the Danish cartoons about the prophet Mohammed or not, no one in a free and democratic country such as Canada can seriously argue the magazine should not have the right to publish them," said PEN Canada's national affairs chair Christopher Waddell.

"That is equally true for *Maclean's* magazine and the excerpt it published from Mark Steyn's book that led to the complaint against that publication."

Neither complaints should ever have been accepted by a human rights commission and both should be immediately dismissed.

To ensure there is no repetition of such attempts to constrain freedom of expression through the guise of human rights legislation, PEN supports calls for removal of subsection 13(1) of the Canadian Human Rights Act which states that it is discriminatory when individual or groups say or write anything that is "likely to expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt."

Similar wording in provincial human rights statutes should likewise be removed.

Issued February 4, 2008.

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CAJ URGES CHANGES TO HUMAN RIGHTS LAWS

The Canadian Association of Journalists is calling on federal and provincial governments to amend human rights legislation to stop a pattern of disturbing attacks on freedom of speech.

Two recent cases spotlight the dangers of allowing state-backed agencies to censor speech based on subjective perceptions of offensiveness - *Maclean's* magazine, which is facing complaints in two provinces and nationally for an article by syndicated columnist Mark Steyn, and Ezra Levant, the former publisher of the *Western Standard* who is now before the Alberta Human Rights Commission for his decision to publish the Danish cartoons of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.

"Human rights commissions were never intended to act

as a form of thought police," said CAJ President Mary Agnes Welch. "But now they're being used to chill freedom of expression on matters that are well beyond accepted Criminal Code restrictions on free speech."

The CAJ supports Liberal MP Keith Martin's private member's motion to have section 13(1) of federal human rights legislation, the clause dealing with published material, repealed. Similar provincial legislation should also be amended as required.

"The lack of political leadership on this issue, apart from Mr. Martin and a few others, is appalling," said Welch. "Even people who helped create human rights commissions have said they were never meant to act as censors."

Since a number of commissions have accepted these complaints as worthy of investigation, there clearly needs to be government direction to stop the ongoing erosion of one of Canada's most fundamental rights."

The CAJ believes that laws of libel and slander, hate speech and other provisions found within the Criminal Code provide sufficient restrictions on freedom of speech. Human rights commissions, which are not bound by the same rules of evidence of the courts, have become last-ditch end-arounds for those who want to silence commentary they disagree with.

"Whether you agree with Steyn or Levant is immaterial. If they're breaking no laws, they should have the right, in our democracy, to speak freely," said Welch.

The CAJ will be monitoring the investigations in these two cases and plans to intervene if the process moves to the tribunal stage. The CAJ, however, strongly urges the Canadian human rights commission, as well of those of Alberta, B.C. and Ontario, to simply dismiss these complaints completely.

The Canadian Association of Journalists is a professional organization with some 1,500 members across Canada. The CAJ's primary role is to provide public interest advocacy and high quality professional development for its members.

Issued February 22, 2008, Ottawa. For further information: Mary Agnes Welch, president, CAJ: (204) 943-6575. □

Please give notification of attendance by **MAY 1st**, so that we can arrange appropriate catering.
 Contact Information given below.
 Thank you!

SAFS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, May 10, 2008, 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	Collective Agreements: Protecting or Threatening Academic Freedom?
	<i>Chair:</i> Paul Paré, University of Western Ontario
	<i>Speakers:</i> Albert Katz , University of Western Ontario (<i>Psychology</i>) Murray Miles , Brock University (<i>Philosophy</i>) Phil Sullivan , University of Toronto (<i>Engineering</i>)
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm	Buffet lunch (in Somerville House, Rm. 3320)
12:45 pm – 2:30 pm	Keynote Address: <i>Chair:</i> Clive Seligman, University of Western Ontario
	KEYNOTE SPEAKERS: Anton Allahar } University of Western Ontario Jim Côté } (<i>Sociology</i>)
	IVORY TOWER BLUES: A UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN CRISIS
2:30 pm – 2:40 pm	Break
2:40 pm – 3:30 pm	Annual Business Meeting (<i>members only</i>) (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: \$5.00 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/annualmeeting for a campus map.]

ACCOMMODATION: On-campus rooms at Elgin Hall are \$59.00 per night including breakfast. A modern, air-conditioned residence, situated at University Drive, off Richmond St. North. (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 approx \$100.00 per night.

TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AND FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: E-mail: safs@safs.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).



See you at the SAFS Conference

A POSTSCRIPT TO "ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FOES OF THE MILITARY"

Kenneth H.W. Hilborn

In the last issue of the SAFS Newsletter, (January, 2008) I described a threat to academic freedom resulting from the efforts of anti-military campaigners to restrict research that might be potentially useful to Canadian or allied armed forces. Even before my article was published, this threat had receded, though perhaps only for the time being. (It was an early version of the article that appeared in print, though an updated version soon replaced it on the SAFS website.)

At the University of Western Ontario, anti-military agitators had obtained an assurance that the Vice-President for Research was attempting to "raise awareness" in other institutions about "issues" related to research of possible military value -- an attempt that did not seem entirely consistent with President Paul Davenport's public defence of faculty members' right to undertake "controversial" research projects. Fortunately, the Vice-President's initiatives met with a cold reception from other university administrations. In due course he announced that he had received a letter from his counterparts in the G-13 group of universities rejecting the idea of setting up "ethical review" bodies to screen the research in question. The Ontario Council on University Research had adopted a similar position.

Though objections to military-related research had been raised also on other campuses, the G-13 group explicitly recognized the difficulty of distinguishing between research that would lead to "harm" and research that would not. On this ground the G-13 refused to endorse even an attempt to set national guidelines. In the spring of 2007, citing the lack of such guidelines, Western's University Research Board judged the creation of an "ethics" review body to be "premature," and after the G-13's response the Vice-President reiterated this conclusion.

Such repeated use of the term "premature" -- rather than something like "bad idea in both principle and practice" -- is not entirely reassuring. Neither is the G-13's implied acceptance of the notion that rendering assistance through research to Canadian and allied armed forces may be harmful. It might be better viewed as a service to society, which the armed forces of a democracy also serve.

What can we expect in future? It is significant that the particular target of the anti-military campaign at Western was a project involving materials intended to provide greater protection from mines and rocket-propelled grenades -- in other words, research aimed at reducing casualties among Canadian and allied military personnel. The campaigners' evident desire to prevent a reduction in such deaths and injuries suggests a high degree of fanaticism. Since fanatics rarely take "no" for an answer, and may even be encouraged by a term like "premature," we have to fear that the enemies of free choice by researchers will try to revive the issue of "military-related" research in future, and make new attempts to put pressure on university administrations. ▢

THIS ISN'T ABOUT FACEBOOK

Ryerson student scandal not really about social networking site

It's about time someone made a point that has been lost in all the back-and-forth over Ryerson University's "Facebook scandal." That point is: The Facebook scandal doesn't really have anything to do with Facebook.

An engineering professor at the Toronto school gave his students a specific instruction that their take-home assignments should be done independently. One of those students, Chris Avenir, allegedly ignored the instruction, joined an existing study group devoted to the class, and invited everyone in it to "input solutions" to the assignments so they could be shared. He got caught, was given an F in the course, and is currently appealing his expulsion for academic misconduct. The fact that the study group was a Facebook group has nothing to do with the nature of the offence or the controversy over Mr. Avenir's punishment.

Ten years ago, it's what journalists would be cluelessly calling an "e-mail scandal". Twenty years ago it would have been a generic "computer cheating scandal." Forty years ago, maybe it would be described as a "mimeograph scandal." ("Dear Sir: cannot something be done about these ignominious, strange-scented contraptions?").

There exists a ridiculous tendency for behind-the-curve

scribes to seize upon new media as somehow responsible, in themselves, for humans doing the kind of things humans have always done. In the Ryerson case, this tendency has descended to the level of low comedy. Facebook really, truly doesn't do anything to facilitate information-sharing that e-mail and older online applications like Usenet don't. The only semi-relevant difference is that Facebook is so new that users make false assumptions about the security of the information they upload to it.

Predictably, some people are demanding that those false assumptions be honoured as facts. The Ryerson Students' Union is, according to the Ryersonian newspaper, "fighting to make sure students can't be punished for what they do or say on Facebook" -- even if what they're doing is cheating on an assignment for a Ryerson University class. We have a funny feeling the student union will lose this battle.

The technological angle is causing everyone to overlook the vastly more meaningful development symbolized by the affair. Apparently, in the year 2008, professors find it necessary to specify that homework problems in an engineering class should be solved by the student, rather than copied from a brighter classmate. Not only that, but doing so apparently provokes a widespread reaction akin to "Pfft, whatever." And not only that, but when someone is caught defying the direct instruction, and accused of cheating, hundreds of his fellow students will rally behind him and declare him a victim of gross injustice.

Call us predictable, but we suspect it just might be the case that a feel-good primary education system that emphasizes collaboration over individual effort, and self-esteem over knowledge, has left a few Ryerson undergraduates poorly prepared for life in hard, advanced disciplines such as engineering.

It is scarcely possible not to think so, given claims like this high-pitched whine from Chris-DidntCheat.com, a website for Mr. Avenir's supporters: "Students don't have a chance to learn because we are too busy completing assignments!"

According to this world view, there is some way of qualifying for the terrifying responsibilities of engineering other than sitting down as an individual and solving difficult quantitative problems assigned by an engineering professor. If there is one, we would be

happy to hear about it. But if it were generally adopted, we are not sure we would ever again feel safe crossing a bridge, flushing a toilet, or even booting up our computers to access that mysterious, soul-corrupting site known as "Facebook."

Editorial, National Post, March 17, 2008.

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FACEBOOK 'CHEATER' WON'T BE EXPELLED FROM COLLEGE

TORONTO, Canada (AP) -- A Canadian university ruled Tuesday against expelling a first-year engineering student accused of cheating through an online study group on Facebook.

Chris Avenir's apparent exhortation to fellow Ryerson University engineering students to "input solutions" to assignment problems on the social networking site raised the ire of a professor.

On Tuesday, the 18-year-old was told that while he wouldn't be expelled he would receive a zero on the assignment section of the chemistry course, which was worth 10 percent of his final grade.

Despite that, Avenir still passed the course.

Avenir, who could not be reached for comment, can still appeal the decision.

The case captured headlines around the world, with bloggers debating whether Web postings constituted cheating.

"Chris in our view is still innocent, so it is still too bad that he got zero for that 10 percent," said Nora Loreto, president of the Ryerson Students' Union. "But considering we were facing expulsion I think this is a victory, certainly a broader victory for the students at Ryerson."

Last term, Avenir became administrator of the online group Dungeons/Mastering Chemistry Solutions. In all, 147 classmates used the group to swap tips on assignments.

Avenir's supporters argued the online group he ran was no different from any kind of homework help or

tutoring circle. But a professor, who had stipulated assignments be done independently, discovered the group, gave the student an F and then charged him with academic misconduct.

Although a faculty appeals committee cleared Avenir of academic misconduct, he will have to attend an academic misconduct workshop.

CNN Online, March 19, 2008. □

BC STUDENT DISCRIMINATION LAWSUIT DISMISSED

A six-year battle in which a student's lawsuit threatened academic freedom has come to a victorious end for four faculty members at the University of British Columbia.

In January, the B.C. Supreme Court dismissed a civil action filed in 2002 by Cynthia Maughan, a graduate student at UBC who alleged she had been discriminated against on the basis of her Christian faith by her English seminar teacher, Lorraine Weir. The court concluded there was no evidence on which a reasonably instructed jury could find in favour of the student. CAUT has since learned Maughan is appealing the decision.

Maughan initially appealed the final grade she received in Weir's course to the UBC senate after having exhausted other internal complaints procedures. When the internal complaints and appeals proved unsuccessful, she launched her civil action in the B.C. Supreme Court.

In 2003 she filed a human rights complaint against Weir and three other UBC professors, the university, UBC Faculty Association and CAUT.

In January 2006 the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal summarily dismissed Maughan's complaint. Two months later, Maughan filed for a judicial review of the tribunal's dismissal, but has not yet pursued that appeal.

Maughan's civil action was novel as the legislation which she relied on had not been fully tested in B.C., says CAUT senior legal counsel Rosemary Morgan.

Maughan alleged the four professors and UBC had promoted hatred against her because of her religion, contrary to the Civil Rights Protection Act of British Columbia. No other province has similar legislation.

Unlike the Human Rights Code, this legislation is quasi-criminal and makes it an offense to promote hatred against individuals because of their religion or other protected characteristics such as sex and disability. It is similar to the Human Rights Code, but in contrast to the Code, the Act requires proof of an intention to promote hatred. It is distinguishable from the Criminal Code because it does not require proof of an intention to promote violence.

"In Maughan's case, there was not only no evidence of promotion of hatred against her, but no evidence of an intention to promote hatred on the ground of religion," Morgan said.

The most significant aspect of the decision to dismiss Maughan's case was the court's appreciation of the perceptible risk to academic freedom of expression in Maughan's claim: "The law must be restrained in intervening in the conduct of affairs in any circumstances where what are at issue are expressions and communications made in the context of an exploration of ideas, no matter how controversial or provocative those ideas may be."

Maughan had alleged in part that Weir, as well as the three colleagues who supported her after Maughan complained to the administration, had discriminated against her on the basis of religion because, knowing she was a Christian, Weir allowed a class to be held on a Sunday.

Maughan had participated in the class that set the course schedule, and did not object formally to the Sunday class for some time. Later when she did object, in accordance with UBC policy, Weir accommodated her request for an alternative assignment, but Maughan claimed the failure to change the schedule constituted promotion of hatred.

She further claimed Weir's critique of her written work constituted promotion of hatred against her on the basis of her religion.

Not only did the court find this claim could not constitute promotion of hatred since the discussions or

communications all occurred between Weir and Maughan alone, with no one else privy to such critique, but also the court pointed out that critique of academic work is the role of academics.

The court argued that while critique may cause discomfort for students at times, especially when dealing with challenging subject matter, and that the discomfort may arise from their religious beliefs, it is not the role of the courts to supervise that dialogue or academic critique and academic process in the absence of some clear evidence of promotion of hatred on the basis of religion.

The court ruled Weir's response to Maughan's internal university complaints and to Maughan's later civil action and human rights complaint were reasonable in the circumstances: "... Dr. Weir was doing no more than making public comment on matters already made public by the lawsuit and Ms. Maughan's former counsel. Nothing in the comments could be construed as interfering with Ms. Maughan's civil rights or promoting hatred of contempt for or her inferiority in comparison to others. The statements do not aver racism, even inferentially against Ms. Maughan, they assert that 'understandably' Ms. Maughan became upset with the controversial course material."

Justice A.F. Cullen concluded: "this is a case that failed because it relied upon speculation, innuendo and conjecture."

The court noted that evidentiary thresholds, requiring proof of intention to incite or promote hatred against someone because of their religion, are standards which, "while not depriving those subjected to harm of the right to a remedy for malicious or morally oblique behaviour, are nevertheless necessary to further academic freedom, which is vital to the function of a university and the community it serves, and freedom of expression, which is crucial to the operation of a free and democratic society."

On behalf of the UBC Faculty Association, CAUT has provided legal representation to Weir and her colleagues throughout this case.

The full decision can be viewed at: http://www.courts.gov.bc.ca/jdbtxt/sc/08/00/2008bcsc0014er_rlatt.htm

CAUT Bulletin, February 2008, pp A2; A5. □

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AT IUPUI (Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis)

David Hoppe

Keith John Sampson never thought he could get in trouble for reading a book, especially not on a college campus.

But that's what happened. Sampson is a man in his early 50s. He does janitorial work for the campus facility services at IUPUI, where he's been gradually accumulating credits for a degree in communications studies. He has 10 credit hours to go.

"Being on that campus has really been an experience for me," Sampson told me not long ago. It's an experience that got a lot more complicated last year.

Sampson is an avid reader. It's been his habit to bring books to work with him, so that he can read in the break room when he's not on the clock. Last year, Sampson was working in IUPUI's Medical Science building. It turns out the break room there is across from the morgue, which, as Sampson pointed out, is kind of ironic when you stop to think about it.

At the time, Sampson was reading a book he had checked out from the public library. *Notre Dame vs. the Klan: How the Fighting Irish Defeated the Ku Klux Klan*, published in 2004, features a photograph of the University of Notre Dame's famous golden dome on the cover. Its author is Todd Tucker, the publisher is Loyola Press of Loyola University in Chicago.

The book is about how for two days in May 1924, a group of Notre Dame students got into a street fight with members of the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan was meeting in South Bend for the express purpose of sticking a collective thumb in the eye of the country's most famous Catholic university. *Notre Dame vs. the Klan* was a *Notre Dame Magazine* "Pick of the Week" and garnered an average customer review of 4.5 stars on Amazon.com. In its review, *The Indiana Magazine of History* noted that Tucker "succeeds in placing the event in a broad framework that includes the origins and development of both the Klan and Notre Dame."

Sampson recalls that his AFSCME shop steward told

him that reading a book about the Klan was like bringing pornography to work. The shop steward wasn't interested in hearing what the book was actually about. Another time, a coworker who was sitting across the table from Sampson in the break room commented that she found the Klan offensive. Sampson says he tried to tell her about the book, but she wasn't interested in talking about it.

A few weeks passed. Then Sampson got a message ordering him to report to Marguerite Watkins at the IUPUI Affirmative Action Office. He was told a coworker had filed a racial harassment complaint against him for reading *Notre Dame vs. the Klan* in the break room. Sampson says he tried to explain to Watkins what the book was about. He says he tried to show her the book, but that Watkins showed no interest in seeing it.

Then Sampson received a letter, dated Nov. 25, 2007, from Lillian Charleston, also of IUPUI's Affirmative Action Office. The letter begins by saying that the AAO has completed its investigation of a coworker's allegation that Sampson "racially harassed her by repeatedly reading the book *Notre Dame vs. the Klan: How the Fighting Irish Defeated the Ku Klux Klan* by Todd Tucker in the presence of Black employees." It goes on to say, "You demonstrated disdain and insensitivity to your coworkers who repeatedly requested that you refrain from reading the book which has such an inflammatory and offensive topic in their presence ... you used extremely poor judgment by insisting on openly reading the book related to a historically and racially abhorrent subject in the presence of your Black coworkers." Charleston went on to say that according to "the legal 'reasonable person standard,' a majority of adults are aware of and understand how repugnant the KKK is to African-Americans ..."

Sampson was ordered to stop reading the book in the immediate presence of his coworkers and, when reading the book, to sit apart from them.

"I feel like I've been caught up in a 21st century version of catch-22," says Sampson, who has never been given the opportunity to officially face any of his accusers. When I tried calling the Affirmative Action Office, I was told their policy is to never speak to the media.

But, Sampson says, this episode could be an opportunity. He would welcome the chance to participate in a moderated forum that might use his experience for a larger discussion dealing with intellectual freedom on the IUPUI campus.

That's a good idea. For Sampson's sake, I hope ideas still count at IUPUI.

Editors note: At press time we learned that Sampson received another letter from IUPUI's Affirmative Action Office, postmarked Feb. 21. We will continue to follow this story.

February 27, 2008, www.nuvo.net/articles/21st-century-catch22/. □

THE CROSSOVER IN FEMALE-MALE COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RATES

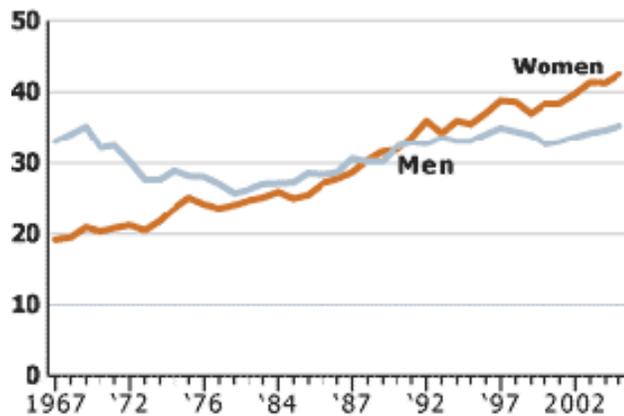
Mark Mather and Dia Adams

This is part of a series of PRB articles about the science and engineering (S&E) workforce in the United States, funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Additional state-level data on the S&E labor force will be available this spring, in PRB's 2007 U.S. Population Data Sheet. Data for this article are based on the Population Reference Bureau's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and 2005 American Community Survey.

Since 1991, the proportion of young women enrolled in college has exceeded the enrollment rate for young men, and the gap has widened over time.¹ In 2005, about 43 percent of women ages 18 to 24 were enrolled in college, compared with 35 percent of young men.

This represents a major shift in the gender balance at U.S. colleges and universities. Between 1970 and 2005, the gender composition has shifted to the extent that women now make up the majority—54 percent—of the 10.8 million young adults enrolled in college.

Figure 1
Proportion of 18-to-24-Year-Old Men and Women Enrolled in College, 1967-2005



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Several reasons have been cited for this crossover, including gender differences in academic achievement (girls do better in high school than boys), changes in societal values, and a shift in women's expectations for future employment.²

Some researchers have focused on these trends as a positive development for young women, who still lag behind men in labor force participation rates and earnings.³ Others view these trends as evidence of the growing social, behavioral, and economic problems facing young men, particularly those in lower-income groups.⁴ Some colleges are now actively recruiting male students in order to bring men's enrollment rates in line with those of women.⁵

Regardless of whether these trends are good or bad, they need to be viewed in a broader context. In particular, what happens to these highly educated women once they leave college? And how do these gender differences relate to broader race/ethnic and state/regional differences in enrollment? Policymakers and campus officials need to pay attention to these issues before they create new gender-based recruitment policies and programs.

Women Lead in College but not in the Workforce

Colleges need to balance women's advantage in enrollment rates against their disadvantage in the post-college labor force. Women's earnings, relative to

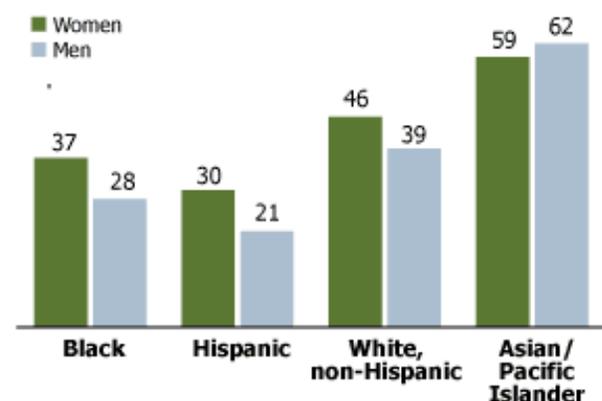
those of men, have not kept up with their gains in educational attainment. In 2005, the median weekly earnings for women working full-time were \$585, compared with \$722 for men.⁶ Part of this difference reflects the higher concentration of men in higher-paying fields, including the natural and physical sciences, mathematics, and engineering. At the college level, fewer women than men take courses in science-related fields.

The U.S. economy can benefit greatly from women's educational gains, but only if women are working in occupations that can use their specialized knowledge and skills.

Large Race and Ethnic Variations in College Enrollment Gaps

Another often-overlooked issue is the racial/ethnic variation in college enrollment rates. Although the gender gap in enrollment has increased in recent years, it is still much smaller than differences across racial and ethnic groups. In 2005, enrollment rates ranged from 25 percent among Hispanics to 61 percent among Asian Americans. African Americans also had below-average rates of college enrollment—10 percentage points below those of non-Hispanic whites.

Figure 2
U.S. College Enrollment Rates by Race and Ethnicity, 2005



Note: Data reflect persons ages 18-24 enrolled in college, graduate, or professional school.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Gender differences in enrollment are more pronounced for racial and ethnic minorities, especially for blacks and Hispanics. Nationwide, there is a 7 percentage-point gap between men and women's college enrollment rates. For blacks and Latinos, the gender gap is 9 percentage points.

Recent increases in minority enrollments at U.S. colleges may contribute to the growing gap between male and female enrollment rates. Between 1993 and 2003, minority enrollments increased by 51 percent, while the number of white students increased by only 3 percent.⁷

For Asians, the gender gap is reversed. Asian men have higher enrollment rates than their female counterparts (although women have gained ground in recent years). The higher concentration of Asians in many large cities on the West Coast contributes to smaller gender gaps in school enrollment in those areas. For example, the San Jose metropolitan area, which has one of the largest concentrations of Asian Americans in the country, has about equal numbers of male and female college students. Among large metropolitan areas, only Salt Lake City has a lower female-to-male student ratio.

Asians and Latinos represent the fastest-growing minority groups in the country. That they have such divergent rates of school enrollment points to the growing social and economic divide among U.S. minorities-particularly for men in these groups.

Enrollment Rates Vary by State and Region

The gap between male and female enrollment rates also varies in different parts of the country. Southern states have the largest gender gap in enrollment, with an average enrollment ratio of 1.4. (A ratio of 1.4 indicates that there are 140 females enrolled in college for every 100 males.) This may reflect the large concentration of African Americans in these states and the presence of several historically black colleges and universities, which tend to attract and retain more women than men. In Arkansas, for example, there are 250 African American women enrolled in college for every 100 black men. The enrollment ratio for Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites in Arkansas is much lower, at 1.4 each.

Enrollment ratios are smallest in Colorado, Nevada,

and Utah. Utah has the lowest ratio of any state, at 0.9, indicating that there are fewer women enrolled than men.

The wide variations in enrollment levels across states and racial/ethnic groups suggest that educational policies need to be implemented at the state or college level in order to meet the needs of all students.

Note: State-level enrollment data are from the 2005 American Community Survey, which did not collect information for people living in group quarters, including college dormitories.

Mark Mather is deputy director of Domestic Programs at the Population Reference Bureau. *Dia Adams* is a research assistant in Domestic Programs at PRB.

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Population Reference Bureau, February, 2007
<http://www.prb.org/articles/2007/CrossoverinFemaleMaleCollegeEnrollmentRates.aspx?p=1>. □

FAREWELL TO 'PREDICTABLE, TIRESOME AND DREARY' WOMEN'S STUDIES:

Twenty years ago, it was the academic fashion. This year, its last dozen students will graduate

Nina Lakhani

Women's studies, which came to prominence in the wake of the 1960s feminist movement, is to vanish from British universities as an undergraduate degree this summer. Dwindling interest in the subject means that the final 12 students will graduate with a BA in women's studies from London's Metropolitan University in July.

Universities offering the course, devised as the second wave of the women's rights movement peaked, attracted students in their hundreds during the late 1980s and early 1990s, but the mood on campuses has changed. Students, it seems, no longer want to immerse themselves in the sisterhood's struggle for equality or the finer points of feminist history.

The disappearance of a course that women academics fought so long and hard to have taught in universities has divided opinion on what this means for feminism. Is it irrelevant in today's world or has the quest for equality hit the mainstream?

The course's critics argue that women's studies became its own worst enemy, remaining trapped in the feminist movement of the 1970s while women and society moved on.

"Feminist scholarship has become predictable,

tiresome and dreary, and most young women avoid it like the plague," said Christina Hoff Sommers, resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute for public policy research in Washington and author of *Who Stole Feminism?* "British and American societies are no longer patriarchal and oppressive 'male hegemonies'. But most women's studies departments are predicated on the assumption that women in the West are under siege. What nonsense."

Others believe young women have shied away from studying feminist theory because they would rather opt for degrees that more obviously lead to jobs, especially since the introduction of tuition fees.

"[Taking] women's studies as a separate course may not feel as relevant to women who go to university to help them enter the job market," said Jean Edelstein, an author and journalist. "As the feminist movement has become increasingly associated with extreme thoughts, women who may have previously been interested in women's studies may be deterred by these overtones."

Anyone ruing the degree's demise can take heart: many gender and equality issues are now dealt with by mainstream courses, from sociology and law to history and English. And many universities, including Oxford, still offer the course to postgraduates.

Mary Evans, visiting fellow at the Gender Institute at the London School of Economics, said: "This final closure does not signal the end of an era: feminist ideas and literature are as lively as ever, but the institutional framework in which they are taught has changed."

Ms Edelstein added: "Feminist critique should be studied by everyone. If integration into more mainstream courses means more people looking at gender theory and increases the number of people who are aware of the issues, then that is a good thing."

But Dr Irene Gedalof, who has led the London Metropolitan University women's studies course for the past 10 years, defended the discipline.

"The women's movement is less visible now and many of its gains are taken for granted, which fuels the perception there is no longer a need for women's studies. But while other disciplines now 'deal' with gender issues we still need a dedicated focus by

academics. Despite the gains women have made, this is just as relevant in today's world," she said, blaming the course's downfall on universities' collective failure to promote the discipline.

Given that graduate courses in women's studies are thriving in many countries, such as India and Iran, the decision to stop the course here has surprised many.

Baroness Haleh Afshar, professor in politics and women's studies at the University of York, said: "In the past quarter of a century, women's studies scholars have been at the forefront of new and powerful work that has placed women at the centre but has also had echoes right across academia. In particular, it is important to note the pioneering work of Sue Lees, which began at the Metropolitan and still has a long way to go. I am desolate to see that the university has decided to close it."

Additional reporting by Maryam Omid

Independent.co.uk, March 23, 2008. □

THE 'DOUBLE HIT' ON WOMEN'S SALARIES

Scott Jaschik

Surveys abound showing that women in academe (and the rest of society) earn less than men. Likewise theories abound for why this is the case, so many years after it ceased to be acceptable for deans (or other bosses) to automatically assume a woman could make do with less.

A scholar at the University of Iowa who has been mining national data presented his latest findings Monday at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. The results in short say that — even using the most sophisticated possible approach to take into consideration non-sexist reasons for pay differentials — a pay gap remains, based on gender. And while this can't be definitively tied to sexism, there aren't a lot of likely alternative explanations.

But the study also found that some of the explanations that do exist — in particular based on disciplines and

the types of institutions where women are more likely to find jobs — suggest that the salary gaps may be here to stay, unless higher education thinks very differently about reward structures.

"Higher education in general is going to have to consider how we reward people, and how our awards differentially affect men and women," said Paul D. Umbach, assistant professor of education at Iowa.

In fact, Umbach's analysis finds a greater share of the salary gap in these general reward policies than in the unexplained category that could be blatant sexism. That's why he said Monday that women face "a double hit" in what they earn — an average of \$3,200 when he has controlled for all factors. Generally, controlling for all factors, he found a gap of 4 percent remained between the salaries of men and women. Controlling only for discipline and institution type, the gap is larger (14 percent) and part of Umbach's concern is that the larger gap may be the one faced by most women.

Generally, Umbach's research has not been quick to proclaim sexism as the cause for salary gaps. He has devoted much of his work to exploring the various explanations for salary gaps that may or may not be directly related to gender and that may or may not be fair. His latest analysis is based on data from 472 four-year colleges and universities, broken down not only by gender but by 87 disciplines. Nearly 8,000 faculty members were studied.

In controlling for all possible factors, Umbach said he wanted to look at the interrelationship of discipline and institution. He said that many salary gap studies are flawed in that they focus on institutions only or disciplines only, when the two are related. In addition, he applied an approach in which faculty members were ranked on productivity and other factors, so that the final comparison (in which only a 4 percent gap remained) compared faculty members on equal ground with respect to those factors and numerous others (seniority, classes taught, etc.).

One of the theories Umbach said he wanted to test was whether — as departments attract more female faculty members — their relative pay level goes down. Here, he said that his findings were ambiguous. He did find a clear correlation — disciplines that have more women have lower average salaries. The complication, he said,

is that he found other factors as well. Those disciplines also tend to be teaching-oriented disciplines. Similarly women were disproportionately employed at teaching-oriented institutions, which also pay less. So professors who are women, teach in a field that cares about teaching and work at a college that really cares about teaching face a “triple hit” on salary, he said, “and it adds up to real money.”

It’s not sexism alone at play, he said, because men who teach in those departments and at those institutions also earn less than men elsewhere (although the teaching-oriented men still earn 4 percent more than the comparable women).

In terms of what to do about this, Umbach acknowledged in an interview that there weren’t easy answers. “There are pure market forces we can’t ignore,” he said. And that explains in part why universities tend to favor professors in fields where they might be recruited outside of academe or have the potential to attract outside support.

But he said that the study suggests that, at the very least, colleges need to continue to study their salary gaps, and not to assume that this is a problem that has been solved.

And if colleges care about the gender gap, it may be time to question assumptions about why people in some disciplines earn more. “Is it fair to reward people who can earn grants from outside over people for whom there aren’t grants?” Added Umbach: “At the very least this is something to observe. It perpetuates inequities.”

The original story and user comments can be viewed online at

<http://insidehighered.com/news/2008/03/25/salarygap>. □

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