

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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MANITOBA – PHD ‘DIPLOMA MILL’

Prof suspended after taking university to court over waiving academic requirements for doctoral student

Carson Jerema

Earlier this month Gabor Lukacs received two letters from University of Manitoba president David Barnard. One invited the assistant professor of mathematics to a dinner in acknowledgement of his teaching excellence award. The other informed him that he was being suspended without pay.

Lukacs is accused of violating the university’s privacy regulations with respect to the identity of a PhD student who had been asked to withdraw from the program after twice failing a comprehensive exam. The student later successfully appealed that decision to the Dean of Graduate Studies, John Doering, who, in fall 2009, waived the requirement that the student take the exam at all. The student is said to suffer from “extreme exam anxiety.”

After months of attempting to use university channels to have Doering’s decision reversed, Lukacs filed an application in late September at Manitoba Court of Queen’s Bench. The application calls for Doering’s decision to be quashed and for an affirmation that the dean had no authority to resolve the issue without consulting an appeal committee of academics. Lukacs alleges that Doering violated Faculty of Graduate Studies regulations and the *University of Manitoba Act*.

Although the student’s identity was included in Lukacs original court application, at a hearing Thursday morning a judge ordered a publication ban on the name.

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When outlining the reasons for Lukacs' suspension, Barnard cites the court application directly in his letter, a copy of which has been obtained by *Maclean's*. "These documents include unauthorized reference to a student's personal and personal health information," Barnard wrote. The university president calls Lukacs "insubordinate" and further accuses him of "having engaged in a pattern of behaviour with regard to [the] student which the university considers to be harassment."

Several people contacted for this story, including Dean Doering and certain professors in the Department of Mathematics, either declined to speak to the matter, did not respond to a request to be interviewed, or redirected *Maclean's* to the university's Director of Public Affairs, John Danakas. Danakas declined to speak to the specifics of the case, citing "personnel" and "privacy" issues, but agreed to address university policy in general terms.

In a written response, Danakas stated that all university employees are bound by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and the *Personal Health Information Act*. "In general personal information about a student, with or without the name attached, may only be disclosed to other university employees who absolutely need to know the information for the purposes of performing other duties," he wrote.

As for the powers of the dean, Danakas stated that "It is university practice to attempt to resolve appeals at the lowest possible level. This could include a dean achieving an informal resolution with a student after a broad consultation."

Lukacs, who says he did not meet the student in person until he served the student with court papers, says he is motivated by a desire to protect academic standards. "I have a personal interest in protecting the integrity of the PhD program in Mathematics, because it affects my reputation whether I am a member of a respectable department or a diploma-mill," he stated via email.

When asked to respond to allegations that he violated the student's privacy, Lukacs defended himself: "The right for privacy cannot trump the need for review of decisions made without jurisdiction, or decisions that are patently unreasonable."

According to emails and other documents included with an affidavit filed by Lukacs, the dispute began in March 2009 when the student failed for the second time a comprehensive exam in analysis. Under regulations outlined by the Faculty of Graduate Studies the student was required to withdraw from the PhD program.

In July, after an unsuccessful appeal to an associate dean, the student appealed the withdrawal to Dean Doering on the basis of suffering from "extreme exam anxiety." Doering reinstated the student and requested that the Graduate Studies Committee in the Department of Mathematics devise an alternate examination option.

The committee, after consulting with disability services, agreed to allow the student to retake the exam with more time and relaxed conditions.

In late August 2009, Doering rejected that proposal and requested that the student be given an oral exam. When the graduate studies committee did not agree to those terms, Doering waived the exam requirement altogether.

Lukacs first became involved with the case in October 2009, after he was elected to replace a member of the graduate studies committee who had resigned, allegedly in protest of the dean's decision.

Lukacs was briefed on the case and was informed that the department was awaiting written confirmation from Doering that the exam requirement was indeed waived for the student. Lukacs then took it upon himself to investigate the matter further and, in an email dated October 30 2009, requested that Doering affirm his decision.

Lukacs also challenged the dean's authority to settle academic appeals, writing: "my understanding is that the Dean has no jurisdiction to determine academic appeals at all—that power is reserved for the Appeal Committee of the [Faculty of Graduate Studies]."

In an email response, a copy of which has been filed in court, Doering confirmed that he waived the exam requirement and disputed the claim that he did not have the authority to do so. "I heard that appeal and rendered a decision, i.e., I reinstated the student and waived any requirement to sit another comprehensive exam," the dean wrote. "Moreover, I would note many of the things a dean can do are not written down."

When Lukacs persisted, Doering referred him to the university's legal counsel, who affirmed the assertion that the dean acted within his powers. Lukacs subsequently contacted the university secretary, as well as the vice-president academic. Each time he was told either that Doering acted correctly or was referred elsewhere.

On December 2, 2009, Lukacs called a meeting of the mathematics department council to discuss taking the case directly to the university's senate. In the notice sent to the department, some details of the case were revealed but the student's name was not given.

As a result, Mark Whitmore, Dean of the Faculty of Science reprimanded Lukacs, arguing that "this disclosure has exposed the university to a potential complaint by the student" in relation to a breach of "privacy." Lukacs was advised to consider the matter closed and warned that further disciplinary action could be taken.

Several faculty members of the math department signed a letter in protest of the reprimand.

One of those colleagues was George Gratzner, a distinguished professor of mathematics who told *Maclean's* that while a dean has authority to decide if a student appeal has merit and may try to mediate a resolution, an appeal committee of academics has to be called if conciliation is not possible. "In this case the dean decides he had powers not written down, and that counter the published regulations of the faculty of graduate studies," Gratzner said. "This strikes me as something as incredibly inappropriate." Gratzner has filed his own affidavit in court in support of Lukacs.

On two separate occasions Lukacs requested the senate's own appeal committee hear the case, and both times was told that the case was outside the senate committee's jurisdiction.

It was after his second appeal to the senate was denied that Lukacs filed his court application. In addition to arguing that Doering acted outside of his authority, the application also alleges that the student "abused" the appeal process by waiting until twice failing an exam before claiming exam anxiety.

Additionally in August of this year, it was discovered that the student was short one course to complete the doctoral program. Doering decided to allow the student, who was scheduled to graduate this month, to elevate a fourth-year course to the level of a graduate course. Lukacs is also applying for that decision to be reversed.

A court hearing is scheduled for Nov 30, and counsel for the University of Manitoba will file notice that it will contest the case by Nov 5.

Lukacs is grieving his suspension through the faculty union and his students have circulated a petition advocating his reinstatement.

MacLean's, October 28, 2010. □

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SAFS LETTER TO PRESIDENT BARNARD

January 3, 2011

Dr. David Barnard
President and Vice-Chancellor
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dear President Barnard:

Re: Professor Gabor Lukacs

I am the president of the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (www.safs.ca), a national organization dedicated to protecting academic freedom and the merit principle in decisions affecting faculty and students. I am writing to express our concern about the seeming abridgement of academic freedom of one of your professors, Gabor Lukacs.

Our information about this case comes from several sources: a) media, for example, *Macleans* (October 29, 2010), *National Post* (November 29, 2010), b) joint statement by Deans Doering and Whitmore (November 17, 2010), c) a letter to you from a group of 86 mathematicians from around the world, and d) other information sent to us by individuals. Clearly the case is complex and has extended over a considerable amount of time. Our information may not be complete. Accordingly we invite you to correct our understanding of the record, if need be.

Without going in to all the detail, it seems that the incident began when Professor Lukacs protested the awarding of a PhD to a student in his department who twice did not pass one of the comprehensive exams and did not complete all of his graduate courses. The student is said to suffer from extreme exam anxiety. Despite a recommendation to allow him to write the comprehensive exam a third time, under conditions that should reduce the anxiety, Dean Doering waived the requirement to pass this comprehensive exam, and also upgraded an undergraduate course the student had taken to the status of a graduate course, thus allowing the student to receive his PhD, largely on the strength of the quality of the dissertation itself. There appears to be controversy over whether the Dean had the authority to make this decision, whether the Mathematics department was consulted, and whether the university's rules concerning dealing with a student

with a disability had been followed, and whether Professor Lukacs' protests and appeals of the awarding of the degree had been handled with fairness, due diligence, and compliance with the university's policies.

We understand that Professor Lukacs was reprimanded for violating the student's confidentiality by writing to his colleagues in the department outlining his concern. Arguably members of the Mathematics department are entitled to know of any unusual actions taken to grant one of their students a PhD, and very likely that the student in question was already known to them. Be that as it may, Professor Lukacs did not further reveal the name of the student until, having exhausted the appeal process within the university and believing the case was not heard properly, filed a motion against the university in court. I believe the case will be heard at the end of January, 2011. Our understanding is that in filing an application to the courts confidential information relevant to the matter may be disclosed without violating privacy. For this last action, the university suspended Professor Lukacs for three months without pay, essentially to the end of this year. During this time, the university has prevented Professor Lukacs from entering his office, even to prepare for a course he will be teaching, beginning January 5, 2011. Aside from anything else, it is questionable that it is in the students' best interests that their professor is hampered in his preparation for their course.

Whatever one may think about Professor Lukacs' judgment, persistence, protests, and court filing, his academic freedom grants him the right to criticize the university, its policies, and administrative decisions. An unpaid three month suspension strikes us an unnecessary and unreasonable. The suspension seems to have been applied only to punish Professor Gabor for protesting, and not because of any further alleged violation of privacy, because the courts allow this disclosure.

We believe that this incident is a lose-lose situation for all parties concerned. The reputations of both the university and Professor Lukacs have been harmed. We urge you and your administration to seek a resolution to your treatment of Professor Lukacs. We recommend that you rescind his suspension, compensate him for the loss of three months' salary, and strike a committee of outside academics to review

the entire case. Its mandate should include the following: a) to evaluate the internal processes regarding the awarding of degrees when challenged, b) the implications of a disability judgment on the academic quality of graduate student performance, c) the rights and obligations of faculty members to protect high standards in the awarding of graduate degrees, and d) the clarification of who is responsible under what conditions for rendering these decisions.

Finally, the university not only has to protect the quality and standards of its academic programs and degrees it must also protect the academic freedom of its faculty. It is apparent in this case, from what we have been able to learn, that neither of these objectives has been appropriately achieved.

We look forward to your response to our concerns. We will post our letter to you on our website, and we will also post your response to us, without any editing.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,
Clive Seligman, President. □

SPEECH BY COLUMNIST CHRISTIE BLATCHFORD SPARKS PROTEST

Audience at the University of Waterloo lashes out against protesters

Alanna Wallace

What was scheduled as a speech by *Globe and Mail* columnist Christie Blatchford turned sour tonight as protesters opposing the journalist's new book *Helpless: Caledonia's Nightmare of Fear and Anarchy, and How the Law Failed All of Us* took over the stage.

Three protesters locked themselves together at the centre of the stage where Blatchford was meant to speak at the University of Waterloo's (UW) Humanities Theatre in Hagey Hall, with another individual acting as their "negotiator". A fifth, Tallula Marigold, acted as the group's media representative.

"We don't want people who are really, really racist teaching [the people we love]," said Marigold of

Blatchford. "And we don't want that person to have a public forum because it makes it dangerous for others in the public forum."

Despite a crowd that acted unfavourably towards the group that took over the stage, assistant director of media relations for UW Michael Strickland addressed the audience about an hour after Blatchford was meant to start her talk to inform them that the event would be rescheduled.

"Unfortunately there is a small minority that felt that they would win if they'd just sit on the stage and yell 'racist, racist, racist,'" said Strickland. "We made a determination that since she wasn't going to get a word in, in any sort of respectful fashion, there would be no point in bringing her out and having her subjected to that."

A group of individuals had organized a teach-in two hours before Blatchford's speech, held in a room across the hall from where the event was to take place. There, a group of about 30 individuals engaged in a critical discussion of the journalist's articles and the issues surrounding what some deemed racist, xenophobic and anti-native. In sharp contrast, yelling and cursing occurred between audience members and those on stage only hours later.

Although Blatchford's event will be rescheduled, there was a general feel in the audience of distaste for what had transpired. Among those saddened by the events were Waterloo resident Pauline Campbell and former Wilfrid Laurier University student Jacob Pries.

"The people who were on stage were expressing some very real ideas that I to a degree agree with but they weren't backing them up with any facts and that made it hard for people to listen," said Pries.

"That wasn't the night I came out to hear and I mean just it's a load of garbage, calling people Nazis, it was very unpleasant," said Campbell.

With the event cancelled and Blatchford returning back to Toronto, Marigold expressed her contentment with the events that had transpired.

"Our goal was to not let her speak, we accomplished that."

The Cord, November 12, 2010. □

'PROGRESSIVE' INTOLERANCE IN ACTION

Rex Murphy

The University of Waterloo is inadequately and belatedly trying to make up for the shabby treatment afforded Christie Blatchford at the renowned institution. It has apologized for the hijacking of her talk by self-ordained (they always are) "anti-racism" activists -- five ignoramuses who took the stage before her, chanted "racist, racist, racist" at her, denied her right to speak and denied the audience who came to hear her their right to hear her. The apology at least recognizes the insult done to Blatchford, and to the people who came to hear her. A knot of intellectually vacant hooligans, whether united neck to neck with bike locks or not, should never be allotted the power to say who speaks and who does not speak at a university. (Or anywhere else for that matter.) Waterloo has also promised to reschedule the event.

However, the apology only became necessary because the university -- she was there at the invitation of its bookstore -- didn't toss the smug nuisances from the stage in the first place. Nor does the apology -- which wears the whiff of "damage control" -- quite measure up to a real acknowledgment of the ugliness Blatchford endured that evening. As the Post editorialized on Thursday, the shutting down or abridgement of free speech at universities -- especially by "progressive" protesters -- is growing so commonplace that we fail to notice how aggressive and mean the actions and words of the protests leading to the shutdowns actually are.

The Waterloo clowns smeared Christie Blatchford horrendously: She is, by their description, a "hack" and a "bigot" who preaches "racism" and "hate." She's a "Fascist"; she has "no right to speak"; she "dishonours" Waterloo by being invited to speak there. If you listen to or read the words of Don Kellar, the putative leader of the vile and petty coup, Christie Blatchford is all of these things -- but wait Kellar has more. She's also a modern instance of one of the most despicable human beings in history -- Julius Streicher, the notorious Jew baiter and killer from Nazi days. Julius Streicher and Christie Blatchford! Now there's a yoking that only someone crawling slowly up the ladder to a PhD in Geography (which is Mr. Kellar's burden) could make. In any decent world, anybody who slung accusations and characterizations like this around with such

factless and vicious abandon would be seen as unfit to be present in a university environment. These descriptions are an attempt to slaughter Christie Blatchford's reputation, and the University of Waterloo should be embarrassed and ashamed that such vile, hateful words should come from the mouths of one or more of its students. But, as I've said, the normalization of thuggish protest, and the ever inflated ugliness of the language that the "progressive" sect allows itself, has numbed everyone to the sense of how feral and nasty some of these so-called activists have become.

Let me also make a somewhat incidental point. It is mainly through her writings that I know Christie Blatchford, but they alone allow me to say that she is, in the fundamental moral sense of the term, 10 times the anti-racist that Kellar is, 10 times more informed than he is and has 10 times his courage to boot. She would have been willing to do what he and his kitetail of smug pretenders didn't have the nerve to do: debate the matters in question.

It was also extremely interesting to note that in some of the online comments that appeared when the story was written up in the Waterloo Record, someone identifying himself as Dan Kellar dismissed the part of the audience that opposed the protesters as "old white men" and "old white ladies." So apparently it's the "anti-racists" who take skin colour into account when making their judgments, and "white" is obviously deemed second-class and unworthy. Activism works some strange transmutations. Anti-racism, meet racism: You are slopebrowed twins.

The University of Waterloo lost something on the night the anti-racists were allowed to pose, instead of Blatchford getting to speak -- something the university's apology only begins to repair. The preening self-righteousness and the hyper arrogance of the protesters put a blot on the university's reputation, dented the exercise of free speech in Canada and gave the rest of the country one more ugly example of "progressive" intolerance.

Finally, the most chilling and obnoxious statement of an evening rich in them came from one of the protesters: "Our goal was to not let her speak; we accomplished that." If we were looking for a sequence of words that would ornament the lips of a real fascist, "Our goal was to not let her speak ..." would be as

perfect a set as under the visiting moon we are allowed to hope for.

National Post, November 20, 2010. □

CARLETON STUDENT ASSOCIATION BANS ANTI-ABORTION CLUB

Charles Lewis

Carleton University's official student association has banned the Ottawa institution's anti-abortion club, offering it just one way to get back into good graces: support abortion rights.

On Monday, the Carleton University Student Association (CUSA), decertified Carleton Lifeline for its anti-abortion views. It told the club that being against abortion violated CUSA's anti-discrimination policy, but that it could get recertified in a day or two.

"We invite you to amend your constitution to create one that respects our anti-discrimination policy as laid out above," wrote Khaldoon Bushnaq, CUSA's vice-president of internal affairs. "If you are able to resubmit a constitution that meets our criteria by Thursday, November 18th we will be able to certify your club for this semester."

Ruth Lobo, the president of Carleton Lifeline, said CUSA assumes all students are "pro-choice," which is not necessarily the case. Its policy, she said, smacked of hypocrisy.

"It's very ironic that they have a discrimination policy that allows them to discriminate against pro-life groups," she said. "CUSA claims to be representative of all students. As a pro-life student I am not represented by an organization I am forced to pay dues to in my tuition. Either they should create a policy in which students can opt out of fees or get rid of the discrimination policy," Ms. Lobo said.

"Pro-choice should also mean that a woman has the right to not have an abortion, so I think CUSA is being anti-choice by not allowing people to hear the other side."

CUSA did not return phone calls on Tuesday. The Canadian Federation of Students, an umbrella group

for student associations, said it does not get involved with local matters on specific campuses.

The letter from Mr. Bushnaq noted Carleton Lifeline believes in the "equal rights of the unborn and firmly believes that abortion is a moral and legal wrong." Therefore, because of CUSA's commitment to the pro-abortion-rights position, Carleton Lifeline can no longer promote its views on campus or lobby in any way that would oppose that position.

It can no longer book space for advocacy or events, nor is it eligible for funding.

Ottawa lawyer Albertos Polizogopoulos, who is defending the Lifeline students, said CUSA's "appalling" decision goes against all principles of free speech.

In a letter to CUSA, Mr. Polizogopoulos noted that CUSA's own constitution, which overrides all bylaws and policies enacted by CUSA, calls for "maintaining an academic and social environment free from prejudice, exploitation, abuse or violence on the basis of, but not limited to, sex, race, language, religion, age, national or social status, political affiliation or belief, sexual orientation or marital status."

Mr. Polizogopoulos continued: "Since the Discrimination on Campus Policy explicitly calls for the discrimination [against] individuals on the basis of their political belief that life begins at conception, [therefore] it cannot, according to CUSA's Constitution, continue to be in effect."

Late on Tuesday Carleton University said in a statement: "CUSA is an independent, incorporated organization; they operate independently of the university and the university plays no role in and has no standing with regard to CUSA's decision making."

The Carleton Lifeline became certified in 2006 after a failed attempt by CUSA to keep the club off campus.

Ms. Lobo said she can only speculate why CUSA decided to ban them now but she assumes that it is related to an incident involving the club last month.

On Oct. 4, Ms. Lobo and four other students were arrested on campus by Ottawa police for attempting to display graphic anti-abortion posters. The police were

called in by the school administration and the students were charged with trespassing. The case is still pending.

John Carpay, a civil liberties lawyer from Calgary, who has dealt with similar bans on anti-abortion groups, said CUSA's offer to reinstate the club if they agree to endorse abortion rights can only be laughed at. "That's awfully generous of them to offer an opportunity for repentance," said Mr. Carpay. "But it is truly alarming that CUSA would so easily suppress free speech. It's tragic."

National Post, November 16, 2010. □

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO KILL HUMAN-RIGHTS CENSORSHIP

Karen Selick

The Supreme Court of Canada has agreed to reconsider 20 year-old jurisprudence that limits free speech. The case under appeal is *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission vs. William Whatcott*.

Back in 2001 and 2002, Whatcott, a social conservative activist, distributed flyers in Regina and Saskatoon bearing headings such as "Keep Homosexuality out of Saskatoon's Public Schools" and "Sodomites in our Public Schools."

He was hauled before the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission for having "exposed to hatred, ridiculed, belittled or affronted the dignity" of gays and lesbians, and was ordered to pay compensation totaling \$17,500 to four complainants. That decision was upheld on its first appeal to the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench in 2007. But in February, 2010, three members of the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal overturned it.

While the Court of Appeal's decision was a victory, of sorts, for free speech, the court had to twist itself into contortions to reach it. On any objective reading of Whatcott's flyers, he did ridicule and belittle gays — and he probably even exposed them to hatred. What rankles free-speechers is the more fundamental question: Why should this be against the law? After all, don't we have a Charter of Rights that guarantees

freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression? But the Court of Appeal declined to strike down the offending portions of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code as inconsistent with the Charter. The problem lay in the fact that in 1990, the Supreme Court of Canada had considered similar human rights legislation and had decided that those censorship provisions were permissible despite the Charter's free-expression guarantee.

That case, known as *Taylor*, attempted to set some guidelines or standards as to when censorship laws designed to deter "hate speech" would be acceptable. Hatred or contempt, wrote then-chief justice Dickson, "refers only to unusually strong and deep-felt emotions of detestation, calumny and vilification."

Then, with inexplicable confidence in the niceness of the universe, justice Dickson opined that so long as human rights tribunals paid heed to the extreme degree of hatred necessary to justify censorship, there would be "little danger that subjective opinion as to offensiveness" would trump free speech.

But events over the last few years have demonstrated that the danger characterized by justice Dickson in 1990 as "little" is anything but. Accusations of anti-Muslim hate-mongering have been levelled against Maclean's magazine for Mark Steyn's commentary on immigration policy; and against *Western Standard* magazine and its publisher Ezra Levant merely for printing the notorious "Muhammad cartoons" as part of its news coverage.

Even B'nai Brith, a Jewish organization known for supporting the anti-hate provisions of human rights legislation, has been hit with a complaint.

While the complaints against Maclean's and Levant ultimately were dismissed, the accused parties had to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars upholding their innocence — money they'll never get back. Worse yet is the chilling impact those prosecutions have had on less stalwart souls than Steyn and Levant. The risk of being put through such an ordeal, even if one is ultimately vindicated, undoubtedly has diverted many a commentator into less hazardous topics of discussion.

Even the history of the Whatcott decision itself demonstrates how subjective justice Dickson's test is.

Of those who have sat in judgment on Mr. Whatcott's comments to date, two have said he violated the law while three have said he didn't. That's hardly a demonstration that the standards are crystal clear.

Justice Dickson's confidence in the discretion of human rights tribunals now appear to have been hopelessly misplaced.

The Whatcott appeal presents an opportunity for the Supreme Court to reconsider its Taylor decision with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight. It's encouraging to note that the Taylor rationale itself just squeaked by in a four-to-three decision in 1990. The only judge on that seven-member Taylor panel who remains on the bench today is Beverly McLachlin, now the Chief Justice. In 1990, she was one of the three-member dissenting team who said that the human rights law then under consideration was not "reasonable and justifiable in a free and democratic society."

It will be interesting to see whether her opinion remains the same, and whether she can now persuade a majority of her colleagues.

Karen Selick is the litigation director of the Canadian Constitution Foundation, which intervened in favour of freedom of expression at the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal.

National Post, November 3, 2010. □

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SAFS NEWSLETTER

In the CAUT Policy Statement on Academic Freedom (SAFS Newsletter, September 2010, page 3) we find this statement: "Academic staff must not be hindered or impeded in exercising their civil rights as citizens, including the right to contribute to social change through free expression of opinion . . ." The principle is admirable, but I detect a certain bias in the phraseology. Why does CAUT sanctify in particular "the right to contribute to social change" rather than the right either to contribute to it or to oppose it? In a free society both sides of the argument should be equally legitimate, and in the academic world it may well be critics of social change who have the greater need for protection against retaliatory discrimination.

In the American conservative periodical *National Review* (October 18, 2010), Frederic J. Fransen -- executive director of the Center for Excellence in Higher Education -- draws attention to the persecution which dominant leftist elements in universities have sometimes inflicted on faculty members found to hold "incorrect" political views. One case is that of Professor Laura Freberg at the California Polytechnic State University (commonly called "Cal Poly") in San Luis Obispo. Because of her husband's involvement in local politics, members of her department made a horrifying discovery. Prof. Freberg was -- a practitioner of witchcraft? A part-time prostitute? No, something worse -- a Republican! Fransen writes: "Soon she was the target of an organized campaign to drive her off campus. 'We would have never hired you had we known you were a Republican,' one colleague told her. Ultimately, she was stripped of her chairmanship of the psychology department, and she suffered nonstop harassment" -- one form of which was to force her to move again and again from one office to another.

A very different case (not mentioned by Fransen) is that of Mark Moyar. Born in 1971, he graduated from Harvard summa cum laude with a degree in history, and then earned a Ph.D. at Cambridge University in England. The most important of his books -- *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954-1965* -- was published in 2006 by Cambridge University Press, which reissued it in paperback in 2009. The first of a planned two volumes, it is a distinguished work of original scholarship, packed with illuminating detail and copiously documented from a wide range of sources. One might have expected that universities would compete with each other to recruit the author. They did not -- quite the reverse. Though a faculty member at the U.S. Marine Corps University in Quantico, Virginia, Moyar was shunned by the mainstream of the academic world.

His sin was to adopt interpretations of Vietnamese events that adherents of reigning orthodoxy consider politically unacceptable. For example, according to the orthodox view, South Vietnam's President Ngo Dinh Diem and his regime were the villains in the crisis that led to Diem's overthrow and murder (November 1963). During and after the crisis this anti-Diem verdict was challenged by some well-informed observers -- perhaps most conspicuously by the prominent journalist Marguerite Higgins (1920-1966), a hard-line

anti-Communist whose book *Our Vietnam Nightmare* was published by Harper and Row in late 1965. A selection of the Conservative Book Club, it has carried no weight with what became the orthodox school of thought among academics. Moyer, however, treats Higgins' reporting with respect, and uses *Our Vietnam Nightmare* as one of his sources. (To find information relevant to these paragraphs, use Google to search for "Mark Moyer" and for "Mark Moyer, Marguerite Higgins" together.)

Even more damning in the eyes of typical academics is Moyer's conviction that in the circumstances of the time the American defence of South Vietnam against the Communists was justified. The very last sentence of his book calls the U.S. effort "not . . . a foolish war fought under wise constraints, but a wise war fought under foolish constraints."

There is no need to feel sorry for Moyer personally; he is now Director of Research for Orbis Operations, a counter-insurgency consulting firm active in Afghanistan. But the priority given to intellectual conformity has deprived American higher education of a major talent, at least temporarily. Andrew Irvine ("The Real Discrimination at Universities is Against Men," *SAFS Newsletter*, September 2010) is right to point out that intolerance of "opposition to affirmative action" has cost universities the services of "more than one talented academic," but intolerance of dissent on other issues can also be damaging.

If applied impartially, the CAUT policy offers protection to dissenters in general, but one has to fear that the bias I noted in the phraseology may reflect greater solicitude for leftist dissent than for its conservative counterpart.

Sincerely,

Kenneth H.W. Hilborn
Professor Emeritus of History
University of Western Ontario
E-mail: hilborn@uwo.ca

Kenneth Hilborn is a former member of SAFS Board of Directors. □

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

May 7, 2011

Advance Notice

SAFS Annual General Meeting will be held at the University of Western Ontario on **May 7, 2011**.

We are happy to announce that **John Carpay** will be our keynote speaker. Calgary lawyer *John Carpay* served the Canadian Taxpayers Federation as Alberta Director (2001-2005). He then served the Canadian Constitution Foundation as its first Executive Director (2005-2010), defending individual freedom in the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench (*Boissoin v. Lund*), Saskatchewan Court of Appeal (*Whitcott v. Saskatchewan Human Rights Tribunal*) and Supreme Court of Canada (*R. v. Kapp*). Currently, John is the founder and president of the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms.

He will address the issue of speech in Canadian campuses.

Further program details will be provided later.

REIN IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNALS

Nick Brancaccio

Usually, ordinary Canadians have little exposure to the snake pit that is faculty-lounge politics. But every so often, a university scandal becomes so big that it bursts out into the real world of lawyers and human-rights commissions and front-page he-said/she-said media reports. Such is the case with the story of Emily Carasco, a University of Windsor law professor who is convinced that foul play by white males sunk her campaign to become law school dean.

The details of her case are difficult to summarize

briefly. Suffice it to say that she is a woman of colour who has spent her entire career fighting obsessively for more affirmative action on campus, and railing against the alleged bigotry of her own university's White-Male-ocracy -- and now she is convinced that she has become its latest victim.

Her complaint also includes a complex sub-plot involving allegations (which she denies) that she plagiarized an academic publication many years back -- allegations now being advanced by the husband of one of her collaborators. Adding tangent upon tangent, Ms. Carasco goes on for pages in her human-rights complaint about how that same publication was edited in a racist way, with all of her claims about Canada's racism being racistly edited out. All in all, Ms. Carasco's human rights complaint is 48 pages long -- longer than many academic articles. It must have taken her a whole semester to write the thing. The word "racist" and its various synonyms appears many, many times.

On paper, at least, Ms. Carasco must have been considered a viable applicant for law school dean: Before the allegations of plagiarism emerged, she apparently was one of two candidates still remaining on the school's short list. But given her obsession with racism and affirmative action, it's hard to see how this one-issue activist could handle the position--in which she'd be required to deftly balance the interests of 100 different squabbling professors. This would be especially true if--after all this brouhaha -- she was put into the position of law school dean by state fiat, which is what her human rights complaint demands (along with \$75,000 and, of course, a whole slew of new sensitivity programs to teach everyone at the University of Windsor how very racist they are).

The most bizarre part of the story is that, as Joseph Breaun reported in the *National Post* last week, an Ontario Human Rights Tribunal (HRT) really could put this woman into the dean's office -- even if the university picks another dean while her case is being heard: "The appointment of a new dean does not preclude the option of a remedial order instating [Ms. Carasco] to the position of dean should [she] succeed in her [complaint]," declared the HRT in an interim ruling. "It is true that the presence of an incumbent may be a factor influencing the tribunal's decision of whether this is an appropriate remedy, but it is too early at this stage to gauge the significance of this factor against all of the other potentially relevant

considerations."

Think about that for a second: A human rights mandarin -- someone who may or may not have any experience in academia; or even the firm legal grounding in labour law and constitutional free-speech principles that we expect of real judges -- gets to decide who runs one of Canada's law schools ... all based on a sheaf of paper submitted by an identity-politics activist who's angry she didn't get the job.

Then again, why stop at deciding the deanship? Section 45.2 of the Ontario Human Rights Code is very broad in defining the remedies that a human rights tribunal can prescribe. Financial restitution is just one of the options available. The HRT also can provide: "An order directing any party to the application to do anything that, in the opinion of the Tribunal, the party ought to do to promote compliance with this Act". Which means the sky's the limit. The HRT could theoretically disband the whole law school, or force it to stop hiring white people.

Till now, watchdogs of Canadian human rights commissions have focused mainly on the threat that these star chambers pose to free speech. But as this case makes clear, their powers must be reined in across the board.

In a way, it might be a good thing if Ms. Carasco gets exactly what she wants in this case. When that happens, the people who rebel against the system and demand reform won't just be angry editorial board pundits: They will be the very same establishment legal minds who set up the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal and its counterpart kangaroo courts across Canada in the first place.

National Post, Monday, October 4, 2010. □

SUBMISSIONS TO THE SAFS NEWSLETTER

The 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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**SENATOR LINDA FRUM
IN MACLEAN'S, NOVEMBER 22, 2010,
WITH A COMMENTARY**

Grant Brown

Q: When you wrote this book [on Canadian universities in 1987], 52% of undergrads were women, and now it's 65, and at some schools more than 70% are women. So it's a completely different experience for your son and daughter.

Frum: I find it extremely upsetting because I feel the atmosphere is going to be skewed against my daughter. Just by definition it cannot be as much fun to be at a place where it's 65% female. What we wanted for women was to be valued and equal, and now we are going to be overabundant and therefore devalued. I remember how hard people fought for women to be able to go anywhere, and now, once again, the boys have the advantage. They just have it in a new way.

Q: That's the reverse of what everybody's saying. "We're losing the boys. What have we done to the boys?"

Frum: That's true. But for those boys who have it together, the world's their oyster. And my daughter has it just as together as my son – she has a 90 average and she's a school leader, but so what? We see it in 65% of the other girls, whereas he is a standout. It kind of enrages me that women always end up with the short end of the stick.

Comment by Grant Brown:

These comments defy parody. I mean, people rightly make fun of Sara Palin, who says a lot of dumb things; but bizarre and sexist attitudes like the one on display here from Ms. Frum are at least as dangerous and as misguided. Even when prompted a second time, she cannot muster a single word of sympathy or give a simple thought for the lost generation of boys. All that consumes her – "upsets" and "enrages" her - is the effect on her daughter. Her precious, eminently privileged, 90-average daughter - yes, she is the one to be really concerned for in this unfortunate scenario.

This is a Conservative Senator – not some radical, wild-eyed, feminist Liberal hack. I would say it is "unbelievable," except that it is sadly typical of

the illogical, politically correct, myopic, and self-serving people who govern Canada – of all political stripes. It's a disgrace.

Grant Brown is a former member of SAFS Board of Directors. □

**CAMPUS LEFTIES NEVER TIRE
OF CRYING RACISM**

Ricardo Duchesne

The November 2010 issue of *University Affairs* – a monthly Canadian magazine – welcomed its readers with an eye-catching cover story entitled "Racism in the academy," by Harriet Eisenkraft. In the article, Ms. Eisenkraft interviewed numerous academics from across the Canadian university landscape, all in support of the sweeping allegation that "many non-Caucasian scholars still feel excluded or denied opportunities" in our universities. After five decades of official multiculturalism and three decades of mandated employment equity, Peter Li, a professor of sociology at the University of Saskatchewan, for instance, says that racism is still "regularized and embedded in the social process" of Canadian academic hiring, promotion, governance, research, and in the curriculum.

The article states that every new report on systematic racism has had the unfortunate effect of producing a "backlash." According to Audrey Kobayashi, a professor of geography at Queen's University, one of the effects of this backlash "is to prevent progressive people from acting progressively" in the universities.

These are her words; I am not trying to be amusing. How can the most leftist institution in Canada be accused of curtailing the efforts of progressives to fight against racism?

In fact, it is the preponderance of progressives in the faculties of arts across Canada that sustains and encourages such outlandish claims as those contained in Ms. Eisenkraft's article. In case we need to be reminded again, "studies in both [Canada and the United States] confirm that the humanities and social sciences are dominated by scholars with left-wing opinions and values" -- as Christine Overall, cross-

appointed with the department of philosophy and women's studies at Queen's, has acknowledged in an article, "Lefty Profs," published two years ago in University Affairs.

It is well known that progressives have been able for decades now to exercise their control through domination of university hiring committees and the imposition of politically correct speech codes designed to exterminate dissent. Dr. Li is not an isolated figure fighting for racial justice. In fact, his employer, the University of Saskatchewan, officially calls itself a "progressive university" committed to "employment equity" for women and visible minorities.

Of the 15 full-time faculty members teaching in Dr. Li's department, eight are females; and three of the males, together with Dr. Li, are visible minorities of Asian origin. What is more, most of these members have research interests that touch on race, ethnicity, multiculturalism and social inequality. Among the many colleges, programs, and departments housed at the university are "Discrimination and Harassment Prevention," "Native Studies" and "Women's and Gender Studies."

A similar set of facts can be adduced for all the academics cited in Ms. Eisenkraft's article. Jeffrey Reitz, who claims that white people tend to trivialize the experiences of minorities as unimportant, is director of ethnic and immigration studies at the University of Toronto, housed in a department in which the research and teaching areas are singularly left-oriented in character. Constance Backhouse, who wants universities to "take the lead" in dismantling the "mythology" that Canada is a "race-less" society, belongs to the faculty of law at the University of Ottawa, wherein the "Message from the Dean" states categorically and imperially that research and teaching are expected to be pursued "in a progressive atmosphere where issues of social justice are at the forefront of student and faculty concerns."

This influence of progressives over our universities may explain why few of the specialists cited in Ms. Eisenkraft's article offered any solid evidence to substantiate their claims. Working within an audience of true believers, they have grown accustomed to softball questions and easy endorsements. Pretty much all the "evidence" cited is anecdotal, based on "feelings," and in no way the foundation for making a "systemic

racism" allegation. The one meagre fact offered is that "about 14% of faculty positions are held by visible minorities, whereas 24% of all PhD-holders in Canada are visible minorities." It does not take statistical expertise to realize that this claim is devoid of any meaning unless one offers a system-wide, representative set of statistical indicators on all the positions held by all ethnic groups, on all the PhD-holders, on all the academic openings in the last few decades (rather than merely looking at the ethnicity of academics who were employed decades ago), on all the number of actual applicants for jobs, and on all the respective qualifications of the applicants.

Canadian universities have worked like a gold mine for progressives. Many of the professors cited in the article have multiple research grants, contracts with government departments, awards for research and teaching, are fellows of the Royal Academy and, in at least one case, is a member of the Order of Canada. I could go on for pages citing their academic honours. University Affairs might have done its readers a greater service publishing an article entitled "The Racism Industry in Academia."

A longer version of this article first appeared on the web site of University Affairs. To read the full article, please visit universityaffairs.ca/a-response-to-racism-in-the-academy.aspx.

Dr. Duchesne is a professor of sociology at the University of New Brunswick, John campus.

National Post, January 4, 2011. □

THE CRISIS OF THE HUMANITIES OFFICIALLY ARRIVES

Stanley Fish

In a response to last week's column on "Howl," the movie about Allen Ginsberg's famous poem, Charlie from Binghamton asked, "What happened to public investment in the humanities and the belief that the humanities enhanced our culture, our society, our humanity?" And he speculated that it "will be a sad, sad day if and when we allow the humanities to collapse."

What he didn't know at the time is that it had already happened, on Oct. 1, when George M. Philip, president of SUNY Albany, announced that the French, Italian, classics, Russian and theater programs were getting the axe.

For someone of my vintage the elimination of French was the shocker. In the 1960s and '70s, French departments were the location of much of the intellectual energy. Faculty and students in other disciplines looked to French philosophers and critics for inspiration; the latest thing from Paris was instantly devoured and made the subject of conferences. Spanish was then the outlier, a discipline considered stodgy and uninteresting.

Now Spanish is the only safe department to be in. Russian's stock has gone down, one presumes, because in recent years the focus of our political (and to some extent cultural) attention has shifted from Russia to China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq. Classics has been on the endangered species list for decades. As for theater, the first thing to go in a regime of bottom-line efficiency are the plays.

And indeed, if your criteria are productivity, efficiency and consumer satisfaction, it makes perfect sense to withdraw funds and material support from the humanities — which do not earn their keep and often draw the ire of a public suspicious of what humanities teachers do in the classroom — and leave standing programs that have a more obvious relationship to a state's economic prosperity and produce results the man or woman in the street can recognize and appreciate. (What can you say to the tax-payer who asks, "What good does a program in Byzantine art do me?" Nothing.)

President Philip cites as one justification for his action the fact "that there are comparatively fewer students enrolled in these degree programs." Of course, in a bygone time seats in those programs' classes would have been filled by students who were meeting quite specific distribution requirements; you remember, two advanced language courses, one course in American lit and another in British lit, and so on.

Those requirements have largely gone away. SUNY Albany does have general education requirements, but so many courses fulfill them — any one of dozens will meet your humanities requirement — that they are

hardly a constraint at all, something the Web site acknowledges and even underlines with pride. This has happened in part because progressive academics have argued that traditional disciplinary departments were relics from the past kept artificially alive by outmoded requirements.

But keeping something you value alive by artificial, and even coercive, means (and distribution requirements are a form of coercion) is better than allowing them to die, if only because you may now die (get fired) with them, a fate that some visionary faculty members may now be suffering. I have always had trouble believing in the high-minded case for a core curriculum — that it preserves and transmits the best that has been thought and said — but I believe fully in the core curriculum as a device of employment for me and my fellow humanists. But the point seems to be moot. It's too late to turn back the clock.

What, then, can be done? Well, it won't do to invoke the pieties informing Charlie from Binghamton's question — the humanities enhance our culture; the humanities make our society better — because those pieties have a 19th century air about them and are not even believed in by some who rehearse them.

And it won't do to argue that the humanities contribute to economic health of the state — by producing more well-rounded workers or attracting corporations or delivering some other attenuated benefit — because nobody really buys that argument, not even the university administrators who make it.

And it won't do, in the age of entrepreneurial academics, zero-based budgeting and "every tub on its own bottom," to ask computer science or biology or the medical school to fork over some of their funds so that the revenue-poor classics department can be sustained. That was the idea a while back, but today it won't fly.

The only thing that might fly — and I'm hardly optimistic — is politics, by which I mean the political efforts of senior academic administrators to explain and defend the core enterprise to those constituencies — legislatures, boards of trustees, alumni, parents and others — that have either let bad educational things happen or have actively connived in them.

And when I say "explain," I should add aggressively

explain — taking the bull by the horns, rejecting the demand (always a loser) to economically justify the liberal arts, refusing to allow myths (about lazy, pampered faculty who work two hours a week and undermine religion and the American way) to go unchallenged, and if necessary flagging the pretensions and hypocrisy of men and women who want to exercise control over higher education in the absence of any real knowledge of the matters on which they so confidently pronounce.

On the basis of his performance in this instance, President Philip (who is without a doctoral degree and who has little if any experience teaching or researching) is not that kind of administrator, although he does exhibit some skills. With little notice, he called a town hall meeting for Friday afternoon, Oct. 1, when he could be sure that almost no academic personnel would be hanging around. In an e-mail sent the same day, he noted the “unfortunate timing,” but pleaded the “limited availability of appropriate large venue options.” In effect, *I can’t call a meeting on a convenient day because we don’t have a room large enough to get you all in, so I’ll commandeer a large room on a day when I know that very few of you will show up.* Brilliant!

The lengthy e-mail is also a legal justification in advance of any legal action. Philip knows that he can’t dismiss individual professors, but can only eliminate programs and departments. And he knows that, given tenure, contracts and all that pesky stuff he can only do that if he can make a case for financial exigency.

Accordingly, he explains in some detail a 30 percent decline of state support in the past three years and lists the steps his administration has already taken to deal with the problem. He is careful to say that the action he takes does not reflect any negative view of the scholars who will lose their positions or the value of the subjects they teach. He acknowledges that the burden seems to fall disproportionately on the humanities, but assures the departing soldiers that comparable cuts are on the way in the other colleges. (It’s almost a Bill Maher line: *Don’t get me wrong. I love the humanities.*)

Every sentence is written with passages like this one from AAUP v. Bloomfield College (1974) in mind. We consider, the court said, an administration’s “duty to honor solemnly undertaken tenure commitments, the

objective data relating to the college’s financial circumstances, its financial history; the authenticity of the financial threat . . . the existence of real alternatives or the action taken.” Philip (or the university lawyer) is covering all the bases.

He also seems to be trying a political ploy. He makes much of the failure of the state legislature to pass a bill that would have allowed the university to set its own tuition rates. “Regrettably,” he reports, that didn’t happen. He is sending the legislators a message: *you dropped the ball and see what you made me do.* I guess they are supposed to recoil in horror and say, “No, no, we’ll do the right thing.” Fat chance! The truth is no one in public life cares for the humanities as an academic enterprise, although public officials most likely do care for books, movies, operas and TV, and like to think of themselves as crackerbarrel philosophers and historians.

That’s O.K. It’s not their job to value the humanities or even to understand them. But it is the job of presidents and chancellors to proclaim the value of liberal arts education loudly and often and at least try to make the powers that be understand what is being lost when traditions of culture and art that have been vital for hundreds and even thousands of years disappear from the academic scene. President Philip cries crocodile tears. Real tears are in order.

The New York Times, October 11, 2010. □

SHOULD PROFS LEAVE UNRULY CLASSES?

Scott Jaschik

Professors routinely complain about students who spend class time on Facebook or texting their friends or otherwise making it clear that their attention is elsewhere. But is it acceptable for a faculty member to deal with these disruptions by walking out of class?

Two years ago, a Syracuse University professor set off a debate with his simple policy: If he spots a student texting, he will walk out of class for the day.

Now two faculty members at Ryerson University, in Toronto, sparked discussion at their institution with a similar (if somewhat more lenient) policy -- and their

university's administrators and faculty union have both urged them to back down, which they apparently have.

The Ryerson professors' policy was first reported last week in *The Eyeopener* (the student newspaper) and then was picked up by other Canadian publications. Two professors who teach an introductory engineering course in chemistry jointly adopted a policy by posting it on the courses' Blackboard sites. The professors vowed to make tests more difficult, to encourage students to pay attention. And the professors said that after three warnings about disruptions such as cell phone discussions and movies playing on laptops, the professors would walk out of class -- and students would have to learn the rest of that day's material themselves. (Sources could not say whether the faculty members followed through on their treats.)

The student newspaper described a chaotic environment in the class where the faculty members made the threat to walk out, with loud chatting among students and even paper airplanes being shot around the room. A Ryerson spokeswoman said she couldn't confirm that those conditions existed, but others at the university said that student behavior has deteriorated in introductory courses (even if only a minority of students misbehave). Comments posted on the student newspaper article from people who said that they were in the classes -- including comments from those critical of the professors' response -- confirmed the rude behavior. One student wrote about "a whole row of kids" chatting and reading Facebook throughout a recent lecture.

But this student added these questions: "Was it really fair to leave the class based on the actions of these few students? Why were we all reprimanded for their bad mistakes?"

The two professors -- Robert Gossage and Andrew McWilliams -- did not respond to requests for comment (and have not responded to inquiries from reporters in Canada, either).

Janet Mowat, a spokeswoman for Ryerson, issued a statement on behalf of the university that rejected the approach used by the professors. "Ryerson University does not endorse faculty members threatening to abandon their class if the class is unruly nor does the university endorse arbitrarily raising the bar for tests in the middle of the semester." The statement went on to

note that the university has a "guide to civility" and a student code of conduct, both of which say that both students and professors are responsible for jointly assuring a good learning environment. Students are specifically barred from "disruption of learning and teaching."

The engineering college at Ryerson is also starting several initiatives to help faculty members teach large classes, the statement noted, including a special online seminar on managing large, first-year classes; inviting a student conduct officer to participate in orientation to discuss these issues; and adding teaching assistant support to large classes.

Mowat said that the professors had been contacted and that she believed they would be trying other tactics in the future to deal with the issues.

Anver Saloojee, a professor of politics and public administration at Ryerson who is president of the union that represents tenure-track faculty members, said that the faculty contract would not permit faculty members to leave their classes unless there was an issue of health or safety. "One of the most important things we have to do is teaching," he said. And while Saloojee said he sympathized with faculty members struggling with inappropriate student behavior, he is not a fan of collective punishment. "You might have a minority of students who are disruptive, but you are doing a disservice to the students not engaging in that activity" by leaving, he said.

The university does need to do more to educate students -- especially first-year students -- on acceptable behavior, he said. And inappropriate behavior is clearly on the rise, he said, "when students have multiple devices at their disposal" in class. Saloojee said that he has had success from outlining expectations about behavior in the first session of each course.

While Ryerson appears committed to dealing with these issues without professorial walkouts, Laurence Thomas, a professor of philosophy at Syracuse University, said that he's sticking with his ultimatum about students who text, although he sometimes gives a warning for the first offense he spots. He said that since *Inside Higher Ed* covered his policy, he shows students that article on the first day of class.

Thomas said that the reason for the policy is straightforward: "I have the power to walk out whereas asking a student to leave the class could result in a very awkward confrontation."

In explaining his policy to students, Thomas said that he stresses that he himself uses text messaging (when doing so would not be rude), as he wants students to know that his objection to texting in class does not arise from being "clueless" about technology. "I talk about the climate of the classroom and how each of us makes a difference in that regard."

Sometimes, he leaves class. "I actually walked out two weeks ago and I was stunned by the extent to which the student apologized for the behavior," he said.

Inside Higher Ed, November 29, 2010. □

DON'T FOLLOW YOUR DREAM

Harrison Solow

Everywhere you turn today, our children are urged to "follow your dream." It seems like a harmless, even inspiring bromide to motivate children to achievement.

It isn't.

A lot of damage is being done to young minds by how this rampant (and particularly nauseating) philosophy is interpreted. There seems to be an air of entitlement in it, which encourages people to expect rewards for simply having a dream and not working toward it with blood, sweat and tears.

Somewhere along the line, responsibility has been discarded in favour of infantilism. Scream loud enough from the cradle or the American Idol stage and mama/nanny/Simon Cowell will come running. And when in the latter case, this does not happen, many people are bewildered and angry.

Wanting something, they have been told, is the only requirement needed to get it. This is, of course, absolute nonsense.

The simple fact is that people who achieve excellence

in their fields didn't just have a dream. They got up at 4:00 a.m. to practice on parallel bars or had to forego other desirable activities and paths in order to get in six hours of violin practice a day, or stayed off the several million absurd writing advice blogs with their overheated little cliques that dispense useless regurgitated maxims and empty praise and decide to actually confront their thoughts on a page. Or they read Beowulf and Dante carefully and deeply when they didn't see any point, since all they were interested in was Sylvia Plath, because someone of more experience and wisdom told them to do so. I don't know whether we're overly lazy, stupid, or childish these days. But the idea of preparing oneself for excellence has somehow disappeared.

Case in point: I was Writer in Residence and an English professor at a British university some years ago. In my second year there, when one of my students actually lifted, word for word, two pages off a website and handed it in as his own work, I ended up being the one reprimanded!

I had given him a zero for the paper, of course. But the policy then was that I wasn't allowed to give him a zero. Instead, the entire English faculty met to go over his paper and give him credit for all the things he didn't plagiarize. This, to me, is akin to a criminal breaking into your house and stealing your jewelry, silver and art, and when appearing in court for indictment after pleading guilty, being given credit by the judge for not stealing your television or computer.

I was both disillusioned and livid at this so, contrary to university policy at that time, I called "Trevor" into my office and asked him why he had done this despicable thing. He responded that he had always had a dream to have a degree. ("Have" not "earn"!) I said to him, "Trevor, you will never have a degree if you keep on doing this. Oh -- someone may hand one to you one day, but you will always know that it isn't yours. It will never be yours. It will always belong to all those from whom you stole it. Never you." And he started to cry. I was glad to see those tears, which were, in the end, the only entity in the university acknowledging responsibility for such an unworthy act.

My friend James Strauss, a talented novelist and writer for the television show, *House*, among other things, found a similar situation in his recent (and brief) foray into teaching.

"Our public almost never understands what it takes to put a production on, or the vital necessity of good writing," he wrote to me. "Everybody thinks they can 'at least' write. I taught a screenwriting class last year and was amazed that almost all my students thought they had a screenplay in them. I assigned them a one-hour, fifty-page, screenplay by next week's class. I said I'd do the same. The following week we met (only 11 of the 16 showed) and there was one screenplay written. Mine. Not one page of any other work was available, although the excuses were endless and complex."

This is worrying. Even our universities are filled with people who have dreams but no plans; desires but no talent; talent but no work ethic, and because the few people who could make a difference in their lives will not step up to the plate and say "You can't have this until you earn it," I am concerned that there is no end in sight.

So -- my advice to dreamers: Don't just follow your dream. Do what it takes to earn it. To achieve it. To be worthy of it. Because if you don't, it will never, ever, really be yours.

This article originally appeared on aolnews.com.

Harrison Solow is a writer, English professor, ex-nun and winner of the Pushcart Prize for Literature in 2008. She has written, edited and executed more than 400 publications and projects. Her latest book is Felicity & Barbara Pym, a tale about reading, writing, and true education. Read her blog on the Red Room redroom.com/author/harrison-solow.

National Post, November 14, 2010. □

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NOMINATION FOR SAFS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2011-2012

The Nomination Committee consisted of Clive Seligman (President), Doreen Kimura (Past-President), Rick Goffin (University of Western Ontario), and Phil Sullivan (University of Toronto) as two SAFS members not currently on the Board.

The current board is being re-nominated. The Directors are: **Rodney Clifton, Andrew Irvine, Tom Flanagan, Steve Lupker, Mark Mercer, John Mueller, Clive Seligman, and Peter Suedfeld.**

Any member of SAFS may nominate individuals for election as Director. These nominations must be received at the SAFS Office by April 15, 2011. Each member nomination shall contain the following information: (i) the signature of the person nominating and the signature of two (2) seconders; (ii) the full name and address of the person nominated; (iii) a statement of the status and attributes of the person nominated, showing each person's qualifications to be a director; (iv) a written consent signed by the person nominated agreeing to be nominated for election and serve, if elected.

SAFS MEMBERSHIP FORM

To join **SAFS** or to renew your **SAFS** membership, please sign and complete this form and return to:

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N6G 2N3

Please make your cheque payable to **SAFS**

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- ◆ Sustaining - \$100 - \$299
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signature

Renewal	Sustaining
New Member	Benefactor

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Institution: _____

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*(Because **SAFS** is not a registered charity, memberships cannot be considered charitable contributions for income tax purposes.)*

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