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For the third consecutive year The Heritage Foundation is pleased to sponsor a workshop for members of the American Legislative Exchange Council at their Annual Meeting...

"POLITICAL CORRECTNESS IN STATE UNIVERSITIES: WHAT STATE LEGISLATORS NEED TO KNOW"

- ◆ Dr. Michael Sanera, University of Northern Arizona
and President, Arizona Institute for
Public Policy Research

- ◆ Dr. Thomas Lindsay, University of Northern Iowa
and President, Iowa Chapter, National Assoc. of Scholars

- ◆ Dr. John J. Ruszkiewicz, University of Texas at Austin
and President, Texas Conference of
College Teachers of English

- ◆ Dr. Abraham H. Miller, University of Cincinnati
and President, Ohio Chapter, National Assoc. of Scholars

4:00 P.M.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6

THE BROADMOOR HOTEL, COLORADO SPRINGS

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Politics in the Classroom

The multiculturalist's version of history:

It runs something like this: the history of "Western Civilization" is in large part a history of oppression. Internally, Western civilization oppressed women, various slave and serf populations, and ethnic and cultural minorities generally. In foreign affairs, the history of Western civilization is one of imperialism and colonialism. The so-called canon of Western civilization consists in the official publications of this system of oppression, and it is no accident that the authors in the "canon" are almost exclusively Western white males, because the civilization itself is ruled by a caste consisting almost entirely of white males. So you cannot reform education by admitting new members to the club, by opening up the canon; the whole idea of "the canon" has to be abolished. It has to be abolished in favor of something that is "multicultural" and "nonhierarchical."

—John Searle, "The Storm Over the University." The New York Review of Books. 6 Dec. 1990: 34-42.

Professors of English talk about teaching writing and literature

"The pursuit of self-evident and unquestioned goals in the composing process parallels the pursuit of self-evident and unquestioned profit-making goals in the corporate marketplace.

—James Berlin. "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class." College English 50 (1988): 483.

We can affirm the freedom to dissent radically in the classroom by refusing equal time to ruling powers.

—James R. Bennett, "National Power and Objectivity in the Classroom." College English 51 (1989): 816.

There is reason to think that students want to write about what they say they don't want to write about. They want a chance to write about racism, classism, and homophobia, even though it makes them uncomfortable. But what I think makes them uncomfortable is to surrender the paradigm of individualism and to see that paradigm in its sexist dimensions.

[R]eligious values collaborate with the ideology of individualism and with sexism to censor the full capability of what people can say and write. . . . By "religious values" I mean belief in the savability of the individual human soul. The ideal of the nuclear family, as opposed to the extended or communal family, permits the overvaluation of the individual child and the individual soul.

—David Bleich. "Literacy and Citizenship: Resisting Social Issues." The Right to Literacy. Eds. Andrea A. Lunsford, Helen Moglen, James Slevin. New York: MLA, 1990. 163, 168-69.

The teacher can best facilitate the production of knowledge by adapting a confrontational stance toward the student Above all the teacher should avoid the pretense of detachment, objectivity, and autonomy.

—Ronald Strickland, "Confrontational Pedagogy and Traditional Literary Studies." College English 52 (1990): 293.

I suggest we must be forthright in avowing the ideologies that motivate our teaching and research. For instance, James Berlin might stop trying to be value-neutral and anti-authoritarian in the classroom. Berlin tells his students that he is a Marxist but disavows any intention of persuading them to his point of view. Instead, he might openly state that his course aims to promote values of sexual equality and left-oriented labor relations and

that his course will challenge students' values insofar as they conflict with these aims. Berlin and his colleagues might openly exert their authority as teachers to try to persuade students to agree with their values instead of pretending that they are merely investigating the nature of sexism and capitalism and leaving students to draw their own conclusions.

—Patricia Bizzell, "Beyond Anti-Foundationalism to Rhetorical Authority: Problems Defining 'Cultural Literacy,'" College English 52 (1990): 670.

Rhetoric is ideology's tool and is responsible for promoting and protecting the birthright rule established within that ideology—it does this, in no small part, by effacing the effects of domination and by desensitizing the rulers to the suffering of the ruled.

—Diane Mowery and Eve Duffy, "The Power of Language to Efface and Desensitize." Rhetoric Society Quarterly 20 (1990): 170.

There is no canon of "Great Books," in my view, because there is no intellectual core to the notion of "Great Books" in the first place Western Civ, I maintain, lacks the coherence for pedagogically sound instruction.

—Robert Scholes "A Flock of Cultures—A Trivial Proposal." College English 53 (1991): 763.

The "melting pot" is a crock, as great and pernicious a myth in literary history as it is in social and political history.

—Gregory S. Jay, "The End of 'American' Literature: Toward a Multicultural Practice." College English 53 (1991): 267.

Colorado Springs Talk

better right word--course in an American college or university--is an English composition class at The University of Texas called E 306. How does a simple, introductory class in composition like E 306 grow so famous that it becomes the subject of articles in The New York Times, The New Republic, The Wall Street Journal, The Chronicle of Higher Education, and Newsweek? Why are scholars today rushing to be the first out with their books on this humble course in rhetoric, mechanics, and usage?

It is because E 306 at the University of Texas has become a powerful symbol of the radicalization of university curriculums across the country as a generation of tenured professors seeks to use ~~their~~ ^{its} classrooms to advance ~~their~~ far left-wing political agenda. E 306 embodies the concept and the consequences of political correctness.

Before the controversy, E 306 was a class that taught incoming freshman how to write a competent college essay, how to write a research paper, how to handle the complexities of English grammar and usage. In short, Freshman English was freshman English.

In the spring of 1990, a number of administrators in the Department of English and College of Liberal Arts at UT decided it was time to reform the curriculum at the University to address what they insisted were the new political realities of the 1990s: an oppressive and declining America facing demographic changes that would compell it to repudiate such concepts such as individualism, free enterprise, and Western culture.

These people decided that E 306 Rhet. and Composition, the university's largest required class, would become a seminar not in writing, but, to use the proponents' jargon, in "Understanding Difference," focusing specifically on issues of racism and sexism. Instead of learning to write, students would plow through a series of legal cases dealing with racial discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual preference, and so on.

The course would be dominated by a sociology textbook by Paula Rothenberg, a Marxist feminist, entitled Racism and Sexism: An Integrated Study, which included ~~readings~~ readings such as "'Pricks'" and 'Chicks': A Plea for 'Persons''; "He Defies You Still: The Memoirs of a Sissy," and "Androgyny as an Ideal for Human Development."

A composition handbook was also required. But from that 822 page book, the syllabus for the course asked students to read only 34 pages that dealt specifically with writing--and eight of those pages were concerned with sexist language. I should point out that these E 306 "Difference" composition classes would be taught, by and large, by inexperienced graduate students of English with relatively little background in writing instruction--let alone law, sociology, and psychology.

Now what makes the E 306 story unusual is not the bizarre course proposed to replace freshman English. Indeed, this new E 306 was modeled after many similar courses already being offered across the country. No, what made E 306 an exceptional story worthy of nationwide attention is that four faculty members in an English Department of approximately eighty people decided to oppose the new course on the extraordinary grounds that a freshman composition class ought to be

first and foremost a writing class, not a seminar in race, class, and gender.

What followed was a barrage of abuse aimed at these professors and their defenders. They were described in the local and statewide press as ultra-right wingers, racists, and sexual harassers. They were likened to an "academic death squad" and they were accused of being part of "a well-orchestrated right wing offensive" on campuses using "McCarthyist tactics." *3 out of 4 were liberals.*

A full year of attack, debate, and controversy ensued during which time the facts about E 306 "Difference" were gradually revealed to a surprisingly interested and concerned public. Their attention had been sparked by an article that had appeared in Texas Monthly about the UT English Department which described an ~~end-of-the-semester~~ gathering of radical faculty and graduate students called a "Bring Something from Texas You Can Burn Party."

Soon everyone in Texas, it seemed, had an opinion about freshman English and, when the radical course was laid open for scrutiny, the outcry from students, parents, and alumni was powerful and sustained. E 306 "Difference" quickly lost support even in the university where there do remain some faculty and administrators--usually in disciplines outside of the humanities--who believe a composition class should teach composition, not "Chambers v. the Omaha Girls' Club."

We stopped that radical version of E 306 and, a year later, the university faculty also voted two-to-one against a related requirement for multicultural courses.

But the price paid was high. As a result of these controversies, two of my colleagues in the English Department decided to leave the University of Texas and a third opted for retirement. I'm the only surviving member of that original gang of four who opposed E 306 openly.

Prior to this E 306 incident, I would have felt it entirely inappropriate for academics to cultivate political relationships with legislators. In matters of curriculum and instruction, our spheres, our kinds of expertise, and our interests are quite different and advantageously separate and might have remained so.

But that wall between the legislature and academy is eroding swiftly, in part because the academy is now filled with people who regard themselves more as agents of social change than as researchers or scholars. They are eager to use whatever instruments they can muster to restructure first our universities and then our society along lines inimical to the beliefs of most of us in this room today and most of the people in this country. Yet these people have strong allies in state legislatures and the governing boards of universities.

So now I think it is time for those of us who view the university as a ~~site~~ site for knowledge, not social struggle and confrontation, to take a more active role in preserving the integrity of our institutions. After all, why should the legislative process be used only to corrupt and radicalize the universities?

As a faculty member at a university where the tides of political correctness have been partially and somewhat successfully resisted, I'd

like briefly to suggest a number of ways that you as legislators can help to resist the tenured radicals.

- 1 First of all, learn what the code words of the radical left really mean.

Multiculturalism, for example, is not about expanding what our students know about other people, but a political study of western oppression designed to advance the agenda of particular interest groups.

Pluralism to the radicals does not mean allowing competing viewpoints to be represented; rather it means privileging the views of groups that they have define as **marginalized** or **silenced**.

Democratizing the university does not mean bringing more democratic procedures to university governance, but eliminating the value judgments and standards that now make it possible to discriminate between what is good, just, fair, or true and what is not.

Other such terms you will hear from advocates of radical programs are **diversity**, **difference**, **sensitivity**, and **participatory democracy**. I can't define them all for you. Suffice to say that in our universities today, they don't mean what you think they do.

Similarly, be sure you understand what the critics of these radicals mean by academic freedom, politicization of the classroom, and radical.

- 2 Second, worry less about the speech codes enacted on campuses than the bureaucracies created to enforce them. The fact is that very few incidents of racial, ethnic, or gender abuse occur on any given campus, but whole offices full of radical apparachiks have been formed with little to do but work on advancing an agenda for change, creating more bureaucracies for dealing with more imaginary problems. Do such offices need to be funded?
- 3 Whenever programs for multicultural studies are brought to you for legislative enactment, ask whether the university has required courses in western culture. Most do not. Insist that they do-- before you will even consider the appropriateness of mandating multicultural courses. Better yet, refuse to allow the legislature to mandate any particular curriculum for the university.
- 4 Do not routinely fund any university degree programs termed "studies." They are usually fictional disciplines with political agendas: women's studies, peace studies, Middle East studies.
- 5 Make no assumptions about today's campuses or faculties based on your past experiences. The academy today is likely to be a very different place from what you remembered--even if you attended in the late 1960's. (Gribben)
- 6 Support affirmative action programs that give preference to individuals according to their financial need, not primarily according to considerations of race, ethnicity, or gender. Investigate how affirmative action is operating in your state's institutions and how it is may be abused by faculty activists using

the good intentions of the program for their narrower political purposes. (Gribben)

- 7 Reject projects to fund ethnic and minority cultural centers on campuses as well as proposals for establishing student lobbyists. Such centers and proposals are almost always political in their *intentions* ~~ultimate goal~~. Reinforce the principle that state or student moneys are not to be used to support particular political agendas.
- 8 Support searches for University presidents with guts. And don't take a university administrator's word that there are no problems with political correctness on his or her campus. These people work diligently to conceal such problems because many of them have been co-opted by the radicals into believing it is better for their careers to move with what can seem like the irresistible tide.
- 9 Support and reward teaching over research, particularly in the humanities where research has largely devolved into politics. Insist that universities find ways to reduce the number of graduate students teaching undergraduates, even if it means some regular faculty may have to teach more classes. (Gribben)
- 10 Cultivate relationships with faculty who can steer you through the jargon of the radicals and who can give you ammunition when educational issues come up in the legislature.
- 11 Demand more intellectual diversity in your state universities. It cannot be an accident that there are virtually no Republicans in Humanities departments. If diversity and difference are such radical virtues, why is there so little diversity among faculty members? Insist on new blood in the academy. Re-empower deans and administrators in the hiring process. Make the University see itself as a partnership of interests, not as a set of autonomous departmental enclaves. (Gribben)
- 12 Extend protection to university faculty and administrators who play the role of whistle blowers. In the face of significant abuses, do not make them choose between silence and the continuation of their careers at one of your state universities. (Gribben)
- 13 Support the integrity of disciplines. Make it clear that students in your state have a right to expect to be taught what their college catalog describes. Freshman composition ought to be a writing course, not a seminar in race, class, and gender. (Gribben)

Colorado Springs Talk

Up until three years ago, I would have felt it entirely inappropriate for academics to cultivate political relationships with legislators. In matters of curriculum and instruction, our spheres, our kinds of expertise, and our interests were quite different and advantageously separate and might have remained so.

But that wall between the legislature and academy is eroding swiftly, in part because the academy is now filled with people who regard themselves more as agents of social change than as researchers or scholars. They are eager to use whatever instruments they can muster to restructure first our universities and then our society along lines I would guess to be inimical to the beliefs of most of us in this room today and most of the people in this country.

To these aptly titled "tenured radicals," the academy is, first and foremost, a means to power and they are in a hurry. So they have learned to cultivate elected officials and to use legislative pressures and mandates to move reluctant faculties and administrations into accepting their interpretation of American culture, into filling faculty and administrative positions with their people, into influencing admissions in ways that run counter to the traditional ideals of universities, and into using state supported institutions and public revenues to fund their specific political agendas.

There remain many in the academy who are faithful to the more traditional role of the university to preserve what is already known, to discover new knowledge, to disseminate that knowledge, and to test it rigorously according to impartial standards of truth, not according to the wishes of special interest groups. Unfortunately, traditional faculty have sat quietly for a long time, perhaps fearful of the power that those who would politicize the academy delight in acquiring. Some of us have seen that power used against ourselves and our colleagues to demean our work, our motives, and our professional integrity.

But now I think it is time we take a more active role in preserving the integrity of our institutions of higher learning for future generations. After all, why should the legislative process be used only further to corrupt and radicalize the universities?

Lest you think I exaggerate what some legislators are willing to do to support their colleagues in the academy, let me read to you from the last paragraph of a letter by Ron Wilson, a State legislator in Texas. He is reacting to the more than two-to-one rejection of a proposal for multicultural courses at the University of Texas at Austin. In his letter sent to UT President William Cunningham, the Governor of Texas, various minority legislative caucuses, and the UT faculty, Representative Wilson argues in favor of multicultural courses:

Such a class would go far in fostering better understanding by all, of the world in which we all must live. It may also foster better understanding when considering such items as faculty salaries, construction projects, expansions and the numerous other requests the legislature is besieged with around budget time. There are many of us who will be watching a little closer those items we are so often asked for, but are ignored when we request something small in

return from the university, such as a three hour course on diversity.

This letter was roundly criticized as intrusive legislative meddling in the business of the university, but I think that Representative Ron Wilson had simply put into print what other more skillful and more subtle legislators no doubt would be saying to university officials in private settings.

I do not wish to be an alarmist here, linking the current academic left to some crude marxist conspiracy from the fifties. Most of the current generation of self-styled "transformative intellectuals"--who constitute a majority in many humanities departments now--are long past believing in a revolution of the proleteriat. Instead, they expect to change the United States permanently and radically from within by dominating the institutions responsible for shaping information and thought.

Yet if the current generation of radicals aren't doctrinaire marxists, the dangers they pose to our values and way of life remain serious precisely because their methods of transforming society are subtle and seductive, imbued with the rhetoric of fairness, equality, and democracy. What links those who today on campus identify themselves variously as feminists, social constructionists, deconstructionists, gay liberationists, animal rights activists, post-structuralists, critical theorists, peace study activists, or multiculturalists (the terms are actually quite interchangeable) is a commitment to what Aaron Wildavsky calls "radical egalitarianism." No doubt you have already seen and will continue to see the influence of this principle on a great deal of legislation.

A major premise of radical egalitarianism is that, in a state of nature, human beings would share the fruits of this planet perfectly equally. All wealth, knowledge, opportunity, indeed even talent would shake out naturally and easily in a precise numerical correlation to the racial, ethnic, and gender distributions present in a society. Of course, differences of class would be entirely eliminated.

All that currently stands in the way of this distributive utopia are traditional interests vigorously represented by patriarchal, hierarchical, racist, sexist capitalists, usually male and usually of European extraction. In short, Republicans and, believe it or not, liberals. These radicals often hate liberals more than conservatives.

To create utopia, the radical egalitarians ask the government in the interest of fairness to intervene in our lives and institutions in a thousand ways, redistributing the fruits of talent and effort to be sure that no one has more than anyone else. It does not take a genius to realize that the utopia of these radical egalitarians would not look much different from the Marxist hell that reigned for decades in Eastern Europe.

With much of the intellectual work behind these notions coming from the academy, it is not at all surprising that our universities should be transforming themselves to conform to equalitarian notions. University and professional school admissions are now routinely influenced by various government targets and quotas. Freshman are processed through orientation programs that help define for them what can and cannot be said or thought on campus. And their courses are routinely influenced,

especially in the humanities, by faculty who seek to convince them that what we call western culture is a narrow, constricted, and distinctly unhealthy view of the world, certainly no better and probably a whole lot worse than any other culture on the planet. Indeed, all of the ills of the world, from the repression of women to the destruction of the ozone layer can be laid at the feet of those damn Greeks in Athens--who, by the way, only stole their ideas from the African Egyptians.

If you have read national periodicals in the last eighteen months or so, you are no doubt aware of many of these activities which have been lumped under the label of "political correctness." As a faculty member at a university where the tides of political correctness have been partially and somewhat successfully resisted, I'd like briefly to suggest thirteen ways that you as legislators can help to maintain or restore the integrity of the universities in your states and to protect faculty willing to resist the tenured radicals.

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