

UT at 'the rear' on multiculturalism, professor says

SOME YOUNG WHITE students see nothing wrong with breaking into a black student's dormitory room and slashing her teddy bear, soaking her clothes with bleach and scrawling "nigger hang" in lipstick on the wall.

Nor, to some whites, is there anything wrong or hurtful in painting KKK and WE HATE NIGGERS on two underwear-clad white fraternity pledges and dumping them on a mostly black campus.

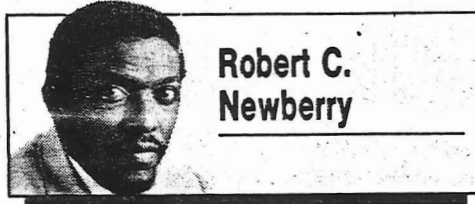
And only students who are deprived of knowing people of other races and cultures could write: "Hey Spic, if you and your kind can't handle the work here . . . why don't you just get out. We'd all be a lot happier," or "Jew-boy get out. I'm going to burn your Torah."

This kind of hatred toward people with different racial and cultural backgrounds — which occurred at universities — most likely can be traced back to stereotyped thinking by students who know nothing about people of other races or cultures.

And it seems as if some folks at the University of Texas at Austin want to keep UT students in this kind of bag.

Sadly, the UT faculty has again rejected an effort to require students to study non-Western, or U.S. minority cultures.

"Texas is in its normal position, bringing up the rear," professor Wayne Dan-



Robert C. Newberry

ielson, chairman of a committee that proposed multicultural classes, said.

Conservatives, however, praised the election results. "This is a tremendous victory for students and relevant education," said Ed Sullivan, chairman of the Young Conservatives of Texas.

Faculty members voted 759-434 against the proposed multicultural classes. UT has been trying to implement the courses since racial incidents on campus in 1990 caused lingering tensions.

But the effort has been opposed by some professors who say the reform is part of a movement by campus liberals to *politically indoctrinate* students.

It seems a bit hypocritical that the people opposed to multicultural teaching don't — and won't — ever say that students are being politically indoctrinated already with the European view of life.

As far as American teaching goes, most of human life revolves around Great Brit-

ain, Spain, Italy, etc. Very seldom do American schools make it a practice to teach that archeological evidence points to life beginning in east Africa, then moving across Asia and on into the Americas long before European explorers started sailing and killing for land.

It's almost as if the world doesn't exist outside of what the European countries did. That viewpoint is what all of the different cultures in America learn every day. It's the world as seen through the eyes of European explorers, writers and historians. It's sort of like U.S. schools passing out textbooks saying, "these are lists of things you as a minority should do to improve yourself." Then when the minorities pass over a list to be better understood, U.S. schools and professors ask, "What the hell is this?"

It's a one-way street. And until that street becomes two-way, Americans of all races will continue to find it easy to snipe at each other and hurt each other physically, mentally and spiritually.

Why are some people so opposed to all of America getting to know all of America? It is a fact that the United States is not homogenous. It is a fact that many different races of people with many different cultural backgrounds live here. So why do some people work so hard to keep

us apart? Is it race superiority?

Most people wouldn't hate people of other races if they knew something about the other races besides stereotyped images and media portrayals.

In an experiment by psychologists that was reported in the New York Times, grade-school students — whose biases have not had time to harden — were put into mixed-race groups and told to work out a problem together. Once they were a unified group, the youngsters began to like each other more than they liked the people who were in other groups.

This experiment demonstrates how familiarity can lead to friendship.

One of these days, the people who are fighting and voting against multicultural teaching and learning will snap to what the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said: "Men hate each other because they fear each other, and they fear each other because they don't know each other, and they don't know each other because they are often separated from each other."

And as long as places like UT-Austin continue participating in keeping white students from knowing people of other races, some will continue to think it's OK to paint racial epithets on a car and sell T-shirts with a black Sambo caricature on it because it's free speech. How sad.