

For Reasoned Scholarship in a Free Society

Virginia Scholar

Newsletter of the Virginia Association of Scholars

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	3
EDITORIAL	4
Taking stock and looking forward	
FOLLOW-UPS & RESPONSES	6
Where does the money go?	
ACADEMIC STANDARDS	13
LITERATURE	15
BITS & PIECES	20

DEPARTMENTS & SIDEBARS:

VAS, NAS, VIRGINIA SCHOLAR	2,23
Quotes.....	7,18

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VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS**PLEASE HELP BY GIVING**

Virginia Scholar #1 was December 1993.

As well as to NAS & VAS members in Virginia, it goes to members of Governing Boards of the major Virginia universities, to media representatives, to NAS affiliates in other states, to such organizations as the Center for Individual Rights, and to an increasing number of individuals who heard of it by word of mouth and expressed interest.

There's no ready way to judge the impact we're having. But as Editor I treasure:

- a Governing Board member who joined NAS after reading *VS*
- alumni who did likewise
- a few alumni and others who wrote to university administrators on matters *VS* had brought to their attention.

That's the sort of thing that helps me stay enthusiastic about the job of Editor; if it were just a newsletter to distribute among our own members I would not find it worth the effort.

NAS, which has fully funded our activities up to now, believes State affiliates should become financially self-supporting.

If you're a member and want to help us continue and expand our activities, please consider making an extra donation.

If you're not a member of NAS or VAS but have been getting *VS* and enjoy it, please consider making an occasional gift (for addresses see inside back cover)

PLEASE HELP BY DOING

Share *Virginia Scholar* with as many people as you can. Pass it around. Tell us where to send complimentary copies. We have extras of many back issues. Ask us for a bunch and **send them to the Departments on your campus** with a request that they be circulated among the faculty.

VASNET

VAS members can communicate with one another through our electronic bulletin board.

To subscribe: send the following message to listproc@gmu.edu:

subscribe vasnet {your full name}

To unsubscribe: send the following message to listproc@gmu.edu

unsubscribe vasnet

Join up now. You may not need to use the list often, but if you do it's likely to be invaluable.

Back Issues of *Virginia Scholar*

Through the generous courtesy of the Virginia Tech Chapter of AAUP and the technical know-how of its president, Peter Rony, all past issues (#1, December 1993 to #13, Fall 1998) are now available on-line at

<http://fbox.vt.edu:10021/faculty/aaup/index4.html>

We also have a few spares from the printings of most issues and would be happy to send them to interested persons or groups. Some of the main features were:

Why going to college has become so expensive in Virginia – four-part series, #1-4

Bibliography on the Mandelstamm Affair – #1
#2: ***On loyalty and whistle-blowing*** (ed.)

#4: M. Krauss:

When you face the PC inquisition

#6: Alexander Weiss:

– ***Affirmative action and me***

Henry Bauer:

How I got here: an open letter from the files

#7: Reviews of contrarian books about AIDS

#8: ***La Trahison des Clercs*** (ed.)

Sal Choudhury,

The price of intellectual freedom

More contrarian books about AIDS

#9: ***Culture and multi-culturalism*** (ed.)

Affirmative action:

a major threat to intercollegiate

athletics

Darrell Stump, ***Barbarians at the gates***

Hans Christian Rott, ***On anonymity***

Henry Bauer, ***Diversity and identity***

#10: Theophilus Whiteman,

Sexually transmitted dis-ease

Let them eat cake (ed.)

Academic standards

Generation X Goes to College

#11: ***Academic standards*** – many reports
Experts, science, and common sense (ed.)

#12: Neil Postman's books on modern culture
Howl 1998 — *For Academe*; Ginsberg's classic
applied to politically correct academe

#13: ***Where does the money go?***

Evaluating administrators

President's Message

Dear VAS members:

I'm writing this note the day after the President's State of the Union address, and am tempted to say that the state of the Virginia Association of Scholars is much more sound than is the state of the U.S. government! VAS has a record number of members (230 as of today); our finances are sound (though we have not yet received our 1999 allocation from the National Association...); our annual meeting in Radford was the best attended in our history; our listserv (VASNET -- email me at MKrauss323@aol.com for instructions on how to "subscribe") has a record number of participants; we recently acquired new cores of members at James Madison and Virginia State; and (last but not least!) our president has not corrupted the organization by his behavior (honest!). We are, I believe, now among the 2-3 most active state affiliates of the NAS. For all this, VAS members owe ourselves a pat on the collective back!

This year promises to be another active one for our association. By the time you read this the data we requested (under the state Freedom of Information Act) from the state, concerning admissions practices of ten public colleges and universities, will have been presented by the Center for Equal Opportunity at a Richmond press conference. My hope is that this VAS/CEO action will spur our legislators to prohibit all racial discrimination at our public institutions, as have done California and Washington recently. On another front, our path-breaking analysis of the failings of state universities to provide a good core curriculum has prompted both the State Council for Higher Education (SCHEV) and the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Education to investigate the matter: I have given presentations before both groups recently, and am happy to report that our concern with the quality of general education is very widely shared. I was even named to the "core curriculum" committee of George Mason University -- proof positive that even those who are far from friendly to VAS understand our influence. Indeed, it is possible that of all 50 states Virginia presents the best political climate presently for sound educational reform.

It is my intention in 1999 to solicit "seed money" which would enable VAS to hire an Executive Director (as approved at the Radford meeting). This will provide a constant media presence, and a regular fund-raising branch, enabling VAS to expand its presence to every institution of higher education in the state.

What can individual members do? Sign up at least one new member (from your own college or, even better, from an institution where there are currently no VAS members), by using the Virginia form you can download from the NAS Web-site (www.nas.org). Keep us all informed of happenings in your corner of the state, via snail mail, email, or through the listserv. Come to the next annual meeting (which we plan for the Tidewater area, although that remains to be confirmed) in October, or perhaps to the mid-year meeting likely to take place in April or May (members will be notified by mail).

I look forward to hearing from many of you this year, and to seeing all of you at the next annual meeting.

Best Wishes

Michael

 Editorial **TAKING STOCK AND LOOKING FORWARD**

The civil-rights revolution of the 1950s and '60s was a great success. But it could not change everything overnight, and what remains to be done has been misinterpreted and distorted in subsequent decades. Demagogues misappropriated the rhetoric of the great civil-rights leaders in a way that brought a pall over public discourse, a gloomy time in which, for example, a man could lose his job because his poorly educated co-worker has never encountered the word "niggardly" and thinks it a racial slur.

By the '90s, American higher education – and much else in American society – had fallen under a virtually total hegemony of political correctitude. But in the mid-90s, resistance to excesses of political correctitude has at last begun to take effect. What more can we do, what should we do to hasten a return to responsibility in learning and scholarship?

Political correctitude arrived unannounced and unsuspected, in the Trojan-horse guise of equal opportunity and affirmative action. It took us by surprise, and much of the 1980s saw a struggle to expose to public view the reality – so hard to believe and yet so starkly the case – that the bulk of American higher education is governed by people whose loyalty is not at all to disinterested learning and scholarship – that is to say, to **education** – but rather to a particular and highly extreme social ideology, an ideology moreover that is anathema to American tradition and to the views of the silent overwhelming majority.

The evidence is all around, for those willing to look. The case has been made directly and in detail in many books and in the pages of *Academic Questions*. Perhaps most convincingly, the case is made out of the mouths of the proponents of political correctitude themselves, see for example the contortions of the American Association of University Professors a few years ago when its own committee tried to deny the very existence of political correctness.

Twenty years ago I had been asked, while being interviewed for a position as Dean, "What would you do if you had two equally qualified candidates, one of whom was a man and the other a woman?"

Ten years later, no one who answered as I did would have been appointed. Nor would a question have been phrased in that manner. Nowadays, it is the rare advertisement for an administrative position that does not demand some evidence of "a com-

mitment to diversity". There can hardly be an academic who does not know that **absolute preference** in hiring has long been given to people of color and gender, never mind what their academic credentials happened to be; thus we never hired ABDs – unless, of course, they were black or female or, the administrator's delight, **both** those academically desirable things.

There can hardly be an academic who has not seen administrative and other positions created solely to provide employment for people of color or gender. There can hardly be an academic who has not seen students' failing performances converted into passing by administrative action, provided only that the student has color or disability or other diversity status.

There can hardly be an academic who has not seen and heard administrators practicing hypocrisy and dishonesty in denying that these things are routine practice.

So discouragement and failure of morale became the predominant mode among those faculty who still believed that higher education should be about education, not indoctrination; about discussing, not propagandizing; about intellect, learning, scholarship, not a cover for social engineering.

I have been as guilty as anyone of sinking into despondency, being unable to fathom how improvements can be brought about. The direct problem is that academe is governed by politically correct ideology. Who is willing and able to remove the ideologues

THE ONLY THING NECESSARY

FOR THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL

IS FOR GOOD MEN TO DO NOTHING

and their fellow-travelers?

And who is available to replace them?

Yet perhaps it is true that the darkness is at its peak just before dawn. The last decade has also seen the organizing of reform movements, notably the National Association of Scholars and its affiliates. If nothing else, this has been a powerful *educational* effort, helping academics to become aware, to be assured that the bizarrerie they think to see *really exists*. Every now and again we hear that *Virginia Scholar* has served to open some eyes and to make some other people feel less alone. When political correctitude surfaced at my own campus, in full regalia with the arrival of a PC provost and a PC director of affirmative action, the Virginia Association of Scholars was a lifeline for me.

The educational efforts of the National Association of Scholars were just a beginning. NAS spurred the organizing of scholarly associations in several disciplines, seeking to re-establish intellect as the *raison d'être* for the several professional societies – the MLA being only the most prominent of them – that had been taken over by politically extreme radicals. NAS sponsored the formation of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, ACTA (formerly the National Alumni Forum), to focus the common sense of the silent majority on the antics of irresponsible administrations and to persuade them by the powerful weapons of alumni sentiment backed by the giving or withholding of financial support. NAS inspired founding of the American Academy for Liberal Education, a ground-breaking accrediting organization intended to promote liberal and general education. It was also members of the California Association of Scholars who organized for Proposition 209 which has banned racial preferences. NAS, then, has provided stimulus and support for a number of worthy ventures.

Another powerful force in the last several years has been the Center for Individual Rights, which has brought the force of law into the battle against racial preferences and restrictions on free speech. The Center has had a succession of notable victories and has given much heart to such persecuted academics as Maas at Cornell.

The Center will not soon lack for worthy causes. The hegemonic PC administrations in higher education, and their allies in government and society at large – not to speak of the radical *éminences grises* who will not let them deviate from the party lines – have demonstrated clearly enough, over and again,

that they intend to persist in their misguided ways no matter how unconstitutional or illegal those have been ruled to be by the courts; thus the Hopwood decision barring racial preferences in admissions was met by overt defiance and the unashamed, open canvassing of devices for getting around the courts' findings. The PCers of today are practicing exactly the same "massive resistance" against the Constitution and the laws of the land as the ilk of George Wallace did in the 1950s and '60s, and for exactly the same reason – desiring to keep in place practices that discriminate among and against Americans on the basis of the color of their skin.

So anti-PC organizations, for education and reform and legal intervention, are in place and have had discernible effects. How to build upon the initial successes? What *specific policies* might usefully be pushed, and how might PC administrations be persuaded to adopt them? What issues offer the prospect that many faculty might support them?

A most effective strategy might be a determined push to have a higher proportion of money spent on **academics**.

This would work against political correctness indirectly not directly, but could well be the most powerful way of disarming it. Where would the hegemony of political correctitude be without its armies of entrenched bureaucratic functionaries, its deep pockets for public displays and speakers, its affirmative-action grants and minorities-only programs? There are recruiting officers and offices and budgets separately for black students, separate Black Cultural Centers, separate "ABD Fellows" programs¹ whereby minority but not other ABDs get \$6000 to teach one course during a summer session (whereas the Others get less than half that for a course during the regular term).

Governors and legislatures and coordinating boards have been demanding that colleges focus on their educational missions and spend their funds responsibly. Here is a rare opportunity for professors to demonstrate that *they*, not the administrations, are on the side of practicality, of the public, of the students. Let the professoriate campaign to have

¹ *Chronicle of Higher Education* 16x98, A76, advertisement of "Virginia Tech ABD Fellows Program". Ironically enough, the very same advertisement claims that "Virginia Tech... does not discriminate... on the basis of race, color... [etc.]" Perhaps imitating the President of the United States in the splitting of rhetorical hairs, a defense might be that discriminating *against* is not the same as discriminating *in favor of*. But in the bad old days there wasn't really discrimination *against* blacks, either, it was just discrimination *for* non-Blacks, non-Asians, etc.

more of universities' funds go into the classroom instead of into the endless "initiatives" that administrators ceaselessly invent. Professors, by and large, are also in an excellent position to draw public attention to the increasing diversion of institutional funds to matters that are separate from and irrelevant to learning and studying.

Administrators like to make much of their commitment to teaching; but typically they make much of it **only in words**. It must be a rare instructor who has not experienced a decline in funds for instructional material and classroom support. Much satisfaction for instructors, students, legislatures, and citizenry would follow if administrations could be made to put the money where their mouths so often are, in support of teaching. So governing boards of

colleges, coordinating boards of higher education for the various States of the Union, governors and legislatures, alumni, and the media, ought to apply to institutions of higher education a very simple and practical measure:

WHAT PROPORTION OF THE INSTITUTION'S FUNDS ARE SPENT BY THOSE UNITS THAT ARE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR INSTRUCTION?

If carried out honestly, this exercise would reveal, as no other could, how much – in public universities, how much of *State-provided* funds – is spent on racial and gender initiatives, touchy-feely student activities, intercollegiate athletics, and other administrative passions. For more on this, see the following piece on "Where does the money go?", and especially the section "Accounting and accountability", p.11.

FOLLOW-UPS & RESPONSES

from the Editor

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

we asked in *VS#13*. Further events provoke us to further comment.

Explaining universities

We cited (*VS#13*, at p.20) from the local newspaper this comment by an Associate Vice-President:

It's very, very hard to explain a university.¹
This is an extraordinarily overcommunicated world...
You need to be able to tell your story and describe who you are.²

If you have something really difficult and complex to explain, how would you go about it?

Obviously, by means of 15- or 30-second thought-bites. Or perhaps that only seems the obvious way if your job is that of Puffer. At any rate,

Virginia Tech plans to launch a glossy statewide television advertising campaign... to burnish its image among prospective students, taxpayers and government leaders.

The series of four 15-second commercials and one 30-second commercial will run...in the four largest markets in Virginia...

The Virginia Tech Foundation paid for the 12-week, \$260,000 ad campaign...

The ads... promote a loftier, more subtle theme: that higher education is vital and worthy of public support.

A university can "tell its story" and "describe what it is" in 15-to-30-second commercials? That promote "lofty" and "subtle" themes?

Puff, Puff, Magic Dragon.

Were I in Governor Gilmore's shoes, I'd be tempted to reduce forthwith the appropriation to Virginia Tech by the \$260,000 that campaign will cost, plus the salaries of those who conceived this self-serving scheme that will benefit primarily those administrators whose budgets and staffs are increased so that they can plan and supervise these and similar pufferies.

In our opinion, higher education would be much better served if people did **not** understand universities, than if their understanding is determined by 30-second TV commercials created by professional puffers.

And how was the need for this new advertising venture discovered?

Last December,... [a member of the Puffery Unit] was watching an Auburn football game when he noticed the commercials for Auburn were very different than any he had ever seen. He came back to work on Monday and mentioned the idea of doing

some commercials of the same type for Tech. Soon, he had a supportive reaction of several people... The production of the new commercials was underway.³

Any teacher must envy this ability to do something as soon as it's thought of. Apparently funds are not an issue in that administrative unit of the university, as however they sorely are in the academic units, where even the issuing of an invitation to an eminent visitor to give a seminar is problematic.

We think it is important to show the quality of the work done here

explained a Puffer.

I'd love to have the quality of my teaching and writing displayed for all the world to admire; but for the life of me I wouldn't know how it could be done in 30 seconds.

There has been no criticism at this point. The response has been overwhelmingly positive.

Please consider this a resounding criticism and less than positive response.

(It is) important for Tech to establish a corporate image

said a campus pundit. But he failed to say **why**.

The truth about universities

The truth has to do with what actually happens. What people **say** is happening is not necessarily what **is** actually happening (particularly not when the speakers are puff-meisters and spin-doctors). The surest guide to what actually happens, the surest indication of what a university's **real priorities actually are** can be read from the expenditures listed in the budget.

In VS#13 we noted the administrative decision to use \$700,000 in "savings" to give higher salary raises to administrators than the legislature had provided for. **That demonstrates unequivocally that the highest priority for spending that \$700,000 was to give larger raises to administrators.**

Are there not any other worthy causes to which that money might have been applied?

As it happens, that sum is not far from what the university pays for renting the premises in which are housed the Math Emporium. It was an administrative decision, to rent those premises and to ask the Legislature to provide extra funds to pay the rental. The Legislature, however, noting that the rental had already been paid, decided it was not necessary to provide those additional funds.

How then did the university handle this setback? One that resulted from an unwise administrative decision?

By having the academic units pay for it:

Math Emporium Recommendation⁵

The university was unsuccessful this past general assembly session in its attempt to obtain funds for the lease and operations of the Math Emporium. The university's arrangement when the emporium began was to redirect internal funds if the request for new moneys was unsuccessful. The redirection is an across-the-board reduction to colleges, provost offices (research and graduate studies, outreach, academic affairs, and administration), information services, networking infrastructure, media services, and the computing center of 0.61%. For arts and sciences, that is \$289,907. There are insufficient central funds in the college to handle this reduction, so departments will have to participate.

Indeed universities are becoming very like the corporate world, where executives are increasingly a separate class from, and out of touch with, the

THEY ALL DO IT

"Why is there so little in VS about other institutions than VaTech?", we're asked from time to time. Only because we are rarely provided material from those other places. But there is no doubt that the same major trends and themes can be found throughout the Commonwealth and the nation – indeed, the world. For example:
The University of Virginia Medical Center... has rehired the public relations firm that pitched in during the controversy about switched newborns... In August, Cookerly and Company charged UVa approximately \$25,000 for 10 days. Company representatives helped field reporters' calls... they helped draft a letter of apology from UVa President John T. Casteen III... The firm will stay at UVa for a few days this time... [and the university] was not sure how much the bill will be⁴

Why should not a publicly funded university, its president, and its medical center just tell the unvarnished truth?

Leave aside the moral advantage; it would also be much cheaper.

Is there any **academic** (i.e. non-administrative) unit that can call in PR consultants without even worrying about what the eventual cost will be?

workers. When a CEO or other executive makes a boo-boo and profits suffer, what happens? The company downsizes, lays off some workers, and pays its executives a handsome bonus for the emotionally onerous task of sacking people; thus a decade or so ago, IBM's CEO received \$8,000,000 in the year when he sacked 8,000 people. Just the other day⁶, Volvo workers signed a new contract that "will start new employees at 30 percent less than base pay and require an eight-month waiting period for health insurance"; the union had been under "threats by Volvo... to scuttle a \$148 million expansion project". The day following the workers' ratification of the union's agreement to the contract, Volvo announced increased bonuses and benefits for its managers; a spokesman said these had long been planned, but had not been announced until the contract was settled because it might have affected the negotiations⁷. Indeed it might.

At any rate, as in industry so in academe: an **administrative** miscalculation in the university leads to **workers'** budgets being reduced. **That's** the university's priority: cut academic budgets **first**.

But is it worth making a fuss about a mere 0.61%? Isn't that making a mountain out of a mole-hill?

Far from it. The briefest acquaintance with academic budgets reveals that they consist predominantly of salaries and wages, costs that are so tied up in long-term commitments that it takes years to effect significant change. For example, for the College of Arts & Sciences the budget comprises⁸ **97% personnel costs**. Thus the reduction of "merely" 0.61% **of available actual money** represents a **20% reduction in effective operating budget**. That at a time when the operating budget is already too small **by a factor of about 3**: we have it on the authority of Dean Josef Martin⁹ that a budget in which more than 90% is personnel costs reveals that the operating budget is too small to support what quality teaching and scholarship require.

Even before that 0.61% reduction, faculty (for example in the Editor's unit) were granted \$250 for the whole academic year to cover long-distance phone, fax, travel, etc. What, one would like to know, are the corresponding restrictions in administrative units? Copying is restricted to 400 per month. What, one would like to know, are the corresponding restrictions in administrative units? And in how many administrative units is there a restricted issue of only one writing instrument (board marker, not

computer) per person? That's so in at least one academic unit, see below.

Priorities

So when you hear or read that a university has teaching as its highest priority, have a look at the budget before you applaud this apparent setting of proper priorities. You are then likely to find that the priority placed on teaching is verbal only, an exercise in spin-doctoring and puff-meistery, while the available discretionary money goes to pay for administrative mis-steps and salary raises for those who mis-stepped.

Though budgets are the most incontrovertible demonstration of what priorities really are, one does occasionally come upon other notable illustrations:

>Date: Wed, 2 Sep 1998 11:05:15-0400

>Subject: Hiring Plans and Decisions

>To Directors and Heads:

>Bob [Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences] mentioned during the heads retreat that he would try to respond by now to your hiring plans. Events have conspired to prevent his responding, and university business will prevent his responding before very late this month. I understand that this is a problem because of deadlines you face in advertising positions... At the same time, the university business that is delaying his decisions is bringing the college prominence in the university and with influential friends.

... There were 32 requests for hiring across the college... [but those] connected with the cross-cutting initiatives... [were only] 12...

Of course we want intellectually curious people who will sell their souls to advance knowledge... [but] Bob must resolve in his mind... whether combining disciplinary goals and university goals precludes our attracting the "best" applicants...

For those – Puffers and others– who may not immediately see what's wrong with all this:

- Nothing in a university is more important than the quality of the faculty. Therefore hiring is the most important thing an administrator has to take care of.
- Nothing should preclude hiring the **best** faculty. Talk of "best" applicants leaves this commentator uncharacteristically speechless.
- That a College of Arts & Sciences should make hiring decisions based on the university's "cross-cutting initiatives" may not seem absurd, if one doesn't know what those seven are, namely:

* Biological systems & biotechnology

- * Computing, information, & communications systems
- * Environmental sciences & energy systems
- * Food, nutrition & health
- * Learning communities
- * Materials science
- * Transportation

So much for art, philosophy, history, religion, foreign languages, English. So much, in other words, for the humanities. So much, too, for any social science that can't shoe-horn itself into having something to do with "learning communities" or maybe the effect on people of the various technologies we conspire to perpetrate. So much for liberal education.

If, however, you are prepared to assist with those seven deadly sins – pardon me, cross-cutting initiatives – then the world's your oyster and money flows. For example, reach for a ReachOUT Seed Grant of up to \$7500 "to develop outreach initiatives... that extend the University's knowledge resources to new or existing partners"¹⁰.

On the other hand, if your priority happens to be **teaching**, don't expect support in the classroom or with the assigning of suitable classrooms (see interview with Josef Martin in VS#13). I was telling a colleague of having been assigned a classroom that has, in lieu of a chalk board, one of those white boards on which one writes with a special marker – which, of course, is not supplied with the classroom; one has to get that from one's Departmental office – which means one has to know before getting to the classroom that this one has such a board, which knowledge is however not shared with the faculty member when s/he is notified of the classroom assignment.

My colleague started to grin and then laughed outright (he's now retired). In his Department, money had been in such short supply that instructors using such boards were allowed only **one** such marker for use – so that if it happened to run dry during class, no spare was available (remember, for many faculty their classes are not in the same building as their Departmental offices). **And to get a new marker, faculty had to return the used one to prove they weren't trying to beat the system.**

I was relating this story to some other faculty, only to learn that **they** had just been told that henceforth they would have to share a telephone because the Department could no longer afford one for each professor.

Top administrators are simply out of touch with what happens at the departmental level, at the level

of individual teachers and students. University presidents who earn in the multiple six figures, as an increasing number of them do¹¹, and their minions who aspire to similar positions, live in a different world than do supporting staff and professors. I was struck by one example of that recently. Our university had installed – with some fanfare – new administrative "information technology" systems. One result was that in the last pay period of 1998, social-security deductions were incorrectly shown as having been deducted even from people who had already paid the maximum amount for that tax year. A more serious glitch was that IRA deductions had not been made from the first pay period in 1999. As usual, the latter was not corrected by those who made the mistake in the first place: the IRA agents had to submit a whole new set of forms for each of their clients. When I mentioned these events in the hearing of two of our top administrators, it turned out that they were unaware of them. They see no need, apparently, to look at their own pay-checks and deductions; and of course their flunkies will not tell them of goof-ups and snafus.

Priority: Diversity

The foregoing illustrates how the modern University spends money and time on image-painting, rewarding administrators, and so forth while neglecting the requirements of teaching and scholarship. Those hired are not the "best" candidates but those that fit a particular ideological or sociologic viewpoint, the politically correct one. In support of that sacred cow of "diversity", positions and committees and programs in profusion are created and funded¹²:

DIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT - CALL FOR PROPOSALS for projects in 1999

The College of Arts and Sciences invites proposals from departments that are interested in working closely with the Cultural Diversity Committee of the College and other organizations as necessary to develop effective programs to attract and retain African American students and faculty. From these proposals the College will select departments or a coalition of departments to collaborate with the Cultural Diversity Committee... to design and begin to implement one or more systematic efforts to recruit and retain African American undergraduates, graduate students and faculty. College support will be for one year and will usually be relatively small (i.e., \$2,000 - \$3,000). However, a project can potentially be funded up to \$10,000, if it seems likely that implementation of the project will significantly accomplish the College's aims of recruitment and

retention of African-American students and faculty. Departments should enter this arrangement with the intention of continuing the program they develop for at least two academic years beyond the year supported by the College...

While the College wants to support activities that are appropriate to individual departments and disciplines, the following examples suggest the types of activities that may be developed:

- ◆ A department or program would like to develop a collaborative partnership with an historically black college or university. Working with units on campus that have already been successful in this endeavor, they plan to design an implementation package for the successful recruitment of African American graduate students.
- ◆ A department or program would like to sponsor faculty members' attendance at a national diversity conference or workshop. Sponsored faculty would make a commitment to disseminate material on their return and generate activities designed to improve recruitment and retention on campus.
- ◆ A group of departments or programs wish to work collaboratively to develop a proposal to seek significant funding from external sources for an innovative diversity initiative.
- A group of departments and/or programs, recognizing the need to create a more supportive climate for African American faculty, organize a series of workshops and seminars for their faculty members in order to generate practical approaches to retention.

Priorities: Information Technology

If there's no bread, let them eat cake. If there aren't display-board markers to go around, how about computer technology in the classrooms and offices?

State governments go along with this nonsense, of course. "Virginia Tech...budgets enough to replace computers every four years. 'Even when they [legislators and Governor] don't provide salary increases, the equipment fund is there'" ¹³.

Great teachers – and how *they* are treated

No effort will be spared, then, to attract and retain people of the right sort of "diversity" even if they are not the "best" candidates. What happens to professors who are merely great teachers?

Read on.



Wouldn't it be nice if all former students felt about their professors like this one did:

I wish you the best, and over the years, often think of you. ... If there is anything I can do... I would be delighted to do so. It would be a small repayment for

everything you gave me.¹⁴

The same alumna had published in the Winter 1998 issue of *VIRGINIA TECH Magazine* the following, one of eight responses to a call to the alumni to send "memories" of professors they had had at Tech:

WAS THERE GEFILTE FISH IN THE DUCK POND?

I entered Virginia Tech in the fall of 1974, full of excitement and idealism...

Among the classes I rushed across Drillfield to attend, was my first lecture in economics...

On that first day, I went to the "Principles of Economics" class in Burruss Hall with over 500 other students, not knowing what to expect. I met my professor, who was also new to Virginia Tech, Dr. Al Mandelstamm. Even today, when I look at the "Principles of Economics" volume on my library shelf, I can still hear Dr. Mandelstamm talk of the principles of supply and demand in terms of gefilte fish balls in the magical land of Michischlecht.

Until winter quarter, when jars of gefilte fish were shown to us, most of us thought it was an imaginary "widget," just as Michischlecht was an allegory for Michigan. Dr. Mandelstamm, who often referred to himself as "The Handsome One" (or, as his shirts were monogrammed, Handsome Al Mandelstamm), taught self assurance, self reliance, and individual responsibility for assignments, class attendance, and examinations. These are lessons that have served me well in the last 20 years.

...From Dr. Mandelstamm's example, I learned to be a better professional speaker and lecturer by using analogy and example. His use of examples to teach the abstract principles always seemed to me to provide a clear memory of the example, as well as the point of theory he was teaching. Through Dr. Mandelstamm's lectures, I learned about analogy and simplification to terms that are understood, no matter how unusual. These are skills I have used to explain complex situations to many diverse audiences from courts to professional organizations.

I, however, did not appreciate the effect that this teaching by example style really had on me or other students until I attended my 20 year reunion last fall. There, I saw through the eyes of others who had Dr. Mandelstamm that examples made the difference between "lectures" and "teaching." I had learned that examples make the explanation, not the other way around. In fact, if you can remember the example, you probably can remember the theory; but trying to explain a theory alone is more difficult, and your audience will not retain what is being taught.

At the reunion, we were talking about the different professors we had while we were in school. I was the only economics student there, so I guess I was expected to remember Dr. Mandelstamm's lectures; however I was genuinely surprised to see how many other business graduates also remembered his examples and stories as well as the theory they covered, even when Dr. Mandelstamm's class was the only economics class they took.

While everyone remembered how hard his examinations were (and how difficult the grading was), they also remembered that he was fair and provided a good foundation to understand the basic

principles of economics. Listening to them, I could see how Dr. Mandelstamm's examples had helped them grasp the theory and apply it to work situations, something I also did because I learned from him...

What success I have achieved in my consulting practice and business has been due to hard work as well as the clear communication skills I learned from Dr. Mandelstamm. These are skills I use everyday, and now, with this perspective, I have a new respect for Dr. Mandelstamm, my freshman economics teacher.

A university fortunate enough to have such a teacher would surely try to retain him, by making him feel appreciated. And indeed, before political correctness gained hegemony, Mandelstamm was shown a measure of appreciation: earning an above-average salary and annual raises, often appointed to significant committees. But then came the bureaucratic apparatus to enforce diversity, sensitivity, affirmative action and so forth. Mandelstamm was declared, by the feminoid Women's Affairs Officer, to have committed sexual harassment.

What had he done? Dropped his pants after inviting a State employee into his hotel room? Succumbed to the temptations of an intern in his office? Groped an unsuspecting visitor?

No; **nothing that he had not been doing for two decades**: using examples to illustrate the theories of economics, as described above by a former student.

Some of his examples and stories had gendered themes. For twenty years, this bothered no one; but come political correctness, and a complaint was lodged and supported by **fewer than 1% of the females taking the class**.

Faced with radical feminoid fanatics¹⁵, **no administrator was willing publicly and without equivocation to state that Allan Mandelstamm was an appreciated teacher and member of the faculty**. After **years** of trying for such an assurance – and getting instead, lower than average salary raises – Mandelstamm took early retirement. In the subsequent 8 years, the Department of Economics has yet to find someone to fill his shoes; as periodic advertisements reveal, teaching Introductory Economics remains an unsolved problem for the Department.

Many thousands of students were robbed of the opportunity that earlier generations of students had had, to experience a truly extraordinary teacher. Why? Only so that administrators would not have to talk sense to a few fanatical feminoids¹⁶.

That's another illustration of the modern university's priorities.

Reading budgets

In *VS#13* I ventured that the money lost by intercollegiate athletics programs at public universities gets hidden in various ways in the university's overall budget. I may have been right:

According to figures released under the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act, Rutgers has lost about \$3-million in each of the last two years supporting its athletics program. **That figure does not include salaries and other kinds of overhead, which at the average Division I institution cost an additional \$3-million per year**, according to a survey by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics¹⁷

That comes from a story about the criticism by faculty and alumni at Rutgers of "big-time athletics on moral as well as practical grounds":

The average SAT score of freshman athletes lags 200 to 300 points behind the average score of other freshmen [at Rutgers]... [Said a faculty member], 'We are tired of seeing this university prostituted to this ambition to go to a bowl game, to be like the Miamis and the Virginia Techs

The average Division I-A athletic program received about \$1.5 million in "institutional support" during 1995 and had an inherent deficit of nearly \$240,000; by 1997, institutional support had slipped slightly to (only?) \$1.25 million and the deficit had risen to nearly \$825,000¹⁸.

The "patterns suggest a widening gap between the winners and losers in big-time sports". What that in turn inspires is a further increase in competition: hiring of players with even less regard for their academic capabilities, greater incentives for coaches who happen to win more than average, more ingenuity in sidestepping NCAA regulations. Even more corruption, in other words.

Accounting and accountability

Assume a citizenry wishes the universities it supports to concentrate on education, on teaching and scholarship, and to eschew other matters. How to make that desire effective in the face of politically correct administrations?

In Virginia, the staff of the State Council for Higher Education (SCHEV) have evolved increasingly detailed "measures" of efficiency: weighted student credit hours per faculty member; number of degrees granted per program, and so forth. **None of those takes into appropriate account how a university actually functions**. For example, the use of "productivity" measures for programs (degrees granted per year) and the like has severely damaged some graduate programs that had been nationally

admired¹⁹. Instead of trying to monitor the **educational** aspects, which bureaucracies cannot do, SCHEV could very effectively monitor **budgets**.

To a first approximation, the dedication of an institution to teaching and learning is demonstrated by **the percentage of the budget that is under the control of its academic units**.

- 1 Take the total of the budgets of all the **academic** departments.
- 2 Take the total State funds the institution gets.
- 3 Divide the first by the second.

The result is the most direct measure of how responsibly the university's administration is putting to use the funds provided through the State for the education of students.

Of course, eternal vigilance will be required to prevent the administrations from hiding non-academic expenditures within academic budgets; and sharp common sense will be needed to look separately at expenses of libraries and for computing and utilities and maintenance and the like, to make sure that only the proportion of those used for academic support are actually included in the numerator of the final ratio. But the immediate result of just totaling the budgets of all the academic units and comparing that with the whole State-provided budget would be to direct attention to all the non-academic things that universities now do.

Despite all the detailed work needed to make this truly effective, it may be the single most telling thing that could be done to bring some accountability to the post-modern politically correct university.

29i99, pp.A1,2

⁷ Christopher Calnan, "Nonunion workers reap benefit", *Roanoke Times* 6ii99, A1,2

⁸ Reported by a Department Head as the estimate given to Heads by an Associate Dean

⁹ *To Rise Above Principle: The Memoirs of an Unreconstructed Dean*, University of Illinois Press, 1988

¹⁰ To University Faculty, Deans, Directors & Department Heads, 7 September 1998, from Interim Vice President for Outreach

¹¹ Kit Lively, "What they earned in 1996-97", *Chronicle of Higher Education* 23x98, A34-5

¹² >Date: Thu, 8 Oct 1998 17:51:37 -0400

>From: Bob Leonard <robert.leonard@VT.EDU>

>Subject: Department Funding Opportunity Deadline 12/1/98 [abbreviated but not paraphrased by the Editor]

¹³ Vincent Kiernan, "Will the next generation Internet create a new class of 'have-not' universities?", *Chronicle of Higher Education* 23x98, A23-4

¹⁴ Personal communication, Lillie C. Thomas, economics '77, to Al Mandelstamm

¹⁵ For a feminist's view that this characterization is justified, see Helen Garner, *The First Stone*, reviewed on p.15

¹⁶ For a detailed bibliography on the Mandelstamm affair, see *VS#1*, December 1993

¹⁷ Jim Naughton, "A financial and moral battle over the role of athletics", *Chronicle of Higher Education* 14viii98, A37-8

¹⁸ Joshua Rolnick, "Finances of big-time college sports take a sharp turn for the worse", *Chronicle of Higher Education* 23x98, A59

¹⁹ The Editor's present intention is not to wash in public the details of this dirty linen

Endnotes:

¹ Ian Zack, "Tech puts marketing to work", *Roanoke Times* 19iv98, B1,6

² Ian Zack, "Tech introduces innovative ads", *Roanoke Times* 6ix98, A1,2

³ Jessica Knight, "Tech commercials push new image", *Collegiate Times* (VPI&SU) 2x98, p.4

⁴ "UVa Medical Center calls back PR firm", *Roanoke Times* 10x98, B4

⁵ Information sheet provided by an academic unit in the College of Arts & Sciences

⁶ Christopher Calnan, "Workers OK Volvo pact", *Roanoke Times*

Back to basics

It is now regarded as legitimate by some professors to argue that the absence of a political intention or a multicultural focus in another professor's work constitutes a prima facie disqualification for professional advancement...

But universities cannot arbitrate disputes about democracy and social justice, or govern the manner in which people relate socially to one another, or police attitudes, and that is what they are being asked to do today...

The university... now reproduces all the conflicts of the culture at large, but it reproduces them, as it were, in vitro. For unlike the society it simulates, the university is unequipped, both administratively and philosophically, to deal with conflicts that cannot be treated simply as conflicts of ideas... [because] the university is required, by its accommodationist philosophy, to give equal protection to every idea and point of view anyone chooses to express...

[To remain a university] the university... [must] renounce the role of model community and arbiter of social disputes that it has assumed, [it must]... ignore the impulse to regulate attitudes and expressions that are the epiphenomena of problems far outside the college walls, [it must]... stop trying to set up academic housing for every intellectual and political interest group that comes along, and [it must]... restrict itself to the business of imparting some knowledge to people who need it.¹

Phi Beta Kappa

has been the Honor Society among Honor Societies, standing for excellence in the liberal arts and sciences. Surely it would agree with the sentiments reproduced immediately above. Phi Beta Kappa's quarterly magazine, *American Scholar*, "Over the past 22 years... earned a distinguished reputation under the guidance of essayist and critic Joseph Epstein – an editor resolutely inhospitable to all the latest fashions in academic and literary nonsense, to scholarship as victimology and all similar products of the political winds now blowing through the culture".

But Phi Beta Kappa, too, has succumbed to ideology and political correctness. After years of trying, the feminoids finally succeeded in ousting Epstein as editor because "You could... scour the magazine without finding a feminist statement or one on ethnic studies"².

An example

"It is, I believe, on such occasions as receiving the email below (forwarded from a Chaucer listserv), that the question 'whither the humanities?' impresses itself on me... I hope this informs and entertains listmembers.

Gary H."

----- Forwarded Message Follows -----

Date: Wed, 16 Sep 1998 08:50:53 -0400

Reply-to: Chaucer Discussion Group
<CHAUCER@LISTSERV.UIC.EDU>
From: "Valerie Allen (ENG)"
<allen@CHUMA.CAS.USF.EDU>
Subject: Kalamazoo 99: Medieval Farts Session

I should appreciate it if you would cross-post this message to other relevant lists.

In response to the high number of questions received about this session, the title is not misnamed, it is not a workshop, and it is indeed a panel concerned with constructing a social history of the fart in medieval culture. In deference to any misunderstanding, we will not close the session until Monday 21 September. Proposals from any discipline are considered and can be sent either to me (see below) or to the co-organizer, John Thompson, Modern Languages and Literature, California Poly SU, San Luis, Obispo, CA 93407. <104705.3317@compuserve.com>

Information technology

Those fuddy-duddies who are skeptical about the value of computers in education sometimes suggest that there are things human beings can do that computers can't. Obviously they need to read "How a computer program learns to grade essays"³. I look forward to such sequels as, "How a computer program learns to teach critical thinking".

Retreating

One of those academic "retreats" focused on the features of being interdisciplinary, in particular between black studies, humanities, religious studies, science studies, and women's studies, but also omnivorously. Some intellectual gems were polished:

- "Help students articulate their views of the sciences and technologies" [as opposed to the old-fashioned notion that students need to **learn** something – or even **be taught** something – about those things]
- "Making the invisible visible is the essence of feminist work" [or should it be, Making the invisible visible?]
- "performance as a paradigm"
- "After all, liturgy is performance"

Such gems were committed to paper and circulated⁴ as "quick and spontaneous, but rich and provocative".

I for one was, indeed, provoked.

Learning disabilities

[I have personally checked and can vouch for all details in the following – Ed.]

More and more frequently, instructors are told by students in private conferences that they have certain learning disabilities and need special consideration. Professor X had been asked an intelligent

question in class by student L.D. and was surprised to discover that he had a learning disability. The “Accommodations Required” were:

- Use of a Calculator
- Provide a List of Formulas on Tests (if applicable to the class, i.e. math, chemistry, etc.)
- Extended Time (Double) for testing
- Notetakers
- Professor’s Notes/Outlines

Prof. X asked whether L.D. could tape-record the lectures and make notes from the recordings. “No, I’ve tried that, it doesn’t work for me”.

“How do you learn the material?” asked Prof. X. The answer: “I listen in class”.

L.D. also informed Prof. X that he might have difficulty understanding L.D.’s answers on tests, “but the ideas will all be there and correct”. The various tests he had undergone had not been able to define his disability exactly, though there were four types of disability that were “close”.

General editorial comment: Is it really possible that an intelligent individual who is able to write, cannot be trained or cannot train himself to take notes, even from tape-recorded lectures that he has already heard – provided he is willing to spend enough time and concentration on the task?

General question for administrators and Coordinators for Students with Disabilities: After L.D. has been **given** a degree without having acquired the knowledge or skills implied by that degree, what sort of job will he be able to hold? What sort of job is open to someone who cannot take notes and listen at the same time?

Re-definition: Since “learning disabilities” has become a term of disdain owing to practices like those just decried, henceforth we should speak instead of persons with Self-Paced Cognitive Abilities.

Administrative disabilities

Management experts notwithstanding, good management and administration require that the managers understand the nature of what they are supposed to be managing. But academic administrators nowadays are often out of touch. They don’t know about the excesses of political correctness that their own words and priorities foster. They don’t know how demoralized their faculty are for that reason and

because of the declining interest in studying on the part of the students; and so they say some truly absurd things – for example, that excessive drinking by students might be decreased if “professors give plenty of homework on traditional party nights... the expectation of productive academic work over the weekend can also be very helpful in keeping students focused on their academic purposes”⁵ (see also p.20).

This comes from the same administration whose Student Affairs Division orients students by focusing on **non**-academic matters, chiefly political correctness; whose Director of the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching doesn’t know that Generation-X students don’t study; whose calendar gives students a whole week off for Thanksgiving two weeks before final exams. The proper rejoinder came from a 19-year-old sophomore:

a lot of people... wouldn’t necessarily do less drinking, because their priorities aren’t what the president would like them to be

A freshman pointed out that extra homework would interfere with other student activities than drinking, even such eminently harmless ones as dancing.

More observations

William Cronon, Frederick Jackson Turner Professor at the University of Wisconsin⁶:

I need all the allies I can get to overcome the indifference that too many students bring into the classroom...
Unaccustomed to reading as a welcome form of recreation...

Endnotes:

Cited sources:

- ¹ Louis Menand, “What are universities for?”, *Harper’s Magazine*, December 1991, 47-56
- ² “The latest casualty” (ed.), *Wall Street Journal* 23197, A16
- ³ Kelly McCollum, “How a computer program learns to grade essays”, *Chronicle of Higher Education* 4ix98, A37-8
- ⁴ “Conversations about interdisciplinarity”, Center for Interdisciplinary Studies at a certain Virginia Institution for Higher Education, August 1998
- ⁵ Ian Zack, “Curb drinking with homework, Tech official says”, *Roanoke Times* 18ix98, A1,4
- ⁶ “Teaching American History”, *American Scholar* 67 (#1, Winter 1998)

LITERATURE

Tid-bits from and about books, articles, reports... assembled by *Henry Bauer*

The First Stone: Some Questions About Sex and Power

by Helen Garner¹

The Master of a College at Melbourne University was accused of sexual assault, for allegedly touching the breast of a student he was dancing with; and touching hand and breast of another student who had joined him for a drink in his rooms during a party. The Master was found "Not Guilty" in the courts. But a determined campaign by militant feminists led to his resignation under pressure from the Council of the College. As others have noted, political correctitude knows some offenses so grave that mere innocence is no excuse².

Helen Garner has taught in high schools, worked as a freelance journalist, and published books of both fiction and non-fiction. Born in 1942, she was an active feminist in the years when Australian women were, for example, still refused admission to the public and saloon bars of hotels. But she found herself dismayed by the antics of the new generation of feminists, to whom anything that happens that they don't like is grist for a law-suit and for unlimited persecution of he who acted in a way they don't like. "They are offended by the suggestion that a woman might learn to handle a trivial sexual approach by herself, without needing to run to Big Daddy and even wreck a man's life, because it unsettles their unstated but crucial belief: that men's sexuality is a monstrous, uncontrollable force, while women are trembling creatures innocent of desire, under siege even in a room full of companions, forever about to made to *feel uncomfortable*... [This] in its disingenuousness... makes me ashamed to call myself a feminist" (210).

The students who lodged the complaint against the Master, and the women who supported them, **refused to speak with Garner**: "What sort of feminist were these, what sort of intellectuals, who expected automatic allegiance from women to a cause they were not prepared even to argue?" (p.71); "What sort of feminists are these? What kind of thought-police, of saboteurs? Or don't they believe in the strength of their own argument? Will they only speak to people who already agree with them?... since post-

modernists tossed the idea of truth out the window" (178).

They also campaigned against the female psychologist who was in charge of handling sexual harassment complaints and who had delivered to the College Council a moderate and balanced report on the alleged incidents. "Feminists now, the ones who are making the most noise, seem to be consumed by rage and fear" (47); there is "a certain kind of modern feminism: priggish, disingenuous, unforgiving" (93). "The Catholic Church... took centuries to achieve what these puritan feminists have managed to do in only a couple of years – take an idea whose purpose was to free people, and turn it into something that strangles truth" (102).

The complaining students sued in court for access to Garner's manuscript before it was published! And after publication, it was extensively misread and misquoted by those whose minds were already made up. "Being permanently primed for battle, they read like tanks. They roll right over the little conjunctions and juxtapositions that slither in the undergrowth of the text. It's a scorched-earth style of reading" (223-5). "Many feminists, even, incredibly, some who teach in universities, have declared it correct line not to buy *The First Stone* or to read it at all... One woman, representing the student body of an institution in the town where I was born, wrote to let me know that, the minute she heard I was going to write the book, she purged her shelves of all my other books" (226).

One of the complaining students (not necessarily at the party in question, however) "was wearing a dark, strapless evening dress, out of which the double mass of her bosom – the only possible word for it – is bursting... Her face is so dazzling... It is impossible not to be moved by her daring beauty. She is a woman in the full glory of her youth, as joyful as a goddess, elated by her own careless authority and power" (59). But 'As a result of [the Master's]... actions, [she]... felt like a "worthless sexual object"...

"Why would a young woman feel 'worthless' when a man makes an unwelcome sexual approach...? She might not *like* it. She might want very much for it to stop. But why does it make her feel 'worthless'?" (88-9). When she "thinks of herself as a 'worthless sex

object' when her beauty and her erotic self-presentation arouse desire in men[.]... [s]omething here has gone terribly wrong" (194).

Helen Garner is no anti-feminist, no apologist for misbehaving men. But she tries to **reason**, and like other moderate voices finds herself attacked by the fanatics. But until reason prevails, the innocent men and the innocent women will both continue to be victims, for "men trivialize sexual harassment and women inflate it. Men make light of it and women make heavy" (p.81). "The ability to discriminate [between serious and trivial "harassment"] *must be maintained*. Otherwise all we are doing is increasing the injustice of the world" (120); "I might have quoted Janet Radcliffe Richards' tough and useful book *The Sceptical Feminist*: 'If justice does not matter in transitions, it does not matter at all'" (182).

"I know that between 'being made to feel uncomfortable' and 'violence against women' lies a vast range of male and female behaviours. If we deny this, we enfeeble language and drain it of meaning. We insult the suffering of women who have met real violence, and we distort the subtleties of human interaction into caricatures that can serve only as propaganda for war. And it infuriates me that any woman who insists on drawing these crucial distinctions should be called a traitor to her sex" (221).

Garner got fan mail as well as criticism, of course, and the book was a best seller. In the fan mail, "the word that crops up most frequently is relief: Again and again people speak of the relief they feel that it might be possible to acknowledge that the world of daily work and social life isn't as horrible and destructive and ghastly as punitive feminists insist" (235).

Eternal verities

Magazine and newspaper columns are thought of as ephemera rather than permanent contributions. Still, some old columns may offer useful insights years later. John Leo wrote in 1996 about Dick Morris³, who had betrayed confidences shared with him by President William Jefferson Clinton:

A commentator at the *Washington Post* says Morris's 'refusal to go through a public ritual of shame and apology has been tactically brilliant and already is speeding his resuscitation'

Is that perhaps why President Clinton unsuccessfully tried that tactic a couple of years later?

James Carville was cited on the need in political teams to have mutual trust: "For this thing to work, you have to have some sense of loyalty; you have to have ground rules".

In 1998, I missed hearing Carville explain what this dictum implies when there is a President who lies to every one of his political and administrative associates – not to speak of his constituents.

Novelists' Dilemmas

Novels have beginnings and ends, and can therefore authentically portray human lives, which also begin and end. Or at least they used to. A splendid essay by Brad Leithauser⁴ delineates the novelist's dilemma in an age where "*There are no final acts*": a politician jailed for cocaine use gets re-elected; a president found committing perjury sees his approval ratings soar –

"Where lives are open-ended, it's hard to bring a story to a close...

the 'ruined woman' is a laughable notion in a society where a conviction for prostitution represents a business opportunity – where all scandal shimmers with the possibility of lucrative book/film/merchandise tie-in deals...

in the country that embraced the slogan 'Today is the first day of the rest of your life,' how do you call it quits on a character who is still breathing?"

And so the novelist nowadays can only close his story by killing its characters, which may explain the increasing use of violence in our literature. Yet even death doesn't nowadays bring the end: "the dead exhibit an increasing knack for manipulating our lives from beyond the grave", for example through sperm banks and, soon, the creation of clones of the departed...

Great Books – and others

Memoirs of celebrities and others, which contain only what one knows they will contain; and other non-book books make it useful to establish certain categories of Books, like

the Books You Needn't Read, the Books Made for Purposes Other Than Reading, Books Read Even Before You Open Them Since They Belong to the Category of Books Read Before Being Written⁵

The Marxist Ivory Tower

Many have noted that Marxism has been discredited across the globe, including within "Communist" China, say; but not within Eurocentric academe, where Marx-worship remains prominent:

The Manifesto was and is a work of immense, autonomous historical importance. It marks the accession of social and intellectual consciousness to new stage of inclusiveness... A decade after... [the collapse of the Soviet Union] the Manifesto continues to yield itself to our reading in the new light that its enduring insights into social existence generate. It

emerges ever more distinctly as an unsurpassed dramatic representation, diagnosis and prophetic array of visionary judgments on the modern world...

The detonating power and conceptual fullness of these utterances constitute a species of dramatic performance. Like the biblical prophecies with which they have something in common...

This astonishing document also possesses a structural complexity and a denseness of thematic play that we ordinarily associate with great works of the literary imagination...

Prediction, vision, prophecy – all are fused together in the incandescence of the Manifesto's account...

it got certain things right as no other work of its time, or any other time, did. A century and a half afterward, it remains a classic expression of the society it anatomized and whose doom it prematurely announced.⁶

Moreover,

The collapse of the authoritarian Communist regimes in Eastern Europe should not be regarded as a failure of Marxist theory, according to a group of academics at the University [of Sydney, Australia] with an interest in the work of Karl Marx.

They argue that those regimes were aberrations instead of true examples of the socialist system which Marx envisaged, and that many of his ideas are still valid.⁷

In my professional world of science studies, one of the perennial issues is that of the distinctions between natural science and social science. The academic Marxists' attitude illustrates one of the major distinctions: in natural science, experience and evidence can disprove theories and the theories get discarded; whereas in social science, no amount of evidence or experience ensures that discredited, disproven theories actually get discarded.

Dancing with Strangers: A Memoir

by Mel Watkins*

Watkins's position on his race... [is] that there is no such thing as 'the Negro.' Black people... come in as many personal, intellectual, social and chromatic variations as any other group. Come what may, he would be judged on the basis of his accomplishments. That such a modest, obvious-on-the-face-of-it idea should be in any sense a big deal says something about our country

Afrocentrism:

Mythical Pasts and Imagined Homes

by Stephen Howe (Verso, UK)

Afrocentrists... claim that Africans possess their own specific system of logic, in which, unlike in European logic, 'a thing can be both A and not A at the same time' because 'what is contradictory in Euro-American Aristotelian logic is not contradictory in African thought'. 'Presumably when she hits the "A" key, she expects her screen to show an "A" rather than "both A and not A",' is Howe's sardonic

WISHFUL THINKING?

By now most intelligent liberals have joined conservatives in the reaction against the excesses of multiculturalism

Michael Lind, "Western Civ fights back", *New York Times Book Review* 6ix98, p.10, reviewing Daniel Boorstin's *The Seekers*

response.

That Afrocentrists at the same time claim "that ancient Greek philosophers stole all their ideas from Egypt...is an argument that might seem to sit uneasily with the belief that African and European philosophies are incommensurate" ⁹

Hate Crimes:

Criminal Law & Identity Politics

by James B. Jacobs & Kimberly Potter

The newly minted term ["hate crimes"] promptly begot news stories about how our nation was in the throes of an epidemic of hate crimes, **even before any statistics were collected.**

By describing the politics through which some groups have gained protection and others have not, Jacobs and Potter reveal the senselessness of trying to impose extra punishments for **officially designated prejudices** [emphasis added]

hate crime legislation foments more hatred than it deters... [A]most every crime is motivated by hate of one kind or another... [and] every set of bones deserves equal protection under the laws ¹⁰

Assimilation, American Style

by Peter D. Sahlin (New Republic – Basic Books)

over the past thirty years, our 'opinion and policy elites' have turned their backs on America's historic commitment to assimilation in favor of a policy that aims at preserving and enhancing ethnic consciousness...

These ethnic groups are endowed with certain inalienable rights – including the right to speak their 'native' tongue at school and work, as well as at home; the right to proportional representation in every walk of American life; and the right to have their culture protected, and their self-esteem nurtured, in all public institutions, particularly educational ones. They are not, however, endowed with any overarching America loyalty that transcends their ethnic loyalty.¹¹

The Ordeal of Integration: Progress and Resentment in America's 'Racial' Crisis

by Orlando Patterson

Social progress in the Afro-American community has been truly remarkable. "In 1967, Afro-American families headed by a married couple earned 68 per-

cent as much as their Euro-American... counterparts; by 1995, that had risen to 87 percent...

Fewer than 40 percent of Afro-Americans say they have ever faced discrimination in hiring, and 74 percent say they are satisfied with their lives. ***But a majority of Afro-Americans think that the quality of life for all members of their group has become worse or remained the same, and nearly two-thirds think that hiring discrimination abounds*** [emphasis added].

But when every misfortune is laid at the feet of a white majority, occasional abuses by individuals are perceived as racial oppression"¹².



Something like that sort of perception misled even as generally judicious a black leader as Roger Wilkins. When Senator John Danforth responded to Wilkins' "Hello, Senator, I'm Roger Wilkins", with "Hello, Roger", "Wilkins heard 'the reverberating echo of white condescension across a long legacy'".

Yet the **white** journalist David Shipler who introduced himself to Senator John Danforth was similarly met with, "Hello, David"¹³.

**Carnegie Commission on Higher Education:
"Anti-Bias Regulation of Universities:
Faculty Problems and Their Solutions"**

The affirmative action programs by which the federal government is compelling colleges and universities to hire more women and blacks is lowering standards and undermining faculty quality...

... new minority and women appointees may be paid more than white male faculty members at the same level and... some do not have proper qualifications for the tenured and untenured positions to which they are appointed.

That Report was issued in 1974¹⁴. Its warnings were not heeded; we have had another 25 years of affirmative action hiring. How long will it take to undo the damage to standards of quality in courses, curricula, and overall? How many of the under-qualified people then hired are now in administrative positions?

How we got quotas

How did a civil-rights movement for equal treatment become entrenched preferred treatment on the basis of race?

Read Paul Craig Roberts & Lawrence M. Stratton, Jr., "Color Code"¹⁵, to find out, in astonishing but convincing detail. It happened through bureaucratic rule-writing that went unchallenged even as the rules contravened the laws and the spirit of the laws. The most influential of those responsible wrote:

If discrimination is narrowly defined, for example, by requiring an evil intent to injure minorities, then it will be difficult to find that it exists. If it does not exist, then the plight of racial and ethnic minorities must be attributable to some more generalized failures in society, in the fields of basic education, housing, family relations, and the like. The search for efforts to improve the condition of minorities must then focus in these general and difficult areas, and the answers can come only gradually as basic institutions, attitudes, customs, and practices are changed. We thus would have before us generations of time before the effects of subjugation of minorities are dissipated.

But if discrimination is broadly defined, as, for example, by including all conduct which adversely affects minority group employment opportunities... then the prospects for rapid improvement in minority employment opportunities are greatly increased. Industrial relations systems are flexible; they are in control of defined individuals and institutions; they can be altered either by negotiation or by law. If discrimination exists within these institutions, the solution lies within our immediate grasp. It is not embedded in the complications of fundamental sociology but can be sharply influenced by intelligent, effective, and aggressive legal action.

This is the optimistic view of the racial problem in our nation. This view finds discrimination at every turn where minorities are adversely affected by institutional decisions, which are subject to legal regulation. In this view, we are in control of our own history. The destruction of our society over the race question is not inevitable.

And that's what "affirmative action" has been: rapid improvement in minority employment opportunities at the expense of others, without any demonstrated prior discrimination against those minorities and without correcting the generalized failures of basic education, family life, and the like. Is it any wonder that the pent-up reaction against this unfairness is beginning to spill over?

On the lighter side

Has anyone read *The New Testament and Psalms: A New Inclusive Translation* from Oxford University Press? In a preview in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the editor described it as "a very extensive adaptation' that employs 'the most inclusive form of English that is currently in use.

References to God as *Father*, for example, have been changed to *Father-Mother*... To avoid identifying people with their disabilities, passages such as '*the blind receive their sight*' have been changed to '*those who are blind receive their sight.*' And where the editors feared that metaphors of darkness as evil might be imputed to people with dark skin, those images have been softened. A passage in the N.S.R.V. that reads 'Or what fellowship is there between *light and darkness?*' has been changed to 'Or what

fellowship is there between *day and night?*"¹⁶

Endnotes:

- ¹ Free Press, 1997; first ed., Picador/Pan Macmillan (Australia), 1995
- ² These are "crimes so terrible that innocence itself is not an adequate defense" – Harvey Silverglate, *pro bono* lawyer for student accused of harassment (editorial, "Swarthmore's confused correctness", *Wall Street Journal*, 94:1:17, p.A8); cited in VS#3
- ³ John Leo, "Why not just skip breakfast", *U. S. News & World Report* 30ix96, 29
- ⁴ Brad Leithauser, "You haven't heard the last of this", *New York Times Book Review* 30viii98, 27
- ⁵ David R. Slavitt, "Revenge fantasy", *New York Times Book Review* 14vi98, 17, reviewing *Medea – A Modern Retelling* by Christa Wolf
- ⁶ Steven Marcus (George Delacorte Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University), "Marx's masterpiece at 150", *New York Times Book Review*, p.39 (undated clipping).
- ⁷ "Marxism still relevant to teaching", *The Gazette* (University of Sydney, Australia), September 1990, p.6
- ⁸ Judith Dunford, "One man's 50's", *New York Times Book Review* 15ii98, 16
- ⁹ Kenan Malik, "When is an 'A' not an 'A'?", *Independent on Sunday* (UK), 21vi98, 31
- ¹⁰ Richard Dooling, "Good politics, bad law", *New York Times Book Review*, p.22 (undated clipping)
- ¹¹ Joseph Shattan, "Multicultural meltdown", *American Spectator*, May 1997, 77-80
- ¹² James Q. Wilson, "A long way from the back of the bus", *New York Times Book Review* 16xi97, 10, reviewing the cited book
- ¹³ K. Anthony Appiah, "... Some day", *New York Times Book Review* 16xi97, 11, reviewing David K. Shipler, *A Country of Strangers: Blacks and Whites in America*
- ¹⁴ Gene I. Maeroff, "Carnegie report criticizes affirmative action hiring", *Courier-Journal & Times* (Louisville KY) 30vi74
- ¹⁵ *National Review*, 20iii95, 36-80
- ¹⁶ "Hot Type", *Chronicle of Higher Education* 16xi94, A12

B I T S & P I E C E S

brought to the Editor's attention

Truth

Surely a university is better served by being truthful than by **not** being truthful?

Under political correctitude, orientation programs expose new students to propaganda **that bases itself on fictional events as though they were actual ones**. "The entering freshman has the right to know what he or she can expect after enrollment'... The orientation program... [included a] video [that] showed a woman telling of the night she was held down and raped"¹ – **but such an incident has never happened on that campus**.

"A bubble in the background [on the video] popped during the horrific description which gave the fact that one in four women are victims to sexual assault" – **but it is simply not true that one in four women students experience sexual assault on that campus**.

Donna Lisker, assistant director and sexual assault education coordinator at the Women's Center said on the first day of an engineering class, some professors tell students "I want you all to know that I don't think women can be engineers... I have to have you in my class, but I don't like it".

I'd heard this story 20 years ago. Perhaps it had even happened **once**. But how misleading to offer it up as an illustration of **the current campus climate**. Any professor who ventured such a statement nowadays would face most unpleasant consequences – ten years ago already, the university's master teacher Al Mandelstamm had been charged with sexual harassment just for telling gender-based jokes in class! (See p.6)

Indeed, a small correction item appeared the next day: "the engineering professors [sic] remarks were from an incident that allegedly occurred [sic] in the past. The story is [*nota bene* the present tense] used to explain the past problems with sexual inequality"².

What possible function does it serve, so to mislead entering students? Does it not also convey the message that the Administration allows professors to be offensive to women students?

This type of political correctitude in orientation "was removed for the summers of 1996 and 1997 due to a public relations move recommended by a com-

mission"⁴; to this Editor's personal knowledge, after outrage had been expressed by some parents who had become aware of its lying propaganda. But the material was re-introduced this year.

WHY??

How utterly irresponsible. This sort of lying, this baseless propagandizing by fanatics, is precisely why so many well-intentioned people of genuinely liberal persuasion have become so strongly opposed to "affirmative action", "diversity", and the like: **the proponents of those things lie, routinely, and are impervious to actual social reality**.

"Torgersen continues to battle alcohol"

was the headline in the student newspaper³. It was intended to mean, however, not that President Torgersen was struggling with a *personal* alcohol problem but with that of excessive, unwise drinking by students.

A survey had purported to show that binge drinking was at a peak on Thursday nights and on weekends. A Torgersen memo to the faculty suggested that extra homework be assigned on Thursdays and for the weekend to discourage drinking. Students doubted that this was a useful suggestion⁴, as did faculty: "Why should I expect such an approach to be effective when we already see a significant number of students who see no need to attend class, let alone read a textbook?"⁵

Students have criticized that tailgate parties with alcohol are permitted in a special enclosure for large contributors to the athletic program but not elsewhere. Perhaps they have a point. If getting money were not the highest priority, would the university have made such a special arrangement?

On October 9, Tech threw a party for big contributors to its successful fund-raising campaign, in a large tent in the middle of the campus, "where beer, wine and mixed drinks will be available from an open bar... at least for a 45-minute pre-dinner reception and possibly for most of the four-hour event"⁶. "But many students view the party in the heart of the campus as a slap in the face because it comes in the midst of a binge drinking crackdown by college presidents... It's kind of hypocritical'... 'the university missed a great opportunity. If they had

made this a non-alcoholic party, it would have sent a much stronger signal than any action they could have taken”.

But “There’s a difference between drinking in a civilized manner in moderation and binge drinking and underage drinking...If you have one or two glasses of wine at dinner, it’s not likely you’re going to be in an automobile accident”, responded the university⁷.

Is it cynical to submit that there may have been among the 700-plus diners a few who imbibed rather more than a glass or two of wine, given an open bar offering mixed drinks for at least 45 minutes and possibly for another 4 hours? Is it ridiculous to compare that with student parties at which most of the students do *not* drink to excess but a few do?

But above all, what a wonderful opportunity the university missed to set a noteworthy example, as the President of Student Government had pointed out. Among the approaches suggested to curb drinking by students has been the arranging of more events for students that are alcohol-free. What a model it would have been, had donors been invited to this party as both a celebration **and** a demonstration that adults could enjoy a social celebration without recourse to alcohol. Surely few if any of the invited donors would have taken this amiss. Surely many of them would even have applauded and been enthusiastic about it. Surely the students would have paid attention. The university might even have attracted favorable national publicity – and at a much lower cost than that incurred by the making of 30-second television commercials.

Defining PC

For people who are puzzled about what political correctness is, who find it hard to believe that people get deadly serious about such idiotic “re-definitions” or sensitizations, here’s an extract from an Internet “PC Primer”:

What is PC?

We of the Politically Correct philosophy believe in increasing a tolerance for a **diversity** of cultures, races, genders, ideologies and alternate lifestyles. PC is the only socially and morally acceptable outlook. Anyone who disagrees is bigoted, biased, sexist, and/or closed-minded.

I am a white male. Can I still be PC?

Sure. You just have to feel very guilty all the time.

How do I know when an animal has rights?

If an animal is rare, pretty, big, cute, furry, huggable, or lovable, then it has rights; for example cows, cute

bunnies, whales, owls, harbor seals, red squirrels, dolphins in tuna nets.

Animals **without** rights include **grey** squirrels, **tuna** in tuna nets, sharks, and loggers.

How can I tell when someone is being insensitive toward someone else?

Is the confrontation between two white people?

If yes, then the liberal is right and sensitive.

If not, then the white person is oppressing the ethnic person or person of color.

How can I tell when someone is an ethnic person or person of color?

You need to consult an expert or a reference work, because it isn’t straightforward. For example:

“African-American” includes people with dark skins **regardless where they were born or came from** (because employing them fills our quota/goal).

“Asian-American” is a so-called protected minority classification, but in practice Asian-Americans should be treated even worse than whites because they tend to do so well without any assistance, thereby automatically oppressing everyone else.

PC belief is essentially a recognition that people are diversely equal. We rejoice in this equality by treating people differently based on their equal individuality. Hop aboard the band-wagon. Be PC. Or else you’re an intolerant, racist, sexist insensitive pig.

Out of their own mouths

feminism’s second major project should be to challenge the allegedly natural links long assumed to exist among sex, psyche, and sexuality. I’m thinking here, in particular, of the long-standing cultural belief that men are naturally masculine, women are naturally feminine, and everyone is naturally heterosexual⁸

The author of those words is professor of psychology and women’s studies at Cornell, and was one of the leading culprits in the railroading of her colleague James Maas without a shred of due process. Cornell is now defending a suit brought by Maas with the assistance of the Center for Individual Rights:

The [Maas] case reads like a twisted version on the Salem Witch Trials, only this time the “witch” is a professor at Cornell University and his accusers are former students egged on by some members of the women’s studies program⁹

The law suit was filed in August 1995 and has gone through various hearings and appeals with no end in sight. The University like most any bureaucracy cannot bring itself to admit error even (or perhaps especially) when it is egregious and obvious.

Like a certain President of the United States,

Cornell continues to protest that what it did was “legally accurate” even as the world knows it was utterly obscene.

The Content of Their Character

Martin Luther King looked forward to the day when we would all be judged by the content of our character and not by the color of our skin.

Black students at Harvard boycotted a course on racial discrimination because one of the two instructors was white – Jack Greenberg, Director of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and veteran of such cases as *Brown vs. Board of Education* which set in motion the civil-rights revolution. Greenberg and his co-teacher Julius Chambers, who is black, then canceled a course they had been scheduled to teach at Stanford, where black students had also protested against being exposed to a white teacher.¹⁰

Progress

Only a few years ago, student leaders at Columbia had voted to ban the club “Conversio Virium” whose aim was discussion of sadomasochism.

In *VS#12* (p.14), we noted the recent Women’s Studies conference that included such papers as “Safe, Sane & Consensual S&M: An Alternate Way of Loving”.

Is this progress? Are more barriers coming down? Or is it just the usual double standard of political correctness? Would “Conversio Virium” have been given a green light if it too had been sponsored by a Women’s group?

Parasites of Affirmative Action

In the good not-so-old days when discrimination was forbidden, one mechanism for discouraging it was to require all positions to be openly advertised, so that they could not be filled through an “old boys network”.

Pretty soon, entrepreneurial parasites found ways of making money by trading on this. For example, there was established the *Affirmative Action Register*¹¹ “the national EEO recruitment publication directed to females, minorities, veterans, and disabled persons, as well as to all employment candidates”. The first time that, as Dean, I advertised a position, I received a phone call from the *Register* to

let me know that placing the advert there was a sure-fire way of ensuring that minority candidates would become aware of it.

It seemed unlikely to me that candidates for academic positions would not know of the standard disciplinary publications; and the *Register’s* rates were exorbitant. But I decided to try it, and to see how many replies that particular ad brought, I gave my address as “College of Arts & Sciences, Dept.A”, etc., using the timeworn technique of adding a bit (Dept.A) to the ad that ads in *other* places did not have.

When the ad was printed, “Dept.A” had been omitted.

Fairly clearly, money spent on advertising in the *Register* is about as productive as the paying of blackmail in other situations. One can point to it as proof of good intentions, but its only substantive contribution is to the salaries and bonuses of employees and owners of the *Register*. They sell not only ads but subscriptions as well, \$15 per year (12 issues).

Endnotes:

¹ Nancy McGillicuddy, “Attitudes affecting women adversely”, *Collegiate Times* (VPI&SU) 22ix98, pp.1,2

² “Corrections”, *Collegiate Times* (VPI&SU) 23ix98, p.2

³ *Collegiate Times* (VPI&SU) 2x98

⁴ Editorial: Alcohol on campus – Was the memo too much?, *Collegiate Times* (VPI&SU) 22ix98, p.5

⁵ Al Prestrude, cited in Tim Gregory, “Students react to Torgersen memo”, *Collegiate Times* (VPI&SU) 23ix98 pp1,3

⁶ Ian Zack, “Alcohol at donor party rankles Va. Tech students”, *Roanoke Times* 9x98, pp.B1,4

⁷ Ian Zack, “Tech exceeds fund goal with \$337.4 million in private gifts”, *Roanoke Times* 10x98, B1,4

⁸ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, “In a male-centered world, female differences are transformed into female disadvantages”, *Chronicle of Higher Education* 17viii94, B1,2

⁹ Linda Chavez in *USA Today*, cited in *Annual Report 1997-1998*, Center for Individual Rights, 1233 20th Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036

¹⁰ “Black students at Harvard seek boycott of law course”, *Chronicle of Higher Education* 4viii82, 3; John H. Bunzel, “‘Flawed assumptions’ behind the boycott by black students at Harvard Law School”, *Chronicle of Higher Education* 27x82, 64; “Civil-rights course canceled at Stanford”, *Chronicle of Higher Education* 23iii83, 3

¹¹ ISSN 0146-2113, Affirmative Action Register® “for effective equal opportunity recruitment”

THE VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS

believes that rational discourse is a necessary foundation of academic life and of a democratic society. So we seek to foster and protect

- the free exchange of ideas;
- academic freedom: *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*;
- the substance and integrity of scholarship and learning;
- respect for our intellectual heritage;
- rigorous standards of excellence in teaching, learning, and research;
- the evaluation of students strictly on the merit of their individual performance;

and we aim to

- create forums in which university life can be rationally discussed;
- provide informed comment on immediate and on perennial issues in higher education;

and we urge academic leaders to

- recognize learning and scholarship as the pre-eminent and primary purpose for which colleges and universities exist;
- behave responsibly in pursuit of that purpose;
- practice honesty with the public, with students and parents, with faculty, and with everyone else.

Further, we shall resist

- attempts to subsume academe under political goals;
- ideological corruption of teaching and scholarship;
- intimidation of students or faculty who voice unfashionable views;
- treatment of students, faculty, and others as ciphers or symbols of groups instead of as individuals worthy of individual consideration.

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