

Virginia Scholar

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EDITORIAL **2**

**WHY GOING TO COLLEGE HAS BECOME
SO EXPENSIVE IN VIRGINIA:** Part Four — **5**
A glimpse at the story we were going to write,
and why we chose not to write it

POTPOURRI **7**
Diversity skills; Radford sets an example; more
bumf — and yet Presidents get rewarded; which
stimulates a modest proposal; and more

CONVENTIONS & MEETINGS **16**
South-West Virginia Chapter founded
Virginia Association of Scholars, Business Meetings
National Association of Scholars, Fifth Convention

WHEN YOU FACE THE PC INQUISITION **21**
by Michael Krauss, who did

DEPARTMENTS & SIDEBARS:

<i>Good old days; and a new role-model</i>	3,20
VASNET	4
<i>Insensitivities</i>	8,10,14
<i>Wise words</i>	13,15,19
<i>Priorities, maturity, bumf</i>	9,11,12

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EDITORIAL..... LEARNING NEW TRICKS

I'd hoped that the September issue of *Virginia Scholar* might be followed by another in December. Now my ambition has become that the "February" that I've typed on the first page might be attainable.

One reason for the delay is the obverse of recent good fortune: I've got a new, much better computer. But, as I'd anticipated, my first days with the new machine were filled with panic and terror. I was faced with learning a new operating system, a new word-processor, and when and how to use a tape-backup unit and a CD-ROM. Windows, or the Macintosh system, are supposed to be so easy and self-explanatory. But to me, icons are anything but self-explanatory (no doubt because I stem from a Gutenberg rather than a TV age). I even have to concentrate when going to public restrooms, because I find the difference in the male and female icons so slight as to be less than obvious to my first glance.

Since my several stupidities have not yet caused the computer to blow itself up, I've started to settle down; to find it a relatively enjoyable adventure — just interspersed every day or so by some new sign that I'm too dumb to learn new tricks. I do exactly what I'm told to by the manuals and the On-Line Help and the choices in the Dialogue Boxes, it seems to me, yet the proper result often doesn't ensue. It reminds me of student days in the laboratory, when it always took several tries to make anything work; and yet looking back, one couldn't see anything being done differently when it finally worked, than in the earlier unsuccessful attempts. The next generations, of course, weaned on TV, won't have as hard a time with computers as I do: I'm told that my 2½-year-old grand-daughter already switches her Dad's computer on and mouses successfully into her favorite games.

To reassure myself, I try to recall regularly that some of the problems I have are actually not my

fault: some programs *do* have glitches in them and some manuals absolutely haven't been kept up-to-date. During the fuss over the Pentium's problems with calculations to the ninth decimal place, one of my friends sent me the bulletin-board comment that people who worry about a ninth decimal place might be amused to find a much less subtle fault in the Microsoft Calculator included with Windows: subtract 2.00 from 2.01 and get 0.00! I tried that, and indeed it is so. I'd wondered, actually, as I was first exploring the myriad of stuff that my computer came loaded with (and that I hadn't asked for), why anyone would want to use an on-screen calculator instead of a hand-held one. Now I don't have that to worry about any more: who wants to use a calculator that can't round off correctly to the second decimal place? I wouldn't even be able to balance my check-book to the nearest cent!

What I would like to know, however, is how to rid my hard disc of the various files that only the calculator uses. That's one of the most glaring gaps in the explanations and manuals that come with software: nowhere is there a full listing of what all the files actually do, and which ones belong to programs that one doesn't ever plan to use and can therefore be safely removed. Surely of the 150 Megabytes that came loaded on my disc, there must be 50 Megabytes or more of such stuff. But I'm certainly not going to do the trial-and-error bit of removing some and seeing what happens. Admittedly I did do some of that with my previous machine, but of necessity, for then I had only 40 Megabytes of space; and besides, those programs had their files organized into readily identifiable and transparently logical directories; unlike my present system in which, for example, the dictionaries for the word-processor are not — as one would expect and as the information in the program itself indicates — together with all the other Word-for-Windows stuff in the "MSOFFICE/-

**The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil
is for good men to do nothing**

WINWORD" directory: rather they are in "WINDOWS/MSAPPS/PROOF" (as I cleverly discovered by searching the whole disc for *.DIC files).

After several failed attempts to use the tape back-up unit, I finally believed — or understood — what the screen told me: that it was not "installed". I hadn't at first, since I could easily see the tape unit sitting in the CPU right between the floppy drives and the CD-ROM drive and since I used to think that "installed" meant physically present. But now I know that "installed" in computerese means having the relevant *software* configured properly. Why that hadn't been done with the tape unit though it had been for the CD-ROM, I don't yet understand, though. At any rate, the light having dawned, I consulted the "Quick Start" booklet for the tape unit, put the relevant diskette into drive A, and as instructed typed "a: install" followed by ENTER. "Cannot find file 'INSTALL.EXE'", the screen told me, to my horror. Had I done something irrevocably wrong already? Had the tape actually *been* pre-installed and had I now vitiated that?

I tried and re-tried, over several days. Finally I got smart and used the File Manager (which I'd begun to know how to use) to see what files *were* on that "tape-unit-install" diskette. Only one had an "exe" descriptor: "SETUP.EXE". So I took the risk, and tried "a: setup" instead of "a: install", and lo-and-behold it all seemed to work. I was pretty proud of myself, as you can imagine (though I still haven't succeeded in doing a full back-up, it ends with "System Error" of some sort. Partial back-ups, on the other hand, have worked successfully).

This sort of thing is really quite unfair to customers who happen to be new to computers. The tape unit doesn't come with any warning on its package, "Beware! This product is not intended for use by people without previous PC experience!" Had I not been using a computer for quite a few years now, it wouldn't have occurred to me to look for "EXE" files. Had I not over the years installed a number of programs that called for "a: setup" to do that, I might not have had the courage to try it when I discovered a "SETUP.EXE" file. What about people coming new to this game? They'd have no recourse but to try to get help by phoning for Technical Help which, albeit toll-free, is always busy; or using the bulletin board's access to Technical Help, which in my case has not yielded a response after some three weeks (which admittedly were interspersed by Xmas

and New Year holidays). This, mind you, from a company that gets among the highest ratings of satisfaction from previous customers for after-service help...

So here's another constructive suggestion for the computer industry: Take your cue from the movies and label your product by the group for which it's supposed to be safe. Just as movies are labeled "PG13" or "R" or "X", so computers and especially software might be labeled something from "PC0" (suitable for novices) in various steps up to "PCX" (only for people who know how to program and are comfortable doing their own hardware fitting and repair).

All our troubles with computers now are very small ones, though, by comparison with what's in store for banks, credit-card outfits, and most businesses **and all their customers**, come the millennium. Don't take *my* word for it, of course: read what the *experts* look forward to, as described by Brian Hayes in "Waiting for 01-01-00", *American Scientist*, 83 (January-February 1995) 12-15. Forewarned may be forearmed, but it's still likely to be quite a mess. To prepare you, here's a preliminary take-home exam: just from the title of that article, deduce (or *figure* out) what the essence of the problem is.

FROM THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Attendance at lectures was compulsory. Students who were late faced a fine of two pence. If they missed the class entirely the fine was six pence while a day off led to a shilling fine. In a neat way of making the indolent reward the workers, the money raised from fines was often used to provide end of session prizes.

... at the University of St. Andrews ca. 1794
as described by Douglas Mason in "Order! Order!"
Alumnus Chronicle, June 1994, 29-30

All joking and all frustrations aside, this new hardware and software will provide me years of delectable surprises and opportunities to learn. I'd been using Word-for-DOS 6.0 on a 286 machine with 1 Meg memory, and still kept finding marvelously convenient new things that I could do. My Pentium with 32 Meg is unbelievably faster, and Word 6.0 for Windows is replete with incredibly powerful new features. I have much to re-learn, of course, like that "Find" has become "Search" (or *vice versa*); a host of other command and short-cut-key changes; "templates" have replaced "style-sheets" and are very

much more than the style-sheets were. But in compensation, for as many years as are granted me I can look forward to learning to use things that make for speed, convenience, power. I rather wish that I had no actual work to get out, in fact, so that I could just play with the appearance of the windows, the menus, the toolbars, because the program makes it so easy and tempting to design one's very own.

I'm truly grateful for the generous windfall from Dr. Maximilian B. Bauer that enabled me to buy everything I wanted instead of continuing to agonize over what features I really needed and which would be superfluous frills, say the Uninterruptible Power Supply. One of my fears of going to Windows had been the mess (so say the magazines I read, and even my trusty *Windows for Dummies*) that may result if the power is switched off before programs are exited. In my locality, brief power outages or surges occur all the time. With my previous computer, I'd been used to seeing the screen turn suddenly dark before my eyes, once or twice a month, whereupon I would need to re-boot and then re-do the lost work. I'd been anxious that, with Windows, replacing that work would be just the beginning of my problems. So I got a UPS, and it's saved me already twice this month: on two occasions it has beeped, indicating that power had been transferred instantaneously to its batteries. Were the power to stay off, I would have 5-10 minutes to close down

files and programs. As it happens, this month's were just instantaneous surges or momentary power-lapses, so the only effect was to cause me to jump at the beep and then settle back with pleasure at not having lost any work and not having re-boot problems to cope with. I recommend a UPS to everyone, most certainly to those who share my good fortune to have a financial fairy-godfather.

I hope this recounting of my little tribulations will, as intended, serve to amuse and foster feelings of fellowship. I certainly don't want to keep any of you from participating in the rush to use computers and get on the Internet. Just below is Steve Eagle's announcement of the inauguration of VASNET, a bulletin board solely for members of the Virginia Association of Scholars. I urge everyone who has an e-mail address to send it to me as indicated below (to be checked against our membership rolls) and get signed up as an authorized user of VASNET. There are few if any things, I believe, that could make our Association a more thriving, effective venture than being able to communicate with one another so speedily and easily. Meetings could be called, changed, re-scheduled, at much shorter notice. Initiatives could be put together much more quickly. Trial balloons by the politically correct could be deflated much more effectively. Despite all reservations about the uses (mis- or ab- uses) of computers, I am a wholehearted believer in the benefits that VASNET

NEW "VASNET" E-MAIL SERVICE NOW RUNNING

from Steven J. Eagle

In December, the Virginia Association of Scholars introduced a new electronic mail service:
"VASNET"

VASNET allows all members of VAS to communicate instantly
through a state-wide electronic bulletin board.

Late-breaking campus developments, news about upcoming meetings and events, and word of threats to academic freedom can be shared through this private network. It's as easy as sending a regular E-mail message: just use the address "VASNET @ GMU.EDU"

I am moderating VASNET, and in case you experience any problems using it or have a question,
just send a note to me at "SEAGLE @ OSF1.GMU.EDU"

Since this is a private service for VAS members only, you must first subscribe.

To do so, send your **full** e-mail address (not a shortened form) to:

BAUERH @ VTVM1.CC.VT.EDU

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

*Steven J. Eagle teaches at George Mason University School of Law
and is Chairman of the Board of the Virginia Association of Scholars*

can bring to our cause.

WHY GOING TO COLLEGE HAS BECOME SO EXPENSIVE IN VIRGINIA

Part Four: The “Public Service” (PS) “Mission”

by Josef Martin with Henry Bauer

SYNOPSIS:

Part 1: — *There is no coherence in policy or practice: the typical university has become a hodgepodge of competing interest-groups. So when there is a shortage of classrooms, available rooms under the control of Continuing Education or Student Affairs are not used for instructional purposes.*

Part 2: Teaching vs. Research? — *The notion that research competes with teaching is largely misconceived. “Teaching” means very different things in grade schools, four-year colleges, and research universities. In the latter, research is synonymous with training graduate students. An efficient public system would control the relative amounts of undergraduate and graduate (research) teaching by restricting graduate programs to the research universities and stopping the proliferation of graduate programs at other colleges that seek more prestige by transforming themselves into research universities.*

Part 3: Education vs. The Rest — *Look not at what a university’s spokespeople say but at how it spends its money, and you find that it is neither research nor the education of students that has the highest priority: it is PR, athletics, Student Affairs. Administrative positions have increased at a greater rate than anything else — with the possible exception of bulletins, newsletters, and other bumf. We recommend that every unit that issues bumf have its budget and personnel for the following year reduced by the cost of its self-praising, self-seeking, unauthorized, unwanted PR activities. If the Commonwealth of Virginia applied that rule to the operation of State agencies, the savings would be significant.*

Introduction

One of the domains of egregiously wasteful and uncalled-for expenditure by our universities is on so-called “public service”. All around the United States, students and university presidents have discovered that it is their mission to resuscitate school systems, re-develop decaying communities, spur economies.

Where this mission stems from, whether or not it is God-given, has not been revealed; but its adoption and its effects are obvious enough.

The fact is illustrated by the burgeoning of such things as “service learning” programs: which being translated, means that students are given credit for doing community service as *though that were somehow equivalent to the learning that students used to be expected to do in college*. Thus “students at Harvard are afraid that Robert Coles

... will resign if the university does not expand its public-service program.... a week after ... Coles’s ‘ultimate ultimatum,’ ... Harvard’s president announced that he supported” the program ¹.

Virginia, of course, refuses to be outdone by Harvard: “In keeping with its pledge to better serve the communities of Southwest Virginia and beyond, Virginia Tech is looking for an individual to provide dynamic and innovative leadership for a service-learning program launched in March 1994, which already includes participants from more than 20 units throughout the university. The Service-Learning Director must have excellent communication skills, a strong desire to affect [sic] change, and a proven record of a commitment to diversity. The successful candidate will ... initiate curriculum

development, supervise service activities, and act as a spokes-person for this high-profile program on and off campus ...” ².

Among the effects of a move into serving the public in a big way is the need for large PR departments ³ to ensure that the public is suitably appreciative of these efforts. Over the last couple of years, we’ve been accumulating material to illustrate the mad rush into PS and PR:

“**Tech spearheads regional council**” to “become a ‘university without walls’ ... along with the Roanoke Valley Business Council and chambers of commerce in the New River and Roanoke Valleys, have [sic] formed the New Century Council to develop a vision

² *Spectrum* (VPI&SU) 94:10:13, p.7

³ Betsy Wagner & David Bowermaster, “B.S. Economics”, *Washington Monthly*, November 1992, 19-21

¹ *Chronicle of Higher Education* 94:10:26, A23, “Faculty Notes”

for the region's future"⁴. "The \$200,000 in state money originally intended to hire two job recruiters for the Roanoke and New River valleys apparently will go instead to fund an effort to draw up an economic 'vision' for the region"⁵. **"Tech plays growing role in tourism, development..."**⁶; "Communities wanting to develop or expand their tourism industry can now turn to a self-help manual developed by Virginia Tech's Public Service Programs ..."⁷.

"With the rise of capitalism in Asia, American companies and organizations are jumping to expand their markets.... Virginia Tech's Outreach and International Program is no different.... It, along with Marshall University, Wright State University, The [sic] U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and other state development departments will be participating in a monumental Global Business and Trade Conference with China November 6-16"⁸.

"Virginia Tech and James Madison Sponsor Conference ... to discuss plans that would bring the ... 30 colleges and universities along Interstate 81 ... [into] an I-81 Education Corridor to 'underpin an effort to tie transportation, communications and trade together into a coherent

⁴ *Collegiate Times* 93:9:17, A1, by-line Betty Hayden

⁵ *Roanoke Times & World-News* 93:10:8, A1; Dwayne Yancey, "'Vision' gets state funds"

⁶ *Roanoke Times & World-News* 93:11:10, NRV2, by-line Paul Dellinger

⁷ *Spectrum (VPI&SU)* 94:7:14, p.4, "Tourism manual developed"

⁸ Dan Ferrante, "Tech attends conference in China", *Collegiate Times* 94:9:27, A1

strategy' that would make the region competitive, former Virginia Governor Gerald L. Baliles told participants ... the corridor should be considered one campus ... [to take] 'fullest advantage of this region's important resources: world class education and world class transportation.'"⁹.

"Tech to revitalize Caribbean nation ... Virginia Tech took its first step toward extending the university's international outreach Wednesday, when officials met with the president of Guyana to discuss strategies to revitalize the country's economy"¹⁰.

What else this story was going to include

We had in mind to ask, what competence our college administrators have to help the economies of regions and governments, since to our mind they haven't done such an outstanding job with their own economies. We would have continued by noting signs that maybe the administrators themselves weren't as sure as they made it seem, that they knew what to do and how to do it: the appointment of one administrator was said to be "particularly useful to University Outreach and International Programs ... as this new division defines its mission and clarifies its goals and objectives"¹¹.

Why we're not now writing this story

Current events, however — a promising one and a dismay-inducing one — persuade us that this is

⁹ *Tech Independent (VPI&SU)* vol.II no.11, 94:9:26

¹⁰ *Collegiate Times* 93:9:3, A1

¹¹ *Spectrum (VPI&SU)* 93:8:26, p.2

not the time to write this particular story.

The promising event is (our interpretation of) a recent announcement¹²:

Continuing Ed, outreach programs reorganized

President Paul Torgersen has announced the reorganization of the continuing education and university outreach programs.... Harold Kurstedt ... [will] coordinate all [such] programs ... Torgersen thanked [two individuals for various things like] creating the Division of Outreach and Public Service.... a task force ... [Torgersen] appointed last year on University Outreach will review and make recommendations ... on the future of outreach programs."

What in that announcement makes us so optimistic? One factor is that Kurstedt has a long record of running a major operation, the Management Systems Laboratory, *at a profit* — or, what is the same thing in a non-profit organization, without bleeding the university for resources beyond those provided by the grants and contracts that his Laboratory attracts. This is a rather clear signal that "outreach" will be expected to become equally self-sustaining, an end devoutly to be wished and annually worth many hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not several millions, to us all. In our view, President Torgersen is moving as quickly as humanly possible to set Tech's business and budget in order. We don't want to say anything that could be interpreted any other way.

Lest readers fear that this unaccustomed optimism of interpretation on our part reflects head-softening and unconscionable

¹² *Spectrum (VPI&SU)* 95:1:26, p.3

kindness to administrators, let us hasten to add that if we're right and the scheme succeeds, then of course we'll expect Torgersen to apply the same strong medicine to the Division of Student Affairs and the Athletics program ...

And what's the dismaying factor that also persuaded us not to write this story? It's the *indiscriminate* budget-cutting that Governor Allen proposes. It's difficult in public discussions to make distinctions, and we're not

sure that the media are capable of recognizing the distinction between, on the one hand worthwhile Extension activities that have a record of decades of useful support for Virginia, and on the other the promiscuous "public-service" adventures that too many university presidents had embarked on.

Dear Governor Allen:

Virginia's rate of support for higher education now places the Commonwealth about 43rd among

States of this Union. We don't believe the 42 States that spend more are wanton or mistaken. We're ashamed that tuition for Virginia's students has gone from among the lowest in the United States to the second or third highest, in less than a decade. Do you really want to be remembered as the Governor who put the final touch on the destruction of what was becoming one of the finer systems of higher education in the country?

P O T P O U R R I

Diversity skills defined

Dear VS:

You asked (September 1994, p.6), "Anyone care to define 'diversity skills?'" Sure. Having diversity skills means being willing and able to say publicly and with solemn seriousness things that neither you nor anyone else believes. Being willing to charge with racial or sexual harassment anyone bold enough to point out that this is what you're doing. Facility with 'white lies' (or whatever the politically correct term for that is). Willingness to *act* in like shamelessly hypocritical manner, for example using race and sex as the chief criteria in hiring while strenuously denying that this is what you're doing.

An example just to hand comes from Virginia Tech's search for a Provost. Those staff and faculty whose predictions I surveyed were willing to give odds of between 10:1 and 100:1 on the appointment going to a woman. They were unsurprised when, despite the notorious under-representa-

tion of women at the higher ranks in academe, 3 of the top 5 candidates turned out to be females. But the University's President, the Chair of the Search Committee, and the University's spokesperson, Dave Nutter, all denied that any preference for women was at work. "Dave Nutter ... said while the 'university is interested in bringing women in,' the finalists were chosen solely on the basis of their credentials" (*Collegiate Times*, December 6, 1994). Of course that's quite truthful, it's just that gender gets counted as the most desired credential of all.

(Name withheld by request)

Editorial comment & up-date:

Interviews having been held in early December, already by the end of the month it was announced that Peggy Meszaros would take up the position of Provost as of February 1, 1995.

Meszaros has been Dean of Human Resources at Tech since 1993. According to what we've heard, she's a nice person and we wish her and Tech every success

in furthering learning and scholarship. It's just a pity that the manner of the search and the speed with which the announcement was made are fodder for the conspiracy-minded. People who participated in interviewing the candidates seem to feel that their opinions cannot have been carefully weighed.

We don't have these skills

In one of my other roles, I coordinate a seminar series that meets over Thursday lunchtimes and covers anything that might be construed as dealing with interactions between science and societal culture. Early last Fall I scheduled a talk by a distinguished geneticist on "Multi-Culturalism". But instead of kudos from the politically correct I got this e-mail:

It strikes me that it is very ironic that you are dealing with multi-culturalism [sic] on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar. You are excluding participation [sic] by most Jews in order to discuss multi-culturalism [sic].

DOESN'T SEPARATE STILL MEAN UNEQUAL??

Since the mid-1980s, the Office of Career Planning and Placement of the University of Virginia has been sponsoring an Annual Minority Career Day. By 1992, 50 colleges and 150 employers were participating

... *Collegiate Times* 92:10:13, A6

In 1930s Germany, it was "Jews need not apply". In the segregated South, for many jobs it used to be, "Negroes need not apply". Nowadays in the whole United States, for many positions it is implicitly, "White males need not apply".

(name withheld
as a matter of courtesy)

One of the draw-backs of e-mail for me is that I've often sent my reply before I think better of it. Anyway, my response was,

Are you suggesting we not have seminars that day? How about classes?

which brought in turn,

No, I am not suggesting that classes or seminars be canceled that day. However, if your intent is to have a thorough discussion of multi-diversity [sic] and you exclude a portion of the population that adds to that diversity by reason of scheduling, then perhaps you should rethink the scheduling issue or your intent in presenting that seminar.

Note the incoherence, arrogance and dogmatism that political correctness induces in people:

- No matter the words PCers use, all mean the same thing: multi-culturalism, multi-culturalism, multi-diversity are interchangeable slogans;
- PCers think they know — I can only suppose, by clairvoyance — what someone else's intent is. In the present instance, my intent had been no more than to provide the eclectic food-for-thought-and-discussion for which these seminars have been well known (they've been running for 15 years or more).

- PCers speak as though their own view over anything is the only correct one, that they are uniquely qualified to speak for a whole group of people. But my own hereditary culture is demonstrably Jewish. What gives my correspondent more right than I have, to speak for "our" people? In point of fact I think I'm *more* qualified to take part in multi-diverse-culti discussions because I represent more than just the one culture; thus I like to eat ham with my matzoth.
- PCers have no sense of proportion. Our seminars attract as few as half-a-dozen or as many as several dozen; they are quite informal get-togethers, hardly something to make an issue of;
- PCers expect everyone to know about whatever any given PCer happens to be most full of at any given time. Is it really to be a necessary criterion for all who arrange seminars, that they know what the holiest day is for every religion that might have an adherent on campus or in town? Wouldn't it be just as grievous, for that matter, to be so insensitive on the *second*-holiest day of someone's year? What about people for whom every day is holy? Will this tomfoolery ever stop?

Another example of diversity skills in action?

In Blacksburg we had a People's Fast for Justice early in October, and a public rally, in support of the nationwide initiative to change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day, "to bring out the truth about Christopher Columbus and change the history books ... to move toward a more just and democratic society, one that is freed from greed and all forms of oppression" ¹.

In a just and democratic society, it seems to us, no human being would be so maligned as Christopher Columbus is now maligned by the self-righteously politically correct; nor oppressed as the politically correct now seek to oppress people of no color.

A cogent illustration that being white makes one ineligible for any needed help came in the controversy in Connecticut over adding "Asian Americans and American Indians [sic] ... to Connecticut's Affirmative-Action program" ². "I agree 100 per cent that Asian Americans who are not disadvantaged ought not to get any benefits from any affirmative-action program. But that should apply to African Americans and hispanic [sic] Americans", said one protagonist; "black [sic] and asian-American [sic] student leaders were in agreement on including all groups in the affirmative-action program." "All minorities should be allowed to have some kind of assistance. I don't think

¹ *Collegiate Times* 94:10:7, B6 (Jay LeVan, "March for Native American Issues") & *Spectrum* (VPI&SU) 94:10:6, p.4 (Calendar)

² *Chronicle of Higher Education* 94:10:5, A35 (by Scott Jaschik)

they should be left out.”

So: all minorities should get assistance, but if and only if they are individually disadvantaged. The only disadvantaged individuals who would not then be eligible for assistance, apparently, are the non-minority disadvantaged.

To take an optimistic long-term view, this jealous bickering among minority activists will eventually bring us back to where we should have always been, that assistance be based on *individual* need, not on group affiliation.

And another ...

We received from Randolph-Macon College in Ashland a copy of *Many Voices Newsletter*, produced by the Multicultural (Student) Association and bearing also the logo of the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Our correspondent rightly noted the “combination of venality with a threatening tone, not to mention the near illiteracy of much of it”, for example:

From a practical point of view having a multicultural perspective may help to ensure our future happiness.... When it comes to your career many companies are finding that to be competitive in a global economy, they have to hire employees who are culturally sensitive to others.... Digital Corporation has recently created a 25 person department that do nothing but multicultural training.

Those of us who can demonstrate that we have some multicultural training (classes, workshops, overseas study and etc.) will find that we will have an advantage when we pursue our careers. Potential employees [sic] will find us attractive because they will not have to spend additional money on our training. Some of us will eventually obtain lucrative posi-

tions as multicultural trainers....

Some people turn their noses up to the idea of multiculturalism, and that’s alright. In the end they will be held accountable for their attitudes and actions, by a higher source than you or I.

Isn’t it a shame that the Office of Multicultural Affairs doesn’t help the members of this Association to become more literate? Surely that would also help their future careers, to be able to use their language more correctly and cogently?

We also find heart-rending these illustrations of students being indoctrinated into sloganeering. What they ought to get from college is some inkling of how to think analytically and critically, so that they would not mouth stale shibboleths but could construct reasoned arguments and say what they really intend. The students in this Association could benefit greatly from a course examining, say, the substantive basis and mode of expression used in their first paragraph:

From a moralistic, ethical and spiritual point of view, it is important to treat people with civility, regardless of their race, gender, age, religious or sexual orientation.

In such a course they would:

- Learn the difference between “moral” and “moralistic”.
- Come to understand why that difference matters, why such distinctions need to be respected.
- Examine whether people in different cultures would agree that moral, ethical, and religious considerations all inevitably lead to a belief that civility is important. If not, how to cope with those differences

MONEY AND SELF-ESTEEM!

“the Commonwealth makes millions of dollars from the travel and tourist industry by delaying school openings a week in September. I’m surprised the General Assembly hasn’t seen the obvious: Delay openings until October, close schools at the end of April, and realize tens of millions. April and October are usually warm months. Removing these from the school calendar could bring in hundreds of millions. . . . Does anyone see the potential here? By doing away with public education altogether, we’d have all the money we ever need. . . . Another advantage would be that our kids wouldn’t have to take all those tests where foreign students keep beating our brains out. Self-esteem would soar!”

Timothy D. Dobbins
Roanoke Times & World-News
94:3:14, p. 4A

In the last week of January 1995, we heard on the radio that the General Assembly has once again failed to repeal its prohibition against schools opening before Labor Day.

of viewpoint? In principle and in practice? Within a self-styled multi-cultural perspective?

- Consider what is gained *or lost* by the clause beginning with “regardless”. Since such enumeration entails exclusion of items not enumerated, the quoted paragraph implies that one is entitled to be uncivil on the ground of differences over, say, *political* rather than religious or sexual orientation, or perhaps because one doesn’t like another’s parents or *alma mater* or favorite

football team. This point bears special emphasis because the same people who customarily bleat that “it is important to treat people with civility, regardless of their race, gender, age, etc.” tend themselves to be so uncivil when the race is “white”, the gender “male”, and the age one that goes along with a conservative rather than a counter-cultural bent.

Mr. Jefferson’s University is not to be outdone when it comes to silliness!

(Paraphrased from an e-mail message from a trusty Wahoo Mole):

For generations, UVa students who sought to get into crowded classes had to ask their professors to sign a “forced add” or “forced action” form.

But recently a certain feminist professor complained that the phrase “forced add/action” conjured up images of rape and hence perpetuated a “rape culture”. Administrators moved quickly to eliminate this blatant manifestation of phallogocentric insensitivity. In order to find a new name for the form, they set up a contest: the author of the best replacement name would get a free dinner at Red Lobster. Eventually an exciting and politically-correct

new name was chosen: we are now to call it a “course add form”!

Did anyone suggest the most accurately descriptive name of all, we wonder? namely, “forced entry” form?

Our resident consulting psychiatrist reminds us that the humanistic or rational therapeutics³ of Albert Ellis and Maxie Maultsby begins with the demonstration that what one person says to another is separate from how the latter interprets it, and that the speaker has no control over that interpretation. Thus when Professor Femina takes a Rorschach-type test, as each card is displayed and she is asked what it makes her think of, she may well say, “Rape”. On the other hand, Professor Womanly’s responses to the same cards may well be more varied. It is not what is on the cards that determines the response but what is in the heads (or ids) of the respondents.

UVa administrators should have informed that feminist professor that her conjuring up of images of rape differentiated her from the tens of thousands of other women who have been at the university who did not share her imagination. The correct solution would have been that the objecting professor have psychotherapy, not that the university change its perfectly correct and unexceptionable nomenclature.

Under present circumstances, though, know-nothing administrators force onto everyone the consequences of reactions that only the most far-out neurotics amongst us experience.

³ Albert Ellis & Robert A. Harper, *A New Guide to Rational Living*; Maxie C. Maultsby, *Help Yourself to Happiness through Rational Self-Counseling*; and many other works

That’s one small step for Radford; maybe one giant leap for Virginia?⁴

Radford’s administration and Board of Visitors have bowed to State urgings and abandoned their New College-to-be of Global Studies. The objections were said to be that the program was not well defined and that the good things promised for it could be accomplished within the regular curriculum.

We agree wholeheartedly, as do many Radford faculty⁵:

The New College was an expensive white elephant lumbering nowhere fast, with those in charge of it cheerfully oblivious to its obvious administrative and curricular shortcomings, ... stubbornly resistant to warnings ... that they didn’t know what they were doing. The reasons why these warnings were so easily ignored are instructive.... an idea without substance put forward in a then-favorable political climate. It allowed the university to lay claim to significant new funding, to be perceived to be on the ‘cutting edge’ of technological education (for example, to spend money on computers and satellite feeds instead of testy tenure-track faculty), and to grow gracefully beyond its proclaimed cap ...

There are plenty of programs at many if not all of the Commonwealth’s other colleges, though, about which the same things can properly be said. For decades now (and not only in

⁴ After the first man to step on the moon, Neil Armstrong, 20 July 1969, “That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind”

⁵ Robert M. Gill, Nicholas J. Pappas & Craig Waggaman, “Rigor(less) mortis: Global college at Radford deserved dismantling”, *Roanoke Times & World-News* 95:1:10

MAYBE THEY JUST PREFER TO DO SOMETHING ELSE??

“In 1977, 684 African-American men completed doctoral degrees, but in 1990, only 320 [did so]

Martha Johnson of Virginia Tech’s Graduate School, to U.S. House of Representatives Sub-Committee on Labor, etc. *Spectrum* (VPI&SU) 92:5:28

Virginia, of course) we've been besotted with "innovation" to the detriment of *learning*. We blather about teaching critical thinking while displaying every sign of never being critical of any venture that's labeled "novel". In many academic departments we can't afford to use our copying machines to prepare handouts for the students, even as Centers for Undergraduate Excellence and the like are established. It would be one giant, giant step for higher education in Virginia and in the United States if the basic necessities were to be fully funded and the frills pushed aside until then.

I'm *not* holding my breath. Still, even if one small step brings nothing more, it *is* at least a step in the right direction. Even a journey of a thousand miles, after all, has to start that way, to cite what was at one time a politically correct source.

STOP PRESS: we should have waited ...

The *Roanoke Times & World-News* of January 21 carried a fine opinion piece about dismantling Radford's College of Global Studies, by Professor Sam Riley of Virginia Tech's Department of Communication Studies ("fine" because it agrees with what we said above). But neither Riley's expressions of good sense nor our own feeble attempts at satire can keep pace with a world in which that same issue of the *Roanoke Times* reports (pp. C1,4) State Senator Madison Marye's filing of "a budget amendment to resuscitate the experimental school.... Marye said ... 'It's an innovative [sic] idea whose time has come ... an innovative [sic] approach to education in the future'". And the article reports further blathers

about "internationalizing", "interactive media", and the like.

Since the Commonwealth's colleges and universities are short of bread, in other words, let them eat cake.

"Marye said his action had nothing to do with his daughter's employment at the school. Charlotte Hawes ... earns \$49,500 annually as director of college relations and development for the new college. The job would end July 1, when money for the school runs out."

Which reminds us of the infamous words of a certain Republican member of the Senate Judiciary Committee: if you believe that, then I'd like to sell you a fine bridge in Massachusetts — OOPS, Brooklyn.

Watch me Mama! Here's some more bumf!

Whenever he saw a particularly egregious example of self-advertising, my mentor Bruno Breyer would describe it as an example of the "Watch me, Mama!" syndrome. Hardly anyone, he remarked, ever gets over the human baby's wish to be taken notice of.

"...the fundamental fact is that there's no such thing as a grown-up person ..."

... the chaplain of Glières
quoted by André Malraux ⁶

In *Virginia Scholar* #3 (September 1994), Martin & Bauer drew our attention to the fact that resources are needlessly

⁶ André Malraux, *Anti-Memoirs* (tr. by Terence Kilmartin), New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968, p.1.

"What has confession taught you about men?", Malraux had asked the chaplain after learning that he had been hearing confessions for 15 years

squandered in the composing, printing, and distribution of bulletins, newsletters, and pamphlets by departments, divisions, offices, units, centers. They saw this as one illustration of endless, fierce competition for resources between units owing to a lack of plain institutional priority on teaching and scholarship. But this bumf-barrage is also a "Watch-me-Mama!" phenomenon: too many people aren't sure that what they're doing is worthwhile unless they're being continually noticed and applauded (illustrating David Riesman's characterization of our culture as "other-directed" ⁷).

It almost seems as though Martin & Bauer, far from curbing the proliferation of newsletterish bumf, actually gave some more units at Virginia Tech the idea of joining in the free-for-all ("free" because it's only institutional and not personal money that's being wasted). Last fall semester we saw — apart from the items mentioned in *VS* #3 — an **Advisor's Newsletter** containing nothing useful that advisors couldn't already know from their **Handbook**; a call from the Humanities Center for material for its newsletter **ARETE** (what then is that Center's publication, **The Humanities Grapevine**, if not its Newsletter??); **Energy Outlook** from the Center for Coal & Energy Research; **International Notes** from the Cranwell International Center of University Outreach & International Programs.

⁷ *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* by David Riesman with Nathan Glazer & Reuel Denney, Yale University Press, 1950 (abridged ed. 1953, Doubleday Anchor Books)

The **Department of Recreational Sports**, too, has inaugurated a **Newsletter** (vol.1, no.1, December 1994). The money for that presumably came at first from what the Department saved by decreasing the hours during which the swimming pool was open to faculty and staff last fall semester (5 hours per week instead of 10 hours up to last spring) and now from the money raked in by the newly imposed fee for faculty and staff who use the pool (\$36 per semester). The fee was announced, together with other goodies, in a large advertisement whose center told us that

Recreational Sports is excited to offer ...[many things, but no longer free swimming]

The University Writing Program has put out a 12-page **Connecting Through Writing** brochure whose design makes *Virginia Scholar*, for example, look very plain indeed. No doubt the cost was borne by the SCHEV grant whose award is trumpeted on the first page. The Division of Continuing Education issues not only the glossy **Annual Report** noted by Martin & Bauer but also glossy brochures listing the **Conferences, Workshops, Seminars and Institutes** that it mounts AND FURTHER a 16-page glossy combination of newsletter and program announcements titled **Continuing Education at Virginia Tech**.

The Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching has weighed in with its 8-page newsletter, **The Pedagogical Challenge**. On the upper half of p.6 it deplores “teachism ... the pernicious anti-teaching prejudice that confers second-class citizenship to those who devote too much effort

BUMF ... WHAT'S THAT??

We've been asked this by several people who don't have access to an English English dictionary. Here's the good word, from the *Oxford English Dictionary*:

Bumf. *slang*. [Short for *bumfodder* 'anitergium' (see BUM sb.¹ 4).] Toilet paper; hence, paper (esp. with contemptuous implication), documents collectively.

to improving their teaching”. Below on the same page, presumably to rescue some of those second-classes, the Center offers **“Teaching Release Time During the Academic Year ...** to engage in innovative course or curriculum development or revision”. Are those then no longer a normal part of preparing for what one teaches? Yet we cannot but applaud the delicious irony of fighting anti-teaching prejudice by offering time off from teaching.

One of our correspondents had been near apoplexy as he drew this newsletter to our attention, noting — as well as this having-it-both-ways about “teachism” — that it parrots SCHEV's blather about moving away from the “credit for classroom contact” model, applauds the politically correct drive into “service learning”, and seconds the thoughtless calls to “integrate rather than isolate disciplines”. Integrating is something that one might attempt after having learned things to integrate, not beforehand.

But our favorite new entrant into the bumf race is **The Enabler — Project ENABLE: The Administrative Systems Initiative Newsletter**, which threatens to be a monthly broad-

sheet (vol.1, no.1 was November, no.2 came already in December): “Project ENABLE is the name selected to identify one of the most significant and aggressive endeavors ever undertaken by Virginia Tech” [emphasis added].

WOW!! Comparable, then, to President Hahn's transformation of a small, all-cadet, A&M polytech into a comprehensive research university? To President Lavery's nurturing of meaningful faculty governance? To Provost Wilson's introduction of a University Core Curriculum?

With bated breath we read on to discover what this “most significant and aggressive” initiative is to be:

All the administrative computing systems will be replaced with new state-of-the-art systems; problems will be addressed “directly and aggressively” for “enhanced service, productivity and work environment” by organizing “around cross-functional, multidisciplinary teams ... [which] approach greatly enhances management and organizational flexibility and provides the project with a variety of benefits that would not be possible in a traditional work environment”; and so on and so forth.

We'll wait to see. If we notice any good results, we'll be happy to applaud. Until then, we'd rather not hear about what might, *deo volens*, get done some time in the future; and we'd rather not get this “free publication published periodically by Virginia Tech Project ENABLE Staff Support Team”. How about disbanding that “support” team and putting it to more productive, not to say honest work?

New issues of the periodicals already mentioned by Martin &

Bauer continue to come to hand, of course. So we've been privileged to read about such things as, "The internationalization of each college is a mandate given to the deans by the Provost" (**The University Abroad**, in a series featuring each Dean's "Visions for Tomorrow — Internationalizing the Colleges"). One way we're internationalizing, of course, is by restricting the numbers of out-of-state students and increasing their tuition far more than that of in-staters.

Martin & Bauer ascribed this bumf to competition among self-seeking, autonomous units not held centrally accountable. Examination of the fine print in the bumf, though, makes it seem rather to be part of a major institutional initiative; for many of these publications seem to be parts of a carefully planned series: they are designated in some such manner as VT/651/-1194/6.6M/951772, or VT/322/-1094/2.5M/951524, or VT/170/-1294/2M/952282, or VT/322/0994/-2.4M/950994.

With the help of our consultant code-breaker, we've already deciphered enough of this to be able to identify the funding sources and the sizes of the print runs, confirming Martin & Bauer's estimate that typically several thousand copies are produced of each of these. For the university as a whole, this comes at a conservative guess to perhaps a few hundred thousand dollars annually plus person-time equivalent to a dozen or two positions, in *direct* costs. To that must be added indirect costs of about the same magnitude: for the time of people who are asked to generate material to fill up the bumf, of those who carry it around the campus

**AN ADMINISTRATOR
WHO REALLY UNDERSTANDS
WHAT TEACHERS DO**

"faculty members will **change** their present teaching practices and become primarily concerned with enhancing and facilitating student learning" (emphasis added)

Alan E. Guskin, Chancellor,
Antioch University System
cited in *Chronicle of Higher
Education* 94:10:26, B2

first for distribution and then immediately thereafter for re-cycling or garbaging, and so forth. Still, quite a bargain, no one could deny, if it means that everyone appreciates and applauds what everyone else is doing.

Thanks for economizing!

For their diligence in curbing such unnecessary expenditures as proliferating newsletter bumf, most Presidents of colleges and universities in Virginia were awarded salary raises on the order of 11%: more than 3 times the percentage received by the average staff or faculty member. "Virginia's secretary of education says public university presidents deserve above-average raises for working to cut money and academic programs from their budgets this year" ⁸.

The reasoning struck us as analogous to that by which IBM's new CEO was compensated to the tune of \$8,000,000 for his onerous work in firing 8500 employees. With bated breath we awaited a public explosion of anger and carefully articulated protest by elected representatives of the staff

⁸ *Roanoke Times & World-News* 94:11:14, C2, "Colleges urge pay raises"

and faculty.

And we waited.

Virginia Tech students' *Collegiate Times* did comment that "something is wrong.... Good college presidents are hard to find, but good professors may be even harder to find and even harder to retain" ⁹. Tech's President Torgersen revealed his embarrassment: "He did consider turning down the raise, but decided against it because he didn't want to put the state's other presidents in an awkward position [WHY NOT?, one of our confidants wanted to know]. Instead, ... he and his wife will probably donate the extra funds to the university in addition to their annual gifts ... privately, again, so he won't put other presidents on the spot" ¹⁰.

The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* didn't think these raises were appropriate for "public servants" ¹¹.

But apart from these few comments, the raises went unremarked until January when — quite belatedly one might have thought — Governor "Allen criticizes pay raises for presidents" ¹².

The episode prompts us to make

**a modest proposal,
yet a quite serious one:**

Any number of blunders get committed because the perpetrators have forgotten — or perhaps never did know — how

⁹ Editorial, "Raises should include faculty", *Collegiate Times* 94:11:18, A7

¹⁰ *Collegiate Times* 94:11:18, A1,8 (Betty Hayden, "Torgersen could get salary hike")

¹¹ "How Much?", editorial, *Richmond Times-Dispatch* 94:11:17, A26

¹² *Roanoke Times & World-News* 95:1:8, C1

things appear to people who hold different stations in life. Thus faculty who become University administrators all too often imagine that they should now adopt a different view-point; and they easily come to regard themselves as somehow more institutionally valuable than they used to be as professors, imagining for example that they warrant their own personally reserved parking space ¹³.

Boards of Visitors are comprised by and large of people who have never been faculty members, secretaries, or technical staff. They don't know how people in those positions view the University and its administration and the students. That lack of knowledge results in such blunders as the recent pay-raise for Presidents.

Our modest suggestion is that each Board of Visitors co-opt as (non-voting) members some people who *do* understand how the

¹³ Tech's long-time President William Lavery was always adamant that neither he nor any other administrators were to enjoy such a luxury, even as he himself was sometimes greatly inconvenienced (not many faculty offices were as distant from a parking lot as was Lavery's). We were quite impressed that one of President Torgersen's first actions was to eliminate the parking space that the previous president had had designated for his own sole use. According to one of our best-placed Moles, President Torgersen has now even suffered the indignity of receiving a parking ticket on campus — and, what's more, paid it just as though he were any anonymous professor. (On being appointed President, it should be recalled, Torgersen said that he viewed himself as a Professor who happened to be serving as President. In practicing what he preaches, he sets quite an unusual role model for administrators.)

rest of the University — its non-administrative units — feel about things.

What's wanted, of course, are not "yes"-people but experienced *and independently minded* people. That immediately eliminates from consideration any of the elected representatives of the faculty, staff, and students, because those individuals are supposed to represent the current interests of their constituencies, which is not at all the same thing as offering disinterested insight into what those constituencies feel. We would suggest, retired faculty and staff who are remembered with respect as principled, independently minded people willing and able to speak their minds. To represent the student attitude, *former* students should be chosen.

Boards would benefit immeasurably from the advice of such people. At the moment, everything they hear comes from people who share in some fashion the vested interest that *their* boat not be rocked.

**ABORTION IS NOT
TRAUMATIZING.**

***It's protests against
abortion that traumatize
women.***

[The] Dean of Students ... told *The Aquin* ... that several women were 'traumatized' ... and 'had to be rushed up to counseling' ... [after] the St. Thomas Human Life Alliance (now Students for Life) planted white crosses in the lower quad during Pro-Life Week...

The Aquin (University of St. Thomas student newspaper, LXXVI #9, 93:11:12)

The Commonwealth leads

the way; or, "Governor Allen, where are you when we really need you?"

Martin & Bauer pointed out that the Commonwealth generates and distributes bumf in far larger (and vastly more expensive) quantity than the colleges ever could. Determined to prove them right, the Commonwealth sent me (and about 100,000 others) a fat envelope whose outside already paved the way for apoplectic seizure. Below the ominously bureaucratic return address:

Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Health Benefits
Department of Personnel and Training
c/o Trigon Blue Cross Blue Shield
P.O.Box 27401, Mail Drop 03K
Richmond, Virginia 223279

there came in large letters this enticement:

Exciting Information About Your 1995 Health Benefits Plan

Inside was a 4-page pamphlet describing the latest menu of insurance plans supposedly available to State employees; yet past experience indicates that those of us in South-West Virginia, for example, will not have all those options.

The pamphlet was accompanied by a glossy cardboard folder labeled "Answer Pack" with pockets in which rested more than a dozen individual strips of glossy paper, each adorned with advice and warnings, for example never to consult a specialist without first discussing the matter with your primary-care physician. "If you contact your primary care physician before you receive any hospital or medical care [say, when you've just been run over by a car and are lying in the street], you should never need to worry about referrals or pre-authorization

tion”.

Ah, yes; you **should** never need to worry ... This comes from the people who, every year or two, try to make my insurance account responsible for treatment received by a former wife divorced a decade ago, or a daughter who has had her own insurance since she turned 23 five years ago ...

It is precisely this burgeoning bureaucracy of “insurance” that doesn’t really insure, that will bring to this country the one-payer, federally controlled health-care system that no one really wants. What nonsense, to offer several different plans, as though any ordinary person with legal training and a doctorate in philosophy could make an informed choice among even those plans actually available in their locality. What we want from our employer, the Commonwealth of Virginia or any other, is that someone be given the responsibility to buy for us the very best, most comprehensive coverage that our employer and we together can afford. We **don’t** want any fine print that turns out not to cover treatment for a sudden bout of something when we happen to be away from home; or any other exclusions of what reasonable people would naturally assume to be covered. Oregon showed the way some time ago by drawing a line clearly at procedures whose cost could not be justified for universal coverage.

I **don’t** want to be bombarded with bumf about health benefits;

I **don’t** want money and people-time that could be spent on **treatment** or paying for insurance premiums to be wasted on mailings of glossy bumf;

I **don’t** want to receive propaganda about how good my benefits

are. It just makes me wonder, what must be all the disadvantages, when so many people are putting so much effort into trying to make me think I should be grateful — what is it that they’re hiding? It reminds me of my visit, in 1958, to the then-East-Germany: people were fearful of everyone and everything, the realities of everyday life were drab, but large colorful billboards scattered throughout the country bore the smiling face of Big Brother and large slogans told the people all the things they had to be grateful for. I **don’t** want Big Sister here telling me how well she’s treating me. I’m going to make up my own mind about it, and I’m going to vote my convictions, even if it means continuing to vote *against* candidates rather than for any of them.

And I **certainly don’t** want to be told that I’m going to be even better served by using an automated telephone system to choose or change or register for my insurance coverage. I’ve activated my PID, of course, because I’m terrified of the fine print that excludes from coverage anyone who doesn’t, or even ejects them for ever from State employment and from accrued retirement benefits. But it was not pleasant, and it wasn’t necessary, and it’s going to cost a lot more money than doing it the old, simple way — dealing with a human being (even if only by campus mail) whom you could trust to do his extraordinary best for you. (Yes, there does exist such an individual, at least at Tech, and everyone here knows it.)

Let the Commonwealth show us the way: don’t “innovate”, just do your job.

Speaking of modest pro-

posals ...

"The colors of the tassels on graduates' mortar boards has become an issue at Camden County College. Students who earn the highest grades wear gold or silver tassels. Those with lower grades wear black ones ... black students ... said it was a racial issue." (*Chronicle of Higher Education* 93:12:15, p.A5)

Here's our modest proposal. Let's make black instead of white the traditional color for brides' dresses. Let's wear white rather than black arm-bands to display sorrow. Let's use white, not black, for funerals. Demanding money under threat of unpleasant consequences shall henceforth be called "whitemail", not "blackmail". Cowardice, on the other hand, shall no longer be described as "lily-livered" and rewarded by the giving of white feathers but shall be denoted by "dark-livered" and rewarded with black feathers. Cover-ups will be black-washes not white-washes. In the game of chess, Black and not White shall have the first move.

And since the news item quoted above was date-lined "Blackwood NJ", obviously that town should change its name to "Whitewood".

A DEFINITION ...

the world would be a better place if there were fewer Confederate flags. That's not advocating thought control. It's just advocating decency ...

Barbara Bergmann
(then President, AAUP)
Academe 91:11-12, p.9

CONVENTIONS & MEETINGS

South-West Virginia Chapter of VAS; Annual Meetings of the Virginia Association of Scholars and its Board; Fifth General Convention of the National Association of Scholars

South-West Virginia Chapter

At a meeting convened by Al Mandelstamm on October 18, a South-West Virginia Chapter of VAS was established. The seventeen people present came from Ferrum College, Hollins College, Radford University, and Virginia Tech. Alex Weiss had arranged for the comfortable accommodation in Heth Hall. Officers elected were President Henry Bauer, Vice-President Daniel Kolb, Secretary-Treasurer Allan Mandelstamm.

The goals and possible activities of the organization were discussed. Each person spoke briefly about his or her particular concerns in the current academic milieu. Problems mentioned included lack of excellence in criteria for hiring and promotion, improper grading, restrictions on freedom of speech, blatant male-bashing, and lack of respect for diverse ideas: in short, a lack of academic integrity. Comment was made that an organization of the type we propose would enable people of like concern to meet, interchange ideas, and be aware of the fact that each of us is not alone in our concerns.

Several participants felt that it was essential to publicize specific cases — not only the new ones of local interest but also older ones from this area and cases from other localities. Commendations were expressed for the new Newsletter; at the same time it was felt that it would be advantageous to utilize other means of information delivery such as newspapers, television, radio, and the Internet.

The formal basis of the organization was examined. It was noted that we already had the blessing of Steve Balch, President of the National Association of Scholars, and Ted Smith, President of the Virginia Association of Scholars, to establish an organization consisting of members of NAS or VAS who reside in South-West Virginia.

(from Minutes supplied by Al Mandelstamm)

Virginia Association of Scholars

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Virginia Association of Scholars was held in the Rotunda at the University of Virginia on November 19. More members were able to attend than at previous meetings, and more news was shared. Perhaps most exciting and promising, we heard from Steve Eagle

about his willingness, which was enthusiastically received, to establish an electronic bulletin board for members — see page 4.

Inevitably we heard some disturbing things. Political correctness has been making itself felt at Mr. Jefferson's University, at the George Mason School of Law, at Virginia Tech, and elsewhere as well. Mike Krauss of GMU Law School told us a hair-raising story. Though it has just had the happiest possible ending (see Mike's op-ed piece in the *Washington Times*, reprinted on pp. 21-22), still it subjected to lengthy, emotionally wearing harassment an award-winning teacher who had done nothing to warrant any charge being laid against him.

Whittle Johnston reported the formation of a University of Virginia Chapter of the Virginia Association of Scholars. Paul Cantor described the founding of the Association of Literary Scholars & Critics, intended as an alternative to the Modern Language Association which has become notorious as an evangelical hotbed for political correctness.

The Virginia Association of Scholars is doing well, according to reports from its officers. President Ted Smith has identified campus representatives at about 20 colleges (we hope they will see it as part of their function to send items of interest to *Virginia Scholar!*). Treasurer Al Mandelstamm presented a reassuring balance sheet. As to the Newsletter, we reported the following:

- The two chief purposes are (1) making members of the Virginia Association of Scholars feel part of an active community and (2) making as wide an audience as possible familiar with its views. The latter means, the larger the print run and the bigger the mailing, the better.
- Print runs have so far been 500; for #3, the total mailing was over 400.
- Copies go to all members of the Boards of Visitors at the universities and the 4-year colleges and to National Association of Scholars affiliates in other States as well as to members of the Virginia Association of Scholars.
- A supplementary mailing list includes other individuals who have shown some interest, for example columnist John Leo of *U. S. News & World Report*. We were heartened to receive a

call from one of Leo's colleagues about an item in *VS #3*, showing that it gets read there.

- A friend told us that one member of a Board of Visitors was so taken with *VS* that she joined the National Association of Scholars forthwith.
- The cost, including postage, has been well under \$1 per copy: we're very fortunate to have found so efficient a printer as **The Copy Center** in Christiansburg.
- One copy of *VS #3* was sent to every academic Department on the Virginia Tech campus. We would like to hear from people on other campuses who would be prepared to circulate copies in this fashion: let us know how many copies you want. We believe this can be a very effective way to enlist support and gain more members.
- News items from around the Commonwealth are badly needed; too much in these first issues dealt with matters at Virginia Tech.
- Essays, book reviews, and the like are badly needed. Too much of these early issues has been written by the Editor.

All the necessary business of Roll Call, Minutes, etc. was transacted. Retiring members of the Board were replaced by the Class of 1997, namely Whittle Johnston, Al Mandelstamm, and Ted Smith. At the conclusion of the Membership meeting, the Board efficiently transacted the necessary business at its own Annual Meeting.

National Association of Scholars: Fifth General Convention

Your editor found this, his second NAS convention, more like a scholarly conference than the Fourth Convention had been. The latter program had focused more directly on issues of political correctness, bringing out the passionate concerns that caused many of us to join NAS. This time, focusing on the philosophical or metaphysical underpinnings of political correctness, the meeting was more like other academic gatherings in the humanities or social sciences. The relative staidness and studiousness was also enhanced by the absence of vigorous representatives of PC-type views, some of whom in San Francisco last year had made valiant cases for their insupportable opinions. Whereas at San Francisco there had been a mad rush to the microphones on the floor, this year in Boston there were times when it seemed that no one felt any pressing urge to comment or question.

One had only to stroll from the lecture room to

the display tables, however, to feel the strength of concerns about the continuing problem of political correctness in academe. Robert McConnell was soliciting readers for his book, to be distributed free, titled *Far Out in the New Age: The Subversion of Science by Cultural Communism*; describing himself as "a retired physicist who has joined the Association of Scholars because I am alarmed and frightened by what is happening in the humanities and social sciences under the heading postmodernism and political correctness". If you missed him in Boston and would like his book, write him at P. O. Box 99413, Pittsburgh PA 15233-4413. Having read some of McConnell's earlier works, I can promise that this one too will be interesting.

News releases at the time of the Convention featured an 80-page report from the Massachusetts Association of Scholars "that takes aim at many of the measures others have praised as attempts to reduce tensions"¹. The report is detailed and well documented, a model for the serious effort called for if the media and the public are to be brought to believe that what's happening in academe really *is* happening.

One of the themes running through the report about UMass-Amherst is, how counter-productive are many of the things being done by the PCers. It's quite reminiscent of the educationist penchant for putting into disastrous practice any notion that sounds new and therefore wonderful (no matter how ancient or silly it actually happens to be); like the "open classrooms" whose cacophony soon put them out of favor again (though not before many schools had been built without useful internal walls) or the "inclusive classrooms" where nowadays a single teacher is supposed to cope not only with a couple of dozen more-or-less-average students but also with several who require individual attention because of emotional or mental retardation — individual attention that they can get only if the teacher neglects everyone else in the room.

That well-meant do-good ideas can bring the opposite of the hoped-for effect is something I learned on my first stay in the United States. I lived in an "International House" organized by the Experiment in International Living. Americans and foreigners were paired as room-mates in a semi-cooperative environment, that is to say we had the responsibility

¹ Alice Dembner, "Diversity run amok poisons UMass-Amherst, teachers say", *Boston Globe* 94:11:10

for such chores as cleaning, dish-washing, and so on; and the decisions on who did what were arrived at “democratically”. I like to sum up what I learned there by recalling that, through close association with people of many different cultures, I came to acquire strong prejudices against groups of people of whose very existence I had previously been unaware. And I have copious anecdotes to illustrate that.

It’s no consolation but a matter worth knowing about, that political correctness has been even more damaging in Canada than it has (so far) been in the U.S. The *Newsletter* of the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS) makes that plain enough². At the Boston meeting, the lack of prospects for white males in Canadian academe was cogently described to anyone who cared to listen or to read by Louis Marinoff, who is leaving Canada to take up a position at CCNY. For example: “An Ontario institution ... had 163 applicants ... 150 men and 13 women. All 13 females were short-listed; not one male made the list”³. Under the pseudonym ‘Lou Tafler’, Marinoff has published *Fair New World*, a satirical novel about the battle of the sexes (available at \$14.99 from Backlash Books, Box 2612, 45 River Drive South, Jersey City, NJ 07310; (201) 963-3390, FAX (604) 662-3571).

The display table at Boston had many interesting items. Thus STATS (Statistical Assessment Service) “has been created in order to expose the fallacies of ‘junk science’ claims *before* they receive the media attention that sustains and encourages them”; for more details, write David W. Murray, Director of Research, STATS, 2100 L Street N.W. Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20037; (202) 223-3193, FAX (202) 872-4014. A hard-hitting newsletter “on science, media, policy and health” is *PROBE*, published monthly, which takes a stand different from the consensual pap fed by the standard media: monthly, \$53 per year from David Zimmerman, Inc.— *PROBE*, Box 1321, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025; editorial office, 121 E. 26th Street, New York, NY 10010; (212) 545-0088.

The Convention was opened by Steve Balch with a short, meaty exhortation that we now proceed to combat political correctness by building substantive

programs: “propaganda of the deed”. (Later, at the Business Meeting, we heard that NAS and interested foundations are willing and able to fund intellectually substantive initiatives.) We’ve experienced several decades of academic disarray and intellectual vacuum; PC is one of the delusions allowed by affluence, but unlike primitive magic it is not self-limiting and must be actively opposed. There’s a real opportunity now, and the PCers are beginning to get nervous.

We’ve already noted that the substance of the formal program had a rather theoretical focus, reflecting the theme, “Objectivity and Truth in the Natural Sciences, the Social Sciences, and the Humanities”. Barry Gross, introducing the first panel, pointed out that everything the post-modernists think to have started had already been fully canvassed by the Greek skeptics 2500 years ago. Steven Weinberg gave a thoughtful discussion of how science really gets done — not at all by some mythical ‘scientific method’⁴. In some ways the talk was a synopsis of Weinberg’s book, *Dreams of a Final Theory*, enlivened by such gems as a friend’s reference to “the strong *progrom* in sociology of science”⁵. After somewhat technical papers by historian Gerald Holton and philosopher Susan Haack, there was quite a lively discussion. Haack’s phrase “the New Cynics” was well received. Weinberg incisively noted about them that “You have to be very well educated to be so stupid”. After several attempts to lessen the expressed concern of questioners (“After all there’s no absurdity that I wouldn’t expect in the academy”), Weinberg was applauded when he finally acceded, “OK, I’m scared” about the inroads political correctness has made. Holton deplored the Smithsonian exhibit, “Science in American Life” which denigrates

² Write SAFS at 152 Albert St. — Unit #12, London, Ontario N6A 1M1, or c/o Prof. D. Kimura, Psychology Dept., Univ. Western Ontario, London, Ontario N6A 5C2

³ Holly Horwood, “Male prof flies south”, *The Province* 94:5:31, A14

⁴ For a detailed exposition of that point of view, see Henry H. Bauer, *Scientific Literacy and the Myth of the Scientific Method*, University of Illinois Press, 1992, 1994

⁵ Extreme relativism characterizes the self-styled “strong programme” in sociology of science pushed by the Edinburgh school. Their central tenet is that explanations of how scientific theories come to be accepted should take no account of the correctness or otherwise of the contending views, since after all no scientific theory can ever be known to be correct. The absurdities that this stance leads to are illustrated, for example, by the nonsense that some sociologists continue to talk about the Velikovsky Affair — see Henry H. Bauer, “Velikovsky and Social Studies of Science”, *4S Review*, 2 (#4, Winter 1984) 2-8

Highly educated people are much more easily taken in by propaganda than the illiterate, who have a certain immunity to abstract thought and its abuses

attributed to Jacques Ellul

science ⁶ (funded *inter alia* by more than \$5 million from the American Chemical Society!) and the “pre-emptive surrender” by the National Academy of Sciences regarding the constructivist tone of the proposed national standards for science education ⁷. Holton admitted that “the crazies had been our students”. Haack called for eternal vigilance, pointing out that the others don’t have our scruples. Speakers from the floor noted: a project to decrease the science content of medical training; an accrediting agency’s statement that “race and gender affect thinking in all fields including science”; that in Canada the natural sciences are the next target of undercutting *via* the strategy of harping on “under-representation” of various groups.

In his luncheon address, E. O. Wilson recounted with an amiable grace his harrowing encounter with PC — not then so called — during the debate over sociobiology in the 1970s. A Roosevelt “leftist” become “centrist”, Wilson had been vilified by Marxist colleagues and dowsed with water by protesters at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The session on “What is Truth in Literature?” was opened by Peter Shaw, who recommended John Ellis’s *Against Deconstruction* as one of the first and most definitive of its genre. Christopher Ricks talked well-found sense: the meaning of a word is neither “subjective” nor “objective”; accuracy matters; one can retain the notion of evidence while discarding the demand for “proof”; literature is *not* identical with *fiction*; the 1994 Johns Hopkins “Guide to Literary Theory” is a work of pseudo-reference (respondent John Ellis, a contributor to the Johns Hopkins *Guide*, later agreed that it is indeed “dreadful”); whereas philosophy is identical with philosophical studies, and science with scientific

⁶ “The American Physical Society ... has directed a formal blast at the Smithsonian Institution...”, Constance Holden, “Random Samples — History Slights Science”, *Science* 266 (25 November 1994) 1327

⁷ Since then, the standards have been re-written with omission of the most offensive bits: Constance Holden, “National standards finally ready for public scrutiny”, *Science* 266 (9 December 1994) 1637

studies, literature and literary studies are things apart.

Gary Saul Morson pointed out that historians long ago recognized the fallacy in whiggishness (judging the past by standards of the present), yet today associate professors of English feel quite qualified to render harsh judgments on Shakespeare and indeed on whole cultures.

Mary Lefkowitz, in the panel “History: As It Really Was?”, told of her arguments with Afrocentrists, for example a Native American anthropologist at Sarah Lawrence who suggested that ancient Egyptian knowledge could have been passed down orally for a couple of millennia — as a solution to the difficulty that hieroglyphics were deciphered only in 1830! Lefkowitz traced the notion of Egyptian mystery systems to a French novel of 1732 which had then inspired the founders of Freemasonry. Bernal’s *Black Athena* had attracted attention because of its political orientation, not its scholarly weight.

Henry Ashby Turner shared some inside knowledge about reprehensible dealings by left-wing ideologues. Alan Megill strove for a mediating view: all historians are in some sense relativists, he maintained, because they are clear that the absolute truth cannot be known to them; in any case relativism can be a heuristically useful approach. Much of the fault with PCers may be not so much relativism as sloppiness and premature commitment to an explanatory scheme. Novick’s book, criticized by Turner, is quite a wise book — maybe wiser than its author — if it is read as a chronicle rather than a judgment. A lively discussion ensued with many comments from the floor recounting instances of bias, plagiarism, and tendentious history, for example that commissioned by Ataturk as an underpinning of his nationalistic aims.

“Are the Social Sciences Scientific?” began with Harvey Mansfield asking what “data” really are. Irving Horowitz pointed to the rotten record social science has when trying to predict. Alan Wolfe suggested that the social sciences can never be like the natural sciences but that they should nevertheless be governed by reality. As to whether they should even strive to be “scientific”, the difference of opinions does not correlate with political ideology.

Paul Sniderman shared the interesting results of a survey in which having a black family next door inspired anger in 10% of the respondents; interracial dating made one third of (white) respondents angry; but affirmative action infuriates fully 75% of those

asked. The social sciences come closest to being scientific when they critique themselves, Sniderman asserted; they can also be scientifically reliable in drawing inferences, though perhaps not in building theories. They can come up with new methods and make progress; some findings are robust, some modest discoveries have been made.

Richard Bernstein opened the panel on "Science: Uses and Abuses" by asking, is PC an intellectual irritation or something more important? He gave as illustration Steve Fuller's review, in *Teachers for a Democratic Culture*, of Gross & Levitt's *Higher Superstition*. Paul Gross gave examples of egregiously ignorant anti-scientific discourse, of which most scientists are blissfully unaware — and most of them wouldn't believe that anyone could really take such stuff seriously. That's cause for concern, as is the fact that the interpreters of science are so predominantly anti-scientific; because science, which has thrived on exponential growth since the Scientific Revolution 3 centuries ago, has now reached the end of significant growth⁸. Michael McElroy deplored the public treatment of such matters as climatic change and the ozone layer. Gerry Weissmann gave

A CONTEMPORARY ROLE MODEL

"Why shouldn't Tonya Harding skate in the Olympics? Doesn't she stand for what this country has come to represent? First, the attitude of doing what it takes to get ahead and make money Second, . . . 'It wasn't my fault'. Poor Tonya grew up with a dysfunctional family, and . . . this fact now exonerates one from any wrongdoing. She lied . . . only because she was frightened The Menendez brothers have shown us that you're not responsible for actions taken when you're scared. Finally, she has indulged in that great American pastime - suing when all else fails

Maria Thompson Loos
Roanoke Times & World-News 94:2:17

something of a paean to science; suggested that the concern over fraud in science reveals belief in the possibility of scientific *truth*; claimed that science is in fact self-correcting; labeled scientific fraud an act of psychopathology; and pointed out that if all knowledge is mere social construction then there can

be no such thing as scientific fraud, there are merely different individual "constructions".

For this reporter, the views presented by McElroy and Weissmann are precisely the old-fashioned scientific ones that lend plausibility to current attacks on arrogant scientism. Charles Rubin, by contrast, gave a very balanced discussion: interpretation of science is a complex matter that needs to be learned; science needs to limit its claims clearly to what the facts of Nature are and not pretend that it has authority on matters of social policy. The subsequent discussion reflected the same range of viewpoints as within the panel.

In closing the conference, Steven Balch said that it had been the biggest ever (more than 300 had registered). The next one would likely be in the Spring of 1996, probably in Washington with the theme, "Government and Higher Education".

National Conventions have several good purposes to serve, and we think they've been serving them pretty well. Perhaps, though, there could be more organized effort toward getting people together who don't yet know one another. At the banquet, seating had been pre-assigned on a largely geographic basis, so that most of us sat with old friends; we would rather recommend the very *opposite*: if seating is pre-arranged, make each table a geographic mix. We'd also suggest some sessions devoted specifically to recounting recent first-hand experiences with PC and with combating PC; other sessions bringing together people from around the country who are trying to do similar things — officers of local chapters, say, or editors of newsletters; and some sessions focusing on the strategy and tactics of fighting PC on one's own campus. Several such issues were broached, all too briefly, at the Business Meeting over breakfast on Saturday: surely most of the other people at the Convention would also have been interested to hear about the activities of the recently formed American Academy for Liberal Education, the nascent Association of Literary Scholars and Critics (a non-PC counter-weight to the Modern Language Association), and the Center for Academic Excellence founded at the University of Minnesota.

But in any case we look forward with pleasant anticipation to the Sixth Convention and urge our readers to plan to attend.

⁸ This point and its implications are discussed with authority by John Ziman, *Prometheus Bound: Science in a Dynamic Steady State*, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

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WHEN YOU FACE THE PC INQUISITION

by Michael Krauss

In Sept. 1993, I informed readers of *The Washington Times* of the perils involved when one resists pressures of political correctness ("The day my number came up in the PC lottery," Sept. 24, 1993). Subsequent developments in my case at George Mason University School of Law highlight more acutely than ever the cost of principled resistance to PC czars.

The controversy in which I was involved sprang from discussion, in our first-year Tort class, of the Tort of assault (wherein a tortfeasor is liable for having intentionally instilled in his victim the fear of imminent physical harm). I indicated that racist behavior might in some circumstances constitute assaults. I offered two examples.

The first involved a Nazi Party protest in front of a Holocaust survivor's home; the uniformed demonstrators advocated implementation of Hitler's "final solution."

The second example was a Ku Klux Klan demonstration on a street in a previously all-white neighborhood, in front of a house into which a black family had just moved: the hooded Klansmen burned a cross and screamed "Kill the niggers."

A productive classroom discussion followed my examples, with students (of different races) raising, as I had hoped, the issue of the relationship between the Constitutional right to free speech and the Tort doctrine of assault.

Shortly after this class, however, a faculty colleague informed the dean that I had uttered a racial slur in class and demanded that I be punished. Three faculty members joined her in her protest, which was apparently accompanied by communication with the university's Board of Visitors. Twenty upper-class students petitioned the Dean to require that I issue a written apology to any black students who might have been offended to hear the "N-word" spoken in class. The petition-writers also contacted *The Washington Post* and local television and radio stations. Not one of the student or faculty protesters had attended my class, and not one had judged it appropriate to speak with me before issuing a complaint.

The debate over my 1993 remarks prompted editorials favorable to me in *The Times*, *The Post*, and the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, as well as articles in newspapers and magazines from California to New York. "Progressive" protest against me diminished considerably following the uniformly favorable press coverage. Little did I know, however, that I would spend hundreds of demoralizing hours before, only last week, apparently seeing the controversy over this incident put to rest.

Exams are "blind graded" at George Mason University School of Law, but in determining the final rank of a course professors may assign individual adjustments, up or down by one half-grade, to reflect excellent or unacceptable class participation. I inform my students that exceptional participation will earn them a half-grade "bump," but that unacceptable performance (defined as not volunteering to participate in discussion and demonstrating if called on by me that they have not prepared for class as assigned) warrants the half-grade penalty.

I made approximately 30 "plus" and six "minus" adjustments (in a class of over 200 students) when submitting the final grades for Torts in January 1994. The day after my grades were posted, a student visited my office and asked me to reconsider her minus half-grade. She admitted having never volunteered for class, and she did not deny that she was unprepared when called on by me. I informed her that under those circumstances I could not eliminate her penalty. Before leaving my office, the student advised me that she had sustained similar setbacks in the past, had always prevailed, and would do so again this time.

The student then appealed her final grade. She did not contest the evaluation of her exam, but stated that I had discriminated against her in assigning the minus half-grade.

Her complaint, drafted with considerable help from the "Equity Office" of our university, alleged three grounds of discrimination: 1) she had often been unprepared for class because she was sole provider for her sick baby; even though I had never been informed of the problem during the term, she claimed that my decision to assign a penalty was nonetheless "discrimination on the basis of family status"; 2) she could not have been a single mother without being a woman, and therefore my decision to penalize her was also "discrimination on the basis of gender"; and 3) as a black student, she had been chilled from preparing for class by my one-time use of the "N-word" related above, and therefore the minus half-grade was "discrimination on the basis of race."

The first two grounds of "discrimination" are laughably absurd and were never really pursued, but the student's third allegation (which the reader might accurately interpret as a demand that I assign penalty and bonus points using different standards for different races) pushes all the right buttons in the 1990s.

First a faculty committee investigated the student's appeal at length, and dismissed it for lack of merit. An appeal to the president of the university followed. He appointed a committee which investigated the student's complaint thoroughly, for a second time. This committee interviewed all interested parties and wrote a detailed report, again recommending dismissal of the student's complaint. The dismissal was somewhat of a Pyrrhic victory for me, as it relied totally on fortuitous "bean-counting." It so happened that students of different races and genders had received both plus and minus adjustments by me in 1994, it was for that reason alone deemed that no discrimination had occurred. This was a clear signal that "diversity," if not quotas, in grade adjustments was *de rigueur* at George Mason University.

For this adverse result, the student appealed to the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Education, which administers Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. She claimed that the university had violated her civil rights because of my racial discrimination against her. Several months of ridiculous "discovery" by the department followed. I was, for example, asked to provide detailed rules of assigning grade adjustments. I was asked to provide lists of present and past students to whom I had assigned plus and minus grades, classified according to the students' race. Of course I had no such information, since I do not keep separate racial statistics for my students.

When I could not provide the desired information the law school was obliged to gather the data for me. All the while, I was not allowed to examine the student's Title VI complaint against me. When the Department of Education investigator finally visited our law school on Nov. 8, he interviewed recipients of minus half-grades but no recipients of pluses. He again refused to let me see the complaint, and I informed him that I would not testify before him unless this fundamental requirement of due process of law was complied with. He invited me to file a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) petition to see the complaint, but refused to suspend his inquiry pending treatment of my petition. (I filed the FOIA petition immediately, but the Department of Education has not yet responded to or even acknowledged my request.) An attorney at the investigator's regional office in Philadelphia went so far as to threaten to find against the university given my refusal to testify, and announced that all federal funding would be immediately withheld from George Mason if this happened.

Last week, I was informed of the results of the Department of Education investigation. After spending countless thousands of tax dollars, the department found no evidence whatsoever for the allegation of racial discrimination. Like the university's equity office, the department relied heavily on the fact that both blacks and whites received the half-grade penalty. Woe unto the professor for whom this is not the case in any given year!

The hours spent responding to the various complaints against me and the drain this imposed on two academic years can be imagined by the reader of this article. The temptation to "race-norm" (to implement two different bell curves), or to bureaucratize grading by eliminating adjustments for individual class performance, is manifest. Less obvious, perhaps, is the fact that for the complaining student this process was essentially cost-free. Her initial complaint against me was drafted by the university Equity Office. The Department of Education's subsequent star chamber proceedings required no expenditure by her, but imposed onerous fact-finding obligations at our law school.

The distractions imposed on me would be of little general interest were they not indicative of a general pattern of gross abuse of civil liberties.

In the 1960s, federal courts were quite rightly concerned with violations of fundamental civil rights by state governments. Perhaps in the 1990s, the greater threat to our liberties and to the rule of law emanates from the federal government. The adoption by the Department of Education of regulations that pressure universities to adopt stifling "speech codes" has encouraged countless lamentable incidents like the one at George Mason Law School. It is my earnest hope that the new Congress will rein in such outrageous attacks on our freedom to teach, and to learn.

Michael Krauss is a professor of Law at George Mason University. Mr. Krauss was a 1994 recipient of the first Annual Award for Teaching Excellence at George Mason University. He is a finalist candidate for Virginia Teacher of the Year in 1995.

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