

No More Cardinal Newman's Idea of a University¹

Leland van den Daele

As a young idealistic undergraduate, I was inspired by John Henry Cardinal Newman's *Idea of a University*. His eloquent description of the university as a place where diverse perspectives are explored in the light of reason governed by mutuality and respect inspired my vocation and served as my guiding ideal. As a professor, I emphasized the importance of evidence, rational review, and critical evaluation. In the classroom, no idea was out-of-bounds, so long as it was relevant to the subject. I viewed the examination of alternative perspectives and observations as core to the development of disciplinary competence and critical thought. In line with my ideals were guidelines recommended by the American Association of University Professors, the CIIS Faculty Handbook stated, "Faculty members are entitled to freedom in the selection of textbooks, audio-visual aids and other teaching materials, subject only to established academic standards for graduate-level instruction. There is no censorship of library materials."

I had not really come to understand my commitment to Newman's ideals until an event in the classroom on March 14th, 2006. However, one's deepest assumptions and motives sometimes remain unconscious or implicit until challenged. On that date, an event occurred that took the form of a classic drama, beginning with a prolog, the incident event itself, its complications, a denouement, and finally, a moral or what I learned from the events.

¹ When I went through these experience, I was morally outraged, offended. I believed that justice, or at least what I viewed as justice, should prevail. I was aggrieved at those who did not act in accord with due process, and who made me an "example". I felt that a profound injustice was done. These feeling lingered, but now I see the whole episode like theater. I don't blame any person. Every person, administrators, assorted faculty members, students with an agenda, and myself were cast in a play. Once the scene was sent, roles were played out choreographed by self-interest and group dynamics. In retrospect, the whole course of the "incident" and its aftermath seemed inevitable. For this reason, I hold no animus toward any person, since I know that they had no choice.

The Institute Climate

Trouble was brewing. Unknown to me, ten days² before the incident to be described, site visitors for an accreditation review from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) met with the Students of Color. The report, dated May 28th, described the meeting:

Responses to a Fall 2005 People of Color Survey and the team's open meeting with students both suggest that continued attention to diversity issues is warranted. At the student session there were more than a few speakers who offered criticisms with respect to diversity. Among them were the following: there are few faculty of color, classes are scheduled at times or on days that directly conflict with religious tenets or important non-Western celebrations, the orientation seemed to be more toward anti-discrimination than true diversity, some faculty lack cultural competency, some faculty are not able to be self-reflective when it comes to diversity issues, most of the people studied in courses are dead white males, and in one of the two schools students of color do the diversity work and can be punished for it. The Psychology Doctoral program was singled out as being especially problematic by students in the program as well as by others, including representatives of student organizations (2007, p. 12).

Students of Color at the WASC meeting were *clearly* dissatisfied with diversity at the school and in the psychology doctoral program –whether this had to do with the program as a whole or other classes, I do not know. In addition to the WASC review, the psychology doctoral program was scheduled for an accreditation review by the American Psychological Association (APA). Prior to the incident, no concern had ever been expressed in any of my classes about diversity issues.

The Offending Research Article

In addition to regular textbooks, a feature of a lifespan development course that I taught included reserve readings correlated to developmental periods and lecture topics. The reserve readings permitted students to critically evaluate primary sources as these appear in journal articles. My offense was not speech in the classroom or anywhere else, but an article that I had

² On March 3rd, 2006

written 36 years earlier in a peer-reviewed educational journal published by one of America's leading schools for African Americans.

During the 1960s I had been one of handful of academics who had worked in the Midwest and rural south to promote early childhood education in project Head Start. I spent time in some of the most impoverished rural areas of Mississippi, supervising research on the effects of poverty and guiding Head Start interventions. Among dozens of readings, I assigned an article published in 1970 about a preschool program that appeared in the *Journal of Negro Education*. The paper served in the classroom as a stimulus for discussion of social change over the decades, male and female differences, parental impact upon values and sex roles, and a host of other influences. The article was assigned to provoke engagement, critical evaluation, and discussion. In previous years, the article was employed without incident.

The research article titled "Preschool intervention through social learning" was a year-long intervention study for preschool children supported, in part, by the Office of Economic Opportunity. The article was divided into two parts. The first part examined sex differences of aims and ideals among inner city, impoverished African American children where, regrettably, father absence was often the norm. These were impoverished, often single parent, inner city children where boys often turn to peer groups for survival skills and knowledge. The first part concluded with a summary of the author's findings about differences in executive judgment among elementary school black boys and girls and how father absence weighed upon some single mothers.

The second part of the article described a nine-month long intervention program where sixteen children in a community day care center were divided into two groups equally divided by sex, ethnicity, and father presence or absence. One group was assigned to an African American male model and the other group a Caucasian male model that led the groups. Groups interacted in standardized role-taking for six hours a week. Groups were tested every six weeks. Children, both boys and girls, independent of ethnicity, and particularly father-absent male children showed significant gains in intelligence and maturity of judgement. Approximately half-way through treatment, male models changed groups. When models were switched, children's behavior became disorganized and gains washed-out. During the remaining four and half months

of treatment, children gradually recouped their losses³. At the conclusion of the study, female children progressed from an average IQ of 92 to 115, and male children moved from an average IQ of 92 to 125. A control group of 12 children in same preschool, balanced for sex and ethnicity, but with no exposure to male models, showed a modest gain of 5.7 points –with female children accounting for almost all the improvement. The overall results showed significant benefits from male role models for both males and females, white and black children –and, in particular, for father-absent, white and black boys. Male presence appeared important during preschool in the boy’s cognitive development and maturity of values.

The study was a “demonstration” or “proof of concept” study. It was far from perfect involving a small subject pool at a non-profit day care center. It was conducted decades earlier with limited finances during a period when public awareness of the importance of early childhood experience for adult outcomes was at its inception. However, to my knowledge to this date, it remains the only intervention study in the research literature which assigned father-present and father-absent children to a year-long treatment condition with a male teacher⁴. Certainly, it is the only study of its kind with preschool age children between 3 and 5 years old – a period believed by child psychoanalysts to be critical for acquisition of social values.

The Incident

I described the article in some detail because the series of events set in train were not due to anything I said or did in lectures or discussion, but occurred because of the article. As it was about to be discussed in class, an African American student calmly picked up her books to walk out of class. I asked the student to remain. She replied that she would speak to me after class. A woman with whom she entered attacked the paper as “a deficit study” that compared African Americans with whites and used unacceptable language, such as “disadvantaged”⁵. The incident from the student walking out of the class to the prepared criticism seemed rehearsed. Her criticism, the use of language and history of Head Start were reviewed. Strengths of traditional African American families were articulated, and the importance of early childhood “identification” with a same sex parent for cognitive and emotional growth articulated.

³ The decline in functioning following model change was an unanticipated consequence.

⁴ Since then hundreds of studies have examined father absence and children’s behavior. However, almost without exception, these studies were demographic, retrospective, or based on correlations.

⁵ Traditional educational research tends to be highly outcome-oriented and “comparative”.

The Diversity Action Team Takes Aim

I remained in touch with the student who had left the class. Over the course of two weeks, she said she would meet me, agreed in an email on March 27th to do so, and then, on April 4th, stated that she would not meet. In the interim, another African-American student, who had never attended my classes, met with the Program Director to complain about the article. In accord with guidelines for dispute resolution, the Program Director referred her to me. Instead of meeting with me, the student referred the paper to Diversity Action Team (DAT) for whom she was “Student Coordinator”. DAT was an administrative committee composed of six staff, four students, and three non-psychology faculty members, the Academic Vice President, and the President. The committee was charged with “...promoting diversity in all areas of the Institute...” DAT meetings usually were sparsely attended dominated by two faculty and the DAT Student Coordinator. On March 28th the paper was placed on the DAT agenda “to be read in its entirety”. Following the DAT action, the article was distributed to the entire student body of more than a thousand students as a “racist” article. On the student list serve, militants denounced me and claimed that I advocated sterilization. I was chagrined by the libelous allegations reported to me by students in my classes. Students who spoke on my behalf were derided. The outrageous accusations largely were voiced by students unknown to me.

On March 31st, I contacted the DAT chair and members and explained the purpose of the paper and expressed my willingness to meet with the DAT committee or with concerned students. I received no reply. On April 3rd I conveyed my concern about the absence of due process. I argued if the matter were a grievance, then it should be handled in accord with processes that govern disputes, so I could have right of representation. On April 4th, the Chair of DAT responded that it was not a grievance, and therefore due process did not apply. On April 6th, I reiterated my concern to DAT about its incursion into the classroom, and on April 12th I wrote to DAT to underscore my willingness to engage in informal resolution, and express my concern that academic freedom and faculty responsibility for courses and curriculum were being compromised. Throughout the process I sought guidance from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

Meanwhile on April 4th, the Academic Vice President (AVP), in response to my April 3rd email about due process, asked for a meeting with the Psychology Program Director and I to discuss “the academic issues involved.” Given the urgency of the matter, we believed the date to

be April 6th. However when we arrived we were informed that the meeting was scheduled for April 13th. During what proved to be a critical time during, the momentum of group anger mounted and list server denunciations abounded.

Unknown to me at the time, the Institute President, had called a meeting on April 12th with a group of 65 “cross-gender, cross-cultural” students in response to a letter students had written about my allegedly “racist” article. In an email sent on April 13th to DAT, the President called for a set of measures, including referral of the article by DAT to a faculty body for investigation. On April 14th following a DAT meeting, he sent a message to the entire CIIS community that read, “In response to several questions that I raised, the Diversity Action Team (DAT) met yesterday and recommended... an immediate investigation of Leland van den Daele’s LifeSpan Development class and the use of the article *Preschool Intervention Through Social Learning for Disadvantaged Children* be initiated, within two weeks from today 4/13/2006 and concluded in a timely manner...” In the same email, he recommended the Psychology Doctoral Program undergo program review and that DAT develop a course or program for all faculty, staff, and students to presumably enhance sensitivity to diversity.

Not apparent from the President’s letter was that almost without exception students that met with him prior to his announcement were non-clinical psychology students, ignorant of the historical or instructional context of the article⁶. Following the President’s email to the community, the atmosphere among the agitated students and non-clinical psychology students palatably worsened. In spite of several “town hall meetings,” the President’s email to the community seemed to further fuel ill will and bad feeling. Far from acting to contain these extreme sentiments, the AVP asked clinical psychology students for letters about “suspect” faculty and conducted a series of “informal” investigations.

The incident had been timed to occur approximately two weeks before a site visit by members of the American Psychological Association. Site visitors assess the adequacy of clinical psychology programs for accreditation. The environment that greeted the APA members was highly charged, and many students feared to openly express their views about the controversy out of fear of reprisal from other students. Prominent among these voices was the student DAT coordinator. A member of the site visitor team viewed the Lifespan Developmental course

⁶ According to a clinical student who was present, roughly 90% of the persons at the meeting were non-clinical students.

through the lens of “diversity” and reported that the article and others with which she did not agree were “not current”. She ignored readings about diverse populations and was dismissive of papers that addressed complex causality, such as Bem’s developmental theory of sexual orientation published in the prestigious *Psychological Review*. She characterized Elliot Liebow’s classic sociological study Tally’s Corner as a “deficit approach” to cultural differences. A social psychologist or sociologist would find her characterization dismissive, to say the least. I wrote a rejoinder to her comments. Of course she has the right to disagree with readings, but the point is that site visitors and professional organizations can and do promote agendas.

On May 4th after consultation with my attorney, I filed a grievance in response to what I believed were some of the more egregious actions by DAT and the administration. A grievance is a formal complaint for violation of one’s faculty contract as described in the Faculty Handbook. The Handbook asserted that the Institute:

...is fully committed to the protection of academic freedom... and ...promotes a diversity of opinion, course content and teaching methods, contributing to a spirit of healthy inquiry ... Faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in presenting their subject... Faculty members are entitled to full freedom of research ... [Faculty] are free from Institute censorship.... Faculty members are entitled to freedom in the selection of ... teaching materials... There is no censorship of library materials.

The causes for my grievance were numerous. First and foremost was the violation of academic freedom. Instead of defending my rights to academic freedom, the administration indicated that there should be an investigation of my class and the use of the article. Thereby the administration chilled the exercise of academic freedom rights for me and other members of the faculty. Its actions violated other legal rights, including the covenant of good faith and fair dealing and violation of right of privacy by sharing with over 1,000 people the complaint against me, implying that I wrote a “racist” publication and indicating that I would be investigated.

A Bogus “Forum”

Perhaps in response to my filing a formal grievance and rising agitation, DAT planned a panel discussion on short notice to which I was invited on “How Culture Impacts Minorities” scheduled for May 10th. Participants were to be Bay Area minority, mental health professionals selected by DAT. I was led to believe a forum would provide an opportunity for collegial

discussion of my article within the larger context of minority psychological health. The agreed opening topic was “how culture impacts psychological development”. Instead when I arrived, the order of topics was changed to discuss my paper.

To give a flavor of the Forum, the first speaker asserted that the paper was not peer-reviewed and the *Journal of Negro Education* was no longer published. The second speaker from a Department of Gay and Lesbian Studies ridiculed measurement in terms of “Caucasian norms and definitions”. Tests were “a form of oppression”. She said she could not understand the wording or language in the paper, such as “ego development”, a term commonly employed in psychological literature. She castigated “dominant Western culture” for its individualistic bias. A third speaker asserted that students should be taught views that are sympathetic to Afro-Americans and not critical. The speaker had been misinformed that my paper was the only paper that students in my class had been assigned on cultural influences in development. As the Forum continued, the reality became clear that participants had been chosen for their points of view and primed about the paper. I had been setup as the bogey man, and this was not to be a discussion of how culture impacts minorities, but an indictment.

When my turn came around, I factually responded to the accusations leveled at the paper by participants: The paper was peer-reviewed by a journal still in publication. In the 1970s, the terms “disadvantaged” and “culturally deprived” were viewed as “culture fair” terms that described persons of any race or ethnicity that lacked the prerequisite skills to succeed in school. Differences among African Americans were reviewed because the paper was submitted to the *Journal of Negro Education*. The article described an intervention study that was balanced for race, sex, father-absent, and father-children. Children who were father-absent males particularly benefited from the program. The paper was intended to illustrate the importance of identification with the same sex parent in early childhood. Identification is the child’s taking-on the attitudes, role, and values of another.

With about 40 minutes of the Forum remaining, the moderator turned the floor over to a DAT faculty representative who called for student comments. This began a series of student denunciations of the article. In one long rant, a student demanded that I confess my “sexism and racism”. Another claimed I was responsible for her “Head Start experience at an Indian reservation”. Accusations continued. I was not given an opportunity to respond and cut-off at the mike. At one point during these denunciations, the previous moderator, who was still present,

intervened and said that she believed I was receiving the animosity of students for the shortcomings of the program and the Institute –and these denunciations should be directed appropriately. The DAT faculty representative disagreed and said that this was a good thing, “students need to vent” –in effect, saying “let the disparagement continue.”

Among the sixty or so students who attended, about ten were from the clinical psychology program. Not one student from clinical psychology spoke because they were silenced by the anger of the majority. After the “Forum” several clinical psychology students approached me where they communicated their concern and dismay how this event had unfolded.

After the Lynching

The events beginning in March did not end with the forum, but were a prolog to a longer struggle for vindication and faculty rights. On May 17th, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) appealed to the administration on my behalf for protection of academic freedom. On February 18, 2007, about one month short of a year after the events that precipitated the grievance, I received notice from the Grievance Committee that it had decided *not* to hear my grievance. In its decision, the steps and timelines required by the Faculty Handbook for informal hearing were not followed. No resolution was recommended to the parties. The Committee foreclosed the process by deciding that what had occurred was “a spirited intellectual, political and social discussion”. In my reply to the Committee’s decision, I noted how the decision ignored procedures spelled-out in the Faculty Handbook for due process.

In spite of the storm that had arisen, Psychology Program Faculty supported my teaching the lifespan developmental course. Nevertheless on December 10th, 2006 I was informed by the Program Director to eliminate the controversial paper from my recommended readings. I refused to purge the paper. In an email after registration for the spring semester was largely complete on Friday, December 8, 2006, she wrote “...I have decided to change your teaching assignment for spring (sic) 2007 semester. You will not be teaching Lifespan Development.” After an informal attempt at resolution with the Program Director, I filed a second grievance on February 5th, 2007 for censorship of reading and violation of academic freedom. On April 24th, 2007, I received a note from the Grievance Committee that the Committee had decided *not* to hear my second grievance. I was informed that removal from teaching lifespan psychology “was not a greivable (sic) situation.” In the note, the Committee asserted, “the Program Director has the responsibility

and thus the right to assign courses to faculty members based on her or his best judgment.” I objected that the Committee ignored the reason for reassignment and the regulations to hear evidence. The Committee replied “they confused it [removal from the course] with the previous grievance”. Therefore the Committee decided to discuss in September, 2007 *if* it would entertain the grievance.

Administration seemed keen on deflecting criticism. The Faculty Handbook does not permit anonymous accusations that inherently do not permit correction or challenge. The program reply to the 2006 APA site visit report by a senior administrator included an anonymous accusation about my Lifespan class. The Psychology Program Director and Clinical Director had never heard the accusation and neither had I until I read it on the CIIS intranet. The false impression was given that my article was a matter of previous student concern. The accusation further sullied my reputation and that of a former program director. I filed a grievance about this matter as the spring semester began on February 5th, 2007. The Grievance Committee response on April 24th, 2007 was similarly dismissive as its response to my academic freedom grievance. In its note, the Committee said it “could find no evidence of incriminating materials of the type your grievance posits in CIIS files...” However, the Institute’s documented reply to the APA report cites an anonymous accusation, which is itself evidence of the use of an anonymous accusation.

As these grievances were engaged, the APA accreditation committee was given the impression that the academic freedom grievances were appropriately reviewed and that the Grievance Committee had found no violations of academic freedom. In reality, the Grievance Committee did not formally hear the grievances. The Committee did not engage any formal process, which would allow hearing testimony and the gathering of evidence to reach its conclusions. The Committee formed its opinion largely outside the grievance process. As a rejoinder, I filed a complaint with the APA Accreditation Committee. Throughout this process, I corresponded with the AAUP and FIRE about the course of events.

During the period from May, 2006 through March, 2008, I exchanged literally hundreds of emails with counsel, the Grievance Committee, FIRE, APA, and AAUP. A side show occurred in February, 2007 when the Institute’s “Executive Committee” adopted unpublished, “draft” rules that governed grievances at a closed meeting. Since the rules were unpublished and never ratified by the faculty, I assumed the previous grievance rules would apply. I believed

faculty to have been uninformed about these changes, so I communicated to the faculty these unauthorized changes, along with my correspondence with the Executive Committee. In the end, whatever rules existed did not seem material since the Grievance Committee refused to hear my grievances.

Personal and Professional Impact

As can be seen, the incident was not a simple happening, over and done, but initiated as series of events that affected my personal and professional life. The incident was timed to coincide with WASC review and an APA site visit. The incident seemed geared to “make an example”: Members of DAT, an institutional committee, appeared intent on “finding a scapegoat”; a panel to consider the mental health of minorities turned into a Maoist show trial; a Grievance Committee could find no cause for grievances; and administrators and agencies reacted defensively –while faculty assumed an ostrich-like position. Emails and appeals filled two large binders over a period of two years.

I felt I had been marked with a scarlet letter that spelled “racist”. Where once I had been Chair of the Faculty Senate, a department head, and Dean of the School of Professional Psychology, I was an outsider. Formally friendly faculty distanced themselves and shunned me. I worked in what felt like a poisoned environment. I became obsessed with finding justice and a fair hearing. At the same time, I feared administrative retaliation; and during the height of denunciations, I feared for my physical safety.

My demeanor was glum. I carried a heavy burden and experienced no enjoyment. I was stymied at every turn. I withdrew from my wife and four and five year old children and brooded. I could not prioritize, and carried-on like an automaton. I suffered numerous flashbacks to the “forum: denunciations. Again and again, I pondered how I might have anticipated this outcome, how I might have responded differently, but always with the same result. I had no choice in the situation.

My sleep was interrupted. I had frequent severe bouts of sinusitis, hitherto rare. My allergies were severely exacerbated. I experienced prostatitis for the first time in my life, and prostate specific antigen (PSA) doubled. I gained ten to fifteen pounds during the six months that followed the incident. I looked older. My immune system had been impacted and I was experiencing the consequences.

With my institutional status in apparent ruins, I could derive little satisfaction from my work or office I had become disillusioned with teaching, the fashionable dogmas of psychology, and institutions. I could not rely on externalities for a sense of value or accomplishment. I longed for a better life. As the shock of events receded, I considered moving, but that felt like an admission of guilt. I reconsidered what's important and drew of myself values and ideals that did not depend upon the ebb and flow of fortune. These were fair play, rationality, self-knowledge, colorful individuality, and contribution to a better world –perhaps not a surprising list for an academic. I had revisited the values inherent in Cardinal Newman's *Idea of a University* without reliance on the university, a community that had failed.

The incident and the following two years devoted to correspondence, grievances, complaints, and appeals ended in what was a stalemate. With the Faculty Grievance Committee's declaration that it would not hear any grievance, from the point of view of outside agencies, such as FIRE, APA, and AAUP, the case was only a matter of disagreement among participants. These agencies need faculty findings to provide traction for appeal to a broader community. This is so even though the administration's call for investigation of my article and class is a matter of public record. As my lawyer quipped, "Either we [faculty] all hang together or we hang separately." I hung separately. To the institution's credit, the administration did not retaliate, except for some foot-dragging after the Faculty Evaluation and Promotion Committee recommended a 5 year reappointment –the maximum term for professors at this non-tenured school. Two years after the incident, I was assigned to teach my specialty, lifespan developmental psychology, and permitted to include the article as a recommended reading to promote discussion.

Denouement

Besides a spark, forest fires require tinder. Tinder was present in abundance –the school harbored a virtual fireworks factory. Unknown to the administration at the time, a graduate program at the institute employed methods of education that can be compared with techniques employed at North Korean "reeducation" camps for prisoners of war. At the heart of the program required for students and adjunct professors alike was a course that demanded personal histories of trauma, racism, sexism, class issues, and health conditions to "facilitate the unlearning of racism, sexism, class oppression, religious persecution, heterosexism, adultism, anti-Semitism,

and other conditionings...” Sample syllabus questions for European Americans included “Where did you learn racism? What misinformation were you given about people of color? What privilege is part of your social existence as a white person? How did you resist this socialization process into unearned privilege and learned racism? What makes you a capable ally of people of color?” Similar “loaded questions”, i.e. “How often do you beat your wife?” were fashioned for each area of “unlearning” or reeducation.

Due to numerous purported irregularities the professors who headed the program were asked to leave the institution in 2011. This caused a hub-bub on the internet where the professors protested their innocence. The Scholars at Risk Network reported,

The CIIS administration suspended them then and fired them last month, saying it had no choice because they had breached student confidence, falsified grades, misapplied funds, and otherwise engaged in unprofessional conduct, generally to ensure the loyalty and obedience of those they taught and advised. In the suspension notices to the professors, [administration] pronounced themselves "so stunned by the information thus far provided by our students" that they had decided to act immediately "for the students' well-being."

The hearing board that handled the professors' cases said it was "shocked at the climate of fear and intimidation.

The large majority of students at the Forum Maoist Show Trial were students enrolled in this program. A professor who headed the program and who was a prime member of DAT was visibly present in the midst of his students who, no doubt, were practicing “social action”. Following the revelations of fear, intimidation, and what appeared brain-washing, I realized that the students on the intranet and in the Forum audience who denounced me as “racist”, “sexist”, and a “eugenicist” were simply accusing me what they had already been encouraged to accuse themselves.

Lessons Learned

“Diversity” at academic institutions is held to be a core value encouraged by state and federal funding guidelines and anti-discrimination policies. At institutions of higher education, the term has at least three meanings: First, diversity as a “fact” describes quantitative differences in a population for some variable or variables, such as sex, race, or age; Second, diversity as a “policy” encourages variability in population through active recruitment, scholarships, appeal to

special interests, and the like; and Third, diversity as “ideology” attempts to explain observed differences of fact in a population. When government agencies in the late 1960s and 1970s adopted policies to encourage women and minorities to enter colleges and universities, the policies were highly successful for women. Today roughly 60% of undergraduate students are female with a larger proportion in graduate school. The same turn-around did not occur for all minorities.

Diversity as ideology provides reasons for the poor success of government policies. Perhaps due short-comings in earlier efforts, diversity ideology became increasingly radicalized. Current diversity ideology hallmarks “reeducation”, the “owning” of white male privilege, “unlearning racism”, and the like. Paradoxically, such “training” highlights “privilege” which is the complement to “disadvantage”, a term eschewed in current ideology. During the last two decades diversity ideology has been expanded to embrace virtually all facets of human differences and value preferences. So it is not surprising that findings or points of view that do not accord with a diversity ideology can spark antagonism.

Students are not held liable for slanderous accusations, no matter how egregious. Merely being “offended” is sufficient reason for complaint. The accusation need not be proved since the student’s feelings are known only to the student; but “defense” requires demonstration, that is, the accused is guilty until proven innocent. The person who brings the accusation is presumed the injured party, and agencies tend to side with the “weaker” party. Expert opinion reflects this bias, since consulting experts are often advocates. Thereby a small group of organized students can hold a professor, administrator, or institution hostage -- magnified by connivance with even a few allied faculty or staff.

Small, private institutions with little endowment are particularly vulnerable to protests. A drop in enrollment means a drop in budget. Administrators understand this risk and believe they must act quickly to assuage aggrieved students. Faculty who express support for an accused professor are fearful of being painted with the same brush. Faculty in general are fearful that if enrollments fall, jobs will be lost. Under these circumstances, a legitimate grievance places faculty members between a rock and hard place. By and large, faculty just want the problem to go away. For the same reason, appeals by the accused are met with “closing ranks” to protect the institution.

Under these circumstances, faculty who are the object of a “speech complaint” or, in my case “an article complaint”, have few allies to whom to appeal. Faculty at non-tenure, non-union schools are especially vulnerable to job loss and damage to their careers and reputation. As I sought support for my dire situation, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) proved a vocal ally for fairness and due process. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) provided quiet guidance. Lacking these resources and hired counsel, I might have been hung out to dry. Academia is not what it used to be.

I experienced the laudable aim of equality of opportunity for individuals of different gender, ancestry, religion morphed into a broad social indictment of white males. The distain directed toward my category –I am a white male-- ignores the fact that white males, just as people of color, come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The first generation Russian immigrant has little in common with the 4th or 5th generation Irish whose parents arrived as indentured servants. Diversity ideology of the sort epitomized by “white privilege” justifies a mirror image of the racism that it repudiates. It creates stereotypes. It reifies. It precludes rational consideration. The consequences of personal history and conduct are subordinated to a nebulous abstraction. Diversity ideology does not increase equality, mutuality, or racial harmony. It enflames wounds, fuels anger, and debases its recipients. What happened to me illustrates the ideology in action.

Summary

An atmosphere of crisis developed due to failure of students to abide by established departmental processes, institutional failures of procedure, and rush to judgment. If rules that apply to dispute resolution had been followed, the matter might have been settled straightforwardly. With the distribution of the article as “racist”, an objective consideration of the article became impossible. If DAT had heeded appeals to convene with me during the two weeks before its scheduled meeting, the matter might have settled. If the AVP or the President who are members of DAT had intervened in their administrative role during this period, matters might have resolved. If the AVP had been available for a meeting matters might have been dealt with constructively.

More than 9/10ths of the students that met with the President to denounce the article were matriculated in non-clinical psychology programs. A small but vocal group of students, mired in

their misunderstanding, oblivious of academic freedom, chose to scapegoat me. Following the President's community email, the atmosphere palatably worsened and increasingly outrageous claims were circulated in the Community email. The article was wrested out its historical context and out of its context in the Life Span course. Regrettably, I believe any "controversial" article would have met the same fate, no matter how "balanced" by other articles or by commentary in class or additional readings. Due process was immaterial. No matter what I did or tried to do, the nightmare continued.

The principle of academic freedom that permits confrontation of ideas is vitally important to society and psychology. Academic freedom permits the introduction and discussion of alternative or socially censured ideas, habits, and beliefs. The premises that are foundational to multiculturalism and acceptance of alternative life styles were once unacceptable to a majority. Rather than challenge students to thought and debate, or risk uncomfortable emotion, college readings and lecture will default to predigested correct thought. This is poor preparation for critical thinking and the challenges of the future. Critical thinking is the lifeblood of science and social health. As the database of literature, sciences, and the professions doubles and triples every five years, experience with uncomfortable material and exercise of critical thinking is more and more essential.