

Have Our Universities Bottomed Out?

by Gary Fouse

I have been teaching English as a second language part-time at the University of California (UCI) Extension (now Dept. of Continuing Education) since 1998. Since I am retired from the Drug Enforcement Administration, this has been a part-time endeavor only to keep me busy and provide a little beer money to boot. It has also given me a chance to observe the goings-on at UCI and other college campuses at least since I became involved as an activist around 2006.

I should note at the outset that as a conservative, I have had no issues with my co-workers. To teach ESL only requires a masters degree. My co-workers are people who almost all have either lived in other countries, married spouses of other nationalities, and have opinions across the political spectrum. Usually we tend not to discuss politics in the office anyway. My campus activism, which has no doubt alienated some within the UCI administration and faculty in the humanities sections, has not touched upon my work in the Extension. Furthermore, I have made it a personal policy never to bring my personal beliefs into the classroom. I have reserved them for on-campus events, seminars, and comments in the campus newspaper.

In recent years, UCI has gotten a black eye due to incidents on campus involving groups like the Muslim Student Union (MSU) and Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP). Generally speaking, however, UCI is a school with a rather small humanities department, concentrating mostly on departments like engineering, biology, and other hard sciences etc. The overwhelming majority of UCI students don't get involved in campus craziness as they do at UCLA, Berkeley, and so many

other universities around the country. Slightly over half of the student body is Asian-American, and they pretty much concentrate on their studies and enjoying their university experience. Most of the damage to the school's reputation is thanks to the above two groups.

For years, however, the MSU has annually sponsored an ugly week of events dedicated to bashing Israel. Many of their invited speakers can only be described as radicals, who also bash America and in some cases, Jews as people. In 2010, MSU disrupted the speech of Michael Oren, the then Israeli ambassador to the US. Just this past May, SJP disrupted a film event sponsored by Students Supporting Israel necessitating the call for campus police to quell the disturbance. No arrests were made, and only a warning letter was issued to SJP. Like so many other universities, the UCI administration has been sorely lacking in standing up to groups like these as well as confronting campus anti-Semitism. For this, I have publicly criticized the UCI administration as well as University of California presidents-past and present.

Being conservative, I have been appalled by the politically-correct liberal dominance on college campuses in general. To me, this is the culmination of a process that began when I was a college student in the 1960s, and we were experiencing campus protests over the Viet Nam war and other causes. It is safe to say that many of the campus protesters of the 1960s went on to become the professors and administrators of our universities decades later. This is a culture that has been decades in the making, and it will not soon go away. To be sure, students need to get a variety of different viewpoints, but most conservatives, in my view, would prefer to stay in the real world rather than put up with all the nonsense.

Still, it is troubling to see how our young people are being indoctrinated by so many professors in the classroom and led to believe that their country is imperialistic, racist, and in need of a drastic overhaul. In my view, it is necessary to

inform the public what is going on in academia. After all, it is we who are footing the bill—at least for public universities. Fortunately, I think the message has now gotten out.

The past couple of years have been really troubling, yet comic in a way. The Black Lives Matter movement, which arrived about 50 years too late, has gained a lot of traction on University campuses. In places like the University of Missouri, administrators have resigned under pressure because of complaints of racism, some real, some imagined. In one astounding videotape, we watched a University of Missouri professor of journalism actually try to stop a student reporter from videotaping a Black Lives Matter protest in a public space on campus. She actually called for “some muscle” to remove the young man. The university, figuring it had no use for a journalism professor who didn’t understand the First Amendment, rightly fired her. Not surprisingly, many parents have opted not to send their kids to Mizzou resulting in a sharp decline in enrollment. I applaud those decisions just as I applaud the decision of Jewish parents not to send their kids to the University of California until it gets serious about the problem of campus anti-Semitism.

Similarly, we are seeing one of the most absurd movements of all as universities fall all over themselves to be “inclusive”. White students are being actually demonized for their “inherent racism” and “privilege”. To be a person of color is noble. To be white is to be privileged. Indeed, many white students are rushing to don sack cloth and ashes not because of what they have done or said, rather because of what they are.

Even more absurd is the effort to make students feel secure, included and protected from such things as “macro-aggressions”, “micro-aggressions”, “trigger warnings” and other boogie men. Universities now talk of “safe spaces”, where the little snowflakes (our term) can even hold teddy

bears, hold hands and express their fears.

Just in time for President Donald Trump.

With Trump's election, our universities have truly lost their collective minds. Fortunately for them (and unfortunately for the rest of us) they already have the safe space infrastructure in place. University administrators, aided by their departments of equity, diversity and inclusion, are offering students counseling and group therapy sessions in order to cope with the pending arrival of the Evil Donald. If students are too traumatized to attend class or take a test, preferring to attend a protest instead, faculty are all too accommodating. (After all, they are probably too traumatized themselves to teach a class.) In effect, our universities have put their imprimatur on rejecting the results of this election. When a university president sends a campus-wide email out stating that "the university understands how deeply sad you feel about this election and we are here to help you," they are stating that they are also sorry that Hillary Clinton was not elected. That may be OK for a private school, but it is not OK for a public one.

To be fair, universities also have science departments, foreign language departments, engineering departments, and others where real education is taking place. It is in the humanities and social sciences where you usually see the misfit professors and indoctrinated students. Entire departmental chairs devoted to ethnic studies, gender studies, and gay and lesbian studies are of questionable value other than fostering group identity and separating our students into tribes. Now some schools are even instituting black dorms. Segregated water fountains can't be far off. New words-especially pronouns-are being invented for those students who feel our current vocabulary is too sexist. The University of California at Santa Cruz, which I call, "America's Wackiest University", actually has a Community Studies department (teaching the little rascals how to organize and protest) as

well as a History of Consciousness Department, in which the notorious Angela Davis was a faculty member.

This is what we are paying for in California.

It is tempting to say that it can't get any worse than this, and that from now on, it can only get better. Yet until these universities see their enrollment and funding drying up, they will not reform. Until then I cannot answer the question of whether they have truly hit rock bottom. I try to maintain a sense of humor about it all. It is easy to laugh at the utter stupidity exhibited by people who, with their advanced degrees, should know better. It isn't funny, however, when you consider that every future leader of this great country is walking on our college campuses today.