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guest commentary

Universities' liberal bias is real

By [Fred Singer](#)

Wednesday, January 29, 2003 - Gov. Owens recently told a radio audience that our state universities hire too many Democrats to teach political science. Roland Paris, assistant professor of political science at the University of Colorado at Boulder, finds the governor's comments "troubling."

He denied any political litmus test for hiring and rejected the claim that professors instill a "liberal bias" in students. The Post's Diane Carman was even more indignant, asking: "Just how does he know every political science professor's party affiliation?"

As it turns out, we do know, and the numbers are startling.

In 2002, American Enterprise magazine researchers studied faculties of 20 universities by checking voter registration records at election offices near the campuses. Faculty members were coded as part of the left (Democrat, Green, Socialist Workers) or the right (Republican, Libertarian). The left was found to dominate to an extraordinary degree. At CU-Boulder, for example, researchers identified 116 members on the left. How many on the right? Five.

At Cornell it's 166 to six, at Stanford, 151-17 and at the University of California-San Diego, 99 to six.

It goes on and on.

Paris says faculty searches he witnessed considered never considered party affiliation. The belief universities promote an "ideological agenda," he wrote, is "fictitious" and "malicious."

It may be true there's no conscious attempt to hire only Democrats. Perhaps faculty members are subliminally attracted to like-minded people. But then there's that 116-5 leftward tilt at CU-Boulder.

Because of this slant, it is virtually impossible for political balance in our universities and, as a result, the curriculum, the culture, the values, the atmosphere and the underlying currents of thought resemble indoctrination.

In my university teaching, I consciously try to keep my personal politics out of the classroom, but my prejudices slip through anyway. Offhand comments, discussion of current events, chats during breaks, interpretations of historical events, evaluation of student work and my underlying assumptions and perceptions are going to come through. If the overwhelming majority of professors share the same general outlook, students are going to spend four years picking up subtle and not-so-subtle cues which will conglomerate into a slanted political and social agenda.

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The A required introductory course at CU-Boulder, for example, focuses on "contemporary issues like race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and power." One week is devoted to "Understanding White Privilege," another to "Heterosexism and Homophobia: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Students."

The National Association of Scholars' investigation of education schools at four Colorado universities found "a radical social and political agenda" that teaches: "Western civilization is something to be scorned rather than understood and perpetuated. American history is taught as a sorry record of injustice and oppression of minorities."

At CSU, the freshman orientation includes two different health presentations: one standard for the parents and another for the students, in which they are encouraged to stuff condoms in their pockets. (Wink, wink. We won't tell mom and dad.)

These are the reasons Gov. Owens has endorsed Marc Holtzman, a former investment banker, to be the next president of Colorado State University. He wants balance. He wants academic debate. He wants diversity.

Ah, yes, "diversity." It's a favorite buzzword of those very Democrats who dominate higher education. They tell us ad nauseum that all institutions must have a balance of races, colors, creeds and so on. But they draw the line at their own institutions. They want diversity, but not when they are in the majority.

Diversity means more than a rainbow of colors; it should also mean a spectrum of opinions. But the current numbers give us groupthink, not diversity. We have armies of Ph.D.s marching in lockstep and dragging the students behind them.

Professor Alan Charles Kors of the University of Pennsylvania suggests that the message students are receiving is that "America is an almost uniquely iniquitous place in the world, without opportunity, legal equality or justice."

Philosophy professor Christina Hoff Sommers is struck by the anti-American venom on campuses: "... They seem to view as an evil empire, a military industrial complex, a fascist patriarchy unworthy of respect." ... They see Christopher Columbus as a genocidal villain; the Founding Fathers are 'patriarchal oppressors,' as are the military commanders who led American armed forces to victory in the global conflicts of this century."

This is the result of the extraordinary lack of balance among our professors. The reasons for this leftist dominance on campus are hard to pinpoint, but the fact remains that it does, indeed, exist. So the governor's actions are only "troubling" to those who fear diversity.

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