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Copy dates: 15th of even months (February, April, June, August, October, December).

Publisher: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK, phone: +44 (0)1865 776868, fax: +44 (0)1865 714591

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Information for subscribers: Six issues of bimonthly ANTHROPOLOGY TODAY are mailed free of charge per annum to Fellows and Members

of the Royal Anthropological Institute (registered charity no. 246269). Subscription prices for 2006: Premium Institutional: £69 (UK/rest of world except N America), US\$116 (N America). Member: €33, £22, or US\$34. Single copy: £9 UK, or \$21 overseas. 5% VAT applicable in the EU and 7% GST in Canada. Premium institutional price includes online access to the current and all available previous year electronic issues. For further options, visit www.blackwellpublishing.com/journals/anth.

Back issues: Single issues from current and recent volumes are available at the current single issue price from Blackwell Publishing Journals. Earlier issues may be obtained from Swets & Zeitlinger, Back Sets, Heereweg 347, PO Box 810, 2160 Lisse, The Netherlands.

Periodical ID: ANTHROPOLOGY TODAY, 0268-540X (formerly 0307-6776) (print), ISSN 1467-8322 1467-8322 (online) is published bimonthly.

Postage paid at Rahway, NJ and additional offices. Postmaster: Send all address changes to Anthropology Today, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Inc., 365 Blair Road, Avenel, NJ 07001, USA.

Journal Customer Services: For ordering information, claims and any enquiry concerning your journal subscription please contact your nearest office: UK (customerservices@oxon.blackwellpublishing.com); Tel: +44 (0)1865 778315; USA (subscrip@bos.blackwellpublishing.com); Tel: +1 781 388 8206 or 1 800 835 6770; Asia (subs@blackwellpublishingasia.com); Tel: +61 3 8359 1011).

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Printed in the UK by Henry Ling Limited, at the Dorset Press, Dorchester DT1 1HD.

Shortly after the Twin Towers fell on 11 September 2001, President Bush's press secretary warned that Americans should 'watch what they say, watch what they do' (Fleischer 2001). This bit of advice didn't bode well for university professors, especially those who feel obligated to speak out when their nation's citizenry has grave doubts about the wisdom and competence of its leaders. The subsequent declaration of a 'war on terror' and the passage of the Patriot Act have threatened the civil liberties of many citizens, and brought new fears of government intrusion into our lecture halls and seminar rooms.

As US troops settled into Afghanistan and Iraq the campaign against the academy intensified. Aided and abetted by a resurgent conservative student activism on campus, this campaign accuses the American professoriate of harbouring a pervasive and long-standing liberal bias – with 'liberal' variously understood as leftist, Marxist and anti-American. Two recent studies of the political affiliation of US professors indicate that humanities and social science faculties contain a significant majority of registered Democrats and others who self-identify as liberal or left (Rothman, Lichter and Nevitte 2005, Lindholm et al. 2002). For many observers on the right this distribution implies – on the assumption that party politics *inevitably* intrudes on teaching and scholarship – that American campuses are 'closed shops', and that students are not being educated, but rather indoctrinated into leftist ideology. (Never mind the fact that the US is politically polarized as never before and that, as Todd Gitlin [2006] points out, 'radical leftists' have no power in Congress, the federal courts, or even the Democratic Party itself. If leftist professors have been 'indoctrinating' the next generation of voters, then they're making a real hash of it.) Numerous stories are also circulating on the internet about rampant 'viewpoint discrimination' in the classroom, manifested as left-biased reading lists and assignments, the downgrading of students holding conservative views, and other forms of intimidation and abuse (see, for example, www.frontpagemag.com and www.noindoctrination.org).

The main players in this campaign against the American professoriate are several well-known conservative 'watchdog' organizations including the National Association of Scholars (NAS) and the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA). The campaign's single most militant crusader is David Horowitz, founder and president of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture. A former leftist turned conservative culture warrior, Horowitz is a source of advice on political strategy for the Bush administration. Since 2003, Horowitz' organization Students for Academic Freedom (SAF), with 150 campus chapters nationwide, has mobilized conservative students and politicians in 20 states to propose an 'Academic Bill of Rights' (ABOR) for state-supported institutions (the bill is accessible at www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org). The ABOR seeks enforcement of principles long cherished by the educational mainstream and enshrined in the academic freedom platform of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). These include commitments to teaching a broad range of scholarly viewpoints about how the world works, and the fair grading of students and hiring of academic staff without regard to their political and religious beliefs.

In legislative drafts, however, the ABOR often ventures into much more problematic terrain. For example, in several states it mandates that professors 'not introduce

controversial material into the classroom or coursework that has no relation to the subject of study and that serves no legitimate pedagogical purpose'. Although this principle comes directly from the AAUP's 1940 statement on academic freedom, its invocation in the current context is clearly aimed at critics of President Bush and the war in Iraq. The principle itself, however, raises legitimate philosophical and practical questions about what counts as 'controversial' and 'relevant' in any given context, and who decides.

More explicit justifications for ABOR legislation further exacerbate professorial worries. Ohio's bill was justified by its sponsor on the grounds that '80% or so of [college faculty] are Democrats, Liberals, Socialists, or card-carrying Communists' (Steigerwald 2005). Florida's bill was proposed as a corrective to the 'dictatorship' of 'leftist totalitarians' on campus (Vanlandingham 2005). It gives students the right to sue professors who don't 'respect' their beliefs – for example, by teaching Darwinian evolution to the exclusion of Biblical creation in science class. Pennsylvania's bill calls for the creation of a select committee to investigate claims of classroom bias, and warns accused professors that they have 48 hours to respond to any particular allegation (Berube 2006). It doesn't take a rocket scientist to grasp the potential of such legislation to produce a chilling effect in the classroom, especially for junior faculty. At present most ABOR legislation is being debated in state legislatures. SAF campaigns in Colorado and Ohio ended with legislators and college administrators agreeing to make students more aware of the grievance procedures available to them should they experience viewpoint discrimination in class.

In February 2006 the campaign against the professoriate climaxed (or descended to a new low, depending on your point of view) with the publication of Horowitz' book *The professors: The 101 most dangerous academics in America*. Here, Horowitz reveals the pervasive 'intellectual corruption' of the American university by providing an alphabetized list of some of the worst violators of professional obligations and standards. The book's dust jacket promises to expose not only 'radical academics', but also the 'ex-terrorists, racists, murderers, sexual deviants, anti-Semites, and al-Qaeda supporters' who infect the American system of higher education. The poster boy for this critique is Ward Churchill, Professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Churchill's post-9/11 remarks characterizing victims of the Twin Towers attack as 'little Eichmanns' who got what they deserved sparked national outrage when they were disclosed in early 2005 (Churchill 2001). Horowitz believes that Churchill is just the tip of the iceberg of left extremists on campus, whom he estimates comprise about 10% of academic staff nationwide and who position themselves as administrators in order to hire like-minded people. The American Council of Trustees and Alumni subsequently piggy-backed on Horowitz' book with another text asking *How many Ward Churchills?* (Neal 2006), in which published course descriptions and syllabuses are used to substantiate claims about the partisan agenda of America's professoriate.

I've followed these developments closely because I'm one of four anthropologists profiled in Horowitz's book. Many more anthropologists could have been included, however. Horowitz has indicated in several of his writings and interviews that anthropology is one of the more intellectually corrupt disciplines within the social sciences. Indeed, another ACTA report produced two months after 9/11 implies that there are more 'Blame America first' professors in anthropology than in any other discipline (Martin and Neal 2002). My inclusion in Horowitz' book turns on his reading of a statement on academic freedom that I wrote for a campus publication of the University of Denver (Saitta 2005). In my commentary I worried about the collateral damage to classroom teaching threatened by the Churchill controversy. Although Churchill made his 9/11 remarks in a public context, I expressed concern that condemnations of his protected public speech could

very easily encourage attacks on academic speech. Horowitz misinterpreted this statement as strong support for Churchill's alleged anti-Americanism. My much broader concern was deepened by testimony I heard at the Colorado State Senate's ABOR hearing in December 2003, which included the public naming of allegedly miscreant professors on the basis of anecdotal accounts of their classroom behaviour without the accused having an opportunity to defend themselves.

At present, internet and print media in the United States are alive with debates about the state of the American university (see, e.g., www.insidehighered.com). Many of America's 'dangerous professors' – myself included – have stepped up to challenge the errors and distortions contained in Horowitz' book, and to clarify what it is we do in the classroom and in our extra-curricular activities (see www.collegefreedom.com and www.freeexchangeoncampus.org). That *all* academics should be concerned about Horowitz' crusade is warranted by a recent AAUP survey of public opinion about the university (Gross and Simmons 2006). While Americans are generally confident about the quality of higher education in the United States, they nonetheless have some troubling understandings of what the university is and does. Nearly 70% believe the university should, as its primary function, provide job training rather than cultivate critical thinking. Over 60% believe that professors should be fired for associating with 'radical' political organizations. Over 50% think that too much scholarly research today is irrelevant to the needs of society. Finally, nearly 40% believe that the political bias of professors is a serious problem on campus. The authors of the AAUP report conclude that Horowitz's critique resonates with Americans in ways that pose a significant threat to academic freedom. Equally vulnerable, in my view, is progressive pedagogy – if by 'progressive' we mean teaching and learning that produces engaged citizens rather than compliant employees.

* * *

Given this context, American anthropologists are faced with at least three major challenges. Two of these hold for the professoriate in general, and one is specific to our discipline. Some of these challenges may have relevance for colleagues in other countries who are facing, or could soon be facing, similar scrutiny.

First, we need to demonstrate that the university is an institution that, like every other human institution, is embedded in society and subject to the ebb and flow of cultural forces and generational change. I take what I suspect is a fairly common position: our obligation as university faculty is to teach a breadth of ideas, critically examine their social causes and consequences, boldly experiment with new ones and, from time to time, actively champion particular ideas that can advance what we know and change for the better (whatever we take 'better' to mean) how we live. If we make some of our publics uncomfortable in the process, then we're probably doing something right. This is not a radical position. Indeed, the best conservative critic of the contemporary university – the late Allan Bloom (1987) – argued that universities should be unpopular, adversarial and even subversive institutions. That is, they are places where students should confront ideas different from the ones they acquire at home, in houses of worship and on the street. Jim Sleeper (2005), one of Bloom's interrogators, notes that by struggling with competing familial, religious and academic commitments students 'forge a deeper attachment to truth and civic-republican virtue' (for a very different view see Kimball 2005). Facilitating this struggle is what keeps the university from becoming a glorified trade school, and preserves Jeffersonian ideals of educating for good citizenship.

Such an outcome is possible even with the decided preponderance of 'liberal' professors on American campuses. My small department at the University of Denver is no doubt a microcosm of the national scene. Nonetheless, my colleagues and I have lots of disagreements about culture: how it works, why it changes, and what's the best way to study, represent

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and teach it. That is, we offer plenty of intellectual diversity if *disciplinary knowledge* is the touchstone, rather than party politics. I'm not sure how, or to what extent, a 'conservative' perspective on central epistemological, theoretical and methodological issues in anthropology would enrich our curriculum – but I suspect not much. Like many other departments we are also keen to provide students with the skills and savvy they need to succeed on the job, which inevitably requires a critical analysis of workplace political economy. Our students reinforce this orientation by expecting and demanding an education that is 'relevant'. This means turning anthropological knowledge to pressing political issues of the day, and modelling how such issues might be productively addressed through engaged scholarship and citizenship.

To accomplish these multiple goals we recruit the very best staff available as judged by the quality of their teaching and scholarship. I can vouch for this priority first hand. When I was department head I fought hard to hire and retain a colleague who, by his own admission, occupies a political space far to the right of the Republican party. He also happens to be the best in the world at what he does, a superb teacher, and well connected to the world of applied work. Our main concern is not whether someone is politically on the right or the left, but whether they can do the job given our educational mission, competitive niche vis-à-vis other institutions, and employment opportunities available to our students.

* * *

The second challenge is to better justify and develop the sort of engaged pedagogy and scholarship that landed many of us on the 'dangerous 101' list. Horowitz' model of appropriate pedagogy is hierarchical and elitist. It evokes an image of tweedy professors filling up empty-headed and easily indoctrinable students with what is *presumed* to be disinterested, value-free knowledge. Horowitz bases his ABOR campaign on governing documents of the AAUP, but like all historical documents even these carry epistemological and sociological baggage. Witness the 1915 AAUP academic freedom statement that instructed teachers to avoid expressing their opinions until a student has 'sufficient knowledge and ripeness of judgment to be *entitled* to form any definitive opinion of *his own*' (emphasis added). Even first principles sometimes need refining in order to keep pace with progress in how we understand the world. Significant research in higher education over the past several decades has shown the limitations of a traditional 'sage on the stage' approach to teaching and learning, and the utility of more philosophically self-conscious and collaborative approaches for cultivating critical powers of mind. The best of these approaches are cognizant of how conscious, well-founded *convictions* – which Michael Berube (2006) usefully distinguishes from unconscious *biases* – can work to education's advantage. Indeed, sometimes there's no substitute for a strong, informed polemic for promoting vigorous discussion and debate. Classroom partisanship is not necessarily a betrayal of professional obligations; indeed, it can just as easily be a *fulfilment* of them. Of course, our one non-negotiable professional obligation is to establish a congenial classroom environment in which students can safely express and battle-test their *own* convictions and biases, no matter how 'unripe'. As with any profession, some teachers are better at this than others.

Once again, this is not a radical view. Horowitz himself tacitly acknowledges the 'interested' and value-laden nature of scholarly enquiry where his Academic Bill of Rights invokes the 'uncertain and unsettled character of all human knowledge' and the belief that 'there is no humanly accessible truth that is not in principle open to challenge'. The man's obsession with legislating intellectual diversity, however, seems to have trumped any real concern for establishing transcendent, inter-subjective truth. Indeed, Horowitz' agenda has always seemed more about increasing the number of political conservatives among college staff than safeguarding pedagogical

strategies for teaching and learning. This ambition is certainly implied by SAF's campaign motto, which asserts that 'You can't get a good education if they're only telling you half the story'. The NAS's Stephen Balch (2006) offers a more sophisticated perspective where, instead of *value partisanship*, he advocates *value liberality*: 'an openness to all points of view able to make their case at a level of logical cogency and evidentiary support commensurate with appropriate disciplinary standards and willing to give an attentive hearing when similarly credentialed persuasions reply in kind'. Although Balch is also on record suggesting the need for a 'full-scale organizational overhaul' of the university – which would apparently include a commitment to hiring more conservatives (Balch 2005; cf. Berube 2006) – his is still a sensible position. As with Sleeper's and Bloom's shared understanding of the university, there is common ground here on which liberal and conservative views can be negotiated without the kind of red-baiting and fear-mongering that typifies the Horowitz campaign, and that poses a clear and present danger to academic freedom.

* * *

The third challenge is to show how anthropology's unique 'deep time', cross-cultural and bio-behavioural understanding of the human condition can enrich the *entire* academic curriculum and inform wider public discourse. As noted, Horowitz sees anthropology as a hopelessly corrupted discipline, fraught with political correctness and partisanship. In fact, a good case to the contrary can be made that, because of the qualities identified above, anthropology should be the *linchpin* of a liberal arts education and any truly informed approach to policy-making in a globalizing world. Even Allan Bloom, in an otherwise stinging critique of the social sciences, saw great promise in anthropology's 'depth and comprehensiveness', and appreciated its 'charm of possible wholeness' – i.e. its openness to unity with other disciplines. The big problems of our time are inherently interdisciplinary and the solutions thus require holistic, integrative thinking. This means that, *contra* the stipulations of ABOR, *any* bit of knowledge from *anywhere* in intellectual and social life is conceivably relevant to the classroom subject at hand.

American anthropologists have already engaged our national debate about gay marriage by showing great cross-cultural variation in the marital arrangements and 'family values' of human beings (see the American Anthropological Association's *Anthropology News* for April, May and September 2004). Anthropology's particularist conversation about human rights – one informed by a 'pragmatic ethnocentrism' that compares existing practices to each other instead of to an ideal that has rarely, if ever, been achieved in practice – provides a useful counterpoint to the universalist rights conversations of other disciplines. Anthropology's understanding of our legacy as evolved primates nicely positions the discipline to cope with rapidly accumulating knowledge of the human genome and the complex relationships between human biology, psychology and behaviour. In short, anthropologists need to be out front pioneering integration of knowledge across the arts and sciences and application of the resulting insights in the public sphere. Two recent books – *Why America's top pundits are wrong: Anthropologists talk back*, and *Anthropologists in the public sphere: Speaking out on war, peace, and American power* – are models for this kind of critical, integrative and applied work.

These are interesting times on American campuses, and getting more so with each passing day. Worries about the erosion of free public and academic speech after 9/11 have been vindicated as foreign scholars are repelled at our borders and homeland academics are threatened with censure and dismissal. The faculty's franchise is under siege. Anthropologists need to step up and engage – with colleagues at home and abroad, and with our various public stakeholders – in more and better conversations about the university's status as a site of critical, creative and civically engaged inquiry. Indeed, they are conversations that we need to lead. ●