

The ethics of academic freedom assignment

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Truly dangerous if it is not respected and handled with care. And nowhere is that most apparent, than on the campuses and in the classrooms of this nations institutions Of higher education. Even on the most tolerant of campuses, there exist individuals who are opinionated, biased, and judgmental of others' perspectives. That is to be expected. But what happens when the professors and educators (or those who have put themselves in the role as educator) have taken their freedoms for granted and base everything that they say has merit given his or her First Amendment right? Academic Freedom

Academic Freedom exists. ." In order that society will have the benefit of honest judgment and independent criticism which might (otherwise) be withheld because of fear of offending a dominant social group or transient social attitude" (Kumara, 1993). It's a regulation to help make sure that professors and students alike have a voice on campus. The American Association of University' Professors is " a national organization committed solely to college and university faculty members. It defends academic freedom and tenure, advocates collegial governance, and develops policies ensuring due process" (Sledded, 2004).

They have been extremely vocal in the assurance of academic freedom in academe. One current section on academic freedom reads as follows: " Freedom of thought and expression is essential to any institution of higher learning. Universities and colleges exist not only to transmit knowledge. Equally, they interpret, explore, and expand that knowledge by testing the old and proposing the new. This mission guides learning outside the classroom quite as much as in class, and often inspires vigorous debate on <https://assignbuster.com/the-ethics-of-academic-freedom-assignment/>

those social, economic, and political issues that arouse the strongest passions.

In the process, views will be expressed that may seem to many wrong, distasteful, or offensive. Such is the nature of freedom to sift and winnow ideas. On a campus that is free and open, no idea can be banned or forbidden. No viewpoint or message may be deemed so hateful or disturbing that it may not be expressed. " Pap's Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure, June 1992. Academic freedom is not equivalent to the same freedoms promised us by the First Amendment. If one were to assume that, then any professor could go into a classroom and espouse his or her personal beliefs as law (which, Daly enough, some professors do).

By having academic freedom, it should not excuse anyone from being held responsible for what he or she might say. Taken from the 1940 statement of academic freedom, Point B reads as: Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. – Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment. AUP, 1940

However, US regulations had this definition of academic freedom: " The function of the university is to seek to transmit knowledge and to train students in the process whereby truth is to be mane known. To convert, or to make converts, is alien and hostile to this dispassionate duty. Where it becomes necessary, in performing this function Of a university, to consider

political, social, or sectarian movements, they are to be dissected and examined, not taught, and the conclusion left, with no tipping of the scales, to the logic and the facts. " University of California University Regulations (Revised No. 5), 1 934

This seemed like a very sound foundation in which to run an institution of higher learning. After all, these regulations for the US System had been in effect since 1934. However, in the aftermath of September 11, many professors began to teach by way of ' indoctrinating' instead of ' educating'. Even US Berkeley president wanted to change the rules of academic freedom to " to reflect the modern university and its faculty" (Atkinson, R. , 2003). But why should we now change the rules to suit or behavior? Academic Bill of Rights Conservative author, David Horowitz believes that with a new Academic Bill of

Rights, we can get the liberal thinking colleges and universities back on track with what the academic freedom rules outline. He believes that there have been too many instances of liberal professors trying to indoctrinate political ideals and beliefs on students, and that if a student disagrees with the professor's belief, he or she will be penalized by presumably receiving a failing grade. Horowitz gives as an example the case of a Leistering of Northern Colorado student who had received a failing grade on a paper that reportedly refused to address the question of ' Why President Bush is a war rimmer? (SAP, 2003). This new Bill of Rights reads simply enough and it sounds fair to all parties involved. For example; " All faculty shall be hired, fired, promoted and granted tenure on the basis of their competence and appropriate knowledge in the field Of their expertise NO faculty shall be

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hired or fired or denied promotion or tenure on the basis of his or her political or religious beliefs; also, “ Students will be graded solely on the basis of their reasoned answers and appropriate knowledge not on the basis of their political or religious beliefs” (SARA, 2003).

But even with this type of wording, as politically correct as it may seem, there is, of course, a hidden agenda surrounding Horopito’ draft (at least, according to some). Right-Winged Conservatives According to Horopito, his bill has some heavy supporters; The American Council on Education; the National Coalition Against Censorship; the Association for Extrajudicial Affairs; the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education; and various college and university professors and educators.

Along with Horopito, these groups believe that by having the academic bill of rights, college campuses will become more intellectually diverse (Jacobson, 005). Horopito has taken it upon himself to create this bill to allow the more conservative student’s a voice when working with their (seem ingly) more liberal professor’s viewpoints. It is to “ provide an educational environment where students feel comfortable expressing their opinions free from the worry of discrimination based on political beliefs” (Winters, 2005).

Part of the bill reads as follows: “ Faculty and instructors shall be free to pursue and discuss their own findings and perspectives in presenting their views, but they shall make their students aware of serious scholarly viewpoints other than their own through classroom discussion or dissemination of written materials, and they shall encourage intellectual honesty, civil debate and the critical analysis of ideas in the pursuit of

knowledge and truth” (Horopito, 2003). Leftist Liberals Other groups aren’t as accepting of this new bill being implemented throughout college campuses.

Some of these heavy hitters include; the American Federation of Teachers; The C A-Academic Association of University Professors; the National JAPE; the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAR); and various college and university professors and educators. These groups see the Academic Bill of Rights “ not to provide students with ‘ rights’, but to institute State monitoring of universities, to impose specific points of view on instructors 0 in many cases, points of view that have been intellectually discredited ъ and ultimately to silence dissenting voices by punishing universities that protect them” (Misaims, 2005).

They feel that by allowing the bill, it would “ place uncomfortable restrictions on what can and cannot be taught in the classroom (Winters, 2005). At a senate meeting in Ohio, CARR charges: “ The bill forces the board of rustles, of both public and private schools, to adopt policies about what can and cannot be taught” (CARR, 2005). They call the bill an “ Academic bill of Restrictions”. Even the AUP has said that the bill “ is an infringement of the free speech rights of professors” (Horopito, 2005).

The Middle of the Road Having read so much material relating to academic freedom, the academic bill of rights, and even political correctness, find that I am now a little more cynical than I was before began researching this topic. One problem I have with the pros and cons of this particular topic is that can

understand what OTOH sides are arguing. And if agree with any one side, I will be labeled a liberal or a conservative.

It's very interesting to me, someone who always considered herself a liberal; take such a shady, hazy, blurry view of what (on the surface) seems pretty cut and dry. Because I can agree with some of the things that Horopito is professing shouldn't make me any more a conservative than Jesse Jackson; and because can certainly get behind the liberals in their fight to keep Big brother out of the classroom doesn't make me a tree-hugging hippie, either.

Perhaps Gill Troy had the best idea when he wrote to keep the classroom as political as possible, in his article on academic freedom he wrote: " You need not be a pajama-wearing fire-breathing, Bush-loving flogger to protest the chilling effects of leftist politicking's bullying academic freedom, along with government excesses and conservative histrionics" (Troy, 2005).

He believes that as professors; " We fail when students perceive us as doctrinaire, we distort when we only engage one side of an issue, we oversimplify when we reduce everything to a political equation, we cheat when we only hire intellectual clones, we betray ourselves when we befriend only those who agree with us. (Troy, 2005). Doreen Kumara not only wants her students to disagree with her, but also wants to upset them. I have taught ATA university for over 25 years, and I hope that in that time I have offended many students; in the sense that have suggested ideas to them that they had not entertained before and which they therefore found disturbing" (Kumara, 1993). Us m Mary From the most liberal of institutions in California, to the most prestigious Ivy ague academies, professors and

students have a lot of knowledge. Some of the knowledge may be self taught, or obtained through experiences, while there types of knowledge may be studied and researched over many years. In either case, these two groups have the ability to teach and learn from each other.