

Authoritarians on Campus

✘ The “higher education community,” as they like to be known, worships at the altar of diversity – unless, of course, we’re talking about diversity of opinion. Then these supposedly smart academics show us how dumb they can be.

The Chronicle of Higher Education, which publishes articles for that community, just fired a woman named Naomi Schaefer Riley. Why? Because she expressed an opinion many of those scholars in the “higher education community” didn’t like.

Really!

Academics, liberals who brag about being open-minded, read something they disagreed with and then, like a mob, hunted down the offender and made her pay. Ms. Riley was hired to provide conservative commentary and then was canned because she provided it.

Here’s what happened:

The Chronicle published a cover story recently called “Black Studies: Swaggering Into the Future” which said in part that “young black studies scholars ... are less consumed than their predecessors with the need to validate the field or explain why they are pursuing doctorates in their discipline.” There was also a companion piece about five Ph.D. candidates who, we’re told, “are rewriting the history of race.” Nowhere in the articles is anyone quoted who is skeptical of black studies as an academic discipline.

Enter Naomi Schaefer Riley, who wrote a piece for the Chronicle’s Web site – (that was her job) – that said that the dissertation topics the graduate students mentioned were obscure at best and “a collection of left-wing victimization claptrap” at worst.

What happened next, sadly, is no surprise. After those oh so tolerant academics read what she wrote they bombarded her messages calling her – wait for it – a racist.

Ok, I'm not shocked, either. But that was only the beginning. Then 6,500 academics signed an on line petition demanding that she be fired.

For a few days, the Chronicle sort of stood its ground saying, Ms. Riley's blog was an "invitation to debate." But after about 72 hours, the pressure had become too much for the Chronicle's editor, Liz McMillen. She issued a statement that Ms. Riley says reads like "a confession at a re-education camp."

"We've heard you," Ms. McMillen wrote to the mob. "And we have taken to heart what you said. We now agree that Ms. Riley's blog posting did not meet The Chronicle's basic editorial standards for reporting and fairness in opinion articles."

This, of course, was nonsense. Naomi Schaefer Riley – a white woman who, if it matters is married to a black man – was fired because she said things about race that are unacceptable in liberal academic circles. She was fired because she had an unpopular opinion, which is a crime against humanity on many college campuses. And she was smeared with the word "racist" because that's the word liberals use to describe anybody with views on race they don't agree with.

In an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal about the mob that got her fired, Ms. Riley tells us that "If you want to know why almost all of the responses to my original post consist of personal attack on me, along with irrelevant mentions of Fox News, The Wall Street Journal, Newt Gingrich, Rick Santorum and George Zimmerman, it is because black studies is a cause, not a course of study. By doubting the academic worthiness of black studies, my critics conclude, I am opposed to racial

justice – and therefore a racist.”

Liberals like to howl about the *chilling effect* when supposed enemies of free speech try to get *them* fired for something *they* said. In academia, these *enemies*, of course, are always conservatives. Liberals are always the *victims* of the mob. All of this proves a point: They're not only dumb, these academic authoritarians – they're also breathtakingly clueless.