

Liberal Intolerance on Campus

Nicholas Kristoff wrote a column in the New York Times recently that ran under the headline: “A Confession of Liberal Intolerance.”

It was about the hypocrisy of liberals on college campuses who preach diversity but have no time for a certain kind of diversity – diversity of thought and of opinion – meaning conservative ideas that run counter to their liberal thinking.

“We progressives believe in diversity,” Kristoff wrote, “and we want women, blacks Latinos, gays and Muslims at the table – er, so long as they aren’t conservatives.”

This, of course, is something conservatives have known for a very long time. But, let’s be generous and give Nick Kristoff one cheer – for his better late than never decision to write about this particular brand of liberal conceit.

Kristoff says he “wondered aloud” on Facebook “whether universities stigmatize conservatives and undermine intellectual diversity. The scornful reaction from my fellow liberals proved the point.”

Here’s some of that scornful reaction Kristoff received:

Someone named Carmi said, “Much of the ‘conservative’ worldview consists of ideas that are known empirically to be false.”

Michelle chimed in with, “The truth has a liberal slant.”

Steven said, “Why stop there? How about we make faculties more diverse by hiring idiots.”

This is what liberal smugness sounds like.

Then there’s the Politics of the American Professoriate survey

(2006), which found that while only 3 percent of professors in the social sciences consider themselves conservative – 17.6 percent consider themselves Marxists!

And the PhDs who run America's universities aren't even embarrassed.

I had my own long distance experience with liberal professors last summer when Deepa Kumar, a journalism professor at Rutgers University, my alma matter, tweeted this: "Yes ISIS is brutal, but US is more so, 1.3 million killed in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan"

Another Rutgers professor, Brittney Cooper, who teaches in the Women's and Gender Studies and Africana Studies department, wrote a piece for Salon about what she believed motivated a mentally ill young man in California to go on a killing spree in Santa Barbara.

"Another young white guy has decided that his disillusionment with his life should become somebody else's problem," she wrote. How many times must troubled young white men engage in these terroristic acts that make public space unsafe for everyone before we admit that white male privilege kills?"

Not only is this clearly racist, it's academically lame. This is what the professor left out of her rant:

In 2013, Aaron Alexis, killed 12 people at the Washington D.C. Navy Yard. He's black.

In 2007, Seung-Hi Cho killed 32 at Virginia Tech University. He's Asian.

In 2004, Chai Vang killed six hunters in the woods of Wisconsin. He's also Asian.

And in 2009, Nidal Hasan, a Muslim, murdered 13 people at Fort Hood, Texas.

As a Rutgers alum, I wrote to Robert Barchi, the university's president, and asked him this: "Is racism acceptable at Rutgers so long as it's politically correct racism – the kind that comes from a black professor and is aimed at white people?"

I made clear in my letter that I wasn't calling for either of the two professors to be fired. "Even those who utter foolish speech have rights," I wrote.

But I questioned whether such professors could be open-minded enough in the classroom to be effective teachers.

On the Rutgers website President Barchi acknowledged that "Some of the comments have been offensive to many people and have been inconsistent with the commitment Rutgers has to reasoned discussion and balanced points of view. Such comments do not represent the position of the University, nor should they be construed as having been expressed on behalf of the University." And he ended with this: "While I will not defend the content of every opinion expressed by every member of our academic community, or of speakers who we invite to our campus, I will defend their right to speak freely. That freedom is fundamental to our University, our society, and our nation."

I'll also defend their right to speak. I'm not big on firing people for uttering unpopular – or even stupid – comments. But I wonder what the liberal response would have been if a *white, male* professor made a racist comment about blacks who kill.

What if the white professor had written a piece about the never ending slaughter in black neighborhoods – by black killers? What if he had written: "*Another young black has decided that his disillusionment with his life should become somebody else's problem. How many times must troubled young black men engage in these terroristic acts that make public space unsafe for everyone before we admit that black males are*

dangerous human beings?"

Or what would the reaction have been if an Evangelical professor – I doubt they have many of them on campus – had tweeted: *"The U.S. may have its faults but it's better than any Muslim country on the entire planet."*

Maybe the university president would have still defended the "right to speak freely." Maybe the kids on campus would have accepted the comments in the spirit of free speech. Or maybe they would have viewed the comments as racist and anti-Muslim and called for the heads of those white, male professors.

Back at the Times, Nick Kristoff ended his column with some advice that conservatives have been offering for many, many years. "Universities should be a hubbub of the full range of political perspectives," he wrote, "from A to Z, not just from V to Z. So maybe we progressives could take a brief break from attacking the other side and more broadly incorporate values that we supposedly cherish – like diversity – in our own dominions."

Nice try, Nick, but I'm not holding my breath. And while nothing is comparable to racism in America, too many liberal professors on campus view conservatives the same way white bigots, in another era, viewed blacks: As inferior and not worthy of respect.

Or as Steve, the open-minded liberal put it in response to Kristoff's idea about being more accepting of diverse (conservative) views on campus: "How about we make faculties more diverse by hiring idiots."

If arrogance, smugness and having a false sense of intellectual superiority were a crime, our jails would be packed with college professors. And a lot of faculty lounges would be empty.