

# The Backlash

A Column for the Politically Incorrect

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**Editors' Note:** This is to clarify certain "issues" that have arose recently concerning "The Backlash." (1) This is not a "Men's Column," it is a political column and is in no way intended to represent the views of, or even just "represent", all men on this campus. We would not patronise anybody or any social group by claiming to know what is best for them. (2) This is not an "anti-feminist" column in the sense we are out to get all of feminism, though we have been, and will remain to be, critical of some aspects of feminism (esp. radical feminism)--including this week's article, only 2 out of our 7 articles have had as their primary focus some aspect of feminism. (3) We will remain to be critical of "Women's" Studies as long as it maintains its blatantly political agenda and refuses to allow "non-feminist" critiques and viewpoints within the field. (4) A.D. Irvine (re "Affirmative Discrimination") is not a "feminist basher," we are willing to show his study to anyone who may feel this is otherwise. (5) Contrary to sporadically held belief, neither Dr. Daniel Wolf nor Dr. Mujeeb Rahman write anything that appears in this column nor do they have any influence upon what appears here.

## THE WRONG WAY TO REDUCE CAMPUS TENSIONS -A Statement by the National Association of Scholars

The academic community is alarmed by reports of intergroup tension at many colleges, including those long committed to equal opportunity. Unfortunately, educators have failed to reassess some recent policies and practices that, far from promoting tolerance and fairness, are undermining them. Worse yet, many have seized upon incidents of conflict to call for the extension of these policies and practices. They include:

- \* a willingness to admit students widely disparate in their level of preparation in order to make the campus demographically representative;
- \* preferential hiring for faculty and staff positions determined by race, ethnicity, and gender;
- \* racially or ethnically exclusive financial aid and

academic counselling programs, as well as special administrators, ombudsman, and resource centers assigned to serve as the putative representatives of selected student groups;

- \* punitive codes restricting "insensitive" speech;
- \* mandatory "sensitivity training" for incoming freshman and sometimes for all students, faculty, and staff;
- \* requirements that students take tendentious courses dealing with groups regarded as victimized;
- \* a failure to enforce campus rules when violated by those promoting these policies or other "politically correct" causes.

The National Association of Scholars believes that these policies and practices involve either the application of a double standard or the repudiation of appropriate intellectual criteria. Consequently, they undercut the academy's special sense of common purpose and prompt divisive calculations of group interest. Specifically we believe that:

- (1) The admission of seriously underprepared students creates unrealistic expectations and frequently leads to frustration and resentment. Moreover, policies that target specific minority groups unfairly stigmatize all students in such groups, reinforcing negative stereotypes.
- (2) Two-track hiring threatens to produce a two-tiered faculty instead of a genuinely integrated one. While such hiring may well create "role models," they will be the wrong kind, encouraging the belief that it is the assertion of group power instead of the pursuit of individual achievement that reaps the most abundant rewards.
- (3) Disadvantaged students deserve ample assistance, yet disadvantage need not coincide with race or ethnicity. Those excluded are often frustrated by seeing individuals who may be no worse than themselves receiving special treatment solely because of ancestry. Furthermore, bureaucracies created to serve or champion particular groups tend to have vested interests in emphasizing differences, fostering complaints, and maintaining the separation of those groups.
- (4) Safeguarding intellectual freedom is of critical importance to the academy. Thus, it is deeply disturbing to see the concept of "discriminatory harassment" stretched to cover the expression of unapproved thoughts about selected groups or criticism of policies assumed to benefit them. Higher education should prepare students to grapple with contrary or unpleasant ideas, not shield them from their content. What is more, if a higher permissive attitude toward the excoriation of the "privileged"