

Three years after the publication of his controversial race-ranking study, the theories of University of Western Ontario psychology professor, Philippe Rushton, are once again raising the ire of the academic community.

New gender-based study sparks controversy

Western Professor Rushton is at it again

This time, women are the target.

Rushton and Western zoology professor, David Ankney, have completed studies they say show that women have smaller brains than men.

The studies allege that women's brains are on average 100 cubic centimetres smaller than men's. This is eight per cent smaller, even after factoring in the overall difference in body size differences between the sexes.

Ankney has argued the discrepancy could account for the fact that more men go into mathematics and spatial sciences than women.

The studies are to be published this month in *Intelligence*, a scientific journal.

Rushton's race-ranking study, published in 1989, claimed that Asians are superior to whites who are in turn superior to blacks in intelligence, lawfulness and sexual restraint.

The new gender-based studies have sparked fresh debate at Western.

Peter Ewart, a spokesperson for the Academic Coalition for Equality (ACE) at Western, said the studies are potentially dangerous.

He said other studies concentrating on

gender or racial superiority have contributed to the development of academic racism, which in turn have adversely affected social programs and immigration policies in the U.S.

Those studies have been used against middle and working classes as well as against women and people of colour, Ewart said.

"[They have] had a big effect," he said. "But Rushton is not an anomaly in that way. Universities have played a bad role."

Some academics, however, are staunchly defending Rushton's right to publish his theories.

The Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship -- a group of 40 Ontario professors -- opposes what it sees as a growing move to ban "offensive" materials.

Dr. John Furedy, a University of Toronto psychology professor who is a director of the society, said everything should be open to study.

"The way to ignorance and totalitarianism is to forbid the raising of certain questions," he said.

"When you try to suppress the issue, you get a much more doctrinal and extreme version. The extreme conclusions brought on by suppression get preserved. For in-

dence.

Dr. Neil Wiener, a York University psychology professor, called studies like Rushton's and Ankney's "bio-politics," which he said have been going on for 2000 years.

He said the issue is not freedom of speech, but university accountability.

"You can't prevent people from articulating their beliefs," Wiener said. "The real issue is, 'does anyone fund it?'"

The onus is on individual universities to decide what kind of research will be conducted at their institution, he noted.

"The university of Western Ontario has provided a very comfortable environment in terms of allowing him [Rushton] to take time off and do research. Nothing required the university to do so."

He dismissed the studies as "ridiculous" and unoriginal.

"I like to say that he [Rushton] and his friends boldly go where no man has gone before," Wiener said.

"In the 19th century they were trying to relate brain size to body weight. This unfortunately showed that women have larger brains than men, so that formula was quickly abandoned." ■

stance, when you ban a book, it becomes more popular because you've banned it."

For his part, Ewart said a no-holds-barred approach to academic freedom can do more harm than good.

He cited Nazi Germany as a situation where academic freedom in scientific research enabled Nazi leaders to justify their views on the basis of scientific evi-