

Since it appears that the postings below are still occasionally ‘hit,’ perhaps the subject matter continues to provoke mild interest, or at least some idle curiosity. And while one can hardly hope to spark a student/faculty revolt with such postings, it certainly can’t hurt to provide some additional material to this forum to keep it all from becoming too stale. (And who knows; the injection of a little extra-curricular activity into the rather staid academia-speak that tends to fill these forums might have a salutary effect on the medium.)

But make no mistake; the grounds for a stand to be taken by students and faculty are found in UCLA faculty’s own statements. When a UCLA faculty member (an Emeritus professor) states that he will argue that another UCLA member has been made to pay with his academic career for “department error,” “professor and university disorganisation,” “and carelessness by whoever issues the dismissal notice (for their failure to verify the situation,” he is compelled by the University’s own mission statement to make that argument, to say nothing of his making the argument simply for the sake of keeping intact his own sense of ethics and (academic) responsibility to his fellow members both within and outside the University.

And when a UCLA Assistant Dean proclaims that “we [UCLA’s Graduate Division] cannot be expected to” verify the information used to terminate a student’s academic career, she’s most likely engaged in simple bald-faced lying, as surely as this university stakes its credibility and reputation (at least in rhetoric) on adherence to fact-finding and the verification of those facts.

Let us say that no student/faculty stand is provoked by these UCLA faculty/administration statements, but that at least word gets ’round enough so that a larger portion of the UCLA population knows that these faculty statements have been made. What happens then? The obvious—at least a few people start to inquire about the matter with basic questions directed to those UCLA members who claim to stand either in

support of the integrity of the institution itself (and their academic careers) or perhaps even in critical opposition to the processing machinery of higher education. (Needless to say, we do not go to the UCLA members who made the above statements, as they've already demonstrated their indifference to and/or contempt for the University, and all of its members.) Thus, the first such basic question directed to, say, a self-proclaimed "radical," "leftist" professor—as every university must have at least one to call its own—is, What should be done? or How should this matter be approached?

I've gone to such a professor within the GSE&IS itself and asked for his take on the matter and what might be done. After having informally mentioned the matter of my termination to his colleagues (upon my request), he stated to me that there was then nothing more that he could do. Like others, this professor is a very busy man (or so he told me in some detail), as he must travel around the world to be a lead speaker for radical causes (fomenting revolution in the minds of impressionable youth!), write "critical theory" books and articles for lefty journals raging against the Capitalist system and all its institutional underpinnings (universities included), sit on various thesis committees, conduct graduate level seminars, and still find time to tend to a self-promotional "radical" website and otherwise pitch his work to the appropriate market.

Continuing our communication, I suggested to him that perhaps I could simply make a brief presentation on the facts of my termination to his graduate seminar students during a break (10-15 min). I suggested that since his courses tend to attract students who speak of being interested in getting involved in progressive activism, this matter might provide a good entry (and being at UCLA, one rather close to home, as an added convenience). No, he responded, as there was simply too much work at hand, and he was already behind in his own presentations due to his global lecture tour (though he never did explain how my using time during a class break would take from his own class time). Of course, I could have asked him whether he asked his students if they would like to hear some facts on a graduate student termination that might interest them, but one isn't inclined to put

such an obvious question to a UCLA faculty member. Thus, the only reason he gave for not wanting the facts on my termination presented to his students was because he was too busy. From there, I went on to point out to him that a jam-packed academic schedule that prevents a professor (and his/her class) from setting aside a small amount of time to meet with a student (or former student) on the serious issues raised by the faculty/administration quotes I provided him works quite nicely to keep the university safe from challenges to its operations from within its own ranks. And while I told him that I was certainly not suggesting that the university intends as much, I remarked that it should be clear enough that the university is quite happy to have such an unintended consequence work to keep the university's operations out of sight and out of mind. I pointed out, too, that this business-as-usual state of affairs within the university is precisely how my termination can occur in the first place.

A better understanding of the position taken by this self-proclaimed radical professor can be had when we further examine some of the actual reasoning he put into his declining to present the facts of my termination to a wider audience. In the course of several discussions between us, in his explaining that he had now done all that he was able to do, he pointed out that I was only in one of his classes when I was in the GSE&IS, that our contact was limited, and that I “was an ex-student of [his] only in the context of that one class.” I responded with the dull observation that I’ve “never shared a prison cell with a death row inmate, but when my career position allows (indeed, requires) me to put forth the argument that an inmate has been put there out of error, disorganization, and carelessness, I do not make the repeated point to this inmate that ‘our contact has been limited’ and that a prison cell ‘context’ must figure into my reasoning, as “limited contact” and the “context” within a prison cell have absolutely no bearing at all on the argument. Indeed, one necessarily wonders how much (revolutionary) work he intends to do when the actual contact he has had with the vast majority of his stated global audiences amounts to absolutely zero. That is, in their requests for his actual work, does he really attempt to soften his rejections by offering them his reasoning that his contact

with these people has been limited and that they are “ex-students” only in the context of that one audience? A ten-year-old child knows self-excusing hogwash when he hears it.

It is important to bear in mind that I put the matter of my termination and the accompanying faculty statements to this particular professor simply because he’s long been rather loud in his radical dress (and a visit to his website says as much). And I made this clear to him; i.e., I wasn’t coming to him because I had taken one of his classes and/or because we had had some contact. I told him that since he professes to be taking seriously issues of illegitimate authority and abuses of institutionalized power, it is for he and professors like him to have my advisor’s argument be made, for when this argument exists, and neither the university nor its professors insist that it be made, we’re no longer dealing with either, at least as they so often (and so publicly) define themselves.