

Final Report

MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance

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Final Report



MLA AD HOC COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY AND TOLERANCE

BACKGROUND AND CHARGE OF THE COMMITTEE

The Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance was formed in response to a motion passed by the Delegate Assembly in 1999 calling for the reconstitution of what had been the Task Force against Campus Bigotry. The new committee was to be charged with “working to establish a climate in which all students, faculty, and other college employees, no matter what their religion, race, ethnic identity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or disability status, can work, learn, and develop together in harmony” (“Minutes” 414). In the final report of the Task Force against Campus Bigotry, Jacqueline Jones Royster stated:

[W]e experienced a growing discomfort with the title of the task force, that is, the Task Force against Campus Bigotry. In short order, we realized that we were much more concerned about conceptualizing issues, problems, and solutions in positive rather than negative terms, that is, in terms of what we are trying to accomplish rather than just what we are trying to prevent. We preferred to be a task force focused less on keeping bigotry out than on keeping tolerance in. We affirmed that our interests were not in suppressing bigotry, as it were, but in establishing an environment in which acts of bigotry can neither thrive nor survive. (MLA Task Force 222)

Accordingly, the Executive Council, at its May 2001 meeting, established the Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance to further the work of the Task Force against Campus Bigotry. The title of this committee reflects the concern of the predecessor body that a proactive and positive effort is needed to create a climate of acceptance and respect that will enable students, faculty members, and staff members of institutions

of higher learning to function harmoniously, a climate in which inevitable disagreements will be aired with respect and civility.

Another very important part of the background history of this committee is the creation of a statement entitled “Advice for Combating Bigotry and Fostering Respect in the Academic Community,” by the MLA Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities. This statement, written at the recommendation of the Task Force against Campus Bigotry, is addressed to instructors and administrators. Offering suggestions for teaching strategies and dealing with incidents of bigotry in the classroom as well as problems that may arise between colleagues, between instructors and students, or between instructors and members of office staff, this document has been included in the *ADE Bulletin* entitled *The Chair’s Reference*. The statement notes that individual colleges ought to have policies, rules, and procedures to protect students, faculty members, and staff members from acts of discrimination and harassment but cites many examples where individual judgment on the part of faculty members and administrators is needed to “foster the free exchange of ideas and to model the exercise of mutual respect, as these form necessary conditions for effective learning” (103).

With a grateful regard for the valuable work done by the previous Task Force against Campus Bigotry and the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities, the members of the present Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance considered the following charge:

1. to review the literature relating to ethnic and racial incidents on campus with an eye to determining what is known about how institutions and members of their faculties resolve conflicts
2. to review the literature relating to education in language, writing, and literature for diverse groups of students, with an eye to calling attention to what is effective
3. to create convention sessions where MLA members exchange ideas and information about the topics the committee is studying
4. to consult the members of the Coalition on the Academic Workforce regarding possibilities for cooperation or collaboration on these issues
5. to make recommendations regarding constructive policies and practices for the MLA and for colleges and universities
6. to write a report presenting the results of the committee’s activities and its findings with regard to the topics outlined above

HOW THE COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY AND TOLERANCE ADDRESSED THE CHARGE

At our first meeting, on 9 May 2002, we discussed what our predecessors on the Task Force against Campus Bigotry had done and decided to accept

the definition of bigotry applied to an academic setting as it appears in the final report of this group:

Bigotry is an attitude resulting from unexamined stereotypes by which certain groups are stigmatized on the basis of ascribed common characteristics and leading to words and/or actions that create a hostile or intimidating environment. The consequences of bigotry are to impede the free exchange of ideas and the application of scholarly standards to the discussion of controverted issues, to erode the mutual respect for differences that should undergird academic discourse, and to exclude members of the academic community from full participation in campus life.

(MLA Task Force 223)

As we discussed this definition and the types of searches mandated in the committee's charge, we realized that there was a tension between points 1 and 2 since the first focused on "ethnic and racial" differences while the second referred to the broader "diverse groups of students." After deliberating on this difference in emphasis, the committee decided that its charge included diversity in the following areas: race, class, ethnicity, linguistic difference, religion, sexual orientation, gender, and disability; we agreed that a review of existing literature discussing bias against people on the basis of these categories would be helpful.

Another point of discussion at our first meeting was our awareness of the semantic shift that had taken place in the movement from a task force against campus bigotry to an ad hoc committee on diversity and tolerance: As Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, who served both on our committee and on the preceding task force, noted, we were moving away from opposing what we were against and toward promoting what we were for. Garland-Thomson had earlier addressed the issue of tolerance with respect to disability studies: "Tolerance is an ethical objective most of us would support as a broadly informing principle of literary and language studies" (18). But, as her article makes clear—and as we in our discussions on the subject concurred—mere "tolerance" can sometimes suggest a negative quality, a putting up with difference rather than affirming, respecting, and celebrating it.

With these issues informing our deliberations, the committee laid out the following strategies:

- ongoing communication with MLA standing committees dealing with concerns similar to ours
- outreach to the general membership of the MLA through the *Newsletter*, sessions at the annual convention, and other mechanisms available that will help us in gathering information about concerns of the membership on these issues and disseminating information and actions taken by our committee

- study of the available literature including but not limited to *Academe*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, publications issued by colleges and universities, and materials relevant to promoting understanding among different groups on college campuses provided by the American-Arab Anti-Defamation Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and other groups, with a view toward extracting the most valuable strategies and communicating them to the membership of the MLA
- searching the literature on pedagogical strategies for teaching multiethnic literature in order to provide the MLA membership with methods that support the inclusion and celebration of multicultural literature in the curriculum
- formulating and communicating strategies that inculcate inclusion of and sensitivity to literary works reflecting the concerns of people who may face prejudice and discrimination because of their gender or sexual orientation, disability status, ethnicity, race, religion, or socioeconomic background
- inquiring about diversity guidelines and practices on our home campuses and on other campuses where effective and original strategies have emerged, in order to share these with the MLA membership
- creating case studies of specific situations that have occurred on college campuses, with a view to pointing out positive actions that were taken or might have been taken to promote a positive climate of respect and acceptance

COMMITTEE ACTIONS: COMMUNICATIONS IN THE *NEWSLETTER*, CONVENTION SESSIONS, RESEARCH, AND CASE STUDIES

Articles on the Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance appeared in the Fall 2002 and Summer 2003 issues of the *MLA Newsletter* (resp., “Committee” and “Ad Hoc Committee”) to explain the committee’s work and to invite members of the MLA to communicate with the committee regarding their challenges and their successes in promoting an atmosphere of tolerance and respect on their campuses. The committee also arranged four convention sessions. The first, chaired by Garland-Thomson at the 2002 convention in New York, was entitled “Promoting Diversity and Tolerance on College Campuses after 9/11/01: Theory and Practice.” The speakers were Laraine Fergenson of the ad hoc committee; Barbara Foley, professor of English at Rutgers University, Newark; and Jeffrey Ross, director of Campus / Higher Education Affairs of the Anti-Defamation League. The session, which was lively and well attended, provoked very sharp discussion from the audience. Ross discussed anti-Semitic posters recalling the medieval blood libel against the Jews, which had been prevalent on a college campus (see case study 2 below). Foley presented a Marxist analysis of racism as meeting the needs of capitalism and warned that too much emphasis on tolerance could mask the structural basis of racism in our society. Fergenson spoke on strategies that college administrations could follow that would attempt to anticipate and

avoid confrontations or to heal rifts when they occur. She emphasized a strategy termed the blue ribbon campaign.

At the 2003 MLA convention in San Diego, Fergenson chaired a session entitled “Teaching Tolerance: Combating Bigotry.” Speakers were Patricia Pollock Brodsky, of the University of Missouri, Kansas City; Tina Yih-Ting Chen, of Vanderbilt University; and Amy E. Koritz, of Tulane University. Brodsky spoke on continuing efforts to counter hatred against minorities after 9/11/01 that involved helping Islamic students organize forums and teach-ins and enlisting the aid of local community leaders and members of the press. Chen gave an overview of the Diversity Initiatives at Vanderbilt University, which provided a great deal of institutional support that involved creating new courses and arranging collaborations among faculty members, students, administrators, and community activists. Koritz addressed the session about her work with the director of multicultural affairs and the director of community service to develop a course that integrates literary study with tools for action in a multicultural community.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance arranged two sessions for the 2004 convention in Philadelphia: “Teaching Tolerance: Combating Bigotry,” chaired by Fergenson, and “Understanding Structural Racism in the Fight against Bigotry: A Literary Perspective,” chaired by Finley Campbell.

Members of the committee submitted resolutions in response to campus problems arising after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and reflecting the ongoing violence in the Middle East, which has affected many colleges across the United States and in Canada. These resolutions were adopted by the Delegate Assembly and subsequently ratified by the membership of the MLA. (See Resolution 2001-2 at www.mla.org/membership/governance/mla_resolutions/2001_resolutions; see Resolution 2002-1 at www.mla.org/membership/governance/mla_resolutions/2002_delegate_assemb.)

We were fortunate to have very valuable help from our MLA staff liaisons, who provided us with lists of articles and Web sites on diversity in higher education and of position papers—recommending practices in, policies for, and guidelines on diversity and tolerance, English and language arts, affirmative action, minority issues, and curricular content—formulated by organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English and the Association of American Colleges and Universities and by bodies within professional organizations dedicated to protecting the rights of specific minority groups, such as the Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists and the Cultural Diversity Committee of the College Art Association. We also consulted the materials and Web sites of civil rights organizations such as the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Commit-

tee, the Anti-Defamation League, the NAACP, and the Southern Poverty Law Center to help us understand the challenges that we face in attempting to address many and varied problems of discrimination, incivility, and even threatening situations on many campuses. Like the preceding Task Force against Campus Bigotry, we felt a sense of urgency as we contemplated the enormity of the issues facing us and the probability of great harm and pain being inflicted on students victimized by bigotry and discrimination at institutions of higher learning, where they have a right to encounter respect and openness. On the other hand, as we explored the vast literature involving responses to intolerance on college campuses and listened to those who presented what they had learned from their personal efforts in programs and coalitions aimed at promoting diversity and tolerance, it was also possible to find encouragement and hope.

From the outset it was clear that our ad hoc committee was not to be a policing body but was formed for the purposes of gathering and disseminating information about successful strategies and programs. We also determined at our second meeting (after having had an opportunity to review and discuss the efforts in progress on many campuses) that given the different situations and circumstances of various campuses and given their varied histories and challenges, rather than formulate a general “best practices” list we would do better to study particular scenarios with a view to examining what had occurred and what the college community had done to meet the situation. Although it is fair to say that the controversies examined were, in some cases, so severe and vitriolic as to constitute crises and that not every issue discussed below has been resolved, the effort and the real progress made were commendable as students, faculty members, and administrators faced the challenges presented to them and recognized the responsibilities incumbent on them as members of an academic community. In some cases, the controversies led to the formation of new coalitions and brought together groups that had previously not communicated, illustrating that in the aftermath of a crisis lie opportunities for examination, growth, and affirmation.

The three case studies below illustrate the difficulties in balancing the varying views of different groups in the academic community and the ways in which the views and conflicts of the larger society may create and exacerbate conflicts on campus.

Case Study 1. Academic Freedom: The Qur'an Controversy at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

In 2002 the summer reading committee of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, which is composed of students, faculty members, and administrators, selected *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelation*, by

Michael Sells, a professor of comparative religion at Haverford College, as the summer reading assignment for incoming freshmen. In July 2002, the Family Policy Network (FPN), a “socially conservative Christian organization that works to educate Christians and confront the culture on the important moral issues of the day” (Ashburn and Thigpen 1), accused the university of attempting to indoctrinate its new students in Islam. The FPN recruited three UNC students to join it in a lawsuit to have the assignment eliminated. In addition, the FPN lobbied the North Carolina state legislature to remove state funding for the summer reading program at the university, alleging that the university was using state funds to impose the Islamic religion on students, in violation of the establishment clause of the United States Constitution. The United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit denied the lawsuit in August 2002, and the reading assignment went ahead as planned, but the Carolina Summer Reading Program revised its requirements, stating, “Although the summer reading is required, if any students or their families are opposed to reading parts of the Qur’an because to do so is offensive to their own faith, they may choose not to read the book. These students should instead complete their one-page response on why they chose not to read the book” (*Carolina*).

Though Chancellor James Moeser and the rest of the university administration offered immediate and unqualified support for both the summer reading program and Sells’s book, the sixteen-campus University of North Carolina Board of Governors (BOG) was not so quick to respond positively. After debating a resolution on academic freedom for a 9 August 2002 vote, the BOG did not vote in favor of the resolution. BOG Vice Chairwoman Teena Little said the vote failed because “proper procedure was not followed when proposing and considering the resolution.” She also indicated that the reason the resolution may not have passed was its possible impact on future funding: “It could have had an impact with some of our folks,” Little said. “None of us want to anger the people that hold our purse strings” (Ashburn and Thigpen 1).

On 12 August 2002 the UNC Faculty Council unanimously passed a resolution similar to the one the BOG had not approved. Academic institutions around North Carolina also rallied to the support of the university. The faculty senates at both North Carolina State University and Meredith College passed resolutions in support of academic freedom. Duke University President Nan Keohane lent her support to the UNC faculty resolution. Other campus groups also endorsed the summer reading choice. On 12 August the Campus Ministers Association at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, adopted a supportive statement, and the Student Congress also passed a resolution in support of academic freedom. By late

August, the BOG Educational Planning and Policies Committee unanimously voted in favor of a new resolution that supported academic freedom. The resolution passed at a full board meeting in early September, essentially ending the controversy. (See the text of the resolution at www.northcarolina.edu/content.php/bog/minutes/2002/2002_9.htm.)

Case Study 2. Students' Rights to Free Expression and Physical Safety: The Conflict at San Francisco State University

In May 2002, a confrontation between pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian demonstrators erupted on the campus of San Francisco State University. Laurie Zoloth, then head of the Jewish Studies Program at SFSU, described the event in a vivid account that was widely circulated on the Internet and cited in many publications. According to Zoloth, students in the SFSU chapter of the Hillel Organization planned a "Peace in the Middle East" rally. The students wore new Hillel shirts that said "peace" in English, Hebrew, and Arabic and had invited community supporters. After the rally, about fifty people remained to clean up and conduct a prayer service when they were surrounded by a threatening group of counterdemonstrators. Zoloth wrote:

They screamed at us to "go back to Russia" and they screamed that they would kill us all, and other terrible things. . . . As the counter-demonstrators poured into the plaza, screaming at the Jews to "Get out or we'll kill you" and "Hitler didn't finish the job," I turned to the [campus] police and to every administrator I could find and asked them to remove the counter-demonstrators from the plaza, to maintain the separation of 100 feet that we had been promised. The police told me that they had been told not to arrest anyone, and that if they did, "it would start a riot." I told them that it already was a riot.

Eventually, the San Francisco police were called; they conducted the pro-Israeli group to the campus Hillel House and guarded the door. As Zoloth describes it,

. . . the police could do nothing more than surround the Jewish students and community members who were now trapped in a corner of the plaza, grouped under the flags of Israel, while an angry, out of control mob, literally chanting for our deaths, surrounded us. . . . This was neither free speech nor discourse, but raw, physical assault.

The president of SFSU, Robert Corrigan, responded to the incident with a letter addressed to the campus, in which he charged "a small but terribly destructive number of pro-Palestinian demonstrators, many of whom were not SFSU students" with "intimidating behavior and statements too hate-filled to repeat" (Radler).

According to an account in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Corrigan said that “campus police had videotaped the rally and the clash that followed, and that officers were reviewing the tapes to identify possible student violators who might be subjected to disciplinary procedures such as warnings, suspension or expulsion” (St. John).

The pro-Palestinian students protested that Corrigan’s letter was unfair to them and that generally their concerns were ignored. They also stated that the pro-Israeli demonstrators had provoked the confrontation by using epithets such as “terrorist” and “camel jockey” (St. John) and that they were opposed to violence and bigotry. They issued an “Action Alert,” which read in part:

On May 7th, 2002, pro-Palestinian students at San Francisco State were intending to do an educational exhibit as a form of counter protest to a pro-Israel rally. When barricades were erected to enclose the students, . . . when police forces were brought onto campus and when RACIST slurs were hurled in their direction they began to chant.

The events of May 7th have fit into a continued pattern of discrimination perpetuated by the San Francisco State University (SFSU) Administration. They have made it extremely difficult for GUPS (General Union of Palestinian Students) to reserve rooms, to hold events and to express ourselves freely. Other student groups on campus do not have to jump the hurdles GUPS has to when planning an event. We have been labeled and stereotyped as aggressive terrorists by our own administration. Instead of representing us, it seems as though they are working against us, trying to find any way to suppress our voices and the pro-Palestinian movement on campus. In lieu of the events on May 7th, President Corrigan has released a statement that is one sided and unfair. He along with others on campus, in their attempts to suppress our voices and take away from the Palestinian movement, is attempting to label us anti-Semites and hate mongers.

Unfortunately, they are sadly mistaken. We stand firmly against anti-Semitism and all other forms of racism. *(Action)*

Zoloth, for her part, expressed her view that the threats on 7 May resulted from a long history of anti-Semitic rhetoric at SFSU:

I cannot fully express what it feels like to have to walk across campus daily, past maps of the Middle East that do not include Israel, past posters of cans of soup with labels on them of drops of blood and dead babies, labeled “canned Palestinian children meat, slaughtered according to Jewish rites under American license,” past poster after poster calling out “Zionism = racism” and “Jews = Nazis.” This is not civic discourse, this is not free speech, and this is the Weimar Republic with brown shirts it cannot control. This is the casual introduction of the medieval blood libel and virulent hatred smeared around our campus in a manner so ordinary that it hardly excites concern—except if you are a Jew, and you understand that hateful words have always led to hateful deeds.

SFSU officials turned over videotapes campus police had made of the confrontation to the district attorney's office to check for possible hate-crime violations. The General Union of Palestine Students and allied groups lodged a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, United States Department of Education, alleging discriminatory behavior against the Arab/Muslim-American community of SFSU. In the wake of the clash, the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California sent a letter to President Corrigan, urging him and SFSU officials "to create an environment conducive to peaceful protest and education":

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, we are writing to express our concern over the events of May 7 at San Francisco State University. According to news accounts, the two demonstrations, expressing divergent positions on the Middle East situation, degenerated into a physically intimidating conflict. We have also heard that students are fearful, because they have experienced ethnic and religious harassment on campus, both at the demonstration and at other times. As an organization committed to principles of free speech and equality, we are writing to ask what steps the university has taken and plans to take to address these questions. . . . Faced with a demonstration and counter-demonstration, the university's obligation is to protect all participants by creating an adequate separation between the two sides and a fair opportunity to express their views on important political issues. . . .

We have also heard deeply disturbing accounts that some students feel so harassed and targeted because of their religious or ethnic backgrounds that they no longer feel welcome or even safe in an environment perceived as hostile and discriminatory. We understand that the university has cooperated with the District Attorney's office in reviewing tapes of the May 7 events for possible hate crimes violations. While criminal prosecution may be appropriate if the evidence documents violations of California's civil rights laws, the criminal justice system cannot create a safe, welcoming and tolerant learning environment at San Francisco State. That must come from the administration, faculty, and, ultimately, the students. It is important that the university take positive action to address ethnic and religious tension on campus. (ACLU)

The letter from the Northern California ACLU was eloquent and direct in pointing out the responsibilities of any university to promote a safe environment in which people of divergent views and backgrounds can coexist and learn together without fear. The ACLU's point that the administration must "take positive action" reinforces a view that has been articulated in our MLA sessions. The university should be a place where opposing groups can meet and discuss areas of concern. A hostile environment such as that created by posters targeting a particular ethnic and religious group is a flash point. Since we live in a nation that allows

freedom of speech, censorship is not the answer, but reasoned discussion with the mediation of faculty members and representatives from the college administration might have made students understand the harm in creating such an environment. As Michael Govern, former president of Columbia University, said in a similar context, “having the right, or freedom, or power to do something is the beginning of ethical inquiry, not the end of it. . . . ‘I have the right to do what I am doing’ is very different from ‘I am doing what is right.’ Many Americans miss that distinction” (“College Walk”). Similarly, in our discussions, members of the ad hoc committee spoke of the need to distinguish between what is illegal and what is merely unethical or uncivil.

The administration of SFSU established a special task force to address the issues that the incident had highlighted, and the reports of this group have been posted on the SFSU Web site (*President’s Task Force*). Its recommendations are comprehensive, imaginative, and sweeping, taking into consideration the need for civility in discourse and providing guidelines for future campus events in which students of different backgrounds could talk, work on projects together, and share aspects of their respective cultures. The aim of the SFSU task force is to help the university provide a safe, secure, and welcoming campus environment and to encourage communication and harmonious interaction among students of different backgrounds and views. The recommendations are admirable, and one can only regret that such a crisis was necessary to elicit them and that these measures were not taken earlier. Nevertheless, the SFSU task force’s reports exist now, and perhaps the dissemination and implementation of the task force’s ideas may help prevent future problems not only at SFSU but on other campuses as well.

Case Study 3. Tensions between Freedom of the Press and Avoiding the Promulgation of Bigotry: The Student Newspaper Controversy at Brown University

In March 2001 a student editor at Brown University agreed to run a full-page ad opposing reparations for slavery and arguing “that rather than getting compensation, black Americans owe the country for the freedom and prosperity they enjoy” (Schemo A1). The ad was designed as part of a campaign by David Horowitz, a well-known conservative writer, to test the limits of free expression by provoking minority group members and those who sympathize with them. The response to such ads has been varied. Some newspaper editors have refused to run them, including those at Harvard; Columbia; and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. At the University of California, Berkeley, the newspaper editor accepted the ad but after many protests printed an apology for allowing the paper to

be used as “an inadvertent vehicle for bigotry” (qtd. in Schemo A1). After the ad was accepted at the University of Wisconsin, one hundred students demanded the resignation of the editor (A1).

The content of the ad aroused feelings of anger and pain among Brown University students, who felt that it tended “to minimize the moral crime of slavery.” As one student expressed it, “we cannot sit down while blatant lies are being spread about us or our brothers and sisters who’ve watched their history be erased over and over” (qtd. in Schemo A17). Some students demonstrated against the publication of the ad by forming human chains. Students also demanded that \$725, the amount paid to run the ad, be donated to the Third World Student Coalition and that the paper allow the group “a free page of advertising space” to refute the arguments in the ad. When the editors refused, students removed stacks of the newspaper, which is given away for free, from distribution points (Schemo A17). The newspaper reprinted copies of the issue and sought help from the Providence police with its distribution a day later (*David Horowitz*).

In response to a *New York Times* article reporting the controversy at Brown, Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, wrote a letter to the editor that linked advertisements denying the Holocaust and Horowitz’s ad on slavery. He said that college editors who published such ads under the impression that the First Amendment “allows no alternative” were misled. He wrote:

In fact, college editors, like their professional counterparts, reserve the right to deny advertising based on a historical fallacy or that is explicitly offensive to a minority group.

The ad by David Horowitz denigrates slavery’s prominence in American history and denies the pain and suffering of African-Americans. Mr. Horowitz asserts that he voices legitimate questions about the need for slavery reparations. But his premise serves no purpose other than to foment racism and hate.

The Brown University chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, which published an account of the incident on its Web site, took a different view. It quoted the editor-in-chief as saying, “It’s not our place to decide which political views can be published in the paper. . . . We want to publish everyone’s views.” The Web site further stated, “The Brown ACLU commends the Brown *Daily Herald* for its integrity and commitment to the ideals of free speech and open discussion, embodied in its decision to run the controversial David Horowitz ad on March 13th.” It added:

. . . the ACLU firmly believes that the *Herald* not only has a right to publish what it wants, but in the interests of journalistic integrity should

be an open forum for opinions both liberal and conservative. Other students may disagree with the *Herald's* editorial and advertisement policies, but nobody has the right to forcibly silence the *Herald's* voice by stealing its newspapers from the Brown community. (*David Horowitz*)

The issue of an individual editor's rights and responsibilities with regard to the publication of material he or she deems false and inflammatory was discussed in an MLA session entitled "When Hate Groups Target Campus Newspapers" at the 2001 annual convention. Jeffrey Ross, one of the panelists, explained that hate groups such as those denying the Holocaust find college newspapers a relatively easy way to acquire publicity at little cost. Purchasing space in a college newspaper to promulgate Holocaust denial usually outrages the local community and may lead to protests that are then reported in the press beyond the campus, thus giving the groups who purchased the ads even wider publicity.

The *New York Times* article on the Brown University case cited Stanley Fish, dean of arts and sciences at the University of Illinois, Chicago, as comparing Horowitz's ad with those placed by Holocaust deniers. Fish felt that "student editors were confused if they believed they had an obligation to print any advertisements regardless of content" (Schemo A17). During the discussion period at the MLA session on student newspapers, it was similarly pointed out that college editors accepted the ads under a misunderstanding of the First Amendment, which protects the press against government censorship but does not require a newspaper to promulgate views its editors consider false and offensive. In fact, as was noted in the session, an editor who refuses to accept an ad is exercising his or her First Amendment right of refusal—a right not available to newspaper editors in Germany during the Nazi era, who were forced to print articles at the dictates of the totalitarian government.

Although the student newspaper at Brown University did not allow a free page to the Third World Student Coalition, it "expanded space for opinion articles the day after the incident" (Zhao). The College Republicans invited Horowitz to the campus to debate with Cliff Montiero, president of the Providence chapter of the NAACP but decided to rescind the invitation because of the fear of violence. Todd Auwarter, chair of the Rhode Island Federation of College Republicans, said, "we thought it would send a strong message for debate and dialogue and would hold Horowitz accountable for his ideas. . . . We wanted to have an intellectual debate, but many people have deep and intense emotional reactions to Horowitz and his ideas. . . . Inviting him may have placed students' safety at risk, and since we couldn't accept that, we rescinded his invitation" (qtd.

in Golodny). In response to the controversy, the Brown administration planned a series of campus events, and the director of the Third World Center announced, "We are going to be holding forums on race relations, conflict resolution and dialogues around campus in both small and large groups" (Golodny).

Eventually, in the fall of 2003, the Republicans again invited Horowitz to speak at Brown, and this time he addressed a large audience that included President Ruth Simmons, who had been inaugurated in the fall following the newspaper ad controversy. Horowitz attributes to her presence on campus "a change in the institutional environment at Brown," stating, "At her inauguration, Dr. Simmons had made an oblique reference to the reparations controversy [when she said] 'The protection of speech that is offensive or insulting to us is one of the most difficult, difficult things we do.'" After his talk, which was entitled "Academic Freedom: A Vanishing Ideal at Brown," Simmons objected to Horowitz's characterization of the college as "hostile to diverse intellectual viewpoints," and he acknowledged her point, saying, "if I had painted the faculty with such a broad brush, it was inadvertent, and also incorrect."

William L. Andrews, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Finley Campbell, DeVry Institute of Technology, Illinois
Laraine Ferguson, Bronx Community College, City University of New York
Keith Gilyard, Penn State University, University Park

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