

How the quest for diversity has empowered bureaucrats

# The Unholy Alliance of College Administrators and Left-Liberal Activists

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Benjamin Ginsberg

Contemporary political battles on America's college campuses seem quite puzzling. A half century ago, liberal college students and faculty were at the forefront of struggles for equal rights and freedom of expression. Today left-liberal and minority campus activists seem to have abandoned these goals in favor of an agenda in which free expression and racial integration are equated with political oppression. On several campuses, African American students have demanded the creation of all-black housing units. On quite a number of campuses, students have called for rules requiring professors to issue "trigger warnings" before they say something in class that might offend or upset anyone. The campus, student activists say, should be a "safe space" where no one is compelled to hear anything that might make them uncomfortable. Left-liberals carefully scrutinize campus discussions for evidence of the subtle forms of racism or sexism or other invidious *-isms* collectively known as "microaggressions" or "microinvalidations."

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It is important to understand that such concepts as safe spaces, microaggressions, and trigger warnings are not examples of the hypersensitivity of coddled college students as they are sometimes made out to be by the press. Instead, these ideas are designed to stifle free discussion and to block criticisms of left-liberal dogmas by declaring any and all questions about progressive political beliefs and their adherents to be illegitimate and intolerable. Even the mildest comment presenting a possible challenge to left-liberal orthodoxies will be labeled microaggressive, a threat to the safety of the campus and, accordingly, utterly impermissible. For example, the seemingly innocuous claim that “America is a land of opportunity” has been deemed a microaggressive or a microinvalidative allegation that racial minorities are unable to succeed because of their own shortcomings and not the institutional barriers designed to block their efforts. Hence, say politically progressive groups, the phrase should never be uttered on campus. So much for the idea that colleges are bastions of intellectual freedom.

Most college administrators seem reluctant to criticize left-liberal activists or coalitions of minority students, whatever they may do or say. On a few campuses, most notably the University of Chicago, where administrators recently declared that college should never be an intellectually safe space, college presidents have risen to the defense of intellectual freedom. On many campuses, though, administrators have forged what amount to tactical alliances with local activist groups and are unwilling to take issue with even the most outrageous claims voiced by campus progressives. Note the craven response of Yale’s administration to protests on that campus. The administration declined to come to the defense of two faculty members who were hounded by protestors after they had the temerity to speak up for free expression.

In the past two years, three schools—the University of California, Davis; California State University, Los Angeles; and the University of Connecticut—have acceded to the demands of organized groups of minority students and established black-only dormitories. At many colleges, administrators have canceled events and speakers to which left-liberal activists objected. For example, invited talks by conservative speaker Ben Shapiro, a critic of the Black Lives Matter movement, have recently been called off by two colleges after student activists objected. Administrators cited unspecified safety concerns as reasons for canceling the events. And a number of schools have adopted speech codes restricting forms of expression on the part of faculty and students thought to promote, to cite Oberlin’s Office of Equity Concerns, “racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, cissexism, ableism and other forms of privilege and oppression.”

### *The totalizing impact of Title IX*

Since it was not so long ago that campus presidents responded to the legitimate grievances of minority groups and liberal activists by calling the police, it is fascinating to observe and seek to understand what several observers have now noted as the sympathy shown for these same groups by university administrators today.

One factor, of course, has been the creation of a bureaucratic structure that works to promote a left-liberal agenda. As in the case of Oberlin, virtually every college has established an office whose mission is said to be the promotion of equal rights and the prevention of racism and sexism on campus. Creation of these offices was prompted by regulations and letters of guidance from the U.S. Department of Education under Title IX of the 1972 Higher Education Act and other pieces of legislation. Title IX out-



*The Duke University case was a cautionary tale*

laws discrimination by educational institutions receiving public funds. As interpreted by the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights and the courts, Title IX has been defined to hold schools liable when their actions or failure to take action helped to bring about an environment that was hostile or harassing to women, members of minority groups, or other persons.

The administrators who staff these offices often adhere to a standard of orthodoxy that would have been appreciated by their forebears at the Holy Office of the Inquisition. The chief diversity officer at Clark University recently advised students to avoid using the phrase "you guys" when addressing others. The phrase, she said, could be seen as excluding women. In 2016 a candidate for a position in the office of diversity and inclusion at Cornell caused a furor when, in a moment of weakness, he declared publicly that his goal would be to take account of the needs of *all* students. His prospective boss, the vice president for diversity and inclusion, was reportedly scandalized by this inappropriate (perhaps even microaggressive) comment.

Like bureaucrats of all stripes, equity

administrators are constantly on the lookout for opportunities to wield influence, secure larger budgets, and take on more staff. One way to accomplish these goals is through the promulgation of new rules that create new offenses to police and more potential offenders to investigate. Thus, for example, in 2015 the City University of New York's Title IX coordinator issued rules prohibiting the use of gender identifiers such as Mr. or Ms. in emails to students without prior knowledge of the students' gender self-identifications. Though nominally designed to prevent the college from inadvertently offending sensitive students, the rules had the potential to create an enormous amount of new business for the office of the Title IX coordinator. The University of Michigan adopted a similar rule in 2016.

And while the investigation of claims of matters such as rape and sexual harassment is extremely important, it seems that equity bureaucrats are often a bit too eager to find offenses where none existed. Solicitous and perhaps overzealous staffers allegedly played a role in encouraging the 2014 false rape claim made by "Jackie" (a pseudonym) at

the University of Virginia and publicized by *Rolling Stone* magazine. Indeed, the associate dean portrayed in the now-discredited *Rolling Stone* article as having *discouraged* Jackie from making her allegations actually strongly *encouraged* the young woman to bring charges and to identify other victims of rape at the fraternity house where she had falsely claimed to have been assaulted. Unfortunately, Department of Education guidelines promote such conduct on the part of college bureaucrats by effectively shifting the burden of proof from the accuser toward the accused in sexual harassment and sexual violence cases. The Department of Education has also encouraged schools to adopt restrictive speech codes, nominally to prevent even the tiniest hint of gender or racial harassment from affecting the campus.

### *Origins of the unholy alliance*

The activities of the equity police and the Department of Education constitute only part of the reason that America's colleges seem so friendly to left-liberal activism and so hostile to intellectual freedom. The rest of the story has to do with college presidents and other top campus officials. These worthies generally show considerable solicitude for campus activists. What accounts for this?

In some instances, perhaps, administrators themselves possess deep and abiding commitments to transformative social justice and support the same causes espoused by the minority and activist communities. Yale's late president Kingman Brewster was a leading example. Many university administrators, however, are dull bureaucratic functionaries whose main commitments involve planning the next conference or retreat. Others are opportunists, firmly focused on their own administrative careers. Rather than their own deep and abiding concern for

social justice, two other factors explain the cooperative stance that administrators typically adopt toward their campuses' liberal activists and minorities.

The first of these factors is, of course, a desire to protect themselves from criticism from the often vocal and vehement campus left. Since the 1960s, the campus left has been well organized and active, especially at major colleges and universities. Administrators have learned, through the application of repeated electric shocks, as it were, that a failure to pacify the liberal left can result in demonstrations, disturbances, and the potential destruction of administrative careers. During the 1960s and 1970s, university presidents who sought to battle campus protests, like Columbia's Grayson Kirk, saw their careers ruined, while those who learned to work with and placate militant forces, like a subsequent Columbia president, Michael Govern, had relatively uneventful presidencies.

Administrators who come into conflict with campus radicals or, for that matter, minority groups are, at the very least, likely to be labeled "controversial" and shunned by the search firms that hold the keys to new positions and promotions in the administrative world. Corporate head hunters will never touch a "controversial" individual, although such traits as indolence, ineptitude, and out-and-out stupidity are rarely disqualifications for career advancement in the field of higher education administration. The demands of the campus left, moreover, are seldom counterbalanced by conservative or moderate opinion. There are virtually no conservatives on leading campuses, while the moderate, liberal majority generally takes little or no part in university politics.

Take, for example, the now-infamous 2006 case of the three Duke lacrosse players falsely accused of raping an African American exotic dancer. Radical activists, though constituting only a small fraction of the Duke faculty, were outspoken in

their demands for summary punishment of the accused athletes even before the facts of the case were examined. The campus's more mainstream liberals were dubious about the allegations but generally remained aloof from the fray, reluctant to be seen as taking the side of privileged white students against a poor black woman. The university's president and other administrators, with the notable exception of the school's provost, shamelessly backed the outrageous claims of campus and community activists even after the case began to unravel publicly.

A desire to avoid clashes with vocal and well-organized college groups is only one reason administrators often find it expedient to maintain good relations with liberal activists and minority groups on their campuses. A second reason is that this alliance can, in several ways, help administrators bolster their own power and diminish that of "faculty governance." Because most professors are progressive in their political commitments, they are, as in the Duke case, unwilling to be seen as siding with putative oppressors against the oppressed. Hence, they are generally reluctant to oppose programs and proposals that are presented as efforts to foster campus equality, diversity, multiculturalism, and the like. At some point during the past several decades, cutting-edge administrators became aware of the political possibilities inherent in this situation and developed a model that others could imitate.

Put simply, university administrators will often package proposals designed mainly to enhance their own power on campus as altruistic and public-spirited efforts to promote social and political goals, such as equity and diversity, which the faculty cannot oppose. This tactic can succeed if and only if administrative proposals are endorsed by the school's political activists as well as spokespersons for the women's groups and various racial and ethnic groups that, together, constitute a self-appointed but effective political

board of censors on many campuses. For this reason, administrators view these coalitions of minorities and activists as important allies and frequently work to retain their support with symbolic and material rewards, including positions for spouses, funding for scholarly initiatives, and more released time for research and higher salaries than is received by other professors. Faculty in such programs as Gender and Sexuality Studies, for example, usually have more perks than students. At the same time, they can usually be counted on to support the campus administration in its various endeavors.

The political alliance between administrators and minorities and liberal activists, an alliance born in the turmoil of the 1960s, serves the interests of each of the parties and has become an important force at a number of colleges and universities. The most important expression of this alliance is the strong support shown in recent years by so many university presidents for affirmative action and other racial preferences in both graduate and professional school admissions.

### *The uses of diversity*

Most colleges and universities in the United States appear to be struggling to promote faculty diversity, that is, the hiring and retention of women and people of color as full-time professors. Usually led by the president and provost and other high-ranking officials, university administrators throughout the nation have declared diversity to rank among their institutions' very highest priorities. University of Rochester president Joel Seligman, for example, recently declared that faculty diversity was an institutional priority and a "fundamental value" of his university. The school adopted a thirty-one-point program to enhance the diversity of its tenured and tenure-track faculty. Like many other college leaders, Rochester's president

has appointed diversity officials, instituted procedures to ensure that diversity goals will figure prominently in faculty searches, and encouraged members of search committees to undergo “diversity training.” The officials of some schools have gone even further than their Rochester counterparts, mandating diversity training for those involved in searches and requiring that diversity officers be included in all faculty-search committees. Hundreds of schools have appointed “chief diversity officers,” with the authority to implement diversity plans. Still others have employed the services of one or another of the now-ubiquitous diversity consulting firms that will, for a hefty fee, help ensure that no possibilities are overlooked that could speed universities along the road to greater and greater diversity.

While diversity is an important goal, at first blush the current administrative full-speed-ahead drive to add underrepresented minorities and women to college faculties seems a bit off the mark. The simple, if unfortunate, fact of the matter is that in many fields there are few women and virtually no minority faculty available to be hired. In a recent year, only ten African Americans earned PhD degrees in mathematics and only thirteen in physics. Given these numbers, it might appear that the only way to bolster the presence of minority faculty in such fields would involve a long-term effort to identify and nurture math and science skills among talented minority secondary-school students. A crash program to hire minority scientists when none are being produced seems misguided, to say the least.

The bottom line is that, in some fields, professorial diversity cannot be achieved simply through university hiring processes, while in the humanities and social sciences, where women and minority applicants are actually available to be recruited, efforts to do so have been under way for a number of years and fairly successful. Why then have

university presidents, provosts, and other high-ranking officials suddenly, and somewhat belatedly, become outspoken diversity advocates, seemingly on a collective quest to change drastically the gender and racial balance of their faculties? The answer to this question has more to do with administrative interests than long-standing moral commitments.

To begin with, the diversity plan has become as important an assertion of administrative leadership as the strategic plan. For years college administrators have busied themselves writing strategic plans, vacuous and soon-forgotten documents used by administrators to assert leadership and to claim control over college resources and priorities. Today the diversity plan seems to be a more fashionable administrative tool. When they announce a bold new diversity plan, presidents and other top administrators are, in effect, averring that only they, and not department chairs or other campus luminaries, are capable of providing leadership in this important realm. An ambitious new diversity plan is likely to be endorsed by the school’s liberal activists and minority faculty and staff, particularly if the administration involves these groups in the planning process. Once liberal activists and minority representatives endorse the plan, faculty members who might have doubts about the administration’s ideas and intentions generally remain silent for fear of being seen as lacking proper enthusiasm for inclusivity. By wrapping themselves and their programs in the mantle of diversity, university presidents hope to broaden their base of support on the campus and to intimidate potential critics.

Diversity plans often have more than a symbolic significance. On many campuses, the quest for diversity has allowed administrators to intrude into and gain a greater measure of control over the faculty hiring process. Since the emergence of the tenure system, faculties, particularly at research

universities, have strongly resisted even the slightest intrusions by administrators into faculty autonomy in the realm of hiring. Typically, university departments have defined their own academic needs and, subject to budgetary approval, identified, interviewed, and hired professors to fill those needs. Efforts by administrators to intervene in the process were almost always firmly rebuffed.

Today, under the rubric of diversity, university administrators have been able to arrogate to themselves an ever-growing role in the faculty hiring process. The rationale for this administrative encroachment upon what had been a faculty domain is the idea that university departments are not well suited in terms of their own interests and sense of purpose to work diligently on behalf of diversity. According to one scholar, university departments assign too much weight to “their notion of quality, appropriate credentials, and scholarly research/productivity expectations.” The only solution to this departmental myopia is “leadership intervention” to set appropriate hiring standards and recruitment policies.

Such intervention has become the norm at a growing number of colleges and universities. At many schools, staffers from human resources or the diversity office play an active role in faculty searches. Some schools have moved beyond diversity training to require that all search plans be approved by diversity officials and that all search committees include human resources or diversity staffers as voting members. At one large community college in the South, for example, human resources and diversity staff screen all potential candidates for faculty positions before they can be interviewed by the search committee. At a Midwestern state college, human resources personnel organize all faculty search committees. At one Southern college, a human resources equal-opportunity staffer serves as a member of every search com-

mittee, and at a Midwestern state college an “inclusion advocate” is assigned to every search committee by the human resources department. At the University of California, Berkeley, where the faculty resisted the idea of including human resources staffers on search committees, the Faculty Equity Office moved to train students, who often had a role in faculty hiring, to serve as the office’s de facto agents on search committees.

All this effort might have some value if it demonstrably resulted in enhanced faculty diversity. But “inclusion advocates” and the like cannot make up for the absence of minority PhDs in some fields and offer little or no improvement over the faculty’s own efforts in others. Diversity campaigns do produce an increase in the number of diversity officials, which, by administrative logic, might in and of itself be seen as evidence of a more diverse campus. Such campaigns, however, cannot produce minority physicists and mathematicians. Administrators and diversity consultants, groups with short time horizons, appear to have little interest in the longer-term efforts that might actually produce minority physicists and mathematicians, dismissing the idea that such programs might be effective as “an insidious myth.”

While they do not produce much actual diversity, administrative diversity campaigns have, in fact, given university officials a tool with which to attack the autonomy of the faculty recruitment and promotion process and, perhaps, the tenure system itself. My own school’s Commission on Civility Equity and Respect, created by the president to promote diversity, recommended, among its other goals, mandatory diversity education for search committees and that faculty performance evaluations include an assessment of professors’ “contribution to diversity.” And, to promote diversity, it encouraged university administrators to review “current policies on promotion and time related assessment of employment,” that is, the tenure system.

*Speech and civility codes*

Much the same story can be told about campus speech and civility codes. Hundreds of colleges and universities have enacted codes proscribing forms of speech and conduct that might be seen as offensive or hostile by particular groups or designed to intimidate or harass individuals based on their racial, religious, social, gender, or other characteristics. Administrators sometimes justify these codes by asserting the questionable claim that they are required by federal law. They allege that failure to promulgate a speech or conduct code might leave a school open to lawsuits, under federal employment or equal opportunity laws, by individuals alleging that the institution had failed in its duty to prevent the development of a hostile or harassing environment.

Contemporary civility and harassment codes claim to ban speech and behavior that might be deemed hostile or harassing. Thus, for example, the University of Miami prohibits “any words or acts . . . which cause or result in physical or emotional harm to others, or which intimidate, degrade, demean, threaten, haze or otherwise interfere with another person’s rightful actions or comfort.” Similarly, the University of Pennsylvania’s new code prohibits “any behavior, verbal or physical, that stigmatizes or victimizes individuals on the basis of race, ethnic or national origin . . . and that has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual’s academic or work performance, and/or creates an intimidating or offensive academic, living or work environment.” The University of Iowa’s harassment code declares that sexual harassment “occurs when somebody says or does something sexually related that you don’t want them to say or do.” My own school’s civility code declares that “rude, disrespectful behavior is unwelcome and will not be tolerated.”

Though nominally grounded in employ-

ment and education law, civility and harassment codes enacted by public universities have not fared well in the courts when schools have attempted to apply them in disciplinary settings rather than merely trumpet them as aspirations. In the educational context, true harassment was defined by the Supreme Court in the case of *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education* as conduct “so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively bars the victim’s access to an educational opportunity or benefit.” The expression of words, symbols, or views that someone finds offensive is not harassment. Rather, it is constitutionally protected speech. Accordingly, judges have tended to see civility and harassment codes as efforts to circumvent the First Amendment and have found them to be unconstitutional when their application has been challenged. A federal judge in Pennsylvania, for example, recently ordered Shippensburg University to stop enforcing a provision of its code that declared “the expression of one’s beliefs should be communicated in a manner that does not provoke, harass, intimidate or harm another.”

Despite their poor record in the courts, many public universities continue to promulgate civility and harassment codes and endeavor to punish students and faculty who violate them. When students or faculty members are disciplined under even the most patently unconstitutional code, they, of course, bear the burden of time, money, effort, and anguish associated with vindicating their rights in court. For example, a group of San Francisco State students recently was threatened with disciplinary action under the school’s harassment code when it held an antiterrorism protest that included stepping on images of the flags used by Hamas and Hezbollah, two organizations officially classified as terrorist groups by the United States government. After a complaint from Muslim students, the antiterrorism protestors were charged with “attempting to create a hostile



environment” and “incivility” in violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Political protest and flag desecration—even of the American flag—are certainly First Amendment rights, but the students were subjected to five months of hearings until threatened action by a civil libertarian group led the school to drop its charges. Without external intervention, the students would very likely have been sternly punished for their constitutionally sanctioned protest. Private colleges and universities, after all, are generally not bound by the First Amendment and have broad leeway to discipline students and faculty under their civility and harassment codes.

Parallel to the case of diversity, college administrators view the regulation of speech less as a philosophical issue than a matter of political expediency. They will attempt to block speech they view as threatening to themselves or their allies while defending all speakers whose views are supported by vocal campus constituencies. The Duke University administration, for example, shut down a professor’s website after the faculty member posted an article calling for a strong military response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The website had been condemned by campus activists and Islamic groups. On the other hand, when the Palestine Solidarity Movement announced it would hold its annual conference at Duke, administrators responded to objections from Jewish and conservative organizations by strongly affirming their support for the “principle of free expression.” At the ensuing conference, speakers predictably denounced Zionism and the Jews and praised suicide bombers. One speaker declared that every Jewish wedding, Passover celebration, and Bar Mitzvah represented a potential military target. Duke administrators congratulated themselves for having struck a blow for free speech. “It’s a good thing we did here,” said the university’s vice president for public affairs.

As in the case of the quest for faculty diversity, speech and civility codes reflect the tacit alliance that has emerged between university administrators and activist and minority groups on the campus. The latter have sought speech, diversity, and civility codes to block racist, sexist, or homophobic expression and, in the case of Muslim students, criticisms of Islam. African American student groups are especially eager to silence criticism of affirmative action programs and preferential racial admissions policies, viewing such criticisms as illegitimate attacks on their very presence on the campus.

Campus administrators are anxious to avoid trouble from vocal and sometimes militant forces. Increasingly, administrators have also come to see speech and civility codes as management tools that might help them intimidate or silence critics and gadflies on the faculty. Examples are both numerous and increasing in number. During the spring of 2008, Brandeis University administrators overrode a finding by the faculty’s Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities (CFRR) in the case of Donald Hindley, a long-time and somewhat cantankerous political science professor who had been accused of racial harassment by an anonymous student in his Latin American politics class. The accuser averred that Hindley had used the term “wetback” to refer to illegal immigrants from Mexico. Hindley asserted, in response, that he had employed the term during a historical discussion as an example of the racist invective to which Mexican immigrants had been subjected. University officials seemed to have little or no interest in determining exactly what was said in Hindley’s class. Instead, they quickly sided with campus activists and treated the episode as an opportunity to take a strong public stand against racism and discriminatory conduct, and an opportunity to be rid of another gadfly. The university’s provost assigned human resources staffers to conduct

a brief investigation, sent a staffer to monitor Hindley's classes, and threatened the professor with termination if he failed to modify his classroom conduct.

In a similar vein, in 2015, Marquette University sought to revoke the tenure of Professor John McAdams, who in a blog post had criticized the instructor of a philosophy course for telling a student that it was inappropriate to express opposition to same-sex marriage in class. The instructor told the student that some in the class might be offended by his views. Marquette suspended McAdams and barred him from class, claiming that he represented a threat to student safety. Ironically, Marquette is a Jesuit school that is surely officially opposed to same-sex marriage. Still, the college administration, apparently not troubled by minor matters of Catholic dogma, saw an opportunity to be rid of their persistent critic McAdams.

In 2016, Northwestern University political science professor Jacqueline Stevens was barred from campus nominally on the grounds that her presence raised safety concerns for some of her colleagues. Stevens is a long-time critic of university administrators, whom she has accused of inappropriate corporate ties. She had also been among the most vocal opponents of Northwestern's plan to appoint retired General Karl Eikenberry to head a new global studies institute on the Evanston campus. Stevens made the mistake of questioning the validity of spousal and diversity hires at Northwestern, ostensibly frightening sensitive colleagues and making herself vulnerable to harassment charges.

### *Consequences of the unholy alliance*

The alliance between administrators and campus activists would be a bizarre political curiosity if it were not so damaging to America's colleges and universities. Allowing left-liberal activists to have their way

on college campuses threatens to transform an institution that had once stood for free expression and the critical examination of all ideas into a restrictive "safe space" ruled by a new thought police. Allowing administrators to have their way on college campuses is damaging in a slightly different way. When governed by the faculty, colleges tend to develop curricula that are exciting and challenging, as well as research agendas that have changed the world. From the perspective of administrators, however, only the fiscal bottom line matters. The curriculum is evaluated not from an intellectual perspective but from its capacity to bring paying customers to the store. Coming at it from different perspectives, administrators and campus activists seem to have found common ground in the safe space of intellectual mediocrity through consumer sensitivity.

This alliance is unlikely to collapse any time soon. Administrators and campus activists have much to gain from supporting one another. And both can rely on a phalanx of Title IX regulations by the Department of Education to stifle any faculty or student dissent that might arise. Critics can easily find themselves charged with some trumped-up Title IX violation certain to upend their lives for months. At Northwestern, for example, film professor Laura Kipnis was charged with a Title IX violation, namely creating a hostile environment, after a student complained about an article Kipnis published criticizing university policies governing sexual misconduct. Kipnis was cleared, but only after a lengthy hearing and a seventy-two-day investigation by Northwestern authorities. Under the kangaroo-court rules used in Title IX hearings, the accused individual is not entitled to an attorney but may bring a designated "faculty support person." It seems, however, that supporting the accused is as risky as providing legal defense to the regime's opponents in North Korea. The member of the Faculty Senate who attended

the hearing to support Kipnis was, as a consequence, charged with a Title IX violation and forced to undergo an investigation for his role in the matter. Apparently only campus activists and their allies are entitled to safe spaces.

Certainly, the masked protestors who violently confronted distinguished conservative scholar Charles Murray at Middlebury College in March 2017 seemed only to believe in safe spaces for themselves. Protestors who disagreed with Murray's published views

asserted that allowing him to speak would represent a "flawed notion" of free speech and employed physical violence to prevent him from completing his invited address to a student group. And, as is only too typical, college administrators turned a blind eye to criminal conduct and joined in criticizing Murray's views—while hardly bothering to affirm his right to be heard. Middlebury president Laurie Patton seemed to sum up the matter when she said, "Allow me to state the obvious. We are a left-leaning campus." †

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## Walking Through Thibodaux

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David Middleton

When we came here some forty years ago  
I'd jog the bayou road in rain and sun—  
Often to jeers—and had to dodge or slow  
When drivers hurled pop bottles just for fun.

But then young doctors set up in the town  
And got potbellied patients on a track  
Or walking trail to bring their weight back down  
And ward off early stroke or heart attack.

So now we greet each other when we meet  
At dusk or dawn our headbands dropping sweat  
On soaked-through tee shirts,  
then to quickened feet  
That speed us toward our goal  
of health, and yet . . .

What is the final end toward which we move,  
Both sick and well, whether we will or no?  
A fate whose nature none of us can prove  
But into whose vast trackless realm we go?

May be. Yet still we walk along and gaze  
Amazed by dazzling pageants of the skies,  
This ordered chaos, star trails set ablaze  
Toward which the aster blossoms while it dies.

And so, perhaps, we sojourn after all—  
Though worlds like glass may  
shatter, demons jeer—  
Toward Love, the Great Physician, who will call  
Our hearts to health beyond each sweated tear.