

# ADVICE and DISSENT

#14

7 November 1968

A Semi-Publication for the *live* Faculty of San Diego State College

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## ON WHAT "THE BOSS" SAID

As a new faculty member of San Diego State, what the Chancellor of the California State College system has to say in his interview in *U.S. News and World Report*, "Campus Violence--Crackdown Coming," makes my heart sink to my shoes. The presentation of so-called "obscene" works (e.g., the art exhibit at L.A. State), the demonstrations of student groups like S.D.S., the dissent of some professors, and all Dumke calls "anarchistic," worries our Chancellor. He feels that these things will provoke an "outraged citizenry" to suppress college freedom. I too am worried. But he then goes on to propose that the colleges find a way to police *themselves*.

"We must find," he says, "new answers to our problems of governance." But do we--the students and faculty--have the problems? It seems to me the "problems" are those of an "outraged citizenry" in reaction to the academic community that would criticize it, and if Dumke were for the academic community, he would not be asking us to censor and restrain *ourselves*; he would not be asking us to behave ourselves lest the Yahoos get upset. When he says that he is for "constructive" criticism and asks that we limit academic freedom in order to preserve it, he is certainly resorting to dodges that should be transparent to all of us by now--all of us but the "citizenry" reading *U.S. News and World Report*. That is, he is not even talking to us, but to *them*. He is, indeed, stirring up that mob-fanning reaction. And when he argues for "an academic atmosphere of stability and peace," he is clearly arguing for an end to all dissent, all art, and all learning that is not "constructive" according to the values of those whom such dissent, art, and learning oppose; he is really employing euphemisms for intellectual deadness and the prostration of the young. All intellectual activity that may "disrupt the establishment" must in his eyes be forbidden *by the academic community itself*.

"We're going to lose academic freedom," he says, "unless we are willing to think through the colleges' proper role in relation to society." This again is simply euphemism for saying that we had better knuckle down to the demands of society before the society makes us knuckle down. All scholars who *are* scholars already know the "Role" of colleges: to oppose and transcend the ideas of the *status quo*. The professor who breaks through old assumptions to a new discovery in physics or medicine and the professor who exposes the falsifications of history that are part of the official justification of a war are engaged in analogous activities; no wonder that Dumke, in wanting to suppress non-"constructive" dissent, also wants to curtail research in the interests of what he calls "teaching," for loyalty to a discipline rather than to an institution conceived as an apparatus of the needs of the *status quo*, loyalty to truth, makes a man not easy to control.

Academic freedom cannot be conceived of as a "role" to be played along with the "role" of war, a corporation, a police force, that is, as a co-operating part of the society that is. This was understood in medieval times; nineteenth century thinkers realized it when they said that merely to reflect on a social situation is to oppose it; it was what, over a hundred years ago, young Germans went into exile to preserve; and what, because of the German state, in our times, made many besides Marcuse and Duchamps go into exile because they exercised it. If the State expelled them from their buildings,



they wandered off with the *real* university. So when Dumke asks rhetorically, "How can the faculties, students, administrators, and trustees of a college or university system maintain academic freedom at a time when the freedom itself is being used by organized groups as a device to overturn the academic establishment?" he is only confusing us in what deep down any true professor of arts or sciences, anyone who has any part in him that is like Newton, Darwin, Schopenhauer, or even Ezra Pound, should know. Those who oppose what is are not trying to destroy academic freedom; they are exercising it. Dumke says that "the minute you become an advocate, you cease to be a scholar," but quite the reverse is true: any true scholar is an advocate whether he likes it or not. We think of Einstein having a price put on his head for perpetuating "communistic," "anarchistic," and "Jewish" physics; and one American Congressman wanted him "investigated" when he came to this country. And are we sure that the hostility of an "outraged citizenry" to, say, a Marxist professor of philosophy is not akin to the power that burned Bruno and made Galileo recant? Astronomical truth was a threat to a religious-political hierarchy. Are we so far from that day when now the chancellor of a college system, in the same breath he asks academics to censor themselves, disapproves that in the "measurement of professional competence. . . the research reputation of an individual is the thing most looked at"?

As I said, Dumke makes my heart sink; he scares me, because added to the "town" that the "gown" has always had trouble from, seems to be the mentality of our chancellor too. I really do not like to stick my neck out. But I find, for example, when I teach the nineteenth century literature that I love, I teach things that go against the grain of our culture, as they did against Victorian culture. I find, in short, that when I can get my students to see what is on the page in Blake or Thomas Hardy, in spite of all their "sophistication," they react as Victorians would--with anger. They are upset because they have made a discovery that opposes what their parents, the "outraged citizenry," have told them. Truth can never become socially acceptable, not even for a scholar of a musty age like mine.

But I would rather be fired by an "outraged citizenry" than by members of an academic community trying to pander to it. And the question that *we*, the academic community, must pose to ourselves is not one of redefining away our traditional position of criticism and dissent, but of recognizing the true function of our administrators and "bosses" like Dumke: to do things like keeping an adequate supply of toilet paper in the bathrooms.

- Gerald Butler (English)

#### TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AND GOVERNMENT AWARDS: A STUDY SHOWING THAT PUBLICATION AND AWARDS ARE GOOD INDICATORS OF ABILITY IN TEACHING UNDERGRADUATES

In recent years, articles in American newspapers, magazines, and Sunday supplements have depicted faculty members in colleges and universities who publish reports, and also those who are concerned with obtaining government support for their research, as poor instructors. Such articles can sometimes be recognized by their interesting and inflammatory titles, such as "The flight from teaching" or "Publish or perish," used for dramatic emphasis. Unfortunately, most of the charges and the replies have been highly impressionistic and often based upon anecdotal information.

With this problem in mind, I began an investigation of the relationships between publication, success in obtaining government awards, and teaching effectiveness. In the literature I found no report of any previous study in which these three variables had been considered together. Moreover, the sample on which my investigation was based was one of the largest that has been used in studies dealing with the problem of teaching effectiveness at the college level.

Three bodies of data provided me with an opportunity to study the general question: Is the faculty member who publishes and who holds or has held a government award an effective teacher? The first of these bodies of data resulted from a survey made at Tufts University in the academic year 1965-66. In the fall semester, a student group, under the guidance of John Newell of the department of education, made a survey of student opinion of faculty performance. The students were asked to evaluate the performance of approximately 130 faculty members from the College of Liberal Arts (which includes sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities) and the College of Engineering, in the conduct of approximately 155 courses. The group making the survey was primarily interested in evaluating teacher performance in courses usually attended by students in the first two years of their undergraduate program in those two colleges. All the



students in certain selected undergraduate courses were asked to evaluate the professors teaching the classes in which they were currently enrolled. Students handled the distribution, monitoring, and collection of the evaluation forms. Many faculty members believed that the courses chosen for evaluation of teacher performance were representative of those routinely offered at Tufts. The survey produced a number of confidential summaries, which have never been published (and are not likely to be).

I selected for further study those evaluated courses that were conducted by full-time faculty members with the ranks of instructor through professor.

The value of student opinion about teaching effectiveness is a subject that has raised much controversy. A majority of the earlier reports suggest that the student, as a consumer, is in the best position to evaluate teacher effectiveness. Some observers consider student evaluation of teaching effectiveness to be fallible; a few have regarded it as unacceptable. I consider student evaluation to be an adequate indicator of the faculty member's teaching effectiveness.

A second source of information available in the Office of the Assistant Provost was the file of records of current and past government awards made to members of the Tufts faculty.

The third body of data came from the Tufts yearly publication *Faculty Annual*, which lists the yearly activities of each faculty member under the categories "Publications" and "Professional activities." The June 1966 issue furnished the number of published articles produced by each evaluated faculty member in the areas of science and engineering for the period covered by the students' evaluation study.

A combined tabulation\* (Table 1) of the three bodies of data reveals some interesting trends. Included under Science and Engineering are the departments of biology, chemical engineering, chemistry, civil engineering, geology, mathematics, mechanical engineering, physics, and psychology. Social Science encompasses the departments of child study, economics, education, government, history, and sociology. Arts and Humanities (Table 2) includes classics, drama and speech, English, fine arts, German, music, philosophy, religion, and the romance languages.

In Table 1 the support status of the faculty member is designated either "external support," "faculty award," or "no support." "External support" means that the individual received support for his professional activities from a government agency. The largest share of external support for the faculty of Tufts University came from the U.S. Public Health Service and its component agencies, the Department of Defense and its component agencies, the National Science Foundation, the Office of Education, and the Atomic Energy Commission.

Tufts University, like many other American educational institutions, maintains an internal faculty research fund to provide small amounts of money for various projects grouped under the heading "Faculty Development." Most of the awards (which are usually under \$1000) are administered by a [faculty] committee. Individuals who received support only from the faculty-award program make up the group designated "faculty award" in Table 1; individuals who received both faculty-award and external support are included in the group designated "external support."

The students were asked to evaluate the faculty member as ranking in the first, second, third, or fourth quartile of teaching excellence in comparison with other Tufts faculty members and not according to some external or theoretical evaluation system. These four groups were coded with numerical designations of 1, 2, 3, and 4; the *highest teaching ability being represented by 1* and the lowest by 4. The evaluation average for the individual faculty member was derived from the total number of returns, the students' evaluations, and the number of courses taught by the individual in question. A similar index rating had been used in an earlier investigation.

Also, for the senior Science and Engineering faculty it was possible to obtain an adequate sample of publications for an analysis of number of publications relative to evaluation and support status.

Despite some irregularities in the data (Table 1), in general those faculty members who were receiving or had received support from government agencies were ranked highest in teaching abilities. Those faculty members who had never received support were classified in the lower ranks. Faculty members who had received only Tufts University faculty awards were given intermediate ratings.



Table 1  
Student evaluations of the Science, Engineering, and Social Sciences faculties  
in relation to research support

	External Support	Faculty Award	Totals No Support	Total
Returns	828	477	1584	2889
Number of faculty	19	15	42	76
Number of courses	23	19	56	98
Evaluation (average)	1.92	2.19	2.48	2.27
Standard deviation	.89	.94	.93	.94

The mean number of publications for senior Science and Engineering faculty was, as might be expected, highest for the external-support and lowest for the no-support categories. Thus those [senior] Science and Engineering faculty members who were receiving, or had received, external support were rated highest by the students and produced the largest number of publications.

The data for the Arts and Humanities faculty (Table 2) are presented in two groupings rather than three. Table 2 shows a higher average rating of teacher effectiveness for the group receiving support than for the group receiving no support. This finding follows the pattern of Table 1 for the scientists and the social scientists.

Table 2  
Student evaluations of Arts and Humanities faculty  
in relation to research support

	External Support and faculty award	Totals No Support	Total
Returns	444	503	947
Number of faculty	8	22	30
Number of courses	11	26	37
Evaluation (average)	2.20	2.54	2.38
Standard deviation	.96	.94	.96

Table 3 represents four departments each having three or more senior Science and Engineering faculty members. Here again, the data are consistent: the department having the highest percentage of faculty members receiving external support had the highest student ratings. The department with the lowest percentage of external support for its faculty members had the lowest student ratings.

Table 3  
Confidential representation of departments and student evaluation.  
Only courses taught by Science and Engineering senior faculty,  
regardless of support status, are included.

Department	No. courses evaluated	No. student evaluations	<u>Student evaluation</u> Average Std. dev.		%age faculty receiving external support
A	5	427	1.79	.83	80
B	3	367	1.89	.96	67
C	5	467	2.00	.76	60
D	11	335	2.24	.80	22

Reexamination of some of the data reveals other interesting patterns. In reply to the question "Do the students regard senior or junior faculty as the better instructors?" the responses are mixed and inconclusive. In the Science and Engineering group, the senior faculty are rated higher, whereas in the Arts and Humanities the junior faculty have a slight edge. In the Social Science groups there is a virtual tie.

Another question of interest concerns the size of classes taught by grant holders. The data of Table 1 indicate that the faculty members receiving external support generally have the smaller classes.

There are many published reports in which the professional investigator or journalist claims to have had discussions or interviews with "tens" or even "hundreds" of students. However, in a thorough search of the literature we found only two reports of identifiable experimental procedures relating teacher effectiveness to a stated population base of



student ratings. McGrath reported that two-thirds of the outstanding teachers in 15 liberal arts colleges had published at least one article recently. Voeks at the University of Washington found no difference in the teaching effectiveness of faculty members who published and those who did not. Only the statistical end results are provided in this latter report, and it is difficult to reconstruct the original data for comparison with the study discussed here. Nevertheless, the fact that both McGrath's and Voeks' reports indicate that publication is not associated with poor teaching performance is instructive. We found no reference to these two studies in any popular American magazine.

The Tufts data strongly suggest that the faculty members who publish have higher teacher-effectiveness scores than those who do not. Recently, Carroll carefully distinguished between the product and the process values of university research. Perhaps, as he implies, too much emphasis has been given to a result of research--that is, publication--and not enough to what involvement in the research process contributes to the personal development of the faculty member. Many commentators agree that research does not subvert good teaching. Instead, they believe, research supports good teaching, since it keeps the dissemination of obsolete knowledge to a minimum, encourages the introduction of new teaching methods, prevents professional stagnation, and encourages respect and enthusiasm for scholarship among the students.

We may now return to the original question: Is the faculty member who is interested in publishing and in acquiring funds for research and other means of personal development a poor teacher? The answer, according to our empirical data, is probably no--he is likely to be a better teacher.

- Jack B. Bresler, Associate Professor of Biology and Assistant Provost, Tufts University.  
Abridged from *Science* (April 1968)  
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\*A&D Editor's note: Bresler presented his data separately by discipline and by junior vs. senior faculty. This breakdown is omitted to save space. The editor tested the statistical significance of the findings for the simple comparisons which maximized sample size. Comparison of the average evaluation scores (Table 1) for 34 "supported" sciences faculty with 42 "unsupported" faculty indicates that the difference is acceptable as non-chance ( $.01 < P_t < .05$ ). A similar test for the Arts and Humanities data in Table 2, where the sample sizes are smaller, falls short of statistical significance, although the difference is in the same direction. C.D.

THE PROPER STATE COLLEGE PROFESSOR: OR, CAN A SPECIALIST SPEAK TO OTHER SPECIALISTS ON QUESTIONABLE SUBJECTS?

by a Professor of Punctuation

Some of my nicest colleagues warn me of the impropriety of speaking out amidst the campus ferment of these days. Will it not make trouble? I quite agree that we want no contention and that mere honesty or fairness or thinking are no excuse for being unpleasant. But, I assure you, I only speak out against those who speak out. Let *them* be silent!

However, there is a bit of a problem. Perhaps unfortunately, we pass as *professors*. Some antique sense of our nomenclature would seem to suggest that we profess something or other. Naturally, many of our dear colleagues long ago established our distaste for the intellectual and critical, and our neutrality about anything important. This *is* a state college, as some of our new colleagues forget. But I offer here a further philosophy of restraint to help us in avoiding contamination from dissent. Happily, I find that this meets the consensus of my peers--I mean, of course, the *senior* faculty, those loyal and responsible persons who have been here at least a decade and avoided any corrupting intellectual activities. (We should not respond to those arrogant youngsters who view us as "sinecured normal-school hacks" and the "gerontocracy of mass noneducation.") As with our coequals in the "junior colleges," who share our conditions and qualities, we can devote ourselves entirely to "teaching" (without foolishly saying what that is). When forced into a more ambitious masquerade, remember: a state college professor can profess without professing if he stays purely professional, i.e., technical and specialized. After all, were any of us appointed instructors of ideas and criticism? Who amongst us was given tenure as Professor of Justice or Professor of Change? (I intend no criticism here of our leading colleagues who feel that they hold Chairs as Professors of Things-As-They-Are, which is a strict and profitable little professionalism all of its own.) My



position is a moral one: Modesty, especially when confronted with stupidity and viciousness, defines professorial decorum. Gentlemen, we must think small, if we think at all.

Let me illustrate with my own case. I come under the Division of Humanities; reflect on the perils if I thought of myself as professing the humanities--the intemperate, the broadly human implications of that! Nor does it suffice to cautiously remind myself of my official designation, Professor of English. Too broad, and a euphemism for professing literature, which includes all sorts of dangerous things: imagination and criticism, intense moral and social concern, and even pointed ideas and peculiar attitudes. (I do sympathize with many of my colleagues in education and business and technology who quite properly resent the unsettling liberality and commercial impracticality of some of our literature courses.) But my true role in the collectivity of state-college quasi-scholars is something much more academically sound and small: I think of myself as a Professor of Punctuation. Some extremists and trouble-makers denigrate my specialty and scorn me as a "semantic technician," "a language administrator," a "sentence cop." But what else is hired education these days than technology, plus indoctrination in bureaucratic law and order?

With modest pride, let me speak out on the lawful order of punctuation. While I need not discuss such obvious rules of our weaponry as the period (any "full stop" of what they are is good for our students), I did think of examining a bit the role of the beloved colon: the elegant double period which yet stops not. Embarrassingly, however, the colon reveals obscure verbal associations with the unpleasant and is thus no more appropriate a public subject than our constipating curriculum (which I would never change!). I then considered speaking out on the comma. But here again rise the learned dangers we must always avoid, for the comma allows for some variation in usage and therefore can be a disruptive mark. The little bugger acts at times like the unsubmissive students who now and then slip into our school. With their aggressive casualness and freedom, they show no respect for the technical order of things and the morality of the rituals of our academic science. But of such irritants we had better remain silent, for fear of permissively inciting them.

I also considered publicly professing the ellipsis . . . . While I rarely employ it, it has its use when one feels a critical or contentious idea about to slip out. Still, no one should be allowed much punctuational flatus. Any opening can be suggestive, which is quite improper for a regular state college professor. Nor should we publicly emphasize the more fanciful forms of punctuation. The asterisk, for example, can encourage divergent notes rather than the rote and rule cataloguing which provides our proper rationale. Unusual punctuation stands beyond normative behavior--of no use at all in technical and institutional indoctrination--and so might rightly be called "utopian." Such impulses should be punished, or the next thing you know radicals will be abolishing the grading system and professorial ranks!

Fortunately, we have yet to consider several of our finest pieces of punctuation. Of these I proudly speak out. Take the semi-colon; dismissed by the nihilistic as superfluous, as always open to replacement by a simple period or comma, is not the semi-colon representative of our work and loyalty? Antiquarian rhetoric requires it; technical elaborateness justifies it; and, most crucially, where would we professors of punctuation be without such devices to explicate? Is not this elaboration of the trivial the very essence and discipline of each of our academic fields?

For my concluding remarks, I ask you to consider our finest piece of punctuation, the simple yet ornate question mark. I admit an erotic attraction to its sinuous form, an academic love affair with it. But rest assured that this is a typically safe scholarly passion not likely to lead to overt declarations. No mere mark, the interrogative sign serves as the very imago of the regular state college professor. Notice its covertness? As rhetorical end to a lecture or as unadorned comment on a student paper, it bewilderingly suggests without ever making an assertion, acts knowing without saying a thing. Question marks everywhere? We can well use them for uncertainty, for snideness, for superiority, for trimming. Many strong declarations can be reduced by facetiously questioning them, as I have learned from our leaders in committees and senates. No change is suggested, no intellectual commitment allowed. Isn't this precisely what we want? And doesn't the smirking question suggest ironic wit but without its effort? Practice on students. If you feel doubts about evasive questioning, remember you can gain easy pedagogical honor by calling it "Socratic." Our most reputable colleagues have long substituted question-games for any attempt at sustained thought, or even class preparation.

Dare I suggest the Professor of Punctuation as the very mold and model for state college personnel? Especially when one takes proper form, like the question mark, and stands archly bowed but fully stopping things, less seriously quizzical than intellectually



committed--true sign and symbol of our security. In these perilous days when some dare to assert themselves against our well-ordered blandness and mediocrity and our perfectly legal nonsense and cowardice, let us above all remain true to our neat little professional signs. When confronted by the too concerned and intellectual and radical, respond by a masterful emphasis on the punctuation of things. And may I not expect of most of my nicer colleagues that they will identify fully with that graphic image of the proper state college professor--the Question Mark?

- Kingsley Widmer (English)

#### THE PERIPATETIC PROFESSOR

Isn't it ironic that the Vice President has suddenly found 300 released-time positions for the faculty for spring semester? Where in hell's creation were they all along, man?

Overheard: It's not how dull you make it, it's how you make it dull.

Professor Anderson's fairy tale was neither Hans nor Christian but might better be called Grimm.