



STUDENT STORM TROOPERS



PART 3

So Where Are We?

By Stephen L. Bakke  September 24, 2016

Link to **PART 1**: [**Framing the Issue is Important!**](#)

Link to **PART 2**: [**A List of "Curious College Stuff"!**](#)

In **Part 2** I presented an overwhelming list of all those micro aggressions, trigger warnings and other crazy stuff happening on college campuses. What's actually been going on in colleges and universities is "Freedom of Speech" VS. "Freedom of Speech." In fact, "Free Speech" might be trying to kill "Free Speech"! And "tolerance" is becoming "intolerance." When someone tries to ensure freedom of speech by support a controversial discussion or speaker, there's likely to be a "shout-down" by students. When challenged, the students insist their "freedom of speech" is being infringed. Some of these students and their supporters believe they gain advantage or status by exhibiting outrage – and it turns into a giant case of circular arguments.

It's a slow process, but here's what I see happening: First there's a worthy push for freedom and tolerance; then more and more; and on and on! We eventually discover the definition of infinite tolerance and extreme insistence on freedom is actually intolerance and limited freedom of speech.

What was identified by the American Association of University Professors way back in 1915 (Refer to "**PART 1**") continues to be the trend, only much more of a concern/threat. Chance Layton of the National Association of Scholars (NAS) commented in March of this year, giving the NAS reaction to findings by the Higher Education Research Institute:

College students' heightened sensitivity, embodied in their impulse to find "safe spaces" from ideas they dislike, is an epidemic of closed minds as students become more politically active on campus, they are beginning to limit personal liberties, especially First Amendment freedoms.

But there is some good news. Dr. Robert J. Zimmer, president of the University of Chicago has spoken out about the problem of political correctness on college and university campuses:

Free speech is at risk at the very institution where it should be assured: the university.

And in August the Dean of Students, John Ellison of the same University of Chicago, issued a "Welcome" letter to students in which he commented on his "no coddling" policy. He's taking this stand in the face of significant faculty "push-back." We'll have to watch for developments. Here's a portion of what he wrote:

Our commitment to academic freedom means we do not support so-called “trigger warnings,” we do not cancel invited speakers because their topics might prove controversial, and we do not condone the creation of intellectual “safe spaces” where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own.

And a blog post by Dr. Everett Piper, President of Oklahoma Wesleyan University in November of 2015 had this to say:

I actually had a student come forward after a university chapel service and complain he felt “victimized” by a sermon Our culture has actually taught our kids to be this self-absorbed and narcissistic Anyone who dares challenge them and, thus, makes them “feel bad” about themselves, is a “hater,” a “bigot,” and “oppressor,” and a “victimizer.” I have a message for this young man. That feeling of discomfort you have after listening to a sermon is called a conscience This is not a day care. This is a university.

Economist Thomas Sowell has been critical of the many examples of intolerance on campuses. He recently recommended two sources of information for parents and students seeking out information on freedom of speech on campus. These are the college guide “**Choosing the Right College**” and also information available from the **Foundation for Individual Rights in Education**.

I guess “the beat goes on.” This philosophical debate isn’t likely to be solved soon given the fact that a majority of the nation’s faculty seem to be in sympathy with the policies and events that bother so many of us. So, squint through your tears and stay tuned for “**PART 4**” which will present a “whole bunch” of **Bruce Tinsley’s** hilarious and insightful **Mallard Fillmore** political cartoons – all about this topic of “Curious College Stuff.”