

## Official Racism in Our Universities

By Philip Carl Salzman

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Martin Luther King, Jr.<sup>1</sup>

History is replete with people being treated according to their category: Muslims enslaved and executed "infidels"; the Holy Inquisition tortured and executed Jews and Conversos; England suppressed and executed Catholics, while Protestants were suppressed and executed in France; the Ottoman Empire slaughtered the Armenians to the point of genocide; the Nazi regime in Germany devoted themselves efficiently to the genocide of Jews, succeeding in murdering six million; South Africa segregated blacks; Hutus engaged in genocide against Tutsi fellow citizens, 800,000 of which were murdered; Turkey has marginalized and suppressed the Kurds, as did Saddam Hussein in Iraq with the aid of poison gas, to mention just a notorious few of the multitude of cases. There are of course categories of people in society held to be subordinate and often abused and even murdered: women throughout much of history, untouchables in South Asia, natives in lands that have been conquered, blacks in some countries with multiple races, and many others.

Treating people of members of categories is a common method of avoiding approaching people as individual, complex human beings with multiple dimensions, with hopes and fears, with intentions and goals. The reductionism of individual people to categories of gender, race, religion, caste, nationality, sexual preference, among others, simplifies their treatment as members of preferred or despised categories, which facilitates the ascendancy of members of preferred categories and the degradation of members of despised categories. This reductionism of people to categories is a violation of the liberal spirit, which grants dignity to individuals, and it is also a violation of human rights, all of which are vested in individuals rather than categories.

Unhindered by reflection on the history of reducing people to census categories and treating them according to their category, we in the 21<sup>st</sup> century West have returned to that deceptively easy and efficient way of looking at our fellow human beings. What we today have decided is of paramount importance is a person's race, gender, sexual preference, and religion, and we sort people out accordingly.

To simplify, this is the third of three phases that we in North America have gone through. In the first phase, discrimination due to race, religion, and nationality was common and approved, as seen in slavery and selective immigration, and in discrimination (in decreasing degrees) against blacks, Asians, Jews, and Catholics, among others.

The second phase was one an official rejection of discrimination. Under President F. D. Roosevelt, a committee on Fair Employment Practices was established to ensure that blacks were given access to war factory jobs. In 1961, President J. F. Kennedy's Presidential Executive Order 10925<sup>2</sup> asserted that "discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin is contrary to the Constitutional principles and policies of the United States," and furthermore that "affirmative steps which should be taken by executive departments and agencies to realize more fully the national policy of nondiscrimination within the executive

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/martin\\_luther\\_king\\_jr\\_115056](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/martin_luther_king_jr_115056)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/thelaw/eo-10925.html>

branch of the Government. As such, contractors hired by the Government were obliged to take measures to be non-discriminatory: "The contractor will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, creed, color, or national origin. The contractor will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin." Note that the purpose of "affirmative action" is to guarantee that people are treated *without regard to* race, creed, colour, or national origin.

The evolution of the concept of "affirmative action" over the decades since 1961 introduces us to our current third phase of attitudes at about race, origin, creed, and sex, in which reverse discrimination in favour of some categories of peoples has been accepted and institutionalized as desirable to compensate for past disadvantages or to promote absolute demographic equality. In other words, "affirmative action" has come to be the opposite of its original, non-discrimination meaning: "affirmative action" now refers to programs for purposeful discrimination on the basis of race, origin, creed, and sex. This is allegedly justified by the ideology of "social justice," in which "oppressed minorities" must be given special benefits both to compensate for past oppression and to provide them with equal circumstances and status.

These measures depend upon a particular understanding of "equality": First, equality must be imposed for categories of people, rather than individuals, which means that absolute equality of categories replaces every other value, including the value and integrity of individual persons, as well as considerations such as merit, excellence, creativity, and competence. Second, the idea of "equality of opportunity" is replaced by "equality of result," so that any discrepancy in income, representation, membership, income between categories of people must be ameliorated by social engineering so that the results for people in every category are the same. For example, sports teams must have numbers equivalent to their overall totals in the population: males, females, androgynous; black, Asian, native, and white; Christians, Muslims, Jews, Zoroastrians, and Hindus; wealthy, middle class, and poor; heterosexuals, gays, bisexuals, and transsexuals; college graduates, high school graduates, education-challenged; mentally stable, bipolar, schizophrenic; and so on.<sup>3</sup>

Discrimination by category is also supported by the over-riding concept of "diversity." Diversity has now become the primary value toward which policies must aim, and the criterion by which university, business, and government organizations are judged. The Prime Minister of Canada has repeatedly asserted that, in Canada's "post-national state," "diversity is the strength of Canada." In fact, public policy in Canada, the U.S., and elsewhere in the West has been reshaped to enforce membership diversity on the basis of census categories. For example, the Canadian Minister of Science will measure applicants for the Canada Research Chairs Program at universities according to diversity criteria, and, if the applications are not sufficiently "diverse," funding will be blocked.<sup>4</sup>

Do not imagine, however, that "diversity" in education means "diversity of opinion," which traditionally has been thought to be a critical ingredient for higher education. Far from it. "Diversity" for governments and universities means diversity of gender, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, and nationality. Both at the governmental and university level, diversity of opinion is, in fact, rejected. Notwithstanding the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the ill-named Human Rights Commissions and Tribunals have actively suppressed unpopular opinions. Parliament itself has passed a motion to suppress criticism of Islam, and is looking at punitive measures to enforce this interdiction. The only acceptable goal now in Canada is people of many races, languages, and cultures all saying the same, politically correct things.

According to "social justice" advocates, if there are sports teams, or universities, or boards of directors which have a membership in which one or another category of oppressed is under-represented in relation to the larger population, then "affirmative action" must be taken to increase their representation. Thus, programs of admission, hiring, and appointment are aimed at bringing in the under-represented demographic. Other

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<sup>3</sup> <https://fcpp.org/2017/11/09/a-social-justice-vision-for-sports/>  
<https://fcpp.org/2018/03/02/audio-a-social-justice-vision-for-sports/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ottawa-to-pull-research-chair-funding-unless-diversity-issue-addressed-at-universities/article34905004/>  
<http://www.chairs-chaire.gc.ca/media-medias/releases-communiqués/2017/equity-equite-eng.aspx>

criteria—merit, achievement, excellence, capability, character—are dismissed as “excuses” made by oppressors to monopolize positions.<sup>5</sup>

Let us begin by illustrating these “social justice” measures with examples from McGill University. Administrators at McGill state<sup>6</sup> “Equity and inclusiveness are among McGill University’s core principles, and McGill is committed to the view that striving for diverse representation within our Canada Research Chair appointments, as well as our broader academic and research communities, is a matter of fairness that furthers excellence and the advancement of our academic mission.” The claim that “diversity” in fact “furthers excellence and ... our academic mission” is often made in many “inclusiveness” statements spouted by administrators, although no evidence is ever adduced to support them. Rather, it is a cover for the switch in priorities from academic merit, or excellence, to “diversity.” One earlier McGill committee even argued that diversity *is* excellence. Increasingly, academic criteria are overridden by “social justice” criteria.

For McGill and other universities, these policies must be put into action and must show results. “McGill’s Employment Equity Policy...requires that search committees [for appointing professors] use corrective measures in hiring in order to address gaps in the representation of designated equity groups. One important corrective measure calls for evaluating candidates by equivalency class rather than by individual ranking....” In other words, McGill keeps a close eye on outcomes: “McGill is currently meeting its CRC targets for women and racialized people/visible minorities but has underrepresentation with regards to Indigenous [sic] persons and persons with disabilities.” As such, McGill aims to correct this with “immediate and medium term commitments for the priority hiring of Indigenous tenure track and tenured faculty, including CRC positions.”

Specifically, McGill will “initiate a cluster hire led by the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) that seeks, over the next three years, to hire 10 new faculty members in the tenure stream who have lived experience and expertise in Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies, methodologies, histories, traditions, languages, or systems of laws and governance...[allocating] three Canada Research Chairs (CRCs) in the areas of Indigenous Sustainability Sciences, Indigenous Health Sciences and Indigenous Humanities.” McGill is clear by using the phrase “lived experience” that it intends to hire indigenous individuals who are members of First Nations to the exclusion of all others. In other words, McGill is determined to hire on racial bases. McGill has also established a permanent Office of First Nations and Inuit Education.<sup>7</sup>

McGill’s Department of Anthropology, of which I am a member, appears determined to hire indigenous individuals on a racial basis, as its Graduate Student Association lobbied for. Anthropology, as is the case with most social sciences and humanities, follows the dominant theoretical paradigm, the “postcolonial” version of marxism-leninism. Thus, going beyond the more anodyne “diversity and inclusion,” postcolonialist academics see admitting and hiring members of First Nations as “decolonialization.” Universities become a tool of this political project. Gone are the days when the primary goals of universities were excellence in research and education.

It is worth noting that indigenous individuals are not being hired to teach molecular physics, Latin, organic chemistry, Middle Eastern history, or any of the other academic subjects that make up the traditional repertoire of our Western universities. Rather, they are being hired to teach “Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies, methodologies, histories, traditions, languages, or systems of laws and governance” and “Indigenous Sustainability Sciences, Indigenous Health Sciences and Indigenous Humanities,” which McGill apparently will apparently offer as equivalent to Western philosophy and medical and environmental sciences. As far as I know, there has been no pedagogical discussion about the merits of such an initiative.

McGill’s policies are exemplary, not in the sense that they are in the forefront, but in the sense that they are typical of Canadian universities. For example, the University of British Columbia advertises as a “priority” for a “Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Resurgence and Engagement”<sup>8</sup> and a Tier 2 “Canada Research Chair

<sup>5</sup> <https://fcpp.org/2017/07/28/diversity-replaces-merit-at-canadian-universities/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.mcgill.ca/provost/files/provost/crc\\_edi\\_plan\\_final.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/provost/files/provost/crc_edi_plan_final.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.mcgill.ca/dise/mcgill-supporting-indigenous-languages052018>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.educaloxy.com/announcement,a4379.html>

in Indigenous People's Well-Being.”<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, York University's “Department of Equity Studies” advertises for a “Full Time Tenure Stream - Assistant/Associate Professor in Indigenous Studies.”<sup>10</sup>

Canadian universities by no means limit their special priorities to First Nations. At McGill University, the Joint Senate Board Committee on Equity and the Black History Month organizers hosted a panel on “a number of student-led equity initiatives at McGill.” The Associate Provost of Equity and Academic Policies stated that “the event is part of a greater effort to make links between groups across McGill who are centering [sic] equity in the work....”<sup>11</sup> Dalhousie University is advertising for a Vice-Provost for Student Affairs, an important administrative position. However, Dalhousie will consider only candidates who fall into the categories of “racially visible persons and Aboriginal peoples.” The Assistant Vice-President of Human Resources says that “this is the way for us to develop the most meritorious faculty and staff population.” Apparently the Assistant Vice-President of Human Resources believes that merit comes with skin colour and racial origin.<sup>12</sup> Martin Luther King obviously disagreed.

Who would not be in favour of “social justice”? What objections could one possibly have to “diversity” and “inclusion”? To begin with, “justice” is a contested term that has been much discussed and disputed in the history of Western philosophy.<sup>13</sup> There has been no clear agreement among those interrogating this idea, and “social justice” is one of many possible interpretations. “Social justice” as currently defined is unusual in that it focuses not on justice for or by individuals, but demands justice for large categories based on gender, race, sexual preference, religion, nationality, handicap, etc.

Furthermore, in the view of “social justice” advocates justice means equality of results: equality of income, equality of educational certification, equality of membership in organizations, equality in employment, equality in status and prestige, etc. In philosophy, this is an extreme notion of “equality,” which hitherto in the West has been defined as equality before the law and equality of opportunity, difficult enough ideas to implement fully.

Furthermore, given the great variation among individuals in motivation, talent, intelligence, and creativity, a social system producing equality of results would require massive government intervention and intrusive social engineering throughout society to achieve that objective. We know how this works because during the 20<sup>th</sup> century a number of societies were built with the goal of equality of result as their primary objective: the USSR, Mao's China, Cambodia of the Khmer Rouge, and Cuba. Twenty first century examples are Venezuela and North Korea. This experiment left over 100,000,000 murdered and engendered totalitarian societies and widespread poverty and misery around the world. Surprisingly, “social justice” warriors want to try this experiment again. Did not someone say that, if you don't know history, you are destined to repeat its mistakes?

I grant that diversity and inclusion are appealing ideals. My immediate family is diverse in origin: one from far northern Europe, one from far eastern Europe, one from Thailand, one from China, of which two have documented handicaps. But when you make “diversity and inclusion” the primary objective of an institution, like a university, there are opportunity costs. If you make “diversity and inclusion” the main objective of a sports team, rather than talent, skill, and conditioning, the opportunity cost will be a poorer level a play and an inability to triumph over opponents who make winning their primary goal, and thus recruit on the basis of talent, skill, and conditioning. The same will be true of armies. Companies that focus on “diversity and inclusion” rather than on production and profit will lose out in the competitive market place. Universities that make “diversity and inclusion” their main objective will sacrifice intelligence, diligence, scholarship, creativity, and merit. It is disingenuous to say that diversity will increase merit, when there is no competition to demonstrate relative

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.educalox.com/announcement,a4380.html>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.educalox.com/announcement,a4461.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://publications.mcgill.ca/reporter/2018/02/student-led-equity-initiatives-panel-and-poster-exhibit/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://nationalpost.com/opinion/jonathan-kay-dalhousie-university-should-just-be-honest-about-its-affirmative-action-hiring>

<http://business.financialpost.com/opinion/william-watson-whites-not-wanted-is-what-dalhousie-evidently-considers-progressive>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.iep.utm.edu/justwest/>

<http://media.biola.edu/jsejournal/downloads/articles/western-philosophical-conceptions-justice.pdf>



merit. Universities stop being scholarly and educational institutions and become political organizations engaged in social engineering. There is, in fact, no better measure of that than the lack of diversity of opinion in contemporary universities. Anyone who does not agree with the leftist and far leftist consensus would not be hired, and any divergent opinion that came to be known would be silenced.

However, in my view, the greatest objection to the current program of “social justice diversity and inclusion” is that it discriminates in favour of individuals in preferred “victim” categories, and discriminates against individuals in despised “privileged” or “oppressor” categories. The opportunity cost of “justice” for some is, in fact, injustice for others. Most people would like to be treated fairly. Traditionally, in the West, “fairness” was adherence to universalistic standards: If you could run faster and hit farther, you got on the team. If your grades were higher, you were admitted to university. If you were more skillful, more motivated, and better prepared, you got the job.

No doubt that universalistic criteria were not always applied universally, that some categories of people were demeaned and discounted and others were preferred. We, by no means, always lived up to fairness. But we knew what fairness meant, and we were moving, if slowly, toward the effective application of universalistic criteria.

But the notion of “social justice” rejects universalistic criteria in favour of race and gender category favouritism, and the perfect equality that category equivalency would bring. Those of disfavoured categories—males, whites, well-to-do, Christians, and Jews—would, in the name of wider “social justice,” have to take their lumps. Some “social justice” enthusiasts believe that members of the “privileged” and “oppressor” categories, in fact, deserve their lumps, and some go so far as to say that they should be eliminated altogether, as in the professor who said “all I want for Christmas is white genocide.”<sup>14</sup> As a result, universities have given up the idea of fairness to individuals in favour of benefiting members of “victim” categories.

No clearer example could be found of the unfairness of “affirmative action” racial discrimination than the treatment by universities of people of Asian ancestry. Ironically, Asians have always been victims of prejudice and discrimination in North America, and should be among the favoured categories for “social justice” advocates. But in recent decades, Asians made the great mistake, through talent and diligence, of becoming very successful academically and in business and professions. They are no longer worthy victim clients of “social justice.” So they, along with the despised males, whites, and Christians, must be discriminated against.

In this respect, the U.S. Department of Justice is currently investigating a complaint brought by 64 Asian-American organizations about discrimination against Asian-Americans by Ivy League Universities. According to an editorial in the *National Review*<sup>15</sup>, “the de facto discrimination against Asian and Asian-American students is spectacular, undeniable, and shameful. They are in effect subjected to the same quota system that the Ivy League [and McGill University] once used to keep down its Jewish population — the “bamboo ceiling,” as some call it. (Brackets added.) Asian-American groups pursuing litigation against these policies have demonstrated that students of Asian background on average have to score 140 points above white students to have similar chances of college admission — 270 points higher than Hispanic students, and 450 points higher than black students. The ‘Asian penalty’ is especially heavy in places such as California’s prestigious state universities.” For some, this may be “social justice,” but, to my mind, this is deeply unjust.

Racial discrimination is not limited to admissions, but is now extended to housing and teaching. The new “social justice” initiatives at institutions of “higher learning” are segregation and apartheid. For example, California State University at Los Angeles offers segregated housing in dormitories exclusively for blacks.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2016/12/26/health/drexel-professor-white-genocide-trnd/index.html>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.nationalreview.com/article/450127/departments-justice-affirmative-action-directive-campus-discrimination-asian-admissions?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=20170805%20Weekend%20Jolt&utm\\_term=Jolt](http://www.nationalreview.com/article/450127/departments-justice-affirmative-action-directive-campus-discrimination-asian-admissions?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20170805%20Weekend%20Jolt&utm_term=Jolt)

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/csu-black-student-housing\\_us\\_57d03c69e4b03d2d4597b491](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/csu-black-student-housing_us_57d03c69e4b03d2d4597b491)

Brown University organized segregated lunch meetings for graduate students of colour.<sup>17</sup> At Cornell University, where there is an established Latino Living Centre, the student government is calling for racially exclusive housing for Asian-American students.<sup>18</sup> Many other universities have racially segregated housing.<sup>19</sup> Apparently, the new “progressive” cause is, in fact, apartheid.

As regards teaching, as I have pointed out elsewhere<sup>20</sup>, “in today’s colleges and universities, ‘progressive stacking’ is recommended as a constructive way to deal with diversity among students. The professor sorts out students according to category, using intersectional criteria of suffering and victimhood. In this ‘social justice’ vision, black women are the most oppressed, then white women, then black men, then finally the privileged white males. The professor then favours the most oppressed, calling first on black women to answer questions, then white women, then black men, while ignoring white men. In this way, each professor does her part in correcting the world’s injustice.”<sup>21</sup> Is “progressive” differential grading coming next? As a professor who feels a responsibility to all of his students, I find “progressive stacking” appalling. To mistreat some students because they are not the preferred race or gender is unfair and irresponsible, and to my mind this is disgusting.

In “The Case for Inclusive Teaching,”<sup>22</sup> the author argues that “the most troubling aspects is the racial disparity in persistence in completion rates of African-American and Hispanic students.” The proposed solution is to rework the curriculum “to reflect a diverse array of identities.” Professors should ask: Am I having my student read a bunch of monographs, all authored by white males, for example?” The advice given, which reflects a trend throughout “higher education,” is to teach what strokes the identity of (some) minority students. Do not assign the best work available; assign work on the basis of racial and other identities. Is this not an abdication of academic responsibility? Should not one teach the best material available? Furthermore, if students with weak qualifications are admitted on racial grounds, might not their weak qualifications, rather than the races of assigned authors, be most likely behind their poor completion rates?

In my McGill seminar on immigration, my white and male students did not balk at the assigned book by a black female author, which was by the way one of the best books in the field. Nor did the non-whites or males balk at the two other assigned books by white females, which were also better books than other choices that could have been made. All the students managed to do the work and pass the exams successfully, whether or not they identified with the authors of the books. Is pandering to racial identity really necessary for successful teaching?

According to the sociology of racism<sup>23</sup> “Racialization becomes racism when it involves the hierarchical and socially consequential valuation of racial groups. ... Racial discrimination concerns the unequal treatment of races, whereas racial inequality concerns unequal outcomes.” What we see in the new “social justice” university is racism in favour of various individuals who are assigned to a victim category, racial discrimination in favour those individuals, racism against “privileged” and “oppressor” males, whites, Christians, and Jews. Consequently, there will be racial discrimination against members of certain categories, with racial inequality, not based on merit, the result. However “social justice” advocates spin it, “reverse racism” is still racism.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.thecollegefix.com/post/42465/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.thecollegefix.com/post/42435/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.nationalreview.com/2016/08/university-connecticut-segregated-dorms-black-separatism/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://fcpp.org/2018/03/09/should-minorities-rule/>

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/10/20/penn-grad-student-says-shes-under-attack-teaching-technique-encourage-all-talk-class?utm\\_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm\\_campaign=a31e0ab6b1-DNU20171020&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1fcbcb04421-a31e0ab6b1-227250161&mc\\_cid=a31e0ab6b1&mc\\_eid=3abcbdb6dbc](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/10/20/penn-grad-student-says-shes-under-attack-teaching-technique-encourage-all-talk-class?utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm_campaign=a31e0ab6b1-DNU20171020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fcbcb04421-a31e0ab6b1-227250161&mc_cid=a31e0ab6b1&mc_eid=3abcbdb6dbc)

[http://www.chronicle.com/article/Yes-You-Have-Implicit-Biases/241797?cid=wb&utm\\_source=wb&utm\\_medium=en&elqTrackId=23063459b25f4e0c933ae1a75c777da2&elq=9ad86e3b10bb4c09b2f5ed158b2d1914&elqaid=16791&elqat=1&elqCampaignId=7262](http://www.chronicle.com/article/Yes-You-Have-Implicit-Biases/241797?cid=wb&utm_source=wb&utm_medium=en&elqTrackId=23063459b25f4e0c933ae1a75c777da2&elq=9ad86e3b10bb4c09b2f5ed158b2d1914&elqaid=16791&elqat=1&elqCampaignId=7262)

<sup>22</sup> <https://chroniclevitae.com/news/2009-the-case-for-inclusive-teaching?cid=VTEVPMSED1>

<sup>23</sup> <https://scholar.harvard.edu/matthewclair/publications/sociology-racism>

“Social justice” advocates, whether university students, professors, or administrators, will argue that this is the “good, new racism.” But, can these people really accept that injustice for individuals and the enforcement of racial apartheid is progress? Treating people according to racial, gender, sex, religious categories has never worked out well. The moral way to treat people is as individuals.

#### About the Author



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