

Academic Freedom in the Classroom

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"Academic freedom in the classroom... is a fundamental requisite of effective education." Those were the words of William W. Pendleton, Associate Professor of Sociology at Emory University, in his essay, "The Freedom to Teach," in *Academic Freedom: An Everyday Concern*. Academic freedom in the classroom, according to Pendleton, "is not merely a matter of constitutional speech, nor should it be regarded as a privilege of the faculty." Over the course of a student's career, he continued, academic freedom is "the best means" of ensuring that students receive "an education that is broad, flexible, nondoctrinaire, and subject to self-correction inherent in exposing students to many teachers, all free to pursue the pedagogy and content of their classes as they judge best." (Benjamin, p. 11.)

What do University of St. Thomas students think about 1) freedom of expression and 2) academic freedom? To find answers to these questions, I sought comments and input from an intellectually aware, though admittedly small, group of students. These were the students in my Media Law class during the Fall Semester of 1997. Freedom of expression, with particular emphasis on First Amendment cases decided by the U.S. Supreme Court, is the focus of this course. As I have done for several years now, on the first day of class, I asked the students to write a brief statement on "What Freedom of Expression Means to Me." This is what the 18 students in the class wrote:

1. Freedom of Expression is an extremely broad term. I think it encompasses Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion, Freedom of the Press and the other freedoms the Constitution assures each American citizen. Freedom of Expression gives you the ability to say what you think about various issues without fear of repercussions. However, as the Constitution protects these freedoms, more and more laws are being passed to prohibit them. It is a tug of war process with more regulations being passed into law every day, undeniably preventing complete freedom of expression.

2. Freedom of expression gives us the right to share our ideas and thoughts without fear of prosecution. We can be open to expressing things that others may find totally wrong.

3. When I think of freedom of expression, I think of individuality. Everyone has differences—differences in dress, action, feelings, etc. It seems religion and politics are usually the most controversial items pertaining to individual expression. We all have a right to believe what we want; many religions are recognized in the world today, and many political parties also are recognized. We are free to express our individuality, but up to a point. When the expression becomes extremely hurtful and harmful to others is where freedom of expression is halted. Because we all have rights (in the United States at least), we have rights to leave the situation and also to express our opposing belief. I believe the only way for people to fully believe their view is to hear all sides.

4. Freedom of expression means power and privilege to me. In the United States, freedom of expression is often taken for granted. The ability to speak one's mind is the most powerful privilege we can use to make social change.

5. Free expression has been an "iffy" subject for me. The first time I encountered the concept was my American Authors to 1914 English class. After reading "Huck Finn," the professor explained that the book had been banned, etc. In ways, I could understand the need to protect—for instance, younger students from racial slurs and the whole concept of slavery. When I considered that this was a part of history to be learned from, my opinion was altered. When encountering things such as the artist who does something pornographic, etc., I don't know how to respond.

6. I am very conservative. I feel the media have an impact on how people choose to live. I feel the media have a responsibility to uphold morals and integrity within society. I'd rather have a limit to my personal freedom of expression than have sick people publishing pornography, etc.

7. Freedom of expression means to me that I can say what I would like as long as I don't hurt anyone. That is to say that if I were to report malicious stories that were not true, that would be wrong; but if I were to report facts that needed to be reported to protect the majority and they happened to hurt the minority, that would be fine as long as what I was reporting was of great importance. Common sense does need to be used, and reporting things that are just out to hurt someone is wrong. We do have an obligation to protect the same amount of privacy that is given to us.

8. Freedom of expression means an individual may express his/her opinion—verbally or in writing—without fearing that he/she will be persecuted, harassed, etc. because of it. Freedom of expression, however, should not express opinions in such a derogatory way as to significantly harm, offend, etc. those on the opposing side. I do not mean censorship should be applied, but I believe expressing opinions maturely and without degrading others is crucial.

9. To me, freedom of expression is being able to say, "Oh shit" out loud when you realize that you have forgotten to feed your pet goldfish. It is about wearing clothes that offend some people because they clash, or maybe because the colors or symbols stand for something that you believe. There are boundaries, though. If someone asks, go ahead and say what you think. Be prepared to say why, though, and never intend to offend. You can promote your opinion without putting down another's.

10. The liberty to express oneself freely must necessarily be limited. I believe that we may express our opinions in a respectful manner: what we do may not cause undue harm to others. I believe that educators give up this freedom because they have an obligation to educate and not to persuade. I think that freedom of expression is an invaluable part of growth; and utilized in the right way (non-harmful), this is obvious: it stimulates thought and growth. Freedom of expression must have an inherent responsibility with it in order not to lead to stifling and prejudice.

11. The freedom of expression is a right given to American citizens that many people, like myself, do not fully understand. I feel that it is our own right to know what our rights are. I truly am not aware of all my rights.

12. Freedom of expression is the right to proclaim what we feel, tell others about our feelings, and write and report about things that might not be popular, favorable or easy to swallow. Freedom of expression means we have the right to talk about our country's leaders, whether or not it's in a favorable light. The question is whether freedom of expression means we can do these things without accuracy, fairness or maturity. Can we express ourselves to the public at large without validity or experience? True freedom of expression means we can—whether it affects or benefits anyone.

13. I view freedom of expression as the forum in everyday life where people are expressing their opinions. This can be accomplished in what they say, how they behave, or even what they wear. This forum has its boundaries. I want freedom of expression to never cease, yet I want people to approach it carefully; that is, not to exploit themselves or others. This freedom is necessary to promote changes that will improve our lives.

14. As citizens of the United States, we are granted many rights and liberties. We are fortunate to be allowed to exercise our rights with little interference. However, along with our rights come certain expectations and responsibilities. For example, we must not infringe on others' rights with our personal actions. Therefore, we are granted freedom to express ourselves, but there are still limitations we must respect.

15. Freedom of expression means that people have the right to their own opinions. Not everyone thinks and acts the same, and people express themselves differently. Who is to say how someone is supposed to act? The government realized this and created an amendment that states freedom of expression. What may be offensive to one person may be symbolic to others. The only limit I see with freedom of expression is when it causes harm to someone else. Freedom of expression should be for yourself and not for others.

16. Freedom of expression is the ability to express what you want in both public and private. In the United States, we enjoy freedom to speak freely—thus, freedom of the press—without regulation by the government. I feel that this freedom is one that many of us take for granted in today's world because we are used to it. However, in governments throughout the world people are dying and being imprisoned for trying to exercise this right. While we do enjoy this freedom, I do feel that we have this only as long as we don't infringe on another's rights.

17. Freedom of expression gives me the freedom to express myself in whatever way I find necessary as long as it is respectful. Respect is the key for anyone practicing their freedom of expression. It gives those that use respect opportunity to voice their thoughts and ideas, good or bad, without the government saying no. You can be truthful (what you think is true) without condemnation.

18. There is no such thing as "total freedom of expression" as far as I'm concerned. We are encouraged, especially as younger people, to express our individuality and be outgoing, etc., but when one's individuality infringes upon society's majority view, then it may be hindered. Most people have a pretty mainstream idea of what's "moral" and "in good taste" so they don't want TV and printed materials to go outside of those boundaries. If they do, then most people won't accept it even if it is a simple example of "freedom of expression." I think that some things that may be controversial, such as movies, offensive music and pornography, can be educational to becoming a person who isn't ignorant of the world around them.

The students' emphasis on such factors as courtesy, responsibility and not hurting another person remind me of Cardinal Newman's "definition of a gentleman" in his essay, "Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Religion," in *The Idea of a University*. In that essay, Newman said, among other things, that a gentleman (and nowadays, a lady too) "is one who never inflicts pain." He continued, "If he [or she] engages in controversy of any kind, his [or her] disciplined intellect preserves him [or her] from the blundering discourtesy of better, perhaps, but less educated minds who, like blunt weapons, tear and hack instead of cutting clean..." (Newman, pp. 159-60.)

On the second day of our Fall Semester 1997 Media Law class, after having discussed the students' views on freedom of expression, I asked the students to answer these three questions: What is academic freedom? What does academic freedom mean for the student? What does academic freedom mean for the professor? The following are the responses from the 18 students:

1. Academic freedom? I have no idea what it is supposed to mean. I hope it is something along the line of professors having both a set curriculum and the opportunity to state their own beliefs about the subject matter. Why would you want to study the readings of St. Thomas Aquinas if your prof couldn't say that deep down he/she thought it was nothing more than scholarly fluff? For the student, academic freedom is a wonderful thing. The more available opinions the more you learn. Opportunity and change proceed from freedoms. Both are good. I hope that academic freedom makes life easier for the professor so he/she doesn't feel as though they are walking on eggshells in their own classroom. If the person is educated enough to "profess," shouldn't they be responsible enough to run a classroom that is filled with (possible) differences of opinion?

2. I'm not really sure exactly what academic freedom is, but I'm guessing it means the right to say and write what you think in the academic arena. For the students, academic freedom means being able to express their opinion in a classroom setting, regardless of how controversial it may be. For the professor, academic freedom means allowing students to express themselves and also giving their own opinions to the class.

3. At first thought, the term "academic freedom" confuses me. What really is academic freedom? I feel that academic freedom should be the right for a student to question what is taught, read and promoted in the classroom. It is the obligation on the professor's part to be fair to all students, encourage expressions in the classroom, whether or not these

agree with the teachings or the professor's intentions or beliefs. It is the expectation that all sides of an issue are presented in the classroom and that each student holds unique ideals. We all have some commonalities, but our individuality, including the professor's, should be respected in the classroom.

4. I am not that sure of what academic freedom means, but to me it means that every American has the right to an education without being discriminated against. Everyone should have an opportunity to educate themselves through the U.S. school system and as far as me being a college student, I feel that no one should have a leg up on me and I should be treated like everyone else.

5. Academic freedom is about students stuffing themselves with all of the knowledge that this world has to offer, then "puking" out all of the bad and getting fat off the good. Of course, good and bad are up to the students and not the professor. The professor is like the spoon, and has the ability to tell the students that some knowledge will make them sick and some will make them healthy.

6. Academic freedom is the ability to go against the text and the professor. To be autonomous human beings, we must be able to freely think on our own even if it rocks the boat. Students must be willing to utilize their academic freedom, and professors must be open-minded. The University of St. Thomas is a liberal arts institution and a Catholic university. This sometimes results in a conflict of interest. Since UST is a liberal arts college, it must respect academic freedom. The university may express its stand on the issue but should not be dogmatic in doing so.

7. Academic freedom gives me the right to express my beliefs toward a certain subject or matter with respect to fellow classmates and professors. Each student holds a responsibility to the course: to be on time, do the work assigned and communicate accordingly with the professor and other students. In addition to these responsibilities, the school may place other regulations, but each person should place regulations on his or her own actions and responsibilities.

8. Academic freedom means being able to choose a course of study freely and to go about it in an individual manner. It seems that we have more academic freedom in college than we did in high school. For students it is the ability to follow areas of study of particular interest to the student in course selection and also research topics specifically chosen by the student. For teachers it means a classroom full of students with an interest in the subject matter and a chance to delve deeper into their own warehouse of beliefs and knowledge.

9. Academic freedom is the freedom to learn and teach freely. Academic freedom means that a student has the opportunity to learn "all sides" of an issue or subject. On the other hand, the educator has the opportunity to teach the way that he or she wants. They can present information in ways they see fit. For academic freedom to work ideally, both sides must work together. Both sides must realize what the other side wants to know or present while achieving goals as well.

10. Academic freedom is the right everyone has to learn. As a student, it means that I can receive an education regardless of my gender, race, religion, etc. I can receive an education and not be stopped from learning. As a professor, it means the right to share knowledge of those who want to learn. No one can stop you from teaching/sharing information with someone who wants to learn.

11. Academic freedom includes a selection of materials to be used for instruction that are multi-purposeful. Exposure to the successes and failures of the past and present are important so that the failures of history do not repeat themselves. Banning material from the classroom for whatever reason instills the idea that censorship is acceptable in young minds. Professors need to have the freedom, while using discretion, to promote optimal learning of their subject matter. The student should have freedom to express his or her views, possibly causing him or her to learn by trial and error. But they should not be confined before they even get to express their opinion or understand why. The professor should use discretion but be free to educate his or her class from every angle.

12. Academic freedom is the right that UST educators own to educate openly and responsibly. Academic freedom allows students to be challenged and stimulated by respectful intellectual discussions surrounding unconventional topics as well as conventional ones. Academic freedom allows professors to discourse dutifully on a broad spectrum of topics. Academic freedom differs greatly from pure freedom of speech because educators, as authority figures, hold an obligation to foster intellectual environments rather than forums of persuasion.

13. Academic freedom allows a student to present his/her opinions ideas and work—when required—without fearing prosecution from an educator holding an opposing view. A student should feel that he/she is an equal to all other students—both on campus and in the classroom. A professor needs to accept a student's belief or opinion if the student stated his/her point fairly, accurately and responsibly. No one view—whether it be a student's or a professor's—should be the dominant view within a classroom or campus.

14. Academic freedom allows one to teach a variety of ideas even though the ideas may be controversial. This allows the student to be exposed to many new and different ideas from which they can then decide what they believe. I think it is important to learn about opposing views, not just views with which one agrees. It is the responsibility of the teachers to present every side and do their best to not show bias.

15. Academic freedom for all means the right to learn and teach in an environment of respect and civility. For the student, academic freedom is the right to learn about many various topics in and out of class. Students are encouraged to voice their opinions in class and broaden their horizons in other out-of-class activities. Academic freedom for the professor means being able to hold a class on any topic to encourage discussion (and discovery learning). The professor has the right to decide topics of study and encourage students to participate.

16. Academic freedom for me means that I have the right to object to anything that may be offensive to me or my learning. Also, in order to better educate myself, I feel it necessary to be able to say to the professor that I don't like some things that he or she is teaching. For the professor, I feel that it is their responsibility to state the facts and not try to influence the student into thinking the same way as he or she does. Academic freedom also is the right of the professor to be able to sense inappropriate views by the students.

17. Academic freedom does not entitle anyone to cheat, belittle students or offend. I believe that academic freedom is the ability to express one's opinion in class and to say what the student feels in a respectable manner and not to deliberately offend. The opinion should be well thought out and have a foundation/grounds (or reason why that is yours) that allows the student to feel the way he or she does. If asked your opinion by a professor, or whether you freely give it, the professor shouldn't dock your grade or harm your academic reputation if it should be different than their own opinion as long as it is in a respectable fashion. My opinion should not harm my grade or my status in the classroom or the university. My opinions do not make me less of a person because I have an opinion. I shouldn't fear sharing it as to possible repercussions. The professor has an obligation to listen to opinions of students, respect them and not penalize students if they differ from their own. The sooner we realize that everyone's opinion is what makes the world interesting, the better off we are.

18. Academic freedom means that students, faculty and staff in an educational environment have a responsibility to both themselves and others to uphold in order to facilitate an environment where people can learn freely. I believe that students have the right to formulate groups, discussions or classroom environments that address a wide array of issues, and I would hope that they could do so. The very purpose of an academic setting is to provide a place where people can safely and comfortably express their ideas with one another so that they can have the opportunity to hear both sides of the issue—whether they really want to or not. It is my hope that every academic institution would view this freedom openly in order to ensure that people have the right to express themselves freely.

In the above statement, notice the first sentence and its reference to staff. This was the only student who included staff as having academic freedom. Staff do not, in fact, have academic freedom. More about this later.

I distributed to the class portions of the AAUP's 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure along with the 1970 "Interpretive Comments." These statements were included in the *AAUP Policy Documents and Reports* (1990) that were handed out to participants in the 1997 summer seminar. According to the statement, "Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. (Notice that the statement does not include staff.) The statement's key points, from the standpoint of academic freedom in the classroom, are: 1) teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; 2) teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing

their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter that has no relation to their subject, and 3) college and university teachers are citizens, and when they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline.

At the summer seminar, participants learned that while St. Thomas endorsed the AAUP statement on academic freedom and tenure, the institution did not sign the document. In an e-mail message to Dr. Charles J. Keffer, UST provost, I asked him to inform me why UST did not sign the AAUP document. In his reply to me, Dr. Keffer said that "when one 'signs' a document like that, one then has to potentially live with any changes in the document or, more likely, any interpretations of the document that are issued subsequently. UST has never wished to be bound by any particular statement in that fashion, and so we have not 'signed' that statement. We do subscribe to the original statement and the principles it espouses, and we have stated that publicly inside and outside the institution on many occasions. In the end, it should be a question of whether or not we actually live up to the principles and not whether we have signed the statement, or not."

As was noted earlier, the AAUP document does not include staff as being accorded academic freedom. Shortly before the summer seminar began, participants received an e-mail message from Rick Haught, a doctoral student in UST's Educational Leadership Program and a former UST staff member, having served in 1989-94 as Director of Campus Activities. In his memo, Haught, who now is Director of the Student Union at the University of South Dakota, said that he wanted to sit in on the summer seminar on academic freedom but was denied permission to do so. He said that for the last few years he has been researching academic freedom and that he has written a review of the literature for his dissertation. He thought that sitting in on the seminar would advance his research, and he said that he found it ironic that a university would close a seminar on academic freedom to its own research students. Mr. Haught said that he was assured by Dr. Don Briel, chair of the Theology Department and Director of the Center for Catholic Studies, under whose auspices the seminar was being held, that he "had neither any recourse in the matter, nor any higher authority to whom I could appeal the decision." When I asked Dr. Briel for his comments, he told me that he had not seen Mr. Haught's e-mail message so I forwarded it to him and, subsequently, in a telephone conversation, was told the following by Dr. Briel:

"Over the years since the summer seminars on Catholic Colleges and Universities in the 21st Century began, occasional requests have been received from students and alumni to sit in on the sessions. A consistent procedure of denying requests has been followed because the purpose of the seminars is to allow faculty to have an honest and frank discussion speaking to their peers. The focus has been primarily on faculty although some staff and administrators have attended the various seminars that began in the summer of 1994. In order for the frank and open discussion and exchange of ideas to occur, the meetings have to have a certain confidentiality without external reporters."

Dr. Briel told me that he informed Mr. Haught that he could appeal to the president of St. Thomas, but that he felt that Father Dease would uphold the decision to restrict seminar attendance to those faculty and staff who applied for and were accepted as seminar participants.

What is the status nowadays of academic freedom? John D. Lyons, editor of *Academe; the Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors*, writing about "Tenure in Practice: A Call to Action" in the May-June 1997 issue of *Academe*, the AAUP's bimonthly publication, said, "We are in the grip of a major attack on tenure and academic freedom, the kind of attack that happens... every fifteen to twenty-five years." That issue of *Academe* included six articles that called for the AAUP "to renew and invigorate the practice of tenure based on principles set forth in the major AAUP statements since 1915." (Lyons, p. 12.) In that same issue of *Academe*, Neil W. Hamilton, Trustees Professor of Regulatory Policy at William Mitchell College of Law in Saint Paul, wrote on "Peer Review; the Linchpin of Academic Freedom and Tenure." Hamilton said that "academic freedom and academic tenure have been repeatedly questioned throughout this century" and that "today both are again under public scrutiny and attack." In tracing the history of professors' freedom of expression—beginning with a lack thereof—Hamilton said that for several hundred years after the founding of institutions of higher learning in this country, professors labored under employment law doctrine that held that private and public employees had no right to object to conditions, including restrictions on free expression, placed upon their employment. Eventually, academics organized a professional organization. This occurred in 1915 with the establishment of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), which, in Hamilton's words, "pressed university employers to grant professors' rights of free inquiry and speech in scholarship and teaching without interference by lay boards of trustees and administrators." In his article, Hamilton continued that "'professional academic freedom' describes... the tradition where university employers, serving the university's unique mission of creating and disseminating knowledge, have agreed to grant rights of exceptional vocational academic freedom of speech to professors in teaching, research, and extramural utterance." This academic freedom is to be granted "without lay interference on the condition that individual professors meet correlative duties of professional competence and ethical conduct." (Hamilton, p. 17.)

Thomas L. Tedford, the author of *Freedom of Speech in the United States*, the textbook that I used Fall Semester 1997 in the Media Law course, said that an educator's communication rights fall into two categories: 1) academic expression and 2) extramural expression. According to Tedford, a Professor Emeritus of Communication at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, academic expression "refers to the teacher's job-related speech, including such things as classroom teaching, participation in school programs, and communication of research results and professional opinion in a variety of ways such as by publication or presentations at academic meetings." Nonschool activities, which a teacher or professor engages in as a member of society at large, are extramural expression, and, according to Tedford, these include such things as participating in community organizations and political activity, speaking in community forums and writing letters for newspaper publication.

Tedford said that in 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court in a close (5 to 4) but strongly worded decision spoke in favor of the general concept of academic freedom. In that case (*Keyishian v. Board of Regents*, 385 U.S. 589), Justice William J. Brennan delivered the opinion of the Court, in which he said, "Our Nation is deeply committed to safeguarding academic freedom, which is of transcendent value to all of us and not merely to the teachers concerned." He said that academic freedom "is therefore a special concern of the First Amendment, which does not tolerate laws that cast a pall of orthodoxy over the classroom." Brennan continued that the "classroom is peculiarly the 'marketplace of ideas'" and "the Nation's future depends upon leaders trained through wide exposure to that robust exchange of ideas which discovers truth 'out of a multitude of tongues, rather than through any kind of authoritative selection.'" (Tedford, pp. 306-307.)

Frederick J. Crossen, writing in his essay, "Two Faces of Academic Freedom," in *The Challenge and Promise of a Catholic University*, said that a university is not free "to establish or preserve some insular sovereignty." Rather, according to Crossen, there are two kinds of academic freedom: "the function of a Catholic university is ultimately to serve both the political community of which it is a part and the religious community to which it claims fidelity." He said that the university aspires "to determine what is true about nature and society and art and God," and it helps "its students to learn to do so for themselves, for the truth is a good common to both communities." He concluded that "a necessary condition for that quest" is the both kinds of academic freedom to which he referred. (Hesburgh, p. 58.)

Ronald Dworkin, Professor of Law at New York University and University Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford University, in an essay titled "A New Interpretation of Academic Freedom," in *The Future of Academic Freedom*, offered what he called an "exhortation" to his readers, particularly college and university professors. He said that educators "must defend our freedom" because, "We have allowed academic freedom to seem pale and abstract and even fraudulent... We do carry a great responsibility, and it is time we carried it once again with pride." (Menard, p. 197.)

To bring all of this "back home," so to speak, I asked my seven colleagues in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication the following question: Should we give our own point of view in the classroom? Or, in other words: Do *you* give your own opinions in your classroom discussions? I was particularly interested in this question because at some point during the summer seminar this question was raised by the seminar's leader, the Rev. Peter F. Ryan of Loyola College in Maryland.

Several departmental colleagues responded to my request for information. Interestingly, the most complete response came from our newest faculty member, Kendra L. Gale, who is joining our department this academic year. Ms. Gale said:

"I believe one of the crucial challenges in teaching is to encourage students to think more critically. To that end, I feel students need to understand the underlying complexity of issues and not to simply take things for granted because 'that is the way it always has been done' (my favorite response). Often controversial topics provide the most salient

opportunity for that kind of discussion since students feel more passionately about those issues.

"My approach is to attempt a Socratic method of (respectfully) questioning the assumptions and implications of any given position, and often playing the role of a devil's advocate—even taking up positions which are contrary to my own personal beliefs. On good days, it feels like engagement in an elegant dialectical dance. But, I will be the first to admit that there are times when it feels far less refined and more like mud wrestling as they struggle to articulate their assumptions.

"I see no point in introducing controversial matter that has no relations to the academic subject at hand. But, as you well know, in fields like media and advertising, that still leaves enormous latitude. I do not discourage the discussion of a controversial topic if it is student initiated or if it is currently receiving abundant media coverage. To deliberately avoid current issues in the classroom is to reinforce the perception of an ivory tower removed from the 'real world.' However, my agenda remains to unpack the assumptions and to think through the implications of various positions rather than to resolve any particular debate.

"In the classroom, it is my responsibility to encourage critical thinking skills. If I want to persuade others to 'my' position, there is plenty of opportunity outside the classroom for debate with colleagues, pro bono work, volunteer activities, etc. The faculty/student power imbalance is too great to add the complications of personal opinion to the already precarious mix. However, if asked specifically and directly by students, I will generally share my opinion after it has been thoroughly discussed. Clearly, I have a point of view and to pretend otherwise would be dishonest."

Dave Nimmer, a longtime professional journalist who joined our department in the fall of 1989, had this to say:

"I give my opinion in class, regarding matters relating to broadcast news, individual stories and performances by reporters.

"I think it's important to make clear that this is only an opinion. It works when you: 1) Invite comments from the class. 2) Offer up views that contradict your own. 3) Offer well-established evidence that relates to the matter under discussion. 4) Encourage a free-wheeling discussion. 5) Never confuse fact with opinion. 6) Make it clear, by your demeanor, that you tolerate and encourage dissent.

Two other responses came from Dr. Kris Bunton and Dr. Mark Neuzil, both of whom joined our department in the fall of 1993.

Dr. Neuzil said, "I think it's unavoidable to offer one's point of view in the classroom in the courses I teach, For example, how am I to teach Advanced Reporting and not outline and explain my own value-laden choices I have made over the years as a reporter and editor?"

"In another example, let's think about the coverage of the death of Princess Diana. I was working as 'late ace' or sort of a night city editor when she was killed. Among the choices the newspaper staff had to make was: to run a photograph of the vehicle in which she was killed or not. This is a choice that each person brings to it a set of values, beliefs, interpretations of professional standards, etc., and it was a good example for students.

"In this case, the newspaper staff decided not to print any photographs of the car that were graphic, or showed any of the persons in the car. In the end, the photograph we used of the car was after it was emptied and as it was hauled away."

Dr. Bunton said that because she teaches ethics, where she wants "the students to develop their own points of view so they can do ethical reasoning in the real world, I always try to minimize my own view. I also don't want the students to think I'm trying to 'preach' my own views or convert them to my way of thinking, so I play down my views.

"However, when they directly ask me, I do share my views and try to explain how I arrive at them. But I always try to do it in a context that indicates that the students don't have to agree with me. I figure most journalists can't agree on all these ethical issues, so students should know that.

"Although I try to minimize my own views and make the classroom a place where the students feel free to disagree with me, I expect that they end up knowing a great deal about my views just because of the ethical issues I assign them to explore in the readings and class discussions. So I'm sure my views get shared more than some students want."

Another response came from Dr. Stacey Kanihan, who joined our department in the fall of 1995. She said that when she is discussing a controversial topic, she tries not to include her opinion as part of the class discussion. She said, "The purpose of the discussion is to encourage the students to think critically about the issue—to examine the different perspectives and to respond based on some kind of an informed framework." She said that this "framework may be theoretical or professional—or even moral—but it is probably one we have discussed in class or they have learned elsewhere." Dr. Kanihan recognized that "this is the ideal" but that often a discussion "will fall short of the ideal, and opinions seem as if they were 'shot from the hip,' to use a cliché."

Dr. Kanihan continued, "I try not to give my opinion because of what we call 'expectancy effects' in social research. The students inherently may try to provide the answer that they think I expect, or want. They may even know they are doing this. I also avoid giving my opinions to discourage this. If I do give an opinion, it is usually toward the end of the discussion, and usually because a student asks me. If I am asked, I will answer. And, sometimes I give an opinion to play 'devil's advocate,' or just to get a discussion going. It may not be my own opinion; it may be an unpopular opinion—one that some people may even feel afraid to express."

I had told a colleague that I was going to let the students and other faculty members write a large share of my essay. I am grateful to those who so readily responded to my requests

for information, and thank everyone for their assistance. Academic freedom in the classroom is truly important. As Robert M. O'Neil, Director of the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression and former President of the Universities of Virginia and Wisconsin, said in his newly published book, *Free Speech in the College Community*, "Academic freedom treats classroom speech as the core of protected expression for reasons that reflect the academy's unique pursuit of truth and understanding." (O'Neil, p. ix.)

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