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Accuracy On Campus

Freedom, if it is not to degenerate into license, must be exercised with responsibility. That is the idea behind a new project, Accuracy in Academia, started by the watchdog organization, Accuracy in Media.

When college and university professors get carried away by ideology, as too many were in the 1960s, and too many still are today, what goes by the name "higher education" sinks into propagandizing, conditioning, mind bending, programming or humbugging.

Whatever its name, telling students what to think is not education. Education leads the learner. It enables students to analyze ideas instead of swallowing them whole and undigested with a sauce of emotionalism, which is what they do with ideology.

Selling ideology as education is false labeling. It is dishonest. Injecting immature minds with fear and hate can also be dangerous. "Education" that does that is not worthy of the name. But there is a lot of it around.

The first AIA report cited an Arizona State University professor "obsessed with fear of nuclear weapons and even nuclear generation of electric power" who was trying "to inculcate that fear into his students in his beginning political science course" which "was supposed to deal with political ideologies."

AIA said "his assigned readings were also more concerned with nuclear matters than with political ideologies" and charged that the ASU catalogue had "mislabeled the course."

AIA pointed out serious errors in the assigned reading material and noted that "these were not errors that freshman students were likely to spot on their own."

Such courses, AIA said, may explain why many reporters are negative toward nuclear power while scientists and engineers who know the subject are positive.

Reed Irvine, AIM and AIA chief, who spoke at ASU explaining AIA's goals and aims, said one student who attended his talk reported that AIA's criticisms had already resulted in an improvement in the professor's lectures.

Is academic freedom endangered by monitoring of courses to see that their contents live up to their labels? Of course not. The worst blow dealt to freedom on the campus in recent years has been the Nazi-like suppression of lecturers whose ideas were opposed by ideological fanatics.

The only thing threatened by insisting on honesty is dishonesty.