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Bowen Challenges WSCA Members to Use Academic Freedom to Contribute to the Common Good

Keynote Address at Denver/Boulder on Democracy

I am grateful to the Western States Communication Association for the opportunity to speak with you today. I especially wish to thank President Sara Hayden and Sue Pendell for inviting me some time ago and for her kind introduction just now.

I commend you for choosing as your conference theme “Engaging Through Service.” Like it or not, faculty service, in its various forms, is one leg, albeit usually the weakest, of the tenure tripod that keeps the profession standing. “Civic engagement” has become the mantra of college and university presidents across the nation, invoked usually for three reasons: two of which fall under “public relations: 1) to buttress the institution’s reputation with funding groups and legislatures; 2) to demonstrate that institutions of higher education are not ivory towers indifferent to the ills plaguing the wider society but are instead active contributors to the common good; and 3) to demonstrate compliance with the institution’s mission which invariably promises to graduate responsible, active, and, yes, “engaged citizens.” This latter reason takes on added importance when faced with an accreditation visit.



Now, we faculty understand that under the rubric of “service” there exist different sorts of service and also a certain hierarchy in terms of the value university administrators attach to the particular forms, especially for purposes of rendering judgment about tenure, promotion, and merit pay. You each know what this hierarchy is at your own institutions, despite it being unwritten in the faculty handbook. The most common forms are volunteering service to a community organization, or to a professional association, or to university committees; or employing service learning in the classroom or, as campuses “internationalize,” leading students to a less developed nation to build schools, clinics, and the like. All these forms of faculty service are valuable, but also can be labor intensive and, arguably, not rewarded as richly as teaching and publication. Regardless, faculty engagement through service has in recent years helped grow new cottage industries eager to advise university administrators, among them are the Center for Liberal Education and Civic Engagement (AACU); National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good; The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement; and Innovations in Civic Participation. Organizations like Campus Compact, Project Pericles, Tolerance.org, and Raise your Voice are aimed primarily at college students but usually involve faculty in one role or

another.

The argument I make here today does not in any way demean these more traditional forms of civic engagement or the newer organizations that promote civic engagement. I confess that as general secretary I promoted “Professors at the Polls” as a positive way to blunt external attacks on the professoriate. This program, funded by the Carnegie Corporation, mobilized faculty in Maryland to serve as poll judges at election time, and in this way improve the faculty’s public image and at the same time perform a critically needed public service.

But the argument I will develop now is that all these forms of faculty service are not as valuable to strengthening civil society as faculty teaching in such a way that communicates the centrality of academic freedom to the educational experience, and either by inference or more directly, demonstrates the necessity of free speech to the life of democracy. Teaching academic freedom, simply put, is the highest form of faculty service and the single most appropriate form of civic engagement for members of the profession.

The question I am addressing, then, is how faculty can best contribute to the common good; and what form of civic engagement by faculty can best serve American democracy. Several premises underlie my argument: 1) in the hierarchy of values, democracy ranks at the top; 2) with the progressive John Dewey I maintain that chief among education’s purposes is to support and promote democracy and with the conservative Harry Lewis I agree that “Of all forms of government, democracy most demands an educated, thoughtful citizenry” (CHE 7 Sept 2007); and 3) higher educators best serve democracy by actively demonstrating the academy’s single most important democratic value, academic freedom.

“Wait a minute, Bowen,” I hear you saying, “You’re telling us that all I have to do is teach the core principle of my profession as a way to satisfy my dean, my provost, and my president?!?!” Yes, essentially, that is what I am saying, but with the caveat that we educators must also teach those who judge the educators, i.e., the administrators, that this form of service is not just adequate for meeting tenure, promotion, and merit standards but is also in keeping with the essence of a university’s mission. So, how do we make the case?

I will first offer a description of the origins of academic freedom in the United States; I will then offer you a working definition and suggest how it accords with democracy, and then summarize the major threats confronting academic freedom in the United States. I will close my remarks by suggesting why the protection of academic freedom is important to sustaining our democracy.

Origins

In the first and second decades of the 20th century, professors who professed honestly were frequently in danger of being fired. The issues then were, arguably, as contentious as the ones we face today. The gold standard, immigration from Asia, World War One and possible American involvement, were all flash points in public debate and some professors then bravely took a stand and, consequently, lost their jobs or, less severe, were denied appointments or promotions. Bertrand Russell, for example, was denied an appointment at Harvard by its President despite a unanimous department recommendation to hire; and McKeen Catrill lost his position at Columbia following his submission of a petition to Congress about the war that his university president regarded as unpatriotic. Charles Beard, the noted American historian, resigned his professorship at Columbia in protest against Catrill’s termination.

Such worrisome attacks prompted several prominent academic leaders, such as John Dewey, Arthur Lovejoy, and Edwin Seligman, to codify academic freedom and create the American Association of University Professors in order to police violations. Academic freedom, they said, had two applications: *lehrfreiheit* and *lernfreiheit*; and consisted of three elements: “freedom of inquiry and research; freedom of teaching within university or college; and freedom of extramural utterance and action.” Academic freedom in their view was essential to addressing the central callings of the academy—promoting inquiry and advancing the sum of human knowledge; providing instruction to students; and developing experts for the various areas of public service. Progress in America, they wrote, requires “complete and unlimited freedom” for professors to pursue inquiry and for students to receive the best education possible. The university, they said, should be an “inviolable refuge” from external pressure, whether from politicians, businessmen, or an uninformed public. The university, they wrote, should be “an intellectual experiment station, where new ideas may germinate and where their fruit, though still distasteful to the community as a whole, may be allowed to ripen....” *The New York Times* editorialized in response to the AAUP’s 1915 statement on academic freedom, saying it was written by “chartered libertines of speech” who were “given to much foolish babbling.” Nicolas Murray Butler, president of Columbia agreed with the *Times* and warned his faculty two years later that any opposition from faculty to America’s entry into World War I would not be tolerated. Presidents then, and trustees as well, regarded objectionable faculty speech as punishable, often with termination of employment.

Meaning of Academic Freedom and its connection with democracy

Experimenting with ideas can be dangerous for the experimenter because of what John Dewey called “the crust of convention.” Conventions will necessarily be broken by thinkers who are dissatisfied with old truths. Every convention, of course, has its defenders, generally those who have, or believe they have, gained from convention: they tend to be conservative politically and culturally. All the more reason then, in Richard Rorty’s words, to have “safe havens for sound opinion” where trained experts—those in the professoriate—alone are qualified to make the distinction between sound and unsound opinion. Academic freedom is essential, as Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter stated, “to provide that atmosphere which is most conducive to speculation, experiment, and creation.”

America’s most eminent jurists have understood that freedom of thought in the academy is not a luxury—it is a necessity—“essential” in Justice Earl Warren’s view—lest teaching and learning degenerate into the repetitious conveyance of tired ideas. The freedoms to think and profess must also be accompanied by the freedoms from outside interference, especially interference from government but also from business, university administrators, public opinion, and religious leaders.

While the courts, at the federal levels, have recognized academic freedom as the most essential condition for teaching and learning, academic freedom is NOT imposed on universities by any external source of law. It is rather a product of academic common law, of a widespread recognition within the academy that academic freedom is the *sine qua non* of the educational and scientific process, and a product of a democratic temperament that regards freedom of thought and speech as a goods unto themselves but also as liberal virtues that when exercised honestly are most apt to produce truth.

As a foundation document in academic common law, the 1915 Statement of principles of academic freedom was intended to serve as rallying point for faculty nationwide. It was updated in 1940 and supplemented in 1970, in each instance to reflect the changing nature of the academy’s relationship to the wider society. The 1940 statement asserted that “Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common

good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition." "The free search for truth and its free exposition" is perhaps the most terse, and apt, of all definitions of academic freedom. As in the 1915 statement, the 1940 statement repeated the need for freedom in research and publication, freedom to teach, and freedom of faculty to speak out as citizens, i.e., extramural utterance.

Well over 200 learned societies and academic professional organizations have endorsed the 1940 statement; and US courts, lower as well as the US Supreme Court, have cited the 1940 statement in their rulings or have referenced its philosophy as authoritative. Arguably, the 1940 statement is the foundation of academic common law in this nation today; and in some respects also serves as the basis of international statements on academic freedom such as those issued by UNESCO (1997) and the Global Colloquium of Presidents (2005). The latter offers a short-hand definition of academic freedom that merits citing: "At its simplest, academic freedom is the freedom to conduct research, teach, speak, and publish, subject to the norms and standards of scholarly inquiry, without interference or penalty, wherever the search for truth and understanding may lead."

Serious students of academic freedom often note a tension between the academic freedom of professors and the academic freedom of the university itself. One such student (David Rabban, chair of the AAUP's Committee A and professor of law at the University of Texas) points out that in order for professors to teach and do research freely, they need some degree of autonomy from university administrators; and that for universities to protect academic freedom and fulfill their obligation to generate new knowledge, the institutions need a degree of autonomy from the government.

To say "degree of autonomy" is, of course, to admit that autonomy, while on its face is absolute, is, in fact relative. But relative to what? I suggest, along with Ronald Dworkin, relative to competing values, such as tolerance or social justice. Speech codes, for instance, were developed in violation of academic freedom codes and the First Amendment, as policy overrides on many campuses where official censorship was deemed necessary in order to guarantee public peace, a necessary condition for learning. The principle behind such policies is the right to live and learn and teach in an environment free from prejudicial behavior and speech. But I agree with Dworkin that "censorship will always prove a traitor to justice" and that we "need to put our faith in freedom, not repression." More speech, whatever its ilk, is better than less speech in a free society.

In one famous US Supreme Court case, academic freedom was described as a "special concern of the First Amendment," what we often refer to as the right of free speech. There are, in fact, some scholars who see the line between the right of free speech and academic freedom as a very thin one and argue that free speech in the academy is, merely, academic freedom. Other scholars disassociate academic freedom from the First Amendment, arguing that academic freedom is a freedom peculiar to one and only profession—the professoriate—and should not therefore be confused with the First Amendment which applies to all citizens. The 1st Amendment gives the speech of citizens protection FROM government interference, while academic freedom is the freedom of faculty to profess and students to learn.

This debate, however, has less import for today's discussion than the more precise question about why the protection of academic freedom is central to sustaining a democracy. It is this issue that I wish to explore.

To repeat: academic freedom is the freedom of college and university professors to teach, conduct research, and publish the results of their research while at the same

time not losing their First Amendment and other rights as citizens. In brief, the professoriate is endowed with a right, a special right, not accorded to ordinary citizens, but a right that fundamentally inheres in the nature of the learned profession.

Why should professors enjoy a right that is not extended to ordinary citizens? The answer has everything to do with the nature of the vocation. Like lawyers and doctors, academe is a recognized profession, self-regulating, with its standards set by its members. Higher education is, after all, dedicated to discovering new truths or to re-examining old truths which may in turn lead to debunking old truths. Professors tend to question received wisdom, cherished orthodoxies, and popular opinions on a variety of phenomena. There is considerable risk attached to openly doubting older truths which some people regard as sacrosanct. Aver that the earth revolves around the sun, instead of the opposite which was received wisdom in the 16th century, and you will be prosecuted by church or civil authority. Aver that the 21st century war in Iraq is grounded in misassumptions or lies, and in some circles you may reap public criticism or, worse, be denied tenure or threatened with the loss of your job.

Professors are by trade and inclination devil's advocates—professional doubters whose search for the truths of their particular academic discipline often results in findings that logic alone—quite apart from seeming political advocacy—requires that we scuttle fictions and replace them with newly discovered facts; or revisit old facts that may have been hidden for political reasons (cf, Tonkin), as I illustrate here with a personal anecdote.

When I was teaching a course in the mid-80s about the Vietnam War, I relied heavily on the Pentagon Papers—originally a secret study done by the US Government on the roots of the American involvement in Vietnam and leaked by a CIA insider—Daniel Ellsberg—who had come to conclude, based on a close reading of these classified documents—that the Vietnam War was a mistake and grounded in official deceit. Sharing these classified documents with students, as it happened, was risky. Reagan was in office and conducting an overt/covert war against the Sandinista government in and around Nicaragua that grew more controversial over time, especially after it was revealed that US law was being violated by US officials in waging the war. Some of my students were strong supporters of President Reagan and his muscular foreign policy and apparently believed that analogies between Vietnam and Nicaragua were propagandistic rather than honest professing on my part. One of them invited "Accuracy in Academe"—a conservative watchdog group in Washington—to visit my class and identify and publicize what certain students saw as my preaching politics rather than teaching political science. Because I told the historical truth which Accuracy in Academe could not dispute, I was defended by the college administration.

Most of recognize that with academic freedom comes the responsibility of abiding by the norms and standards of scholarly inquiry, meaning peer review in the broadest sense, that is, accepting that scholars themselves in whichever academic discipline are alone competent to make judgments about the quality of another professor's research, publications and teaching. Teaching and research in all fields, it is presumed, is a search for the truths of the particular discipline and it is this noble purpose that ultimately legitimizes academic freedom.

There exists an essential condition for fostering academic freedom: institutional autonomy. This is the freedom of the college or university from outside interference in the scholarly mission to pursue the truths of the discipline. Institutional independence is required lest the search for truth be compromised by political, economic, governmental or social interests.

There also must be in place certain procedural guarantees if academic freedom is to be

preserved. What is called “academic due process” mirrors for professors the rights that citizens enjoy when charged with an offense; and gives scholars the right to a hearing by their peers.

Academic due process is the hallmark of institutional autonomy and the guarantor of academic freedom. A classic example: If Galileo proclaims that the earth revolves around the sun, instead of the opposite, the cogency of his theory should be judged not by religious or civic leaders, but instead by fellow astronomers. Or more contemporary: if a psychologist claims homosexuality is biological, the claim should be reviewed by fellow psychologists and not by politicians, religious fundamentalists, or Bill O’Reilly.

The uttering of some truths can be controversial in the marketplace of ideas where vested interests may wish to preserve more traditional ways of looking at the world. When Darwinism, for example, was offered as an alternative truth to biblical notions of human creation, some religious leaders and church-related scholars strongly objected, seeing Darwin’s theories as blasphemous as well as seditious. As a result of public clamor, some scholars supporting Darwin’s theory were fired from their university positions. Their terminations were violations of academic freedom. Why? Proponents of new truths must be accorded the right to have their teachings and writings judged not by the clergy and public opinion, in this instance, but by evolutionary biologists who are competent to pass judgment about the quality of the ideas being taught.

Take an extreme example: When Ward Churchill, the tenured ethnic studies professor at University of Colorado, referred to 9/11 victims as “little Eichmans,” the governor of Colorado and other state legislators called for Churchill’s termination. The UC president, Betsy Hoffman, resisted, however, claiming that Churchill was protected by academic freedom and that only his peers, relying on academic due process, were qualified to question his competence. She lost her job, partially I suspect as a result of defending Churchill’s academic freedom, yet her successor honored her decision to resist political pressures and permitted faculty peers to render a judgment about his writings.

I will not claim that Churchill’s purposely incendiary comment represents a search for truth, but it does help us to understand the meaning of the “marketplace of ideas” and the importance of academic due process. If the marketplace of ideas worked as it ought, critics would have attacked Churchill’s contention and left the Ethnic Studies professor himself alone. But American academe operates within the capitalist marketplace where the value of ideas is directly dependent on their acceptance by consumers of ideas; by my lights, academic capitalism distorts the meaning of “marketplace of ideas.” It confuses the conveyor of the idea with the producer and lends to the temptation for the payer of the piper to call the tune. The difference between the academy and the economic marketplace is that in the academy the “producers,” i.e., the faculty, have final judgment on the value of the ideas or theories being presented, while in the economic marketplace consumer taste may well determine whether a product, or, yes, an idea, is judged worthy.

The search for truth sounds highfalutin, pretentious, and probably arrogant to an undereducated public. Yet there are some professions where the search for truth defines what its practitioners do. All religions, for instance, make the claim of knowing received truth; and even when the clergy grapple with moral and ethical conundrums, they do so in the context of biblical truth. Closer to the academy than religion is the law. The legal process is all about the search for truth where the truth is often contestable. The presumption is that lawyers and prosecutors act as disinterested seekers after the truth in the name of justice which itself is usually accepted as a condition defined by common and positive law. When justice is transmogrified by political partisanship—as it was last year over the replacement of federal prosecutors

for partisan political concerns—a public uproar can ensue.

Similarly, in the academy the professors' code of ethics requires that they not use or interpret evidence in order to appease the financial supporters of their research, whether it is BMW in the case of Clemson, or Monsanto in the case of UC Berkeley or the US Government in climate change research. If a scholar fixes his/her findings in order to appease a financial backer or political supporter, not only does the scholarship lose value but its very production weakens professional standards and ultimately, when found out, discredits the scholar.

Professors, then, are honor-bound to pursue the undiscovered truths within their academic discipline. Academic freedom gives them this right, but academic freedom also imposes the obligation to pursue the truth honestly. Institutional autonomy protects the scholarly pursuit of truth from outside agents who might otherwise influence scholarly findings. And if the scholar discovers an “inconvenient truth”—say, global warming, the deceit behind the Vietnam or Iraq wars, or the lack of scientific basis for intelligent design—and is targeted in some way—denial of tenure, denial of promotion, termination, or the like—then academic due process assures the scholar gets a fair hearing from a panel of fellow experts.

So what has this to do with American democracy?

Democracy is an ideal and a value and, therefore, perpetually contestable, and is also a condition that is always in the making, never fully developed. To be sure, democracy has its necessary, basic elements, such as constitutional rights, elected representation, legal due process, and the like, but even in the world's oldest democracy—America—the challenges to democracy are frequent and serious. When our elected leaders lie to the public, or engage in graft, or violate the civil rights of citizens, in every case democratic truths are being assaulted and sometimes undermined. Democracy is assaulted when officials who are sworn to uphold laws and to tell the truth—like Scooter Libby or former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales—are found to have lied or to have violated the public trust by pursuing partisan interests.

Similarly, if a professor spews bias or mere opinion in the classroom or in publications, instead of conveying the truths of the discipline in all their complexity, students and the reading public lose confidence in the professor's intellectual integrity. If debate is curtailed by pontification or the professor gives his students only “ready-made conclusions,” students will either turn off or conclude that truth is singular and Upper Case and decide they might as well be in church or mosque or temple as in the classroom. In any event, students will not learn how to think for themselves.

There is a classical liberal notion at work here, straight from John Stuart Mill, that has as much relevance for free speech as it does academic freedom. Debate, dialogue, discussion are the best ways to produce truths, to deepen public understanding, and to raise civic consciousness. Edicts, monologues, and dictation of truths are the most certain means to undermine democracy. Education is all about challenging received wisdom, even if the product is reaffirmation of ageless truths. Regardless, education, no less than democratic society, requires intellectual openness, substantive exchanges between learners holding conflicting views, and the intellectual courage to rebut. Education in this sense is, as John Dewey claimed, democracy itself.

The pursuit of truth obliges the seeker of truth to put aside biases, politics, personal interests, and favoritism of whatever sort. Certain professions other than academe require this sort of impartiality in pursuing truth—the law, medicine, and hard science. All have in common a need for the practitioners to enjoy absolute independence in carrying out their responsibilities. When their independence is compromised, the public

loses confidence in the integrity of these professions' findings. Unfortunately, examples abound.

Recent testimony by former surgeon generals of the United States revealed that political maneuvering by elected officials stymied the nation's chief physician from sharing certain kinds of medical information. To wit, the former Surgeon General of the United States, Richard Carmona, testified that the Bush administration censored him as he attempted to share information on stem cell research and teen pregnancy with the general public. (Los Angeles Times, 10 July 2007). Similarly, NASA scientists have claimed that the Bush administration has tinkered with scientific findings on climate change.

Let me offer an analogy taken from economics. When the stock market plummeted last August as a result of massive defaults in the American mortgage industry, Deutsche Bank's chief economist proffered: "Credit depends on trust. If trust disappears, then credit disappears and you have a systemic issue." (NYT, 10 August 2007)

In the academy, no less than in the economy, public or student trust in the professoriate depends on the intellectual credit accumulated by teachers and scholars whose veracity and commitment to finding and communicating the truths of their discipline builds trust and, hence, credibility.

Eight Threats

Various forces threaten academic freedom today. I can identify at least 6 major threats to academic freedom that in varying degrees are exogenous. Two, maybe three other major threats are, in my view, attributable to failures by faculty themselves to safeguard their precious right:

1. Corporatization of the academy, transmogrifying education into a business, governed by a "bottom-line mentality," and university presidents into CEOs, Deans into "middle level management," faculty into exploitable labor, students into consumers or clients; and rankings roughly based on wealth (endowment size). Presidents as CEOs: obscene salaries, sweet-heart contracts, appointments of non-academics and public officials as president
2. The hollowing out of the professoriate: growing reliance on part-time faculty and the gradual elimination of tenure; converting FT into PT, allocating instruction monies into administration or athletics; 2/3 all new positions going to non tenure eligible
3. Defunding of higher ed (publics), from public supported, to public assisted, to public located, along with the arbitrary setting of performance benchmarks and "accountability standards" that treat faculty as piece workers and students as widgets or as customers. "Starving the beast," "fee for service," education not as a public good but as a private interest. Examples: UVA, U Delaware, SUNY
4. Anti-intellectualism, from Bush pushing for equal time in the classroom for intelligent design and evolution (cf., Pew survey, 65% of public agrees) ; attacks on Middle East experts; official suppression of evidence of global warming; speech codes, w/in academy
5. Growing conservatism of students, who believe the academy is a service industry and that they should be rewarded based on what they pay and not on what they learn.
6. Right-wing assault: ACTA, David Horowitz, Campus Watch, The Patriot Act, Solomon Amendment, Students for Academic Freedom, 25 state legislatures consider the so-called "Academic Bill of Rights"

The last two threats come from the faculty themselves:

1. Failure of faculty and university leaders to teach academic freedom: to help students understand its critical importance to learning.
2. Academic feudalism: divided faculty, indifferent to shared governance, a reward system based on hyper-individualistic research agendas and departmentalization

If I were to list a ninth threat, it is related to # 8 above: the failure of institutions to honor the faculty's governance of themselves. It is often argued—and I agree—that academic freedom is imperiled whenever administrators, trustees, students, or legislators usurp or undermine the faculty's historic right to make a judgment about the quality of ideas within the academy. I must repeat: Faculty members alone are competent to determine scholarly and pedagogical standards.

Teaching Academic Freedom

A poll taken by the Pew Foundation shortly after 9/11 disclosed that almost half of all Americans believe the First Amendment's "free speech" doctrine is not of such import that it cannot and should not be trumped for the sake of national security. An AAUP poll of two years ago showed an equally high percentage of the public favors sacrificing academic freedom for national security reasons.

To serve through engagement, your conference theme, requires me to ask, why not begin every course you teach by asking what Pew did, "Does the First Amendment go too far?" And ask, additionally, "Under which conditions should speech protections be suspended?" Assay the students' responses and then introduce them to the concept of "academic freedom" as a "special concern of the First Amendment." Ask whether there should be any limitations on student and faculty speech during your course; whether the class, acting as a corporate body, should be empowered to disallow certain notions, words, and writings from being discussed. Ask your students whether higher education is obliged to provide forums for all ideas, opinions, viewpoints, and arguments if only in order to test their validity, coherency, and implications. Ask them the question J.S. Mill might have posed if he lived in 21st century America, whether having "peace in the intellectual world" merits sacrificing "the entire moral courage of the human mind?" Ask your students if they agree with Supreme Court Justice William Brennan who wrote that "Academic freedom...is of transcendent value to all of us and not merely to the teachers concerned...?"

Finally, share with your students the 1915 and 1940 AAUP statements on academic freedom, as well as the 1967 Statement on Student Academic Freedom and lead a discussion about how these documents pertain to the subject matter of the course. Having this discussion communicates pointedly that your course is a public forum where all students are encouraged to exercise their freedom to speak, question, and debate. Proffering this example of democratic openness is the highest form of civic engagement and an object lesson for students who will later participate in a democratic society.

Conclusion

When the United States military occupied Japan following the Second World War, the US Commander, General Douglas MacArthur, retained several New Deal lawyers to oversee the writing of a new democratic constitution for the Japanese. These American legal experts single-mindedly sought to create the perfect democratic constitution and thus offered an extensive list of basic rights, based on the American Bill of Rights but arguably more complete: they added constitutional rights that Americans themselves do not enjoy, among them the right to a "minimum standard of living," the right of workers to bargain collectively, and academic freedom. Each of these basic constitutional rights was intended to address the egregious lack of such

rights during the prewar, fascist regime. Democracy, they reasoned, requires guaranteed rights and academic freedom is one of them. Why would that be true?

In the case of academic freedom, the constitutional experts had noted that the prewar regime used lower and higher education for political purposes: for propagandizing, for socialization of militarist values, and to inculcate obedience to government authority. If, the American constitutional experts reasoned, education is an agency of the state, to teach only what the state wants communicated, then educated citizens will be little more than servants of the state and such a condition makes democracy impossible. Hence, academic freedom was made a fundamental right in the Japanese Constitution.

It sometimes takes an extreme case such as anti-democratic Japan of the prewar era in order to highlight the importance of particular freedoms and their relationship to democracy. So too does it sometime take a serious violation of academic freedom on a particular campus to remind us of academic freedom's importance; or a violation of some person or group's freedom of speech to remind us of the importance of the First Amendment to democracy.

That it takes a violation of anyone's rights—whether in the wider society or in the academy—to prompt corrective action is regrettable if understandable. Less understandable and even more regrettable is for citizens and academics to be passive in the face of rights violations. If civic engagement by faculty is to have consequential impact on students and on the wider society, then at the very least faculty should do as their profession demands and teach the meaning of freedom to teach, freedom to learn, freedom to think, freedom to argue, and freedom to examine inconvenient truths. In so doing, we bring the most basic of democratic tenets into the classroom; and if students learn the value of intellectual openness in this way, perhaps, just perhaps, they will behave as citizens of a democracy.



From the President

by Sue Pendell, Colorado State University

AV costs for the 2008 convention Interest Group panels/programs, the Kickoff, and the Keynote ran a deficit of about \$250. Total AV expenses were \$3,156.97; total income (\$5.00/registration) was \$2,190.00.



AV is expensive. An LCD Projector Package cost \$825.27/day. A TV/VCR/DVD Video Display Package cost \$248.89/day. A Presentation Support Package with 8' screen cost \$170.29/day.

In order to honor all necessary AV requests, I borrowed two LCD projectors from gracious workshop presenters who brought their

own to reduce workshop costs (workshops have to pay for themselves). I borrowed a digital video camera from my university (the only AV I could borrow). I lined up panels/programs with the same AV requests in the same rooms, so the AV was continuously in use.

Of course, no Primary Program Planner can arrange for AV when it's not requested. One Interest Group requested no AV, apparently due to a misunderstanding that none was available. A couple of people requested AV at the last minute, requests that could not be met because AV was already contracted for.

As you work on your papers/programs for next year, please remember that AV is limited and must be requested along with paper/program submission. If you want to use an LCD projector, please try to bring your own and let your Interest Group use it for other panels/programs. I know Dan Canary will do his best to honor your requests for necessary AV; please help him do this.



Distinguished Service Award Presented to Peter Andersen

Peter Andersen, San Diego State University, received the WSCA Distinguished Service Award at this year's luncheon. Here is committee member John Cagle's tribute to the recipient:

In 1979 WSCA began a new award to recognize individuals who have made "considerable and long-standing contributions both to WSCA and to the field of communication." Since then 29 people have been found worthy of WSCA's highest honor. Indeed, in two years it was decided not to make this award. The criteria for the award are of course written down, but they do not give the award its honor and value. It is the people who have received this award over the years who define why this award is worthy of our highest regard. The names of great teachers, scholars, and leaders are printed in the convention program. I will name a few—not selective but every five years beginning 1979: Thorrell Fest, Fred McMahon, Gale Richards, Thomas Scheidel, Lucy Keele, and Ken Frandsen. In the past three years Leah VandeBerg, Sandra Petronio, and Dawn Braithwaite received the award.



There is not time to name everyone. Their names and lives of our Distinguished Service Award recipients provide role models of what it means to be a professor--unselfishly giving of themselves to their students, to scholarship in our discipline, to leadership and service in higher education, and to the world in which we live. For now, however, may I ask all the recipients of the WSCA Distinguished Service Award in attendance to please stand ... and will you join me in expressing again our appreciation.

In 2008 today, WSCA is proud to add the name of another teacher, scholar, and leader to this distinguished group.

Let me say confidently that the person to receive this award today should be known to all of you. This person personifies the qualities I have tried to describe. In this person you will find a passion for life, a passion for addressing real issues in the world, a passion for teaching and nurturing students, a passion for service, a passion for being a human being.

This person has been actively involved with WSCA since 1972—in fact missing only one convention in all these years. The record of service to WSCA builds upon years and years of dedicated service in the trenches of the interest groups as officer and reader, of service as a member of innumerable committees and boards vital to the life of the association. This person has served as Delegate-at-Large to the Legislative Assembly, Member-at-Large of the Executive Council, and First Vice President, President Elect, President, and Immediate Past President of the Association. When a newly selected editor fell ill, this person stepped in with no notice to serve as Acting Editor. In all of these roles this person always strove to make a difference—to encourage us to imagine making the work of the association better, but not forget the human heart at the soul of Western States.

With all of this work to do, was there time for scholarship? Indeed! This person's contributions to the field of communication are significant, having published, at last count, four books, 47 chapters, and 45 articles in refereed journals, plus authored and coauthored 68 competitively selected convention papers for international and national conventions and a number of regional convention papers in addition to those for WSCA—and, get, this, this person actually writes different papers for different conventions! It's easy to see why this person has been acknowledged, in two separate studies, as one of the 100 most prolific communication scholars of the 20th century.

Not living in an Ivory Tower, this person has been incredibly active in communication outreach, in the application of our knowledge and methodologies to make the world a better place. This person worked on two sun safety campaigns for the National Cancer Institute, disaster preparedness for the County of San Diego, and anti-smoking campaigns for the National Cancer Institute and the Colorado Community Tobacco Control Coalitions. His research and civic engagement projects have been supported by over \$12 million in grants. This person has served as a communication consultant, given speeches to local service clubs, been a legal consultant and expert witness, presented workshops for primary and secondary teachers, legal professionals, health professionals, and political candidates and organizations, among others, and done media broadcasts on political, nonverbal, and interpersonal communication. As a scholar writing a nomination letter said, "Just summarizing all these activities makes me tired."

Who is this person? A few hints: Who has a BA in Political Science from the University of Illinois at Chicago, an MS in Communication at Illinois State University, and a PhD from Florida State University?

The last published book shows this person's passion for reaching the broadest audiences: *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Body Language*.

This person has taught at many universities around the country, frequently in a visiting professorship, but finds his home in San Diego, which is great because his wife Jan Andersen lives there! Well—it isn't as simple as that, and I cannot present this award without correcting a rumor that this person has been seen in the frequent company of a beautiful woman in Boston. Jan Andersen is now Dean of the College of Communication at Emerson College in Boston.

By this time it must be clear that the Distinguished Service Award in 2008 is being given to Peter A. Andersen of San Diego State University.



First WSCA Distinguished Scholar Award Presented to Leslie Baxter

Mary Jane Collier, Immediate Past President of WSCA, presented the first WSCA Distinguished Scholar Award to Leslie Baxter, University of Iowa. Here are the remarks that Collier made in her presentation:

I am extremely honored to present the first annual WSCA Scholar Award. This award was created by the Executive Council to recognize “a sustained contribution to the study of human communication from a member of WSCA who has made a difference in the way scholars and students think about the nature, function, and scope of communication. Criteria for selection include a research program that is: 1) sustained, 2) theoretically grounded, 3) analytically sound, 4) advances the discipline, and 5) includes work that has been featured in WSCA journals as well as other outlets.

The research program of the first WSCA Scholar evidences a thirty year history of sustained contributions to communication theorizing and the study of personal and social relationships. This scholar’s name connotes a kind of absolute predictability and confidence in the quality of the work, along with guarantees of novel theoretical insights. As one colleague described, “the stature of this individual’s work is unparalleled, not just in interpersonal communication or even communication theory but across the communication discipline; the scholar has authored and coauthored six books, 67 articles, and 33 book chapters.”



Another noteworthy characteristic of her research (yes the first scholar is a female) is the unparalleled breadth and depth of her theorizing and research praxis. She has produced more than 40 articles on Relational Dialectics Theory and Dialogism; in a survey of 900 studies on family communication, RDT is the number 1 most cited theory.

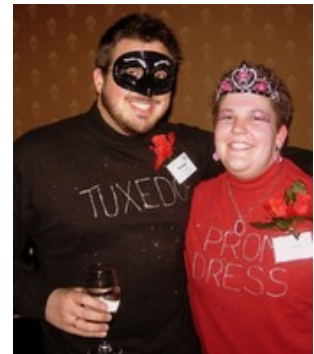
Her scholarly voice stands out due to her willingness not only to recognize contradictions and work with tensions but to create ruptures and question foundational assumptions. One colleague said, “She contributes to existing dialogues as well as prompts quantitative and qualitative shifts in theory and research.” Take for instance

the article on Disciplining the Feminine with Brown & Blair in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* in 1994. It was honored with the 2006 Charles H. Woolbert Research Award at NCA for its lasting scholarly contribution. Additionally, “the book, *Relating: Dialogues and Dialectics* published in 1996 with Montgomery, presented what was known and contradictory and gave us a way to reframe our views of relating.” In 2006 her call for more critically oriented scholarship in interpersonal communication has sparked important discussions about interparadigmatic dialogue.

Finally this individual is someone whose presence has been centrally connected with WSCA, and yet she stands out from the crowd as autonomous when necessary. For instance she’s been president of WSCA, interest group chair, and published nine articles in the *Western Journal of Communication* and one in *Communication Reports*. While she is known for her openness to dialogue, collaboration and mentoring of graduate students throughout the U.S. we are glad she closes off invitations to become active in other regional associations.

In sum, I think of her scholarship as having the constancy and brilliance of the North Star; it guides us from wherever we are located, it brings out the shadows, and lights our way forward.

Look for the special session in Phoenix in 2009, in which the work of this extraordinary scholar will be highlighted. Please celebrate with me the first annual WSCA Scholar, the F. Wendell Miller Distinguished Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Iowa, Leslie Baxter.



5th Annual USRC Success!

by Heather Hundley, First Vice President

We had an excellent array of competitive undergraduate papers presented at the 5th Annual Undergraduate Scholars Research Conference February 16th at the Omni Interlocken Hotel in Broomfield, Colorado. After undergoing the blind review process, we had a 76% acceptance rate. A total of five panels were organized representing nineteen papers delivered by students from universities such as University of Texas at El Paso, University of Illinois, Carbondale, Arizona State University, and Portland State University, just to name a few.



Top honors were given to Jason Abbamonte (University of Colorado at Boulder) for his paper “How am I Supposed to Cope with this Person?: The

Relationship between Authoritative Parenting Communication and Uncertainty and Topic Avoidance in Stepfamily Relationships”; Jonathan Butler and Lauren Lau (University of Colorado at Boulder) for their work “Gender Differences in Question Asking and Self-Disclosure during First-Time Interactions”; and Cynthia Vivoli (University of San Diego) for her research “*Teen Kids News* and its Role in Shaping a Citizen.” The recipients of the Top Three papers received a certificate of recognition, WSCA luncheon, a bag of books from Bedford/St. Martin’s, and \$150. They were recognized at the USRC awards ceremony and at the WSCA luncheon. All USRC participants received a substantial reduction in WSCA’s conference fee courtesy of WSCA.

Many people ought to be recognized for their time, commitment, and sponsorship to the USRC’s success. Namely, I appreciate the faculty mentors for encouraging their students to submit research, the reviewers for their time and dedication, and the respondents for their comments and useful feedback. I also thank the students’ support networks including their professors, family, and friends—many of whom attended the conference offering encouragement to the many first-time presenters. Additionally, Bedford/St. Martin’s and WSCA must be acknowledged for their continual USRC sponsorship and I hope we can maintain this positive relationship. Finally, the students who submitted their research and presented their scholarship are recognized for their hard work and dedication. They are indeed applauded for their efforts.

Please consider having your students submit their work next year to support their scholarship, provide them with opportunities that may be unknown to them, and possibly open the doors for graduate education. More details will be provided in *WSCA News* at the beginning of the next academic year; however, the deadline remains early December. Inquiries can be sent to the new WSCA 2nd Vice President Kathryn Sorrells at Kathryn.sorrells@csun.edu This experience was truly a privilege to be a part of and I look forward to many more USRC in WSCA’s future.



Units Present Top Paper Awards

ORWAC

This year’s recipient of the Feminist Scholarship Award is **Sherianne Shuler**, Creighton University. Dr. Shuler’s essay entitled “Autoethnographic Emotion: Studying and Living Emotional Labor in the Scholarly Life” was chosen for its innovativeness, riskiness and rigor. In particular, the critical eye that she turns on herself in regard to the construction of an academic life provokes interesting discussion about the ways in which we each proceed in such a life; moreover her use of auto-ethnographic methods and scholarship is particularly important in light of various interpretations and understandings that persist



about auto-ethnography. This year's officers of ORWAC congratulate Dr. Shuler for her fine scholarship. Her essay was published in *Women's Studies in Communication*, fall 2007 (vol. 30).

Health Communication

The Health Communication Interest Group presented four awards for top papers. **Lorraine Jackson and Danielle Boulger**, of California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, were awarded the top paper honor for their article, *Short-term exposure to idealized body images in health and fitness magazines: The effects on men's and women's body esteem*. **Phoebe Krueger**, a master's student at the University of Portland, received the award for top debut paper for her article, *Supportive communication on pro-eating disorder websites: A pilot study*. **Vianey Miramontes**, and undergraduate student at The University of New Mexico, and **Olaf Werder**, an assistant professor at The University of New Mexico, also received top four paper recognition for their article, *Consumer responses to conventional versus alternative medicine advertising: The case study of diet supplements*. The final top paper award was presented to **Brian Spitzberg**, San Diego State University, for his article, *Irritating review Boards (IRBs): The health implications of trauma related and meta-research for IRB practices*.

Intercultural Communication

Top Paper Award

ALENENEC: Learning from Place, Spirit, and Traditional Language by Saanich Indian School Board, **Joshua Guilar**, Royal Roads University and **Tye Swallow**, Saanich Adult Education Center

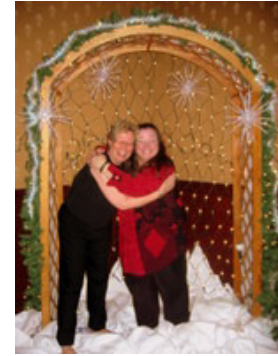
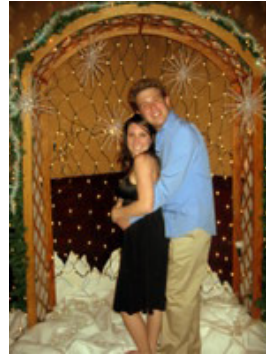
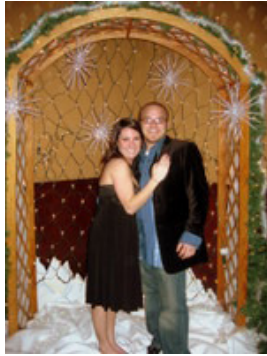
Top Student Paper Award

Ethnic Identity Maintenance and Immigrant Communication Patterns: Dominicans in South Florida by **Yvette Bueno**, University of Miami

Organizational Communication

Congratulations to **Hamilton Bean** and **Lisa Keranen** from University of Colorado, Boulder who won the top paper award for the organizational communication interest group for their essay, *Exploring the Relationship between Homeland Security Information Sharing and Local Emergency Preparedness*.

Congratulations also to **Krista Belanger**, from University of Colorado, Boulder, who won the top student award for her essay, *Theorizing Small Businesses as Organizations*



Environmental Communication Scholars Form WSCA Interest Group

by Todd Norton, Washington State University

The 2008 conference of the WSCA brought about a new Interest Group for the Association.

Given the growth of the environmental communication discipline and the significance of both global and local environmental issues, scholars throughout the west worked with WSCA executive officers to establish the new interest group.



These same scholars and many others gathered at the 2008 conference to showcase the wide range of environmental communication (EC) scholarship underway in western state universities. The EC panels and business meeting were organized by WSCA conference planner Dr. Sue Pendell in conjunction with Dr. Julie Kalil Schutten (Northern Arizona University) and Dr. Todd Norton (Washington State University).

The panels entitled *Extending the Environmental Project in the Western States (Communication Association)* were comprised of invited papers from leading environmental scholars among western universities.

With presenters and attendees from departments ranging from *communication* to *natural resources* and *wildlife and fisheries sciences*, the panels highlighted the necessarily interdisciplinary nature of environmental communication.

Panel I

Panel Chair: Connie Bullis, University of Utah
Communicating Nature: How We Create and Understand Environmental Messages
Julia Corbett, University of Utah
Collaborative Leadership and Decision Making in Environmental Policy
Gregg Walker, Oregon State University
Imaging Dystopia: Environmental Photography and Polluted Landscapes
Jennifer Peeples, Utah State University
The Global Warming Specter
Judith Hendry, University of New Mexico
Beasts, Burgers, and Hummers: Anti-Environmentalism and the Crisis in Masculinity in Contemporary Television Advertisements
Richard A. Rogers, Northern Arizona University

Panel II

Panel Chair: Gregg Walker, Oregon State University
Chewing on the Grizzly Man: The Implications of Humans as Meat
Julie Kalil Schutten, Northern Arizona University
Property and Stakeholder Conflict: A Survey of Rights-of-Way Cases across the
Western States

Todd Norton, Washington State University
Environmental Communication and Community Engagement: Lessons from the Step It
Up 2007 National Project

Danielle Endres, University of Utah
Autumn Garrison, University of Utah
Constructing the Human-Nature Relationship
Tema Milstein, University of New Mexico

Environmental Communication in the Community: Using Principles of Communication
to Engage Stakeholders in Natural Resource Conflict Management

Jessica Thompson, Colorado State University
Event and Sign: Inquiry Directives for Place-based Management
Damon M. Hall, Texas A&M University

This enthusiasm and engagement continued directly into the EC business meeting. The EC business meeting was well attended by both established senior and emerging junior scholars. At the founding meeting of the group, members reviewed and approved bylaws the following members were voted into executive roles:

Todd Norton – Chair
Julie Kalil Schutten – Chair Elect
Danielle Endres – Secretary

Reflecting the commitment and grassroots nature of the group, several committees were also formed among members. WSCA will surely witness an increase in environmental communication scholarship as we move toward the future and especially at the 2009 conference in Phoenix. Please look to the April, 2007 issue of the WSCA Newsletter for a more comprehensive story about the formation and focus of the EC Interest Group.

For additional information, please contact one of the EC executive officers:

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Julie Kalil Schutten Julie.Schutten@nau.edu
Danielle Endres danielle.endres@utah.edu



ORWAC to Offer Research Grants

by Michelle Holling, ORWAC President

ORWAC is extremely proud to announce the first annual “ORWAC Research Development Grant.” Two grants will be awarded—category 1 aims to support graduate students and category 2 targets instructors or tenure/track faculty. Each grant offers a maximum of \$1,000.00. The grants are designed to assist feminist scholars in completing research or creative projects that privilege and advance understandings about the intersectionality and complexity defining women’s lives. Broadly speaking, submitted projects are those that chart new ground in disciplinary knowledge about women and gender; that offer insights about the challenges and negotiations confronted by women in light of intersecting identities; and/or that favor the voices, experiences, discourses, performances and lives of women. Applicants must hold current membership in the ORWAC. To access both the call and application form for the grants, please visit: www.orwac.org or contact Professor Michelle A. Holling, President of the ORWAC, at mholling@csusm.edu



Editor: Bill Eadie, San Diego State University
Submit items for the April issue by April 11 to weadie@mail.sdsu.edu

Thanks to John Cagle and Sue Pendell for access to their pictures from the convention!