



Student Demands: Conformity, Thought Police, Show Trials

Some demands have merit, some threaten education

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Of the demands being made by protesters in the current wave of unrest on American campuses, some no doubt are well grounded and worth considering. Some of them, on the other hand, challenge academic freedom head on.

Some would take control of curriculum and hiring out of the hands of faculty. Some would enforce conformity of thought. Some would attack the rights of dissenters. Some would merely gut the seriousness of the university.

Last night I did a long series of tweets drawing on a website which sympathetically compiles demands from campus protests — TheDemands.org — and noting some of the more troublesome instances:

From Dartmouth: “All professors will be required to be trained in not only cultural competency but also the importance of social justice in their day-to-day work.”

From Wesleyan: “An anonymous student reporting system for cases of bias, including microaggressions, perpetrated by faculty and staff.”

From the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: “White professors must be discouraged from leading and teaching departments about demographics and societies colonized, massacred, or enslaved under white supremacy.”

From Guilford College: “We suggest that every week a faculty member come forward and publicly admit their participation in racism inside the classroom via a letter to the editor” in the college paper.

My series drew and continues to draw a strong reaction. Now I've Storified the tweets as a single narrative, including some of the responses.

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