

## Levitt: At CU, faculty groups have become administration lackeys

By Paul M. Levitt

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As one of the original authors of faculty governance at CU, I grieve over what the Arts and Sciences Council (ASC) and the Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA) have become: willing servants of the administration. The result is that these bodies have failed to defend the faculty from the witch hunters, who have conjured a baneful brew of politically inspired charges ranging from sexual misconduct to retaliation. And why? To ostensibly show Title IX officials that CU is strongly policing the campus and "exceeding" the efforts of other universities to discipline students and faculty for sexual predation. But the university, in its unregulated zeal, has cast so wide a net that it is also likely to haul in pariahs, detractors, heretics, heathens, Hussites, honest brokers, and critics of administrative decisions.

The most recent and most egregious examples concern the disregard for due process, behavior strongly condemned by outside groups such as the ACLU and the American Association of University Professors. Just consider the ham-handed manner in which the administration treated the Professor Patti Adler case, and the draconian measures taken against Professors Dan Kaufman and David Barnett, all to my mind violations of civil and university rights that rise to the level of personal injury. In a well-governed university, the offending officials would be severely reprimanded or even dismissed. But given the fecklessness of the CU Board of Regents, who recently reappointed President Bruce Benson -- without a single mention of his having suppressed the CU campus press -- I would not recommend seeking justice from that quarter.

And the ASC and the BFA? Their response to administrative malpractice is either silence or cowardice. To paraphrase one BFA official, who seems to equate dissent with disloyalty, "We don't want to poke a stick in the eye of the administration." By not defending faculty or holding the administration accountable, the ASC and BFA have, in my eyes, become accomplices to moral lynchings and McCarthyism on an alarming scale. The reasons for our faculty representatives' failing the university community are not entirely clear. Some reps contend that backroom negotiations are more effective than public statements, though the record would argue otherwise. Some fear they will jeopardize their promotions. Some are angling for administrative positions in Regent Hall -- positions that come with handsome salaries, generous raises, numerous perks, and zero teaching. But what we do know is that unlike earlier chairs, whose only reward for their service was course relief, the current ones receive stipends, and the members of the BFA executive committee receive an honorarium. The source of the money? The upper administration. In other words, the faculty representatives take payola from the very people whom they should be scrutinizing and who should be held accountable for overreach. I would hazard that this corruption explains why our best faculty decline to serve on either of these bodies, while those who do are frequently absent from meetings.

What's to be done? First, make high administrative offices subject to a faculty vote, one that is binding. Yes, I know that when the BFA voted against the Benson appointment, the Regents simply overrode it. But did the BFA object? No, to the contrary, its response was surrender and obeisance. Second, cashier the ASC and BFA and convene a select committee to rewrite the governance charters to strengthen faculty standing, prohibit payola, and bar deans from attending ASC meetings and thus effectively controlling them. As matters now stand, the ASC and BFA have perfect records: They have become mute witnesses to perjury and purges without so much as an utterance of moral courage.

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