

Poetic Justice Goes to College

Craig J. Cantoni

Some say that universities are reaping what they have sown as the University of Missouri president was forced to resign in the wake of criticisms of alleged racial incidents on campus.

College professors, administrators, and presidents are of course purveyors of leftist notions of fairness, social justice, redistribution, collectivism, and other coercions du jour. At the same time, they are addicted to government grants, subsidies, and tuition loans, which drive up the cost of college and leave their graduates in debt. They also live in leafy college towns and can take bikes or Priuses to campus while endorsing “climate change” policies that are crushing the working class.

Now they’re getting their comeuppance.

But will they understand?

In May 2014, we saw their response to an effort to hold them accountable. They were shocked to think that the government they love could turn on them.

The Obama Administration came up with the absurdity that colleges were going to be required to evaluate how well their students do after graduation. (How did performance evaluations work at Veterans Administration hospitals?) College professors, administrators, and presidents squealed about this, because for once they were being stuck instead of sticking it to others.

In a story in *The New York Times*,¹ one college president was quoted as saying, “Applying a sledgehammer to the whole system isn’t going to work.”

I wonder whether he said the same thing about ObamaCare.

The chancellor of the University System of Maryland said, “It’s hard for me to imagine how that can work.”

I wonder whether he said the same thing about the imponderable Dodd-Frank law that imposed massive regulatory changes on the financial sector.

Another college president said, “As with many things, the desire to solve a complicated problem in what feels like a simple way can capture people’s imagination.” Then he cautioned that such information can be “oversimplified to the point that it actually misleads.”

I wonder whether he said the same thing about other oversimplifications, such as government statistics on the income gap and the minimum wage.

Still another said, “I find this initiative uncharacteristically clueless.”

Isn’t it racist to say this about the first black President of the U.S.?

Another college president was very judgmental: “We think that entire approach is quite wrongheaded.”

That doesn’t sound like proper civil discourse.

Others accused the Obama administration of being obstinate and forcing the system down their throats.

Now they know how it feels to run a small business in America.

Still others see that the evaluations are at odds with the push to admit into college more minorities and poor students with substandard high school academic records.

Now they know how it feels to be a private employer and be sued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for firing a member of a minority for poor performance after trying to do the right thing and hiring him or her in the first place.

The “radical” idea that prompted all this dismay was to inject the executive branch into the business of helping prospective students weigh collegiate pros and cons, a task that had been dominated for years by private companies like *Barron’s* and *U.S. News & World Report*.

After all, President Obama and his aides pointed out that colleges and universities receive a total of \$150 billion each year in federal loans and grants. And at too many schools, tuition is going up, graduation rates are going down, and students are leaving with enormous debt and little hope of high-paying jobs.

And what have college professors, administrators, and presidents said about federal government requirements for doctors’ report cards, quality measures, pay cuts to hospitals with too many readmissions, or price controls? Not a thing. But imagine the outrage if tuition and administrators’ salaries had been frozen for more than a decade!

Now colleges have to confront the fact that it is not just the government, but the minority students they professed to love who are turning on them. The students, or the agitators claiming to speak for them are not just demanding bureaucratic reports. They want much more, and are unlikely to be placated by a few letters of resignation.

The college professors, administrators, and presidents are unlikely to find sympathy from the working class, industry, small business, physicians—or the serious students whose education has been hampered or wrecked by political correctness.

More likely, there will be celebrations that poetic justice is being served.

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REFERENCE

1. Shear MD. Colleges rattled as Obama seeks rating system. *NY Times*, May 25, 2014. Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/26/us/colleges-rattled-as-obama-presses-rating-system.html?_r=0. Accessed Nov 12, 2015.