

Diversity and Multiculturalism: The New Racism

By: Michael S. Berliner, Ph.D. and Gary Hull, Ph.D.

The "diversity" movement is not imparting knowledge to students, but promoting racism.

Is ethnic diversity an "absolute essential" of a college education? UCLA's Chancellor Charles Young thinks so. Ethnic diversity is clearly the purpose of affirmative action, which Young is defending against a long-overdue assault. But far from being essential to a college education, such diversity is a sure road to its destruction. "Ethnic diversity" is merely racism in a politically correct disguise.

Many people have a very superficial view of racism. They see it as merely the belief that one race is superior to another. It is much more than that. It is a fundamental (and fundamentally wrong) view of human nature. Racism is the notion that one's race determines one's identity. It is the belief that one's convictions, values and character are determined not by the judgment of one's mind but by one's anatomy or "blood."

This view causes people to be condemned (or praised) based on their racial membership. In turn, it leads them to condemn or praise others on the same basis. In fact, one can gain an authentic sense of pride only from one's own achievements, not from inherited characteristics.

The spread of racism requires the destruction of an individual's confidence in his own mind. Such an individual then anxiously seeks a sense of identity by clinging to some group, abandoning his autonomy and his rights, allowing his ethnic group to tell him what to believe. Because he thinks of himself as a racial entity, he feels "himself" only among others of the same race. He becomes a separatist, choosing his friends--and enemies--based on ethnicity. This separatism has resulted in the spectacle of student-segregated dormitories and segregated graduations.

The diversity movement claims that its goal is to extinguish racism and build tolerance of differences. This is a complete sham. One cannot teach students that their identity is determined by skin color and expect them to become colorblind. One cannot espouse multiculturalism and expect students to see each other as individual human beings. One cannot preach the need for self-esteem while destroying the faculty which makes it possible: reason. One cannot teach collective identity and expect students to have self-esteem.

Advocates of "diversity" are true racists in the basic meaning of that term: they see the world through colored lenses, colored by race and gender. To the multiculturalist, race is what counts--for values, for thinking, for human identity in general. No wonder racism is increasing: colorblindness is now considered evil, if not impossible. No wonder people don't treat each other as individuals: to the multiculturalist, they aren't.

Advocates of "diversity" claim it will teach students to tolerate and celebrate their differences. But the "differences" they have in mind are racial differences, which means we're being urged to glorify race, which means we're being asked to institutionalize separatism. "Racial identity" erects an unbridgeable gulf between

people, as though they were different species, with nothing fundamental in common. If that were true--if "racial identity" determined one's values and thinking methods--there would be no possibility for understanding or cooperation among people of different races.

Advocates of "diversity" claim that because the real world is diverse, the campus should reflect that fact. But why should a campus population "reflect" the general population (particularly the ethnic population)? No answer. In fact, the purpose of a university is to impart knowledge and develop reasoning, not to be a demographic mirror of society.

Racism, not any meaningful sense of diversity, guides today's intellectuals. The educationally significant diversity that exists in "the real world" is intellectual diversity, i.e., the diversity of ideas. But such diversity--far from being sought after--is virtually forbidden on campus. The existence of "political correctness" blasts the academics' pretense at valuing real diversity. What they want is abject conformity.

The only way to eradicate racism on campus is to scrap racist programs and the philosophic ideas that feed racism. Racism will become an ugly memory only when universities teach a valid concept of human nature: one based on the tenets that the individual's mind is competent, that the human intellect is efficacious, that we possess free will, that individuals are to be judged as individuals--and that deriving one's identity from one's race is a corruption--a corruption appropriate to Nazi Germany, not to a nation based on freedom and independence.