Report
Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance

Background and Charge of the Committee

The Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance was established in response to a motion passed by the Delegate Assembly in 1999 calling for the reconstitution of what had been the Task Force against Campus Bigotry. The new committee was to be charged with “working to establish a climate in which all students, faculty, and other college employees, no matter what their religion, race, ethnic identity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or disability status, can work, learn, and develop together in harmony” (“Minutes of the MLA Delegate Assembly” PMLA 115.3, 414). In the final report of the Task Force against Campus Bigotry, Jacqueline Jones Royster stated,

... [W]e experienced a growing discomfort with the title of the task force, that is, the Task Force against Campus Bigotry. In short order, we realized that we were much more concerned about conceptualizing issues, problems, and solutions in positive rather than negative terms, that is, in terms of what we are trying to accomplish rather than just what we are trying to prevent. We preferred to be a task force focused less on keeping bigotry out than on keeping tolerance in. We affirmed that our interests were not in suppressing bigotry, as it were, but in establishing an environment in which acts of bigotry can neither thrive nor survive.” (222)

Accordingly, the Executive Council, at its May 2001 meeting, established the Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance to further the work of the Task Force against Campus Bigotry. The title of this committee reflects the concern of the predecessor body that a pro-active and positive effort is needed to create a climate of acceptance and respect that will enable students, faculty, and staff of institutions of higher learning to function harmoniously, a climate in which inevitable disagreements will be aired with respect and civility.

Another very important part of the background history of this committee is the creation of a statement entitled “Advice for Combating Bigotry and Fostering Respect in the Academic Community,” by the MLA Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities. This statement, written at the recommendation of the Task Force against Campus Bigotry and distributed to the members of the present ad hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance, is addressed to instructors and administrators. Offering suggestions for teaching strategies and dealing with incidents of bigotry in the classroom as well as problems that may arise between colleagues, between instructors and students, or between instructors and members of office staff, this document has been included in ADE Bulletin 132 (Fall 2002) entitled The Chair’s Reference. The article notes that individual colleges ought to have policies, rules, and procedures to protect students, faculty, and staff from acts of discrimination and harassment, but cites many examples where individual judgment on the part of faculty and administrators is needed to “foster the free exchange of ideas and to model the exercise of mutual respect, as these form necessary conditions for effective learning” (103).

With a grateful regard for the valuable work done by the previous Committee against Campus Bigotry and the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and
Responsibilities, the members of the present ad hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance considered the following charge:

1) to review the literature relating to ethnic and racial incidents on campus with an eye to determining what is known about how institutions and members of their faculties resolve conflicts,
2) to review the literature relating to education in language, writing, and literature for diverse groups of students, with an eye to calling attention to what is effective.
3) to create convention sessions where MLA members exchange ideas and information about the topics the committee is studying.
4) to consult the members of the Coalition on the Academic Workforce regarding possibilities for cooperation or collaboration on these issues.
5) to make recommendations regarding constructive policies and practices for the MLA and for colleges and universities,
6) to write a report presenting the results of the committee’s activities and its findings with regard to the topics outlined above.

How the Committee on Diversity and Tolerance Addressed the Charge

At our first meeting, on May 9, 2002, chaired by Prof. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, we discussed what our predecessors on the Task Force against Campus Bigotry had done and decided to accept the definition of bigotry applied to an academic setting as it appears in the final report of this group:

Bigotry is an attitude resulting from unexamined stereotypes by which certain groups are stigmatized on the basis of ascribed common characteristics and leading to words and/or actions that create a hostile or intimidating environment. The consequences of bigotry are to impede the free exchange of ideas and the application of scholarly standards to the discussion of controverted issues, to erode the mutual respect for differences that should undergird academic discourse, and to exclude members of the academic community from full participation in campus life. (223)

As we discussed this definition and the types of searches mandated in the committee’s charge, we realized that there was a tension between points 1) and 2) since the first focused on “ethnic and racial” differences while the second referred to the broader “diverse groups of students.” After deliberating on this difference in emphasis, the committee decided that its charge included diversity in the following areas: race, class, ethnicity, linguistic difference, religion, sexual orientation, gender, and disability; we agreed that a review of existing literature discussing bias against people on the basis of these categories would be helpful.

Another point of discussion at our first meeting was our awareness of the semantic shift that had taken place in the movement from a task force against campus bigotry to an ad hoc committee on diversity and tolerance: As Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, who served both on our committee and on the preceding task force, noted, we were moving away from opposing what we were against and toward promoting what we were for. Professor Thomson had earlier addressed the issue of tolerance with respect to disability studies: “Tolerance is an ethical objective most of us would support as a broadly informing principle of literary and language studies” (18). But, as
her article makes clear—and as we in our discussions on the subject concurred—mere “tolerance” can sometimes suggest a negative quality, a putting up with difference, rather than affirming, respecting, and celebrating it.

With these issues informing our deliberations, the committee laid out the following strategies:

• Ongoing communication with MLA standing committees dealing with concerns similar to ours;
• Outreach to the general membership of the MLA through the Newsletter, sessions at the annual convention, and other mechanisms available that will help us in gathering information regarding concerns of the membership on these issues and disseminating information and actions taken by our committee;
• Study of the available literature including but not limited to Academe, the Chronicle of Higher Education, publications issued by colleges and universities, materials relevant to promoting understanding among different groups on college campuses provided by the American Arab Anti-Defamation Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Southern Poverty Law Center, and other groups, with a view toward extracting the most valuable strategies and communicating them to the membership of the MLA;
• Searching the literature on pedagogical strategies for teaching multi-ethnic literature in order to provide MLA membership with methods that support the inclusion and celebration of multicultural literature in the curriculum;
• Formulating and communicating strategies that inculcate inclusion of and sensitivity to literary works reflecting the concerns of people who may face prejudice and discrimination because of their gender or sexual orientation, disability status, ethnicity, race, religion, or socioeconomic background;
• Inquiring about diversity guidelines and practices on our home campuses and on other campuses where effective and original strategies have emerged in order to share these with the MLA membership;
• Creating case studies of specific situations that have occurred on college campuses with a view to pointing out positive actions that were taken or might have been taken to promote a positive climate of respect and acceptance.

**Committee Actions: Communications in the Newsletter, Convention Sessions, Research, and Case Studies**

Articles on the ad hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance appeared in the Fall 2002 and Summer 2003 issues of the MLA Newsletter to explain the committee’s work and to invite members of the MLA to communicate with the committee regarding their challenges and their successes in promoting an atmosphere of tolerance and respect on their campuses. The committee also arranged four convention sessions. The first, chaired by Rosemarie Garland-Thomson at the 2002 convention in New York, was entitled “Promoting Diversity and Tolerance on College Campuses after 9/11/01: Theory and Practice.” The speakers were Laraine Fergenson of the ad hoc committee, Barbara Foley, Professor of English at Rutgers University, Newark, and Jeffrey Ross, Director of Campus/Higher Education Affairs, of the Anti-Defamation League. The session, which was lively and well-attended, provoked very sharp discussion from the audience. Jeffrey Ross discussed anti-Semitic posters recalling the medieval “blood libel” against the Jews, which had been prevalent on a college campus (see case study 2 below). Barbara Foley presented a Marxist analysis of racism as meeting the needs of capitalism...
and warned that too much emphasis on “tolerance” could mask the structural basis of racism in our society. Laraine Fergenson spoke on strategies that college administrations could follow that would attempt to anticipate and avoid confrontations or to heal rifts when they occur. She emphasized a strategy termed the Blue Ribbon Campaign (see Appendix II).

At the 2003 convention in San Diego, Laraine Fergenson chaired a session entitled “Teaching Tolerance: Combating Bigotry.” Speakers were Patricia Pollock Brodsky of the University of Missouri, Kansas City; Tina Yih-Ting Chen of Vanderbilt University; and Amy E. Koritz of Tulane University. Professor Brodsky spoke on continuing efforts to counter hatred against minorities after 9/11/01 by helping Islamic students to organize forums and teach-ins and enlisting local community leaders and members of the press in this effort. Prof. Chen gave an overview of the Diversity Initiatives at Vanderbilt University, which provided a great deal of institutional support that involved creating new courses and arranging collaborations between faculty, students, administrators, and community activists. Professor Koritz addressed the session about her work with the Director of Multicultural Affairs and the Director of Community Service to develop a course that integrates literary study with tools for action in a multicultural community.

The ad hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance has arranged two sessions for the 2004 convention in Philadelphia: “Teaching Tolerance: Combating Bigotry” to be chaired by Laraine Fergenson and “Understanding Structural Racism in the Fight against Bigotry: A Literary Perspective,” to be chaired by Finley Campbell.

Members of the committee submitted resolutions in response to campus problems arising after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and reflecting the ongoing violence in the Middle East, which has affected many colleges across the United States and in Canada. These resolutions were adopted by the Delegate Assembly and subsequently ratified by the membership of the MLA. (See Appendix I.)

We were fortunate to have very valuable help from our liaisons, David Laurence and Elizabeth Welles, and their assistants at MLA headquarters, who provided us with lists of articles and web sites on diversity in higher education, position papers on recommended practices, policies, and guidelines on diversity and tolerance, English and language arts, affirmative action, minority issues, and curricular content formulated by allied organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English, the Association of American Colleges & Universities, and by bodies within professional organizations dedicated to protecting the rights of specific minority groups, such as the Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists, and the Cultural Diversity Committee of the College Art Association. We also consulted the materials and web sites of civil rights organizations such as the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the NAACP, and the Southern Poverty Law Center to help us to understand the challenges that we face in attempting to address many and varied problems of discrimination, incivility, and even threatening situations on many campuses. Like the preceding Task Force against Campus Bigotry, we felt a sense of urgency as we contemplated the enormity of the issues facing us and the probability of great harm and pain being inflicted upon students victimized by bigotry and discrimination at institutions of higher learning, where they have a right to encounter respect and openness. On the other hand, as we explored the vast literature involving responses to intolerance on college campuses and listened to those who presented what they had learned from their personal efforts in programs and coalitions aimed at promoting diversity and tolerance, it was also possible to find encouragement and hope.
From the outset it was clear that our ad hoc committee was not to be a policing body, but was formed for the purposes of gathering and disseminating information about successful strategies and programs. We also determined at our second meeting after having had an opportunity to review and discuss the efforts in progress on many campuses, that given the different situations and circumstances of various campuses, and given their varied histories and challenges, rather than formulating a general “best practices” list, it was preferable to study particular scenarios with a view to examining what had occurred and what the college community had done to meet the challenges of the situation. Although it is fair to say that the controversies examined were, in some cases, so severe and vitriolic as to constitute crises and that not every issue discussed below has been resolved, the effort and the real progress made as students, faculty, and administrators faced the challenges presented to them and recognized the responsibilities incumbent upon them as members of an academic community are commendable. In some cases, the controversies led to the formation of new coalitions and brought together groups that had previously not communicated, illustrating that in the aftermath of a crisis lie opportunities for examination, growth, and affirmation.

The three case studies below illustrate the difficulties in balancing the varying views of different groups in the academic community and the ways in which the views and conflicts of the larger society may create and exacerbate conflicts on campus.

Case Study 1) Academic Freedom: The Qur’an Controversy at UNC-Chapel Hill

In 2002 the summer reading committee of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, which is composed of students, faculty, and administrators, selected Approaching the Qur’an: The Early Revelation by Michael Sells, a Professor of Comparative Religion at Haverford College, as the summer reading assignment for the incoming freshmen. In July of 2002, the Family Policy Network (FPN), a “socially conservative Christian organization that works to educate Christians and confront the culture on the important moral issues of the day,” (Ashburn and Thigpen 1) accused UNC-CH of attempting to “indoctrinate” its new students in Islam. The FPN recruited three UNC students to join it in a lawsuit to have the assignment eliminated. In addition, the FPN lobbied the North Carolina state legislature to remove state funding for the summer reading program at UNC-CH based on the allegation that it was using state funds to impose the Islamic religion on students, in violation of the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals denied the lawsuit in August 2002, and the reading assignment went ahead as planned, but the Carolina Summer Reading Program revised its requirements, stating: “Although the summer reading is required, if any students or their families are opposed to reading parts of the Qur’an because to do so is offensive to their own faith, they may choose not to read the book. These students should instead complete their one-page response on why they chose not to read the book.” (Carolina Summer Reading Program, UNC-CH Web Site).

Though the Chancellor James Moeser and the rest of the UNC-Chapel Hill administration offered immediate and unqualified support for both the summer reading program and Sells’ book, the 16-campus University of North Carolina Board of Governors (BOG) was not so quick to respond positively. After debating a resolution on academic freedom for an August 9, 2002 vote, the BOG did not vote in favor of the resolution. BOG Vice Chairwoman Teena Little said the vote failed because “proper procedure was not followed when proposing and considering the
resolution.” She also indicated that the reason the resolution may not have passed was its possible impact on future funding: “‘It could have had an impact with some of our folks,’ Little said. ‘None of us want to anger the people that hold our purse strings.’” (Ashburn and Thigpen 1).

On August 12, 2002 the UNC Faculty Council unanimously passed a resolution similar to the one the BOG had not approved. Academic institutions around North Carolina also rallied to the support of the University. The faculty senates at both NC State University and Meredith College passed resolutions in support of academic freedom. Duke University President Nan Keohane lent her support to the UNC faculty resolution. Other campus groups also endorsed the summer reading choice. On August 12, the Campus Minister’s Association at UNC-CH adopted a supportive statement, and UNC-Chapel Hill’s Student Congress also passed a resolution in support of academic freedom. By late August, the Board of Governors Educational Planning and Policies Committee unanimously voted in favor of a new resolution that supported academic freedom. The resolution passed at a full board meeting in early September, essentially ending the controversy at UNC-Chapel Hill. (See Appendix III for an excerpt from the Board of Governors’ Resolution on Academic Freedom.)

Case Study 2) Students’ Rights to Free Expression and Physical Safety: The Conflict at San Francisco State University

In May 2002, a confrontation between pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian demonstrators erupted on the campus of San Francisco State University. Laurie Zoloth, then head of the Jewish Studies Program at SFSU, described the event in a vivid account, which was widely circulated on the Internet and cited in many publications. According to Zoloth, students in the SFSU chapter of the Hillel Organization planned a “Peace in the Middle East” rally. The students wore new Hillel shirts that said “peace” in English, Hebrew, and Arabic, and had invited community supporters. After the rally, about 50 people remained to clean up and conduct a prayer service when they were surrounded by a threatening group of counter-demonstrators. Zoloth wrote:

They screamed at us to 'go back to Russia' and they screamed that they would kill us all, and other terrible things . . . . As the counter-demonstrators poured into the plaza, screaming at the Jews to 'Get out or we'll kill you' and 'Hitler didn't finish the job,' I turned to the [campus] police and to every administrator I could find and asked them to remove the counter-demonstrators from the plaza, to maintain the separation of 100 feet that we had been promised. The police told me that they had been told not to arrest anyone, and that if they did, 'it would start a riot.' I told them that it already was a riot.

Eventually, the San Francisco police were called; they conducted the pro-Israeli group to the campus Hillel House and guarded the door. As Zoloth describes it,

. . . the police could do nothing more than surround the Jewish students and community members who were now trapped in a corner of the plaza, grouped under the flags of Israel, while an angry, out of control mob, literally chanting for our deaths, surrounded us. . . . This was neither free speech nor discourse, but raw, physical assault.
The president of SFSU, Robert Corrigan, responded to the incident with a letter addressed to the campus, in which he charged “a small but terribly destructive number of pro-Palestinian demonstrators, many of whom were not SFSU students” with “intimidating behavior and statements too hate-filled to repeat.” (Radler).

According to an account in the San Francisco Chronicle, Corrigan said that “campus police had videotaped the rally and the clash that followed, and that officers were reviewing the tapes to identify possible student violators who might be subjected to disciplinary procedures such as warnings, suspension or expulsion” (St. John).

The pro-Palestinian students protested that President Corrigan’s letter was unfair to them and that generally their concerns were ignored. They also stated that the pro-Israeli demonstrators had provoked the confrontation by using epithets such as “terrorist” and “camel jockey” (St. John) and that they were opposed to violence and bigotry. They issued an “Action Alert,” which read in part:

On May 7th, 2002, Pro-Palestinian students at San Francisco State were intending to do an educational exhibit as a form of counter protest to a pro-Israel rally. When barricades were erected to enclose the students, when police forces were brought onto campus and when RACIST slurs were hurled in their direction they began to chant.

The events of May 7th have fit into a continued pattern of discrimination perpetuated by the San Francisco State University (SFSU) Administration. They have made it extremely difficult for GUPS (General Union of Palestinian Students) to reserve rooms, to hold events and to express ourselves freely. Other student groups on campus do not have to jump the hurdles GUPS has to when planning an event. We have been labeled and stereotyped as aggressive terrorists by our own administration. Instead of representing us, it seems as though they are working against us, trying to find any way to suppress our voices and the pro-Palestinian movement on campus. In lieu of the events on May 7th, President Corrigan has released a statement that is one sided and unfair. He along with others on campus, in their attempts to suppress our voices and take away from the Palestinian movement, is attempting to label us anti-Semites and hate mongers.

Unfortunately, they are sadly mistaken. We stand firmly against anti-Semitism and all other forms of racism. (“Action Alert”)

Laurie Zoloth, on the other hand, expressed her view that the threats on May 7th resulted from a long history of anti-Semitic rhetoric at SFSU:

I cannot fully express what it feels like to have to walk across campus daily, past maps of the Middle East that do not include Israel, past posters of cans of soup with labels on them of drops of blood and dead babies, labeled "canned Palestinian children meat, slaughtered according to Jewish rites under American license," past poster after poster calling out "Zionism=racism" and "Jews=Nazis." This is not civic discourse, this is not free speech, and this is the Weimar Republic with brown shirts it cannot control. This is the casual introduction of the medieval blood libel and virulent hatred smeared around our campus in a manner
so ordinary that it hardly excites concern -- except if you are a Jew, and you understand that hateful words have always led to hateful deeds.

SFSU officials turned over videotapes campus police had made of the confrontation to the District Attorney's office to check for possible hate crimes violations. The General Union of Palestinian Students and allied groups lodged a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, alleging discriminatory behavior against the Arab/Muslim-American community of SFSU. In the wake of the clash, the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California sent a letter to President Corrigan, urging him and SFSU officials “to create an environment conducive to peaceful protest and education”:

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, we are writing to express our concern over the events of May 7 at San Francisco State University. According to news accounts, the two demonstrations, expressing divergent positions on the Middle East situation, degenerated into a physically intimidating conflict. We have also heard that students are fearful, because they have experienced ethnic and religious harassment on campus, both at the demonstration and at other times. As an organization committed to principles of free speech and equality, we are writing to ask what steps the university has taken and plans to take to address these questions.

... Faced with a demonstration and counter-demonstration, the university’s obligation is to protect all participants by creating an adequate separation between the two sides and a fair opportunity to express their views on important political issues...

We have also heard deeply disturbing accounts that some students feel so harassed and targeted because of their religious or ethnic backgrounds that they no longer feel welcome or even safe in an environment perceived as hostile and discriminatory. We understand that the university has cooperated with the District Attorney’s office in reviewing tapes of the May 7 events for possible hate crimes violations. While criminal prosecution may be appropriate if the evidence documents violations of California’s civil rights laws, the criminal justice system cannot create a safe, welcoming and tolerant learning environment at San Francisco State. That must come from the administration, faculty, and, ultimately, the students. It is important that the university take positive action to address ethnic and religious tension on campus. (“ACLU Calls on CA Univ.”)

The letter from the California ACLU was eloquent and direct in pointing out the responsibilities of any university to promote a safe environment in which people of divergent views and backgrounds can coexist and learn together without fear. The ACLU’s point that the administration must “take positive action” reinforces a view that has been articulated in our MLA sessions. The university should be a place where opposing groups can meet and discuss areas of concern. A hostile environment such as that created by posters targeting a particular ethnic and religious group is a flashpoint. Since we live in a nation that allows freedom of speech, censorship is not the answer, but reasoned discussion with the intermediary of faculty and representatives from the college administration might have made students understand the harm in creating such an environment. As Michael Sovern, former president of Columbia
University, said in a similar context, “. . . having the right, or freedom, or power to do something is the beginning of ethical inquiry, not the end of it . . . . ‘I have the right to do what I am doing’ is very different from ‘I am doing what is right.’ Many Americans miss that distinction.” (College Walk: A Time for Solutions” 19). Similarly, in our discussions, members of the ad hoc committee spoke of the need to distinguish between what is illegal and what is merely unethical or uncivil.

The administration of SFSU established a special task force to address the issues that the incident had highlighted, and the reports of this group have been posted on the SFSU website (see Appendix V). Its recommendations are comprehensive, imaginative, and sweeping, taking into consideration the need for civility in discourse and providing guidelines for future campus events in which students of different backgrounds could talk, work on projects together, and share aspects of their respective cultures. The aim of the SFSU task force is to help the university provide a safe, secure and welcoming campus environment and to encourage communication and harmonious interaction among students of different backgrounds and views. The recommendations are admirable, and one can only regret that such a crisis was necessary to elicit them and that these measures had not been taken earlier. Nevertheless, the SFSU task force’s reports exist now, and perhaps the dissemination and implementation of the task force’s ideas may help to prevent future problems not only at SFSU, but on other campuses as well.

Case Study 3) Tensions Between Freedom of the Press and Promulgating Bigotry: The Student Newspaper Controversy at Brown University

In March 2001 a student editor at Brown University agreed to run a full-page ad opposing reparations for slavery and arguing “that rather than getting compensation, black Americans owe the country for the freedom and prosperity they enjoy” (Schemo A1). The ad was designed as part of a campaign by David Horowitz, a well-known conservative writer, to test the limits of free expression by provoking minority group members and those who sympathize with them. The response to such ads has been varied. Some newspaper editors have refused to run them, including those at Harvard, Columbia, and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. At the University of California, Berkeley, the newspaper editor accepted the ad, but then after many protests, printed an apology for allowing the paper to be used as “an inadvertent vehicle for bigotry” (quoted by Schemo A1). After the ad was accepted at the University of Wisconsin, one hundred students demanded the resignation of the editor (Schemo A1).

The content of the ad aroused feelings of anger and pain among Brown University students, who felt that it tended “to minimize the moral crime of slavery.” As one student expressed it, “. . . we cannot sit down while blatant lies are being spread about us or our brothers and sisters who’ve watched their history be erased over and over” (qtd. by Schemo A17). Some students demonstrated against the publication of the ad by forming human chains. Students also demanded that $725, the amount paid to run the ad, be donated to Third World Student Coalition and that the paper allow the group “a free page of advertising space” to refute the arguments in the ad. When the editors refused, students removed stacks of the newspaper, which is given away for free, from distribution points (Schemo A17). The newspaper reprinted copies of the issue and sought help from the Providence police with its distribution a day later. (“The David Horowitz Herald Advertisement . . . .” ACLU Website)

In response to The New York Times article reporting the controversy at Brown, Abraham Foxman, National Director of the Anti-Defamation League, wrote a letter to the editor that linked
advertisements denying the Holocaust and Horowitz’s ad on slavery. He said that a college editors who published such ads under the impression that the First Amendment “allows no alternative” were misled. “In fact,” he wrote:

. . . college editors, like their professional counterparts, reserve the right to deny advertising based on a historical fallacy or that is explicitly offensive to a minority group.

The ad by David Horowitz denigrates slavery’s prominence in American history and denies the pain and suffering of African-Americans. Mr. Horowitz asserts that he voices legitimate questions about the need for slavery reparations. But his premise serves no purpose other than to foment racism and hate. (A18)

The Brown University chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, which published an account of the incident on its web site, took a different view. It quoted the editor-in-chief as saying, “It’s not our place to decide which political views can be published in the paper . . . . We want to publish everyone's views'; and the web site further stated, “The Brown ACLU commends the Brown Daily Herald for its integrity and commitment to the ideals of free speech and open discussion, embodied in its decision to run the controversial David Horowitz ad on March 13th.” It added,

. . . the ACLU firmly believes that the Herald not only has a right to publish what it wants, but in the interests of journalistic integrity should be an open forum for opinions both liberal and conservative. Other students may disagree with the Herald's editorial and advertisement policies, but nobody has the right to forcibly silence the Herald's voice by stealing its newspapers from the Brown community. (“The David Horowitz Herald Advertisement . . . .” ACLU Website)

The issue of an individual editor’s rights and responsibilities with regard to the publication of material he or she deems false and inflammatory was discussed in an MLA session entitled “When Hate Groups Target Campus Newspapers” at the 2001 annual convention. Jeffrey Ross, one of the panelists, explained that hate groups such as those denying the Holocaust find college newspapers a relatively easy way to acquire publicity at little cost. Purchasing space in a college newspaper to promulgate Holocaust denial usually outrages the local community and may lead to protests that are then reported in the press beyond the campus, thus giving the groups who purchased the ads even wider publicity.

The New York Times article on the Brown University case cited Stanley Fish, Dean of Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois, as comparing Horowitz’s ad to those placed by Holocaust deniers; Fish felt that “student editors were confused if they believed they had an obligation to print any advertisements regardless of content” (A17). During the discussion period of the MLA session on student newspapers, it was similarly pointed out that college editors accepted the ads under a misunderstanding of the First Amendment, which protects the press against government censorship but does not require a newspaper to promulgate views its editors consider false and offensive. In fact, as was noted in the session, an editor who refuses to accept an ad is exercising his or her First Amendment right of refusal—a right not available to newspaper editors in Germany during the Nazi era, who were forced to print articles at the dictates of the totalitarian government.
Recommendations

The 1999 report of the Task Force against Campus Bigotry contains an excellent list of recommendations for the MLA Executive Council and Committees and Commissions, for the MLA Convention and other meetings, and for departments of English and foreign languages. Building upon these, the ad hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance recommends:

1) that an issue of PMLA be dedicated to papers on “racism and the literary imagination,” or than an issue be dedicated to a discussion of literary treatments of “the other,” whether based on race, religion, national origin, social class, disability, gender, or sexual orientation;

2) that the MLA publish an anthology of papers presented at the convention sessions arranged by the ad hoc Committee on Diversity and Tolerance and the Committee against Campus Bigotry, possibly including some papers that were submitted, but could not be included in the sessions because of time constraints;

3) that relevant documents such as reports, policy statements, and advice be made easily available to MLA members, e.g., through the MLA web site;

4) that MLA develop a means by which members can consult informally, colleague-to-colleague, with other members who have knowledge and experience in promoting policies that foster a climate of harmony and acceptance of differences on campus;

5) that all MLA members be encouraged to be proactive in observing possible signs of bigotry and to alert the appropriate campus committees or administrators so that measures can be taken to promote civil dialogue and to prevent outbreaks of conflict;

6) that MLA members be encouraged to inform themselves about campus policies regarding rallies, posters, reserving facilities, or planning meetings with a view to sharing what has been learned about creating a positive and healthy campus climate;

7) that MLA members be encouraged to work with their campus administrations to create sustainable structures, organizations, courses, and campus activities that promote inter-group dialogue and a campus atmosphere of mutual respect;

8) that for the foreseeable future at least one session dealing with issues of combating bigotry and promoting tolerance and diversity be on the program at the annual MLA convention;

9) that the MLA form a discussion group on race and literature;

10) that MLA members consider implementing campus-wide blue-ribbon campaigns to reduce tensions during periods of crisis (see Appendix II);

11) that the MLA establish a list of members who would be available to speak to students, faculty, and the local community on issues of tolerance, diversity, race, bigotry (travel expenses
and honoraria to be matters determined between the individual speakers and the institution, not the MLA);

12) that appropriate MLA membership committees draft of a series of pamphlets directed to students and readily available to MLA members dealing with, but not limited to, racial supremacy, hate group recruitment, and holocaust denial;

13) that the Executive Council remain alert to the kinds of circumstances that gave rise to the Task Force against Campus Bigotry and the present Committee on Diversity and Tolerance and be prepared to address these circumstances in an appropriate fashion, including the possible appointment of a future committee.

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Ten Ways to Fight Hate on Campus: A Response Guide for Collegiate Communities. Montgomery, AL: Southern Poverty Law Center, 2004. Publication and Web Site; going to the web site allows access to publications that may be ordered for free. <http://www.tolerance.org/campus/index.jsp>
<http://www.religioustolerance.org/isl_unc.htm>


APPENDIX I. Delegate Assembly Resolutions Submitted by Members of the Committee on Diversity and Tolerance and Ratified by the MLA Membership

2002 - 2003
Submitted by William L. Andrews, Finley C. Campbell, and Laraine Fergenson, at the December 2001 DA meeting; approved by the DA by a vote of 116 yes and 3 no (see May 2002 PMLA). The text of the ratified resolution (Spring 2003 issue of MLA Newsletter) is as follows:

Whereas the recent attacks on the US have led to deplorable incidents of bigotry on American College Campuses,

Be it resolved that the MLA urges all its members to help create an atmosphere in which no student is harassed because of race, religion, or perceived national origin; and

Be it further resolved that MLA members help all students work together to counteract prejudice based on race, religion, or perceived national origin.
2003 - 2004
Submitted by Laraine Fergenson and Finley C. Campbell at the Dec. 2002 DA meeting; approved by the DA by a vote of 136 yes and 13 no (see May 2003 PMLA). The text of the ratified resolution (Spring 2004 issue of MLA Newsletter) is as follows:

Whereas the current violence in the Middle East has resulted in deplorable acts of bigotry at North American colleges and universities,

Be it resolved that the university administrations and faculties be proactive in promoting productive dialogue and mutual respect among students of different religious, cultural, and political backgrounds; and

Be it further resolved that the MLA condemn anti-Jewish and anti-Arab or anti-Muslim racism as equally abhorrent; and

Be it further resolved that the MLA condemn boycotts and blacklists against scholars or students on the basis of nationality, ethnic origins, and religious background as unfair, divisive, and inconsistent with academic freedom.

Appendix II. How to Create a Blue-Ribbon Campaign

What is a blue-ribbon campaign?

It is a means by which members of a community, specifically an academic community, express their abhorrence of prejudice and bigotry and their positive desire for cohesion based upon their respect for all members of the community regardless of race, religion, nationality, country of origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or social class. The means of expression is very simple: all can participate by wearing a blue ribbon symbolizing tolerance and a willingness to discuss differences of opinion reasonably without recourse to hostile and harmful speech. It is a protest against hate speech and violent acts against persons or property. In short, a blue-ribbon campaign gives members of a community a simple means to demonstrate their respect for other members of the community and to protest against bigotry.

Why is a blue-ribbon campaign helpful?

People who have been targeted by bigots, whether the harassment has taken the form of personal confrontation, hostile e-mail or graffiti, or other means, may feel isolated and insecure. Seeing a positive sign that many (or even the great majority) of the campus community disapprove of expressions of bigotry and will in fact demonstrate this publicly can reassure the victims while at the same time discouraging the aggressors. The ribbon worn by members of the community becomes a tangible sign that the campus is a place where bigotry is neither condoned nor ignored, but vigorously, though non-violently, confronted. Similarly, people who may not have been themselves targeted are given a specific way of showing their disapproval of bigotry and their support and sympathy for its victims.

Where incidents involving bigotry and prejudice have created feelings of mistrust, anger, and isolation among students, a blue-ribbon campaign can be healing.
How is a blue-ribbon campaign organized?

The impetus for it may be the college or university administration, especially the office of the dean of students, the student government organization, a particular campus group or coalition of campus groups, or even a particular academic department. All that is required is publicity and the distribution of the ribbons. Posters and mass e-mail can inform the students and faculty of the campaign. Memos to department chairs and faculty members asking them to inform the students in classes are helpful. The school newspaper is another important source of publicity. Ribbons can be distributed at the student center, at the entrances to the campus, in the hallways of campus buildings, or in classrooms. At Bronx Community College, in response to several incidents of racism years ago, blue ribbons were distributed about a week before graduation and at the graduation ceremony, where almost everyone was wearing one. Blue ribbons were also tied around the trees on campus.

Once the campaign is well underway and the students and faculty are wearing the ribbons, the local press should be alerted so that it may print a story on the campaign. Such coverage may be very helpful if there has been previous negative publicity regarding incidents of bigotry at the institution.

Sample Poster or Leaflet for a Blue-Ribbon Campaign

WEAR THE BLUE RIBBON

Wear the blue-ribbon to express your solidarity with your classmates and all members of the college community, regardless of race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, social class, or ethnicity.

Wear the blue ribbon to let your classmates know you care.

Wear the blue ribbon to let the bigots and the bullies know that you disapprove of intolerance and prejudice.

Wear the blue ribbon to let faculty and the administration know that you want them to promote a campus where all people respect each other, a campus where a diverse student body can learn and grow together in harmony.

Wear the blue ribbon for brotherhood and sisterhood.

Wear the blue ribbon for a more peaceful world.

Wear the blue ribbon now for the future!
APPENDIX III. From the Resolution on Academic Freedom, Board of Governors, University of North Carolina

Whereas, The University of North Carolina, the oldest public university in America, has throughout its history supported and endorsed the free exchange of ideas; and
Whereas, it is a primary responsibility of the University’s faculty to extend and enhance the intellectual horizons of the students in the University's constituent institutions; and
Whereas, as part of their university experience, students are expected to be challenged by the introduction of new ideas, philosophies, and practices; and
Whereas, the Code, which governs the affairs of the University, contains an emphatic expression of the Board of Governors’ commitment to the values of academic freedom and the freedom of inquiry; and . . .
Whereas, individuals and groups have attempted to override decisions made by faculty and administrators in the execution of their academic responsibilities;
Whereas, the American Association of University Professors asserts that, “The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition . . . .”
Now therefore, be it resolved, that the Board of Governors reaffirms its commitment to academic freedom and to its current and longstanding statement on academic freedom and responsibility . .

Appendix IV. Proposal of Finley C. Campbell for a Special Edition of PMLA on “Race and Racism in the MLA Canon.”

"The MLA Canon" is defined, connotatively speaking, as "all the stuff that is created under the aegis of the Modern Language Association, whether it be monographs, session papers, research documents, articles in the PMLA, or all those works of art which are deemed subjects covered by the Modern Language Association, whether dance, film, opera, music, or traditional world literature" (Campbell). Denotatively speaking, the specific word canon means "a regulation decreed by a church council . . . an official or authoritative list (as of the saints or the books of the Bible)" (The New Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1989).
Conceptually speaking, "the Modern Language Association Canon" refers to "that large body of work which while initially focusing on literature in its most narrowly defined sense, has now been expanded, if one would examine a typical list of sessions since 1990, to include all kinds of areas of discussion which are capable of being subjected to aesthetic mediation/meditation, ranging from the description of animal life in Felix Salten's Bambi to comparisons of the Shakespearean Quartos to determine if they were, in fact, written by the Earl of Rochester" (Prof. Lucy Grigsby, formerly of the Department of English, Atlanta University).
Examples of the canon could also include the subjects of all of the papers, sessions, monographs, and other documents produced by the MLA itself as a corporate body and as a collegium of scholars, critiquing these aesthetic/artistic "subjects," seen both in their contemporary format as present day articles in the PMLA and their historical contexts as works of art. I would also add a third aspect of this canonical approach: the collection of written rules and regulations which have shaped the development of the MLA, its written policies and guidelines for admission to membership and for appearing in the journal, especially archival material dealing with the period
of segregation, 1896 - 1954, when de jure segregation in public schools was the law of many states and de facto segregation was the unwritten law. A study of archival material, which could be considered a canonical part of the MLA as an historical entity, might explain the need for the formation of the College Language Association (CLA) as a more inclusive entity. Another less radical example of the racist ambiguity which forms and frameworks this canon is the Nathaniel Hawthorne paradox: great writer, tremendous artist, and an exponent of the racist ideology that shaped a great deal of the envisioning about black people during the 19th century, signaled by his support of the pro-slavery Democrat and his best friend, Franklin Pierce, and his representation of Satan as the “Black Man” of the forest.

The function of the canon is, of course, to establish, as it were, the bedrock ground rules of determining what is to be taught as literature in our institutions of education, both lower and higher, determining what is to be taught throughout the MLA internationale or to be investigated as being worthy of "human and scholarly inquiry." And to that degree, the Modern Language Association serves as the Royal Society of language and literature, the Academie Francaise of the written word, the arbiter of what is and what is not to be considered worthy of investigation, pedagogy, and reputability.

The canon is important as a phenomenon, especially as we (the members of the MLA) have developed it, because it establishes parameters that allow for a certain standardization and consistency in modern literary education, which is necessary at a time of fragmentation and disintegration about what is and is not art created by the post-modern period and its adherents.

Now to go to the heart of this essay: my proposal for a special edition of the MLA publication. Here is the problem: in our efforts as members of this committee to deal with the issues of diversity and tolerance, the issue of racism as a specific focus has, in my opinion, gotten lost. Diversity as a value is good, tolerance as a virtue even better, but as a way to engage thought, to stimulate debate, and to be a force for the general good, diversity and tolerance are ineffective as topics for struggle, for, dare I say, social change or even for personal transformation. Precisely because the diversity/tolerance paradigm encompasses such a wide variety of problems--disability issues, sexism, homophobia, ageism, classism, "physicalism," etc., we have gotten away from the race/racial/racist focus which brought this committee into being in the first place. For this reason, I am submitting a concrete proposal for dealing with race and racism, which, I hope, might be acceptable: an issue of PMLA dedicated to the question of race in the MLA canon and even, perhaps, in the history of the MLA itself. In addition, I propose that we not only focus on race in general and racism in particular, but also on uncovering an anti-racist tradition in the canon as well. A suggested title would be “Re-reading Racism in Canonical Literature.

This project would put us finally on record as being aware that the creation of racist ideology in this country and indeed around the world with all of its negative effects --from slavery to genocide -- has, alas, a literary-aesthetic component and that some of the men and women who have been identified as esteemed members of the canon have been complicit in that which traditionally we have blamed upon the average white person, signified by the ambiguous trope, the European. By locating racism as an ideological development in the site of aesthetic creation, we advance human knowledge by an understanding of the complexity of the role that art plays in the transmission of ideas. We also would come to an understanding that just because one has been denominated a genius does not mean that he or she does not have weaknesses when it came to issues of race. Or we can confront the more dangerous fact, symbolized by Richard Wagner, that an artist can have an ideological commitment to the concept of race in its white-Aryan
supremacist mode as a vital part of one’s mission in creating works of art: to persuade others to that belief.

Another important reason to adopt this proposal is that in doing so, we would give to the new scholars and teachers of literature, who are being trained directly and indirectly under our tutelage within the MLA community, a very powerful weapon to deal with racism not only as acts of violence and insult and the effect of outside speakers and organizations bringing racist ideas on campus, but also as assailing us insidiously from within our own canon. Such an issue of the PMLA would be one of those small but profound steps that may help ensure that this the 21st century will be the last century in which racism will be a problem plaguing humanity.

APPENDIX V. From San Francisco State University’s Preliminary Status Report and Recommendations to the President from the President's Task Force on Inter-group Relations: Initial Focus on the Effect of Middle East Issues on Campus Life

Note: the following are excerpts from a lengthy statement, which may be found at the SFSU Web Site. Much of value had to be omitted from the present report, but interested people may read the entire document at <http://www.sfsu.edu/~news/response/prelimreport.htm>.

This presidential task force will examine inter-group relations at San Francisco State University and advise the University on immediate and long-term strategies for improving the campus climate particularly regarding the concerns of the Jewish and Palestinian communities. The short-term tasks for the Task Force are:

• to recommend immediate actions that can be taken to improve campus climate for our Jewish and Palestinian communities
• to consider various facets of the University that may be relevant to issues raised by the Jewish, Palestinian and related communities regarding recent events on campus. These may include the University's curriculum; co-curricular activities; orientation programs for students, staff, administrators and faculty; colloquia; and campus policies
• to relate, where appropriate, Jewish and Palestinian community concerns to those regarding inter-group relations among other SFSU communities, e.g. racial, ethnic, religious, gender, sexual identity, disability or other social or cultural communities
• We are attempting to address the short-term tasks mandated in the charge and recommend immediate actions that can begin to address improving inter-group relations in the following areas:

Campus Policies on the conduct of rallies and the expression of free speech
Orientation programs for students, staff, administrators and faculty
Colloquia, special events, and discussions
Psychological Counseling Services
Employment Practices
University Curriculum

. . [S]everal Task Force members wish to address lawful and productive ways to respond to speech that is morally repugnant and counter to a peaceful learning environment. We will be setting a regular monthly meeting schedule for the fall semester for the Task Force, as charged;
to study more comprehensively the issues that demand continued attention. We will also begin to address inter-group relations among other university communities.

Campus policies on the conduct of rallies and the expression of free speech

1. Broadly disseminate First Amendment and Free Speech rights and what constitutes both protected speech and non-protected speech under the First Amendment.
2. Review and revise the policies related to student organizations and the conduct of rallies:
   a. Use of Buildings and Grounds, Executive Directive . . . regulating time, place, and manner
   b. Policies for registering and holding events
   c. Student Center policies for use of facilities
   d. Student code of conduct
3. The Task Force subcommittee may provide oversight on this, but it will be most important to bring together the Student Center Governing Board, Associated Students, Inc., Academic Senate Student Affairs Committee, . . . and VP Student Affairs office to discuss coordinating these policies and eliminating discrepancies among them.
4. We are also recommending revision of particular aspects of the policies, such as distance between groups with opposing views, posting of flags and banners, responsibilities of students, student organizations, off-campus visitors and faculty advisors, and other important details.
5. Disseminate widely all policies and procedures, when revised, to all student organizations, faculty advisors, and other parties. These policies should be readily available on a web site as well as available in hard copy.
6. Develop a process to respond to speech, conduct, and activities, which might be protected by the law but are offensive and emotionally and physically adverse to a safe learning environment.

Orientation programs for students, staff, administrators, and faculty

What the University needs:
   A mechanism for constructive interaction
evelopment of a true campus community, not just special interests
   Clearly articulated standards and criteria incorporating -- at a minimum -- principles of
   Respect
   Civility
   Conflict resolution
   Freedom of speech
   Appreciation of diversity

Orientation should have three FOCI:
1. Initial orientation programs for new faculty, staff, and students
   The student orientation should engage student leaders in discussions on free speech, hate speech, and the role of the campus community in creating a climate for civil discourse on campus.
2. Orientation for current employees
3. Ongoing orientation
4. Encourage students at orientation to seek pro-active opportunities to bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds, including members of groups that are sometimes in disagreement over political issues, to foster dialogue and promote cooperation.
Colloquia, Special Events, and Discussions
1. The University should foster the creation of an interfaith and inter-group student organization that:
   a. encourages interfaith dialogue
   b. includes the range of the faith communities and those which do not practice faith but wish to be included in the dialogue
   c. has on and off campus sponsors, advisors and support
   d. produces a publication so as to educate the wider campus
   e. partners with groups such as the United Religions Initiative, The Ecumenical House, Hillel, the Muslim community, St. Thomas Moore Newman Center and others.
2. Provide educational programming around the showing of appropriate films . . .
3. Sponsor multi-cultural arts groups/musical groups that include both Arab and Jewish musicians performing together.
4. Community service projects (a shared value of different cultures; e.g. feeding the homeless, visiting elderly, local ecological projects).
5. Food Festival . . .
6. University sponsored debates of divergent views.
7. Open Houses (campus-sponsored trips to various houses of worship).

Psychological Counseling Services

Employment Practices

University Curriculum

1. Regarding co-curricular activities, the Task Force recognizes that at least six major units . . . are all likely to be conducting co-curricular activities for the fall and our best information indicates that they are not currently collaborating.
   a. For the fall, the University should, at a minimum, maintain a master calendar of events in order to insure some coordination.
   b. Ideally, these groups should be encouraged to collaborate where possible in the fall.
   c. The University should commit centralized support for spring programming and provide a mechanism for a comprehensive set of collaborations for spring that include the areas of cultural diversity, inter-group communications, and conflict resolution.
2. We recognize that SFSU established a Jewish Studies program, after many years of deliberation . . . We now recommend the establishment of an Arab and Islamic Studies program dedicated to the study of the Arab world and Islamic civilizations.
3. Establish an Islamic Studies Endowment Advisory Council or visiting committee to help raise private funding in cooperation with the University's Office of Development. The Jewish Studies Program should be encouraged to reactivate its Board of Advisors.
4. Include an FTE line in Jewish Studies for Israel Studies to supplement its already existing two FTE's.
5. Encourage opportunities for cross-cultural studies where appropriate in both co-curricular and interdisciplinary programs.

Support for the Task Force Activities

1. The Task Force wishes to develop greater cohesiveness and focus within the Task Force. The Task Force will hold a facilitated retreat early in the fall to better focus its work and develop strong working relationships.
2. The Task Force anticipates a greater need for data and information gathering from the campus community. The Task Force will need to enlist the assistance of a research group to
collect relevant archival data, focus groups and survey data to inform the long-term decision-making.

3. The Task Force requests adequate staffing to address its significant and demanding clerical support needs.

**Methodology**

1. The Task Force had four meetings as a whole, which met on June 13, June 28, July 17, and July 29. The agenda for each meeting is attached. Task Force members also attended Listening Groups and Sub-Committee meetings.

2. The Listening Groups were made up of 3-5 Task Force members at each session. To date they have had 18 scheduled Listening Group Sessions, outreach was done through campus e-mail and press releases to San Francisco media outlets. 50 people from campus and community came to speak. In addition, 29 different Task Force members participated as listeners.

3. The Sub-Committees were also made up of various Task Force members, the Sub-Committees are as follows: University's Curriculum; Codes of Conduct/Freedom of Speech Faculty and Student Orientations; Special Colloquia and Discussions; Hiring Practices; Psychological Counseling Services