

Dartmouth Vice Provost Reportedly Apologizes Over Recent Library Protest . . . To The Protesters Accused Of Using Racial Epithets

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We [recently discussed](#) the allegations of a conservative college newspaper at Dartmouth that “Black Lives Matter” protesters burst into the Baker-Berry Library on the university’s campus in Hanover, New Hampshire and yelled racial epithets and prevented students from studying. The incident was [partially caught on videotape](#) and showed protesters abusing students. At the time, I questioned why the university seemed so silent and reticent about allegations of racist statements and even physical threats reported by other students. According to some reports, the university has now acted . . . to apologize to the students who burst into the library, prevented other students from studying, and allegedly yelled racial epithets.



[The Dartmouth reports](#) that the university has taken no action because no one has filed a criminal complaint. On its face, this is odd since there is a videotape of the disruptive protest and there are Dartmouth students being quoted as saying that they were confronted with protesters chanted phrases such as “F**k you, you filthy white f**ks!” “F**k you and your comfort!” and “F**k you, you racist shits!” If such reports existed of student yelling racist remarks about black students, would the university wait for a criminal charge to investigate?

Instead, The Dartmouth says that [Vice provost for student affairs Inge-Lise Ameer](#) “apologized to students who engaged in the protest for the negative responses and media coverage that they have received.” I have not been able to find any statement from Ameer denouncing the protesters who abused Dartmouth students or a call to determine if these protesters hurled racist insults at students. Indeed, I have not seen any such statement from the school as a whole or from [President Philip Hanlon](#).

Ameer is quoted as saying that “There’s a whole conservative world out there that’s not being very nice” and dismissed the incident as nothing more than a “peaceful meeting” turned “political protest.” It is hard to imagine the same response had the alleged racial epithets and the blocking of students were directed at minorities at the school.

Ameer was just appointed this year and is not quoted as expressing any criticism of the protesters in their actions toward other students who simply wanted to study.

There is a rising concern of the double standard that is taking hold on our campuses, a concern that I share. We have been following the controversy surrounding the confrontation of Feminist Studies Associate Professor Mireille Miller-Young with pro-life advocates on campus. Miller-Young led her students in attacking the pro-life display, stealing their display, and then committing battery on one of the young women. Thrin Short, 16, and her sister Joan, 21, filed complaints and Miller-Young was charged with criminal conduct including Theft From Person; Battery; and Vandalism. Miller-Young was convicted and sentenced in August. Despite the shocking conduct of Miller-Young and the clear violation of the most fundamental values for all academics in guaranteeing free speech and associational

rights, the faculty overwhelmingly supported Miller-Young and the university decided not to impose any meaningful discipline. She has kept her job when many have asked if battery committed by a male professor against pro-choice advocates in the same circumstance would have rallied the university and resulted in the same approach.

Likewise, [we have discussed racist remarks published by academics that have been dismissed by universities while statements viewed as discriminatory toward minorities have led to calls of termination](#). Again, there is a concern of the standard being applied.

This conflict was readily apparent in a confrontation where a faculty member at Yale was surrounded by hostile students because he merely questioned the campaign to stop students from wearing a variety of Halloween costumes and voiced the countervailing view of free speech. The controversy was triggered by his wife. In response to a campaign against wearing “culturally unaware and insensitive” costumes, Erika Christakis, a faculty member and an administrator at a student residence, wrote an email to students living in her residence hall about some students who felt “frustrated” by the official advice on Halloween costumes. She asked “Is there no room anymore for a child or young person to be a little bit obnoxious ... a little bit inappropriate or provocative or, yes, offensive? American universities were once a safe space not only for maturation but also for a certain regressive, or even transgressive, experience; increasingly, it seems, they have become places of censure and prohibition.”

That seems a legitimate point to raise but the response at Yale was to call for her to be fired. Her husband was then surrounded while walking across campus. Nicholas Christakis, a faculty member who works in the same residential college, faced a large group of students demanding that he apologize. He remains calm and reasoned while students tell him to shut up and yell at him in this videotape:

I find the abusive conduct of the student, particularly the woman at the center of the video, to be shocking and antithetical to the academic environment. Yet, again, there has been virtually no condemnation of such behavior. Peter Salovey, the president of Yale, met with students and [expressed how “deeply troubled” he was in speaking with students of color who were “in great distress.”](#) I certainly understand that concern but how about the faculty members who are facing attacks and demands that they be silent or resign or be fired?

The response at Dartmouth is only the latest in this troubling trend. When a college or university remains silent in the face of such allegations (including racial epithets and trapping students), we are facing a serious crisis in our schools. I can understand if the school wants to investigate the allegations. However, it appears that the school has confined its attention to whether criminal charges have been brought — a focus not seen at schools like Missouri in forcing the resignation of the President in the face of allegations of racial epithets directed at black students. It would seem sufficient that your campus newspaper has interviewed students who say that they were prevented from studying, calls racist names, and in some cases not allowed to leave.

There is a growing intolerance and orthodoxy that is taking hold on our campuses. Faculty are chilled by scenes like the one at Yale where faculty are told to “be quiet” and accept public shaming for questioning certain policies or practices. We need to look at these conflicts before we lose essential elements of free speech, civility, and academic freedom that have long been the foundation for our academic institutions.

UPDATE:

The college republicans have sent the following letter to the University President:

An Open Letter to President Hanlon and the Trustees of Dartmouth College

*It is with great sadness and the utmost disappointment that we find ourselves having to write this letter. As the Dartmouth College Republicans, we often feel discriminated against by the administration and unwelcome on this campus. As conservative students, we have often felt marginalized in this community. In light of an especially toxic campus environment, a seriously concerning incident has come to our attention: at a recent public event held on the evening of Monday, November 16, Vice Provost Inge-Lise Ameer stated, "There's a whole conservative world out there that's not very nice." Furthermore, students at that meeting repeatedly violated Dartmouth's Principle of Community by referring to conservatives by slurs such as "f***ing racists," which Ameer did little to stop.*

Unfortunately, her recent comments and actions are only the latest manifestation of a campus culture that dismisses conservative voices. We are now at the point where the vast majority of conservative students on campus do not feel comfortable expressing their views. Even selfidentification as a conservative can invite serious backlash. Many of us have been called bigoted, racist, and homophobic — among other epithets — for simply stating our opinions. Thus, it is especially concerning that a senior administrator would casually encourage a culture of prejudice against conservatives on this campus.

At the same public event, Vice Provost Ameer also stated, "If you're feeling unsafe and you're not feeling like you are getting responded to then contact me directly and we will deal with it because that is not right." We feel unsafe, and we feel that we are not being responded to. The same resources made available to the Black Lives Matter protesters, including regular meetings with senior administrators, should be made available to conservative students on campus. An open and polite dialogue is essential to any college campus. It is difficult enough to be a conservative on any college campus, and it is simply unacceptable that any administrator would reinforce such a hostile climate.

We urge Vice Provost Ameer to condemn the actions and words of protesters and to send an open and public apology to all of campus, retracting her previous statements on conservatives and reaffirming the need to respect conservative students and their opinions.