



Written by [James Heiser](#) on February 18, 2011

UC-Davis Charges Christianity with Institutionalized Oppression

Only days after a group of deeply religious university students were charged with engaging in a criminal conspiracy to disrupt a speech by a foreign diplomat, a controversy has erupted at another university over a school policy statement which designates a major religion as guilty of “institutionalized oppression.” The way in which these two incidents is being addressed (or ignored) by the mainstream media reflects the way in which the represented religions are viewed through the lenses of political correctness.



In the case of the students recently charged with criminal conspiracy, the formal charges have been very slow in coming because the alleged perpetrators are Muslims at the University of California, Irvine. However, at the University of California at Davis, administrators allegedly had no trouble inveighing against the “institutionalized oppression” which they purport is perpetrated by Christians against non-Christians in the United States, and it has been alleged that the protests of at least one student against such a bigoted characterization were ignored until lawyers put pressure on the university.

As Todd Starnes [reported](#) for FoxNews Radio, the administration at UC-Davis has “backed away from a policy that defined religious discrimination as Christians oppressing non-Christians.” The world is certainly not lacking in various forms of religious discrimination, including that of atheists against believers, which provided several of the most horrific examples of 20th century genocide, including Soviet Russia and Cambodia under the [Khmer Rouge](#). However, it was only the supposed “institutionalized oppression” which American Christians inflict on non-Christians which drew the ire of a university, and required students to consent to such an assessment of the religion to which a majority of those students profess — a religion the institutions of which [gave rise to the concept of the university](#) in the first place.

The offensive mischaracterization of Christianity was enshrined in the university’s “Principles of Community” which, according to press accounts, students are required to affirm. According to Starnes, one student (who was later joined by dozens in protesting the policy) immediately perceived what was at stake in the so-called “principles”:

One student, who asked not to be identified, said university officials asked her to reaffirm “The Principles of Community” last semester. She refused to do so when she realized that Christians were not protected under the policy. “To have a non-discrimination policy that excludes the Christian faith is a cause for action,” she said. “In higher academia, one would hope that a diversity of ideas and beliefs would be appreciated. But my experience has been that this has not always been the case. There is a real



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fear of academic bias against the Christian faith.”

The Alliance Defense Fund agreed, and filed a letter on behalf of 25 students protesting the offensive language. University officials have now retreated from the offensive language. What remains inexplicable is how such defamatory language could have survived any meaningful process of review prior to adoption in the first place.

For an actual case of religious oppression, one might consider the case the treatment of the Israeli ambassador by members of the Muslim Student Union at the University of California-Irvine. An article for the *New York Times* ([“Charges Against Muslim Students Prompt Debate Over Free Speech”](#)) summarizes the offensive incident, and some of its context:

When the ambassador, Michael B. Oren, came to speak last February, several students stood up, one at a time, and interrupted him with shouted complaints about Israel. When the repeated outbursts continued deep into Mr. Oren’s speech, the ambassador huddled with his security aides to decide whether to continue speaking. He did, but by the time the speech was over, 11 Muslim students had been arrested. The group became known as the “Irvine 11,” although three were students from University of California, Riverside....

During the fall quarter, while the suspension was in place, none of this kind of activity by the Muslim Student Union had been allowed.

Over the last decade, the university has become a symbol of what some Jewish groups say is a growing anti-Israel sentiment on campuses. But for others, the school is quickly becoming a symbol of problems Muslim students face when they are viewed as too outspoken.

“People are afraid to be seen as with us,” said Hamza Siddiqui, a senior and a leader of the Muslim Student Union. “It’s like they went after them, how do we know they aren’t going to come after us next? Everyone is afraid and looking over their shoulder.”

Actually, given the circumstances, one might expect it would be Jewish students who would be looking over their shoulders. The university’s administration initially addressed the incident with a temporary suspension of the Muslim Student Union’s activities; the district attorney is taking a bit more dim view of what transpired and has filed misdemeanor charges against the 11 students, and, according to *The New York Times*, is “accusing them of disturbing a public meeting and engaging in a conspiracy to do so.” One can scarcely imagine what would happen at UC-Davis if campus Christians had engaged in a similar protest.



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