



June 20, 2005

Robert Johnson, Ph.D.
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Dear Professor Johnson,

The faculty and administration in the School of Education have learned of comments you recently made in the *New York Sun* and *Inside Higher Education*. It is certainly your right to make whatever claims you wish. We want you to understand, however, our views on the issues you raised in those publications. Furthermore, we want to express publicly our contempt for your attacks on a colleague, for the unsubstantiated claims and innuendoes you have made that the School of Education is imposing an ideological litmus test on students, and for your failure to engage any of us, other than in an adversarial role, in discussions about the issues.

Hiding behind the complaints of a handful of students, you apparently are intent on defaming the character of a professor. We are particularly outraged that you would claim that the charge of plagiarism leveled against two of these students was retaliatory for their having complained about a Brooklyn College faculty member, a professor whom the majority of her students have rated highly in student evaluations and personal letters. Furthermore, your comment that social justice is an "empty vessel" debases an ideal that is central to the mission of public education and to our national identity and reveals a woeful ignorance of the history of public education and what educators across the country are striving to accomplish. Finally, there is your critique of NCATE dispositions. Dispositions are neither graded nor do they determine a student's entry into student teaching. They are designed to help students become good teachers. They are also a requirement of the accrediting body whose recognition the New York State Department of Education has required schools of education to seek. Your misrepresentation of dispositions smacks of an attempt to collapse civic virtues into political cant.

No doubt you imagine you are championing the victims of political correctness. The reality is that your attacks on a colleague and your critique of a national accrediting body, and by extension the success of Brooklyn College's School of Education in meeting all the standards promulgated by that body, reveal an agenda that is far more politically extreme than what you fantasize dispositions are or what you imagine took place in a particular classroom. At no point did you seek to engage any of us in a substantive discussion of NCATE, social justice, academic freedom or dispositions. We would have welcomed such discussions. Instead you chose to launch what we regard as misguided and intellectually suspect attacks on the School of Education, our mission, and our commitment to meet NCATE standards. We must insist you stop such attacks.

School of Education

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cc: Matthew Goldstein, Chancellor, CUNY
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