

UT Profs Remarks Denounced As Racist

By Colleen De Baise
CPS

AUSTIN, Texas--A law school professor's remarks on race and achievement have prompted criticism and calls for his resignation from the University of Texas-Austin.

The professor, Lino Graglia, touched off controversy when he told a news conference Sept. 11 that black and Hispanic students cannot compete academically with whites at selective institutions.

"These cultures do not encourage achievement," he said. "Failure is not looked upon with disgrace."

Graglia made the remarks as honorary co-chair of Students for Equal Opportunity, a new campus group that supports the 1996 Hopwood court ruling ending affirmative action at Texas universities.

Reaction to his comments was immediate. Chancellor William H. Cunningham issued a statement, calling Graglia's comments "an insult to thousands of minority students and alumni associated with the University of Texas System."

Minority state lawmakers called for his resignation. State Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos, D-Austin, told a press conference at the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce that Graglia's comments could hurt minority enrollment at the university.

"I don't know this man's mind, but I think he should take under consideration what his commentary

could do," Barrientos said. "I have a feeling that people all over the state are going to be saying, 'Don't go to the University of Texas.'"

Already, minority enrollment has plummeted with the end of affirmative action programs. At UT's law school, only four blacks and 26 Mexican-Americans are enrolled this year.

The Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce also demanded Graglia's resignation. "It is no secret that Hispanics and African Americans score lower than whites on standardized tests," the group said. "But this has nothing to do with intellectual inferiority."

"It is the result of historically underfunded public schools...It is the result of years of exclusion from the learning environment, and this is a problem that still exists today."

Graglia, who says he has no plans to resign, issued a statement saying he regretted the remarks.

The professor said his words were "taken out of context and misunderstood" and, "I realize now, especially after being called by some cordial Mexican-American and black parents, that it was carelessly put, and I regret it."

He added that he opposes affirmative action but, "I am, and always have been, opposed to all forms of racial or ethnic discrimination."

Controversy is nothing new to the 67-year-old tenured professor. In 1986, former President Ronald Reagan rejected his proposed nomination to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals because of his outspoken remarks on affirmative action and busing for integration.

Many professors say they support Graglia's free-speech rights although they do not agree with his remarks. Three black student leaders, however, have filed a racial harassment complaint against

Graglia, saying his remarks caused severe "emotional distress."

The university is investigating the complaints to see whether Graglia treats minority students differently than whites. To date, there is no evidence that he does, said UT interim president Peter Flawn, who met with Graglia following the comments.

Students for Access and Opportunity, a new student group, organized a Sept. 16 rally to urge UT officials to step up their efforts to maintain diversity on campus. Nearly 5,000 students turned out for the rally, which featured a speech by Rev. Jesse Jackson

Jackson urged students to boycott Graglia's classes and called the professor "a national disgrace."

"If they fire him based upon his free speech, then he can sue and become a legal martyr," Jackson warned students, according to news reports. "He must not become a legal martyr. He must become a moral and social pariah."

At the rally, student organizers unveiled a 10-point plan for diversity that includes reforms in admission, retention and scholarship policies.

Bobby Garza, a senior and SAO organizer, said he hoped the 10-point plan would draw students' attention away from Graglia's comments.

"With the rally, we should be able to direct the energy into something a little more positive and a lot less reactionary," he said. "What we're coming out with is a plan that would achieve a higher quality of education through the diversity of students, faculty and administrators."

At the rally, the group planned to ask the state Board of Regents to discuss its 10-point plan at an open meeting.

"I feel like it is our responsibility as students here at the university to protect the interests of students who aren't yet here," Graza said.

Oklahoma school reverses fortunes by redefining itself

By Arnold Hamilton
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

SHAWNEE, Okla. Two years ago, Oklahoma's oldest college was the educational equivalent of a dinosaur, facing possible extinction as enrollment dwindled to about 160.

Now St. Gregory's University resembles an academic phoenix. It has transformed itself into a four-year school that takes responsibility for tailoring a course of study based on each student's needs and talents.

It has become a place where the traditional liberal arts education stressed by the Benedictine monks is combined with the latest thinking on learning styles, skills assessment and personal achievement.

The new approach also has a strong high-tech component, requiring all students to buy laptop computers just as they would textbooks a first among Oklahoma colleges and universities. And enrollment is skyrocketing, up to nearly 600.

For St. Gregory's, the renaissance is nothing short of miraculous, giving school officials hope for the future of the only Catholic institution of higher education in Oklahoma and Arkansas.

"We were in such straits," said Frank Pfaff, the school president the past two years. "We needed a major breakthrough, a major change. This was not an institution that was going to succeed by staying a two-year school."

Pfaff said the new curriculum includes a 17-credit-hour block of courses in professional development and a mandatory internship to provide real-world experience.

He said incoming students undergo a battery of tests designed to identify their learning styles, assess their skills and talents and help focus their careers.

"The single greatest indictment of higher education is it hasn't taken that responsibility seriously," he said.

live video feed.

Stanford Law School officials decided to re-enact the famous courtroom murder-mystery to celebrate a new endowed chair, the Judge John Crown Professorship in Law. Babcock, Stanford's first tenured female law professor and a former defense attorney, has been chosen to fill it.

It's not surprising that the event would be a big draw. After all, it had real-life superstars, two Supreme Court justices who displayed the same stern and calm air they show in their real courthouse.

In one moment that won a knowing laugh from the many law school members in the audience, Chief Justice Rehnquist warned the prosecution and the defense of strict time limits and told them they might be interrupted as they presented arguments, "following the custom of this court."

And Justice O'Connor did just that, sharply questioning each side before the two justices ruled on an evidentiary question.

It wasn't just the celebrity participants that brought the crowd. The Lizzie Borden trial continues to intrigue many folks because of lingering doubts about the innocence of the proper young lady from Fall River, Mass.

On Aug. 4, 1892, Borden's father and step-mother, who ran their household with a parsimonious hand, were brutally murdered in their own home by multiple blows to the head with an axe. There were no signs of a struggle and no conclusive murder weapon. Only two members of the household were nearby, Lizzie Andrew Borden and

He said the St. Gregory's program includes courses in such areas as "self-leadership," designed to help the estimated 30 percent to 35 percent of working adults in the next century who will end up self-employed for a period of time.

"How do you exert the kind of discipline in your life to meet your commitments to other people? To be on time? How to manage your checkbook? Making connections that will be beneficial to you in networking? Self-promotion?" he said.

St. Gregory's is the oldest institution of higher education in Oklahoma, established near Konawa in the Indian Territory era by the French Benedictines. It later moved to Shawnee after a fire destroyed the original campus.

Pfaff called the Benedictines the school's "secret weapon." He said the school's faculty includes 12 of the 35 monks who live in a monastery on campus, highly educated men devoted to teaching and service, not to publishing and research.

"They are the heart and soul of this institution," Pfaff said.

Whether the college-turned-university can successfully combine what sustained it for more than 100 years a tightly knit Catholic community, involvement of Benedictines in every aspect of campus life with a new approach to learning and cutting-edge technology may not be known for years, experts said.

"It's both a leap of faith and a perilous venture moving into this brave new world," said David Warren, president of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

Pfaff said St. Gregory's had no choice but to try. He said the college succeeded for years as a "finishing school" for students who failed to gain admittance to such Catholic institutions as Notre Dame or who needed a second chance to prove themselves academically.

But in the wake of the oil bust in the early 1980s, he said, St. Gregory's role as a two-year liberal arts college was not as easily distinguished from the less costly and more accessible state junior college system.

As enrollment began a steep decline, Pfaff said, the Benedictines focused on a move to four-year university status. When the school's governing board asked him to take over, Pfaff said, he was given the freedom to determine whether the school was salvageable and, if so, in what form.

Pfaff, 50, a former longtime provost and academic dean at Oklahoma City University, a Methodist school, said it didn't take

long to conclude the school needed university status, especially because alumni typically support four-year schools more strongly than two-year institutions.

The result was a campaign, successfully completed last month, to win approval from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools to begin awarding bachelor's degrees in five fields of study.

And he said it was clear St. Gregory's also needed to embrace technology, ensuring it gives its students a practical education that justifies the higher private school tuition. St. Gregory's tuition is \$3,000 per semester for a full-time student enrolled in 12 to 17 credit hours.

"It does change the dynamic of an institution," said Warren of the association of private colleges. "It does redefine what community means."

Unlike universities that build the cost of laptop computers into the tuition bill, St. Gregory's offers them for sale just as it would textbooks. The school sets minimum standards but gives students the freedom to purchase laptops off-campus if they choose.

Pfaff said laptops enable students to access important learning tools, such as the Internet and libraries at other universities.

The professional development curriculum, he said, was created by a team of local business leaders including doctors, lawyers, bankers, store owners and other people from the working world.

"We told them, 'You've got a blank sheet of paper,'" Pfaff said. "You tell us what the skills are going to be for the 21st century."

"We honestly believe the 21st century, in approaching the needs of students, is going to result in the shift of educational models.

Professors are going to be architects of learning rather than dispensers of information. It's not going to be like an assembly line any more. Instead, you'll work through clarification of their sense of purpose and mission in life."

By testing for learning styles and inventorying skills, Pfaff said St. Gregory's will be able to personalize each student's education to help him or her gain even more from their college experience.

"You then design for them utilizing other colleges, outside learning resources, your own resources a learning program, and you mentor him or her through that experience," he said. "They might do some work at a local vo-tech center or go down to OU

(University of Oklahoma) for a couple of classes or over to OBU (Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee), or they'll stay here and be mentored in a directed study or internship."

UC-Berkeley Students Flock To Class On Tupac Shakur

By Maggie Welter

College Press Service

BERKELEY, Calif.-- Reading, writing and rapping? That's right, at the University of California-Berkeley slain rap star Tupac Shakur is joining the ranks of Shakespeare and Robert Frost.

Students enrolled in "The Poetry and History of Tupac Shakur" are studying the unreleased poetry and lyrics of the rapper who died last year after being shot in Las Vegas.

What may be more unique about the class is its origin. The two-unit course offered by the history department, is the brainwork of, and is actually being taught by, Berkeley junior Arvand Elihu.

"I was in history class about Medieval England and I kept making connections between Tupac and history. His poetry provides insight into our times just as historians like Tacitus did of their times," said Elihu. "He is the

Bob Dylan of our day."

Elihu shared his observations with history professor Robert Brentano, who was overcome by Elihu's passion and asked him to give a lecture on the subject.

"You should have seen him," said Brentano, "he is a wonderful, energetic teacher, and he really sparked interest in the students."

The lecture also sparked a desire in Elihu to further explore the works of Shakur. He designed the course, syllabus board as faculty sponsor.

"I think it can be beneficial to look at things that most people unthinkably," Brentano said.

Raphael Darvish, a junior in the class, is finding it beneficial. "I went in with the attitude that Tupac was bad for society, you know, ditching women and police and all in his music."

After five classes however, Darvish said he looks at Shakur in a different. "It's amazing how much talent this guy had, his rap and poems are so much deeper than we know. He is not the same guy we hear cussing on CDs and all. I'm beginning to see that he might have made a difference in the African-American community if he had lived."

Darvish isn't the only one impressed with the course. Only 50 students were allowed to enroll for credit, but about 80 have shown up to every class so far and they are giving Elihu a lesson in juggling a waiting list.

Elihu says the class isn't really about studying Shakur; it's about using his lyrics as a looking glass into the problems facing American society. "Tupac has painted numerous pictures of our society, about our fears, ambitions and shortcomings," he said.

In fact, it's because of Shakur's emphasis on the negatives that he was such a controversial figure, according to Elihu. Many supported former Vice President Dan Quayle when he suggested banning Shakur's music because of its hostile stance toward police officers.

But Elihu said listening to the lyrics allows society to understand the origin of that hostility and to attempt to make amends. "Tupac gives us a unique look at the mentality of young men in the ghetto, about why they act the way they do, why they do not fear death and the effect of growing up without love."

To gain this insight, the class is using Shakur's lyrics and a collection of unpublished poetry he left behind. In addition Tupac's mother and a close friend of the rapper will give guest lectures. "His mother is thrilled with the class and welcomes the opportunity to vent," he said.

Students likewise have plenty of opportunity to vent their feelings. "Their arguments can get pretty heated," Darvish said, "but it's healthy arguments."

In addition to class participation, students are required to write poetry and a final paper about what they've gained from studying Shakur's works. Grading all those papers may be the one thing Elihu doesn't like about the class.

penned by Stanford Law School professor Barbara Allen Babcock, who delivered it Tuesday in a witty closing argument as Borden's attorney. "She has been convicted by a rhyme. Now it is time for reason," Babcock said. "Without an axe or a bloody dress, Lizzie's not a murderer."

And, perhaps persuaded by that line, the Dinkelspiel Auditorium audience of 750 on Tuesday held up paper fans to vote, reaching the same verdict as Lizzie's jury did more than 100 years ago: not guilty! Hundreds more crowded into other campus rooms to watch a

Infamous Lizzie Borden trial of 1893 re-enacted in mock trial at Stanford

By Michelle Levander
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

STANFORD, Calif. Stanford University re-enacted America's first celebrity trial Tuesday with an all-star cast that included Chief Supreme Court Justice William H. Rehnquist and Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, both Stanford alumni.

And just like the first time around in Lizzie Borden's 1893 double murder trial, the swift jury verdict of not guilty Tuesday hinged on a wicked rhyme.

The original verse, still famous today, was widely recited at the time of the original trial:

"Lizzie Borden took an axe and gave her mother forty whacks. When she saw what she had done, she gave her father forty-one." The modern day sequel was

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