

Scholars Nationally Say the University of Colorado’s “Investigation” of Ward Churchill is a Sham

“The relentless pursuit of and punitive approach of the University of Colorado at Boulder to Professor Ward Churchill is a revealing instance of the ethos that is currently threatening academic freedom. . . . [T]he proceedings against him were not undertaken be-cause of efforts to uphold high scholarly standards, but to provide a more acceptable basis for giving in to the right-wing pressures.”
Derrick Bell, Noam Chomsky, Richard Delgado, Richard Falk, Immanuel Wallerstein, Howard Zinn . . .
Open Letter published in the New York Review of Books, April 12, 2007

“The case against Professor Churchill is flawed on multiple contextual, procedural, and substantive grounds. . . .
(1) an unreasonably broad and elastic definition of ‘research misconduct’;
(2) a near-obsessive interest in dissecting a small number of paragraphs and footnotes from an otherwise ‘impressive’ and ‘unusually high volume’ of academic work . . . and
(3) a failure to fully appreciate the ‘scholar activist’ and ‘public intellectual’ roles. . . that Professor Churchill was clearly expected to fill when hired by the University of Colorado.”
Teachers for a Democratic Society petition signed by 494 scholars

"The Report should be rescinded because it contains 'violations of standard scholarly practice that are so serious that we are now considering the additional step of filing charges of research misconduct against the authors of the Report'". Open letter from Boulder Faculty Ad Hoc Committee to Defend Academic Freedom.

"The flaws in the Report are so serious that no legitimate action can be taken on its basis...the Cheyfitz evidence should be thoroughly examined for its validity and effect on the original Report by an independent, qualified, and unbiased panel...No action should be taken...until this investigation is completed." Executive Committee, Colorado Conference of the AAUP 4-23-07

So why is CU making up excuses to fire Ward Churchill? The ACTA Connection:

What is the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA)?
* Organized by Lynne Cheney, it hopes to quash the “obsession with diversity” and the “liberal bias” in education.
* ACTA is financed by rightwing foundations such as Castle Rock (Coors), Scaife, Olin and Bradley.
* It is allied with powerful neoconservative groups such as the Federalist Society, American Enterprise Institute, Cato Institute, and National Association of Scholars.
* ACTA enlists trustees (regents), alumni, governors and legislators to bring political and financial pressure on universities.
* ACTA works with David Horowitz’s Center for the Study of Popular Culture to blacklist so-called “dangerous academics” and promote state legislation to monitor political opinions in the classroom.

ACTA’s “How Many Ward Churchills?” was published in May 2006 to coincide with release of CU’s Investigative Report. ACTA concludes: “Ward Churchill is everywhere.” Everywhere? ACTA points almost exclusively to departments and courses focusing on “race, class, gender, sexuality, . . . globalization, capitalism, . . . and the destruction of the environment.” ACTA wants these issues silenced.

Colorado is an ACTA stronghold
CU President Hank Brown: Co-founder of ACTA
ACTA Chairman Jerry Martin: Former chair of CU-Boulder’s philosophy department
Regent Tom Lucero: Strong ACTA supporter
Former Gov. Bill Owens: Leader of ACTA’s Governors Project; hosted an ACTA conference for Colorado trustees
CU’s new VP for Academic Affairs Michael Poliakoff: Wrote ACTA’s How Informed Trustees Can Ensure Teacher Quality

Ward Churchill and the University of Colorado: ACTA’s test case
* ACTA member Gov. Owens demanded that Prof. Churchill be fired as soon as the “controversy” erupted; the “research misconduct” investigation is a pretext to legitimize that action.
* Regent Lucero immediately called for a review of all CU courses and departments to eliminate those of “questionable academic merit,” i.e., those that encourage critical thought, open dialogue and diverse perspectives.
* Pres. Betsy Hoffman resigned shortly after warning of a “new McCarthyism;” she was replaced by Hank Brown, who has consolidated his power, converting the top diversity monitor and others into “fire at will” positions, and requiring the Silver and Gold faculty newspaper editor to report directly to the president.
* The Regents have “streamlined” the dismissal process, making it easier to fire tenured professors.
All of these steps are outlined in ACTA’s blueprint for transforming and corporatizing higher education.

CU Pres. Brown, one of ACTA’s “friends in high places” will soon make his recommendation to the Regents on the firing of Prof. Churchill. Brown has already announced his intent to retire, having accomplished what he “intended to do.”

Call on Hank Brown and the CU Regents to Reinstate Ward Churchill Now:

Pres. Brown: OfficeOfThePresident@cu.edu CU Regents: www.cu.edu/regents

The true test of Academic Freedom is the defense of the most controversial among us.
Effective resistance to the stifling of diversity and critical thought must come from
educators, students, parents and all who value freedom and knowledge.

**If Ward Churchill is fired, ACTA’s message will resonate throughout the Academy:
Don’t challenge the status quo if you want to keep your job.**

For more information visit www.aaup-cu.org.
Paid for by the Boulder and Denver Faculty Ad Hoc Committee to Defend Academic Freedom