

Forum allows exchange of ideas; teachers speak out

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The second speaker of the forum was Averill.

Averill presented a composition text book from the late sixties to one that is used today.

"The earlier one, ironically, titled *Toward Liberal Education*, has 100 authors. Only one is a woman. There are no African American writers. The only Native American was a Supreme Court Justice. There is one author from a third world country, India, but the selection the editors chose was a piece on the German Philosopher, Wittgenstein. So the only other person, other than the one woman, who is not an elitist white male in this text book, is Buddha," said Averill of the book from the sixties.

"Now, let's take a look at *The Harvest Reader*. We have 33 women authors instead of one, and 47 men. Fourteen of these authors are people of color."

Averill concluded her speech with a statement on political correctness and academic freedom.

"Some of these threatened academics respond by claiming that they are the victims of a political correctness conspiracy. But it is not legitimate to use the defense of academic freedom to prevent a full and open discussion of diverse points of view. The only way we can resolve this is to keep sight of academic freedom for liberals and conservatives alike, whether they are faculty members or Clackamas students."

The next speaker was Epstein who was introduced by moderator Harlow as "My favorite conservative sexist."

"What John and I are trying to do here is not to deny their academic freedom but to protect ours - which is under, of course, attack in several ways," said Epstein at the

beginning of his speech.

On the issue of present texts, Epstein posed the question: "Why do we have so many different writers?"

"The answer is that they are put there for political reasons," Epstein said. "If they weren't put in there, there would be a movement, both at the publishers' level and the professors' level, to exclude that book."

The final speaker of the statement period was Uris.

"Epstein mentions this issue of political correctness. I want to mention two movies: *Thelma and Louise* and *Cape Fear*," said Uris.

"In *Thelma and Louise*, the critics became extremely upset - largely male critics I point out - because two women behaved in a manner that is uncharacteristic, traditionally, for women in films. Instead of being victims, they were victimizers.

"In *Cape Fear*, on the other hand, the critics loved the movie because the women were the clear victims."

Following the five minute speeches from each of the speakers, the speakers questioned each other then the audience had the opportunity to voice their opinions and ask questions.

After the forum, the teachers involved expressed how they felt about it.

"It went quite well. There was a tendency towards name calling. We need a group of campus intellectuals," Uris said.

"It was stimulating," said Averill afterwards. "I am very pleased to see students who are very honest about what their beliefs are."

"Frank was a very good moderator," Epstein said in retrospect. "The forum was very nice and pleasant."



Photos by Vivian Johnson

Diane Averill said that using "the defense of academic freedom to prevent a full and open discussion of diverse points of view" is inappropriate.



"We just want the truth," said Epstein. "And if the truth doesn't fit in with their picture of reality you're called racist and sexist."

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