

## FIRE Protests Threatened 'Inquisition' of Brooklyn College's Dissenting Prof.

By Jim Brown  
September 20, 2005

(AgapePress) - A New York college recently accused of threatening to censor a dissenting professor claims it has remained firm in its commitment to academic freedom. Brooklyn College claims it has not begun an investigation of outspoken Professor KC Johnson; however, the statement comes after the instructor was warned he may face such an official investigation.

Johnson received the warning that he may face a Brooklyn College "Integrity Committee" investigation for criticizing the school's new ideological "litmus test" for education students. Each student in the department is now evaluated on his or her commitment to the school's view of "social justice."

Since May of this year, Johnson has been speaking out against the use of "dispositions" theory by Brooklyn College's School of Education. That theory requires that students' commitment to social justice be evaluated along with their academic performance, and the professor fears the use of the theory constitutes an ideological litmus test and invites viewpoint discrimination.

Dozens of School of Education professors demanded in a June 20 letter that Johnson cease his attacks. Meanwhile, it was alleged at an emergency academic freedom meeting of the faculty union that the dissenting professor might face an investigation by an "Integrity Committee." However, he never received any notice of such an investigation, nor did the administration confirm or deny its existence. ([See related article](#))

The [Foundation for Individual Rights in Education](#) (FIRE) got involved and wrote a letter to Brooklyn College president Christoph M. Kimmich on August 18, demanding that he squelch any such investigation and requesting a response by September 2. The group received no reply, and went public with its complaints. Shortly after that, FIRE got a letter from Kimmich stating that Johnson was not facing an investigation.

Greg Lukianoff with the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education says although he is encouraged by the administrator's statement, the civil liberties group will not relax its vigilance. "We'll be keeping an eye on Brooklyn College," he says. "They seem to be a persistent source of serious problems, and we're perfectly willing to intervene again if the university considers punishing dissenting professors for their beliefs."

Lukianoff feels Professor Johnson was within his rights to question the school's social justice litmus test, and to accuse faculty members of indoctrination and viewpoint discrimination for requiring that education students have the school's view of "social justice" in order to graduate. FIRE insists that professors have a right to disagree about pedagogy, and that it would have been both illegal and immoral for Brooklyn College to subject him to an official inquisition over his objections to the School of Education policy.

"As KC Johnson pointed out," the FIRE spokesman says, "different people have different definitions of what social justice means. [The Education Department's dispositions theory] is an open door for ideological censorship and for excluding professors and students who don't toe the party line about how the School of Education defines social justice."

Although the president has confirmed that the "Integrity Committee" investigation of Johnson will not take place, Lukianoff has some suspicions as to why the administration backed off. "As soon as Brooklyn College started to feel the heat from the media," he notes, "the administration finally affirmed that KC Johnson's rights would be respected."

---

Jim Brown, a regular contributor to *AgapePress*, is a reporter for [American Family Radio News](#), which can be heard online.

© 2005 AgapePress all rights reserved.

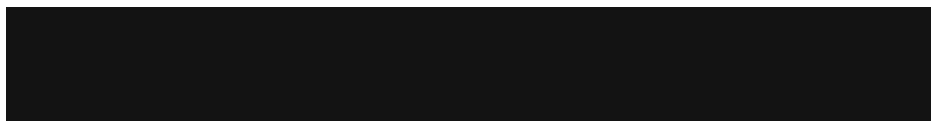
 [E-mail this page to a friend](#)

 [Printer-Friendly Version](#)

[Read all of our current headlines](#)

For AgapePress information contact:  
[editor@agapepress.org](mailto:editor@agapepress.org)

**Please Support our Underwriters:**



[Return to AgapePress Homepage](#)