

Academic freedoms stifled, activists say

Groups debate 'political correctness'

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Advocates of minority sensitivity say they are being wrongly portrayed as prejudiced amid claims that "political correctness" is stifling academic freedom on university campuses.

"Those of us committed to valuing and spreading cultural diversity are being charged by some with engaging in exclusion of persons and opinions different from our own and attempting to close off debate," said Maggie Abudu, a race relations researcher.

Abudu, executive director of the Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies at the University of Oklahoma, predicted battles over political correctness will intensify.

And as those battles are fought, she said, race relations are likely to worsen on university campuses.

Some academics complain that "political correctness" has taken hold in a climate that encourages non-traditional studies, including works of women and minorities. Some who favor traditional teaching say they are labeled politically incorrect.

Disputes over political correctness have divided the academic community and have helped turn the affirmative action debate into a First Amendment argument.

President Bush, in a commencement address in May at the University of Michigan,

entered the political correctness fray, saying, "What began as a crusade for civility has soured into a cause of conflict and even censorship."

Some academics have complained of a "McCarthyism of the left," saying some who favor traditional teaching of basic Western thought are labeled politically incorrect in a climate that encourages non-traditional studies in the works of women and minorities and mixing of social issues in curricula.

About 1,500 university teachers have formed the National Association of Scholars to oppose political correctness. The 3-year-old group warns that teachers or students

who don't advocate politically correct notions are denied tenure, given lower grades or publicly humiliated.

Just last week in Austin, English professor Alan Gribben, a respected, tenured Mark Twain scholar, announced he is leaving the University of Texas. He claimed to be a victim of political correctness and multiculturalism.

Gribben, who taught at the university for 17 years, said some members of a politically correct movement hurt his reputation after he opposed the inclusion of certain works by women, minorities and homosexuals into the English curriculum solely for their political content.

Judge: City must release complaints against police

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A state district judge in Austin ruled the Texas Open Records Law requires the city of San Antonio to make public the details of police brutality complaints.

State District Judge Jeanne Meurer of Travis County announced the decision Monday. The San Antonio Light fought the city for almost two years to open the records.

Meurer ruled the San Antonio Police Department must surrender disciplinary records to the newspaper.

The lawsuit arose from the Light's request for the disciplinary records of two officers alleged to have engaged in an ethnically motivated beating in July 1988.

No action was taken against the officers. The Police Department declined to provide the newspaper with copies of the complaint by the alleged victim, the officers' responses or details of the alleged assault.

Media organizations applauded the judge's ruling but called it a costly victory. Meurer did not impose sanctions for violating the Open Records Act.

"Obviously we are very pleased that the judge saw fit to uphold both the spirit and the intention of the Open Records Law," said Nancy Monson, executive director of the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas.

The judge did not require the city to pay the Light's attorney's fees, which a judge may award to the prevailing party in an open records case.

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House majority leader supports oil import fee

AUSTIN (AP) — Legislation to set a \$20-per-barrel floor price for oil through an import fee is picking up steam in Congress, U.S.

House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt told oil industry officials.

Gephardt, speaking to the Texas Independent Producers & Royalty Owners Association, also said President Bush's national energy strategy falls short of helping the economy or reducing U.S. dependence on foreign oil.



Richard Gephardt favors a fee on imported oil to set a floor price.

He said a fee on imported oil to set a floor price is crucial for the nation's economy and security.

"It's not hops or barley," the Missouri Democrat said. "It's a security asset. We need an energy policy in the United States that is in the self-interest of the United States on that national defense requirement alone."

His comments Monday came before the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries opened its summer conference in Vienna, Austria.

The average price of OPEC crudes was \$17.68 a barrel last week, after surging past \$37 a barrel in October. The average for the year so far was \$18.58 a barrel, compared to \$22.26 for the same period in 1990.

Prices for light American and

European crudes are generally several dollars higher.

Gephardt said Bush's energy strategy presented in February does not adequately address filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which is needed to prevent price shocks.

He said that if the U.S. had used the reserve after Iraq invaded Kuwait last August, oil prices, which shot up for several weeks, may have remained steady.

Gephardt urged TIFRO members to support his legislation for a floor price for oil, and added that northeastern states, which typically fight proposals that could increase the cost of home heating oil, are starting to support the measure.

Children vaccinated after playing with bat

SULLIVAN CITY (AP) — At least three Rio Grande Valley children are receiving rabies vaccinations as a precaution after playing with a dead bat at school, health officials said Tuesday.

A total of 32 children touched the bat, and all of their parents have been advised to consult a doctor about the possible rabies threat.

The fourth- and fifth-grade students at Benavides Elementary School tossed the bat around the playground May 27, said Dr. Charles Wilson, head of the Hidalgo County Health Department. Wilson said a boy had found the bat and brought it to school.

"You know how kids are with creepy, crawly things," Wilson said. "They started playing with it and throwing it at one another. The school nurse found out about

it and realized the possible dangers."

Bats can carry the rabies virus, which is fatal to humans when they are not vaccinated. In South Texas, there have been 24 confirmed cases of rabies in animals so far this year.

The bat was sent to the Texas Department of Health, but tests were inconclusive because the animal had been dead too long, Wilson said.

"So we don't really know if the bat was rabid or not," he said. "But with rabies you don't take any chances. It's 100 percent fatal. Once you get it, you die."

The children's parents were notified in writing last Friday of the possible health threat. Benavides Elementary is in northern Hidalgo County in far South Texas.

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What's Up

Wednesday

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: General discussion at noon. Call Center for Drug Prevention at 845-0280 for more information.

LUTHERAN STUDENT FELLOWSHIP: Evening prayer at 6:30 p.m. at the University Lutheran Chapel. Call Richard Manus at 846-6687 for more information.

Thursday

ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS: General discussion at 6 p.m. Call CDPE at 845-0280 for more information.


GAY AND LESBIAN STUDENT SERVICES: General meeting in 507AB Rudder. Call 847-0321 for more information.

CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST: First summer meeting! Everyone welcome at 7:30 p.m. at Rumors. Call Pat Roach for more information.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: General discussion at noon. Call CDPE at 845-0280 for more information.

Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no later than three business days before the desired run date. We publish the name and phone number of the contact only if you ask us to do so. What's Up is a Battalion service that lists non-profit events and activities. Submissions are run on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no guarantee an entry will run. If you have questions, call the newsroom at 845-3316.

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