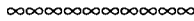


Finally, the real strength of this book is that it is about much more than church politics on P.E.I. MacKinnon has carefully placed his case study of the Island in the broader context of the history of church politics as far back as Cardinal Richelieu, the Edict of Nantes of 1598 which protected the rights of Protestants in Roman Catholic countries and its revocation by Louis XIV in 1685. As well, MacKinnon discusses church politics and education in other Canadian provinces and the current context of the separatist issues concerning the future of Quebec and national unity.

This is a strong book which deserves to be read widely – particularly by Canadians who wish to understand their country better.



Richer, Stephen, & Weir, Lorna, (Eds.). (1995). *Beyond political correctness: Toward the inclusive university*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press. Pp. x - 272. Price: \$55.00 (cloth), \$19.95 (paper). Reviewed by Sharon E. Kahn, University of British Columbia.

Beyond political correctness: Toward the inclusive university offers a timely sociological analysis of “political correctness” discourse in the current debate over equity policies and practices in Canadian universities. For better or worse, the sides in this debate are clearly drawn: Equity opponents argue that universities must preserve as inviolate traditionally defined standards of academic merit (for both the admission of students and the appointment of faculty), a traditionally conceived right of faculty to free expression in the search for knowledge, and a traditionally designed curriculum based upon works that have stood the test of time. Equity proponents argue that Canadian universities have a significant role to play in ensuring that Canadian society realizes the untapped potential of many groups of well-qualified people that have suffered discrimination in educational and employment opportunities, and to this end, universities must re-evaluate their hiring and admission practices as well as their curriculum and pedagogy.

The essays in this anthology promote the expansion and enhancement of the principles of merit and academic freedom in admissions, hiring, and curricular decisions. Rejecting the neoconservative view that equity and human rights initiatives are forms of tyranny that destroy academic freedom and merit, these essays argue that equity and human rights initiatives complement and enhance academic freedom and merit: ultimately, then, true academic freedom cannot coexist with harassment and discrimination.

Editors Stephen Richer and Lorna Weir, sociologists at Carleton and York Universities respectively, organize the book into two sections: the first provides a historical overview and deconstruction of the political correctness phenomenon by analyzing the theory behind arguments for and against equity; the second describes authors' efforts to create a new pedagogy.

The book opens with its most challenging chapters – essays by sociologist Dorothy Smith and editor Weir. These are particularly useful to those who wish to understand the historical context and the social organization of the neoconservative movement in Canada as well as the evolution of the term “political correctness.” Through an analysis of a broadcast of a CBC “Sunday Morning” program on political correctness, Smith reveals ways in which neoconservatives shape the language of the equity debate through the media. By controlling equity arguments in the media, neoconservatives seek to define the public reality of everyday interactions. In her historical analysis, Weir further reviews ways in which neoconservatives control equity discourse on Canadian campuses by shaping “political correctness” into an umbrella term that inherently invalidates a variety of progressive social movements.

Because Smith's and Weir's theoretical chapters are so challenging, the reader may wish to start with the book's final essay, in which Tim McCaskell distinguishes what is unique about universities by contrasting them with elementary and secondary schools. McCaskell analyses the curriculum reform necessary to address race and gender equity in the public school system and finds some similarities with the debate in Canadian universities, but concludes that the central issue in post-secondary institutions – professorial free speech – is largely irrelevant in the public school equity debate, where the central issue is teacher control over students. McCaskell's argument overlooks the possibility that neoconservative definition and practice of “academic freedom” also may serve to maintain control over students by dictating who is accepted as a university student and what discourse is permitted in the university classroom. Nevertheless, McCaskell's chapter enables the reader to appreciate the unique role of academic freedom arguments within Canadian universities.

McCaskell's chapter aside, the remaining ten chapters address post-secondary issues. In a particularly well-written chapter, Jo-Ann Wallace describes the University of Alberta debate surrounding the appointment of five women as assistant professors for the academic year 1989/90. She clearly shows how this particular controversy was part of a larger equity debate within North American universities. Drakich, Taylor, and Bankier argue that academic freedom exists within a context of social relations involving not only the intellect, but also

identities and feelings. They place intellectual debate about ideas within a context of social relations between women and men, as well as between majority and minority groups. In addition, these authors situate faculty and student freedom to express intellectual ideas within the framework of current Canadian jurisprudence, which provides for reciprocal responsibilities between individual freedoms and equality provisions. Other chapters in the book – for example, Victor Shea's chapter on the public funding debate over the Art Gallery of Ontario – also place specific recent events within the political correctness debate in North America and illuminate what is particularly Canadian about these recent controversies.

Chapters in the second section of the book continue to link Canadian public policy with the equity debate and extend these links to a larger North American intellectual community. Daiva Stasiulis' chapter is excellent in elucidating the constraints on post-secondary education in Canada today, including the professoriate's inadequate time and resources to appropriately deal with students' instrumental attitudes toward higher education. Stasiulis discusses the complications that confront a professor who wishes to impart a specific body of scholarly knowledge while at the same time honouring the personal experiences of a diverse student body composed of many who lack basic analytic skills. In his chapter on teaching introductory sociology, editor Richer explores a related question: Can a male professor teach feminism? Richer's chapter offers many practical suggestions for male professors in the social sciences.

All eleven chapters in this book identify race, gender, and class as important features of the equity debate and at the same time acknowledge the need to understand commonalties and differences among overlapping disadvantages, such as gender, race, and disability. Yet, aside from Himani Bannerji, Geraldine Moriba-Meadows, Jennifer Dale Tiller, and bell hooks, who describe the significant impact of colour on teacher-student interactions, most authors focus their attention on able-bodied, white women. Similarly, the authors pay little heed to the commonalties and differences among institutional initiatives and social equity movements, particularly in the light of recent changes in the demographics of university populations. It is as though the authors assembled by Richer and Weir are raising separate voices while striving to join together in a strong harmonious chorus.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, there is good material here for anyone studying sociology, education, women's studies, communication arts, language, rhetoric, or linguistics. *Beyond political correctness: Toward the inclusive university* helps to explicate ways in which the dynamic interplay between behaviours promotes or resists social change, while at the same time, other forces,

such as a developing legal framework and economic shifts effect the possibility of change. The editors are to be commended for this timely and significant contribution to our understanding of the equity debate on Canadian campuses.



Dennison, John. D. (Ed.). (1995). *Challenge and opportunity: Canada's community colleges at the crossroads*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press. Pp. viii – 290. Price: \$24.95. Reviewed by Michael Hatton, Humber College.

Challenge and opportunity: Canada's community colleges at the crossroads, edited by John Dennison, is a text clearly designed to follow from its predecessor, *Canada's community colleges: A critical analysis* written by John Dennison and Paul Gallagher and published in 1986. The earlier offering stands as a seminal text in the development of Canadian community college literature; the 1995 work effectively builds and expands upon that base.

About one-third of the 1986 text documents the founding and history of community colleges, while the remainder is devoted to an examination of issues that the authors argued would or should be pivotal concerns for the future. Similarly, in *Challenge and Opportunity*, Dennison has penned a preface and first chapter that represent about one-third of the text. These provide a brief overview of community colleges and current issues, and then examine their development, province by province and territory by territory, since 1985. Six of the remaining nine chapters were written by half a dozen authors who address a variety of community college issues, and three additional chapters were written by Dennison.

Whereas the 1986 text was the product of two authors, the 1995 offering provides the reader with greater diversity in issues and styles, and very nicely profiles a small selection of the growing number of academic writers and researchers who have experience working directly within the Canadian community college environment. This factor alone makes the book more inviting for community college researchers *and* practitioners, the latter being a group that has in the past sometimes depreciated the benefits of “academic” studies related to the colleges.

The reader is easily drawn into Dennison's first chapter as it details a decade of enormous change within the various jurisdictions. The style, similar to the 1986 volume, is fuelled with facts, cautions, and optimistic challenges.