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## Meese to Universities: Let's Have Diversity of Thought

**Wes Vernon, NewsMax.com**  
 Wednesday, March 12, 2003

WASHINGTON – A California college professor who told her students to write President Bush to protest a war in Iraq is causing a pro-American backlash. And a former U.S. attorney general says philosophical diversity in campus faculties is a remedy to such abuses.

"I think we need diversity of opinion and world outlook on campus faculties," Reagan Attorney General Edwin Meese told NewsMax.com.

Noting the lopsided leftist tilt of most university instructors (which NewsMax has documented in the past), Meese said: "Diversity in faculty view is important. Why not? They favor diversity on everything else."

### Thought Cop Kahn Gets Busted and Exposed

[Professor Rosalyn Kahn](#) of Citrus College in California not only gave students extra credit for writing President Bush an anti-war letter, she refused to give credit to those who wrote letters that did not agree with her view, according to wire reports today. Other news accounts have said the assignment was required. She refuses to talk.

The president of Citrus College apologized to President Bush, "penalized" Kahn with a *paid* leave of absence, and gave the students an alternative assignment.

Meese's comments Tuesday to NewsMax came in a larger context of the issue of academic abuse. He had just participated in a Washington gathering of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE). The coalition of groups from across the political spectrum launched a campaign to "challenge and end the censorship, kangaroo courts, double standards, violation of foundational rights, and arbitrary practices that currently prevail at too many of our college campuses."

It was FIRE that brought the Citrus College case to national attention.

### Guides to Student Rights

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The meeting at the National Press Club celebrated the formal launch of Guides to Student Rights on Campus issued by the FIRE.

“We trust that these guides will enable a wholly new kind of discourse on college and university campuses,” said FIRE President Alan Charles Kors. “A nation that does not educate in liberty will not long enjoy it, and will not even know when it has lost it.”

Speakers at the panel discussion alluded to issues typified by campus speech codes, theft of campus newspapers that publish a “politically incorrect” view, and the practice of shouting down conservative speakers whose views depart from the left-wing establishment, sometimes driving them from the podium.

### Hooray: ACLU Does Something Right

Varying political outlooks were represented at FIRE’s guides launch. Nadine Strossen, president of American Civil Liberties Union (organized decades ago by Roger Baldwin, “one of the nation’s leading figures in left-of-center circles,” according to the Web site Notable Unitarians), said the ACLU would defend student rights against speech codes and that FIRE is “a coalition beyond the usual suspects.” Although the ACLU has attracted some conservative support, it is generally considered well to the left on most issues.

Libertarian precincts were represented by CATO Institute Vice President Roger Pilon, who got a “D” at Columbia University from a professor who simply did not like his views expressed in a term paper, “What’s Wrong With the Welfare State?”

Jordan Lorence, a senior counsel for Alliance Defense Fund, called for a campus recognition of individual liberty and conscience, including religious beliefs often scorned in academia.

The campus ruling elites have an “impulse to suppress free speech,” he said. “They don’t call it that. They argue they are merely ‘re-educating.’”

FIRE intends to support students who have been harassed for expressing views unpopular with those who have the power and the campus megaphone.

The organization has implemented a Know Your Rights program to address its urgent need for students and parents to understand the legal and moral status of student rights on our nation’s campuses “and to understand the means to defend and assert these rights.”

Kors noted that the political and philosophical diversity on FIRE's board (including veterans of the Reagan and Clinton administrations) “demonstrates that campus liberty is not a matter of partisan politics, but of the rights and responsibilities of free individuals in a free society.”

Written by legal experts, each guide addresses ways in which students’ rights are curtailed on campuses today and the ways to make those rights whole.

The five volumes are titled “FIRE’s Guide to Religious Liberty on Campus,”

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"FIRE's Guide to Student Fees, Funding and Legal Equality on Campus," "FIRE's Guide to Due Process and Fair Procedure on Campus," "FIRE's Guide to Free Speech on Campus" and "FIRE's Guide to First-Year Orientation and to Thought Reform on Campus."

**Editor's note:**

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