

From: roger schank <[REDACTED]>
To: jeffrey Epstein <jeevacation@gmail.com>
Subject: alabama
Date: Sun, 11 Apr 2010 19:38:32 +0000

below is a column i wrote

what do I really want? to replace the 2 or 3000 colleges in the US like the one mentioned below who teach people theoretical subjects when what they need is to function the world

one high quality on line university with real choices and alabama at huntsville is over

[How the U of Alabama at Huntsville murder story highlights the disaster that is our university system](#)

In my last column I discussed the problems caused by our notion that universities must be populated by researchers who are working on finding out new things and publishing about those things, instead of seriously teaching.

If it takes a murder to make clear what the problem is, then consider the case of Amy Bishop "a Harvard-educated biology professor who felt she had unfairly been denied tenure," who recently murdered her colleagues at the University of Alabama, Huntsville.

The Chronicle of Higher Education says that "The dean of the chemistry department, William N. Setzer, described Ms. Bishop as smart but weird. As for why she had been turned down for tenure, Mr. Setzer said he had heard that her publication record was thin and that she hadn't secured enough grants. Also, there were concerns about her personality, he said. In meetings, Mr. Setzer remembered, she would go off on "bizarre" rambles about topics not related to tasks at hand"left-field kind of stuff," he said."

I have been on enough tenure committees to know that the real reason she was turned down for tenure was that people thought she was nuts. But that is really unimportant. Why does it matter that a faculty member have a publication record at a university that is very far from being one of the top research universities in the country? Why do students at such a school need to be taught by Harvard PhDs whose specialty is neuroscience when they are studying biology?

Students at schools like this study biology prior to going into a field in the health sciences because they are required to do so. Why does it matter that their teachers have a research track record in a specialty that in no way relates to the needs of the students? Why do we keep pretending that every university in the U.S is a serious research university? When do we start demanding a curriculum and teachers who teach things that students actually will need to know how to do in their future lives? Can't we just let Harvard and Yale etc train researchers and let the other schools train citizens?

According to the Chronicle: Nick Lawton, the son of Professor called her a competent lecturer who was willing to help students who needed it. But her teaching was "not inspired."

Her teaching is not once mentioned as a possible reasons for her tenure denial because I am sure it was hardly even considered. Who cares if a professor at a teaching institution is any good at teaching? Not the system. What they care about, even at the University of Alabama at Huntsville, is how many grants she had gotten and how many papers she had published.

The system is so stupid it is beyond comprehension.

People all over the country are reading about this situation and I think they need to understand the underlying real issue. Yes there are crazy people who do crazy things. But the system encourages professors to worry about

all the wrong things. The idea that all professors must publish and get grants creates awful teachers, and irrelevant courses, and unhappy students, (as well as some really miserable professors.)

roger

roger schank

<http://www.rogerschank.com/>