



# Students

From the issue dated November 7, 2003

## NOTEBOOK

### Campus Conduct Policies Are Stifling Free Speech, Panelists Testify

By ERIC HOOVER

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Concern about campus speech codes resounded last week on Capitol Hill as panelists, testifying at a U.S. Senate committee hearing on "intellectual diversity" at colleges, argued that overbroad conduct policies are stifling the free-speech rights of students and professors nationwide.

While members of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions said the issue did not warrant federal legislation, the hearing was further evidence that the debate over free expression in higher education is reverberating outside academe.

In an opening statement, Sen. Judd Gregg, a New Hampshire Republican and the committee's chairman, said that speech codes have chilled debate on campuses. "What do we teach students about freedom when they see that some views are discouraged or even forbidden?" he said.

Anne D. Neal, president of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, described a broad threat to the free exchange of ideas at colleges, citing the disinviting of politically incorrect speakers, politicized instruction by faculty members, and one-sided teach-ins as examples.

Another speaker, Anthony Dick, a junior at the University of Virginia, argued that university policies, such as UVa's nondiscrimination guidelines, unfairly "politicize" campuses. This semester Mr. Dick, who described himself as a liberal, co-founded the Individual Rights Coalition, a nonpartisan group that has lobbied against a proposed mandatory diversity-training program on the campus.

Senator Gregg said the committee would probably hold more hearings on the issue.

<http://chronicle.com>  
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 Volume 50, Issue 11, Page A41

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