

CANADIAN SHOOTING SPORTS ASSOCIATION / CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION

TEAM CSSA E-NEWS - May 16, 2014

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

(Editor's note: We received many great responses to the question posed in last week's CSSA E-News about the university professor who took umbrage with a student's pro-gun bumper sticker. Your responses ranged from telling the prof to do something to himself that is quite anatomically impossible, to giving him a lesson on freedom, to reporting him to his employers. The question and samples of your replies follow.)

Our question:

A Canadian university student recently contacted the CSSA seeking advice. A professor walked past the student's desk and saw a bumper sticker on his binder that read: "Guns don't kill people – people kill people." The angry professor ordered the student to get rid of the slogan immediately or face consequences. What would you do?

Your replies:

1. It is legal for a properly qualified individual to own a firearm for specific reasons, and subject its lawful use in Canada.
2. The Professor attempted to take away the student's right of free speech, on of all places, a campus of a Canadian university.

Given these two facts, and absence of any other provocation, I would suggest the student would have a wonderful case for a provincial Human Rights Commission complaint. One of two things would happen. Either the HRC refuses to deal with the issue, providing more ammunition for correcting some of their excesses, or they chastise the professor for attempting to muzzle freedom of expression. Either one seems like a win to me.

Tell the professor to ***** off. I know you can't print this response, but please let us know how many readers replied with the same comment. *(ED – A whole bunch!)*

My advice is this: one must pick their battles. A confrontation with the professor in class will backfire, and quickly go beyond the sticker and be viewed as challenging the professor's authority in the classroom. Remove the sticker, and request a one on one meeting with the professor. Come prepared with facts, including statistics. If the professor lets his/her emotions take over, the professor won't listen. Remind the professor that by getting rid of guns, he is attacking the lifestyle of aboriginals, as well as attacking legitimate sports. Just don't push it too far, as the professor has significant power, through grades, to impact the student academically.

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I would politely remind the professor what country he is in and ask if enjoys his freedom?
Canada is an international safe haven for those of us who believe it is a right to live life and not
be persecuted due to expressing opinion.

I would show up to class the next day with a new sticker, " Knives don't kill people, people kill
people", and if challenged again by the professor, ask him/her what they have against "people"
since it is the common element with both stickers.

I would remind the student that freedom of thought and freedom of expression are fundamental
Canadian rights. If this same student had placed a sticker on his binder extolling the virtues of
"Black Power", and the professor had threatened him with consequences for that, the professor
would have rightly been labeled a bigot and could have faced hate crime consequences.

I would advise the student to stand his ground on charter principles. While the professor is free to
openly hate anyone that believes civilian firearms ownership has a role in civilized society, he is
not free to use his authority to impose consequences on those people for holding those beliefs. I
would also remind him that a professor incapable of unbiased critical thinking skills needs to be
exposed for what he is. He's is a victim of his own irrational fears that has been given a pulpit
from which to spread them.

Ce sont ces gens la qui pensent a enlever tous les armes a feu sur cette terre ce collant n est pas
offensif et demontre seulement la fierte d etre membre d un club.

The University may have been Canadian, but was the Professor? By that I mean that he may
have been originally from a part of the world where violent use of weapons claims many,
possibly innocent lives daily. Those of us from who have grown up in a progressive and free
society (yes, we may have draconian gun laws, but let's face it, we do live in the overall best
country in the civilized world!), can only imagine the horrors faced in other parts of the globe.
The Prof may have only seen the "dark side" of firearms use, and not their sporting, competitive,
team-building potential. This scenario is a microcosm of what we, as firearms enthusiasts are
facing in Canada, as a whole...

That being said, any well-educated person, no matter what their background, should accept other
points of view, and be open-minded enough to allow dialogue on any controversial subject.

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Dictating an order, in this case to the student, does not make the issue disappear! Isn't a primary reason for attending an institution of higher learning, to question the status quo, rather than blindly accepting autocratic authoritarian behavior, and then attempt to make changes for the better?

I have two daughters in university. Both universities are very liberal [as expected]. In this case, the consequences for the student would mostly entail discrimination involving grades. I doubt there would be legal consequences by the university. The problem in this case cited is that the student wants to pass! Maybe it's best to let this go away quietly and remove the sticker. You have to know when to fold.

On the other hand, if the student was in a course where high grades were not required [such as admission to law, medicine, dentistry or graduate studies], then the student could take a stand. To do this, the student needs to obtain legal counsel and have the lawyer address the professor/university dean directly on behalf of the student.

My answer is fight for my right – the bumper sticker does make sense. People kill people if guns fall into the wrong hands.

First of all, I was not aware that such restrictions on freedom of expression or of opinion existed. We live in a free country, so the rights of this student have clearly been trampled on by a professor who should know better. I would retain the bumper sticker (which makes perfect sense by the way) and see what the "consequences" might be. I think this professor is bluffing, hoping his intimidation of a lowly student will be enough in this case.

Universities have become places where the iron rule of political correctness (prevails). They are places of intolerance, racism, sexism, and all manner of approved bigotry. Hatred is not only tolerated, but encouraged and even taught. It's completely acceptable to advocate brutal violence or death to those who may disagree with the lock-step orthodoxy. I genuinely fear the rise of a new nazi-ism growing out of our universities.

I would buy more stickers and put them on all my binders. Then I would register him for his PAL and hunting course so he would be somewhat knowledgeable for which he is obviously

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uneducated in the practices of responsible gun owners. Just because he is a professor doesn't make him "GOD", although many of them would like to think they are...

The professor's reaction shows prejudice and should be reported to the appropriate authorities. This, however, may also lead to the sticker being removed as some might sight it as harassment. But the reaction without a valid complaint from a fellow student is most definitely prejudicial.

Since University students are paying a lot of money to be there, the professor has no right to make him remove the slogan. I would complain to the University about the professor's ignorance, as well as cite the concerns that the professor may now treat him unfairly due to his bias, and the students complaint. I would also make sure to note in my complaint that an institution of higher learning should not be so closed minded and ignorant, and if the professor thought the slogan was a topic of debate, should have discussed the issue with the class, with the student being able to bring his opinion to light.