

# Students Want Prof Fired for Questioning 'Diversity'

Anthony Esolen, a professor at Providence College and translator of classic works, is under fire for writing an essay critical of diversity.

The essay, entitled "My College Succumbed to the Totalitarian Diversity Cult," was published in *Crisis Magazine* in September. You can [read it here](#).

Done reading? If so, you might be wondering what all the fuss is about.

Apart from a provocative headline (which an editor wrote, not Esolen), this is hardly the stuff one might expect to cause a campus revolt. Yet that's exactly what has happened.

Last week, dozens of students marched on the president's office and demanded he be fired. Esolen, [speaking to Rod Dreher](#) at *The American Conservative*, offered an account of the ordeal:

*About 60 students marched around, while a female student led them around, shouting slogans through a bullhorn. I think it was "What do we want? Inclusion! When do we want it? Now!" The noise could be heard all through the three-story building where my office is. I had thought they were going to come down the hall and knock on my door, but then they seem to have turned around and gone to the president's office, where they demanded a response from him, and of course some of the students demanded that I be fired.*

Esolen, who has tenure, believes it is "unlikely" he will be sacked. But [the statement](#) put out by Providence College President Rev. Brian J. Shanley was not exactly full-throated

support of intellectual freedom.

Moreover, the scuttlebutt on campus suggests that petitions are already circulating among faculty. These petitions will no doubt support academic freedom on one hand, while expressing full support for creating an environment of tolerance and sensitivity on the other.

But who is being intolerant here? One can agree or disagree with Esolen's points. But calls to dismiss a scholar for suggesting that there is a tendency in academia to exaggerate the virtues and benefits of diversity seems the height of intolerance (and, frankly, absurd).

Students seem particularly angered by a point Esolen made in [a previous article](#), in which he suggested it was narcissistic for students and academics to study themselves rather than previous cultures and ideas.

Maybe the idea is true, maybe it is false. Whatever the case, it hardly seems beyond the pale of intellectual discussion. (For the record, I recently found myself musing on this concept. Perhaps the ingredients for a future article?)

The flap at Providence appears to be yet another example of student bodies (with the help of radicalized faculty) attempting to intimidate and silence people with whom they disagree instead of attempting to refute their ideas. Perhaps more troubling, it's yet another example of collegiate leadership offering lukewarm support for a scholar targeted by agitators.

Tony Esolen, as a tenured faculty member with a laudable reputation, has some protection. Many scholars of the next generation, however, do not have this luxury. You can bet they are watching and learning a simple lesson: be very careful of sharing blasphemous ideas.

*Jon Miltimore is senior editor of Intellectual Takeout. [Follow him on Facebook.](#)*

[Image Credit: Prof. Anthony Esolen of Providence College (Saint Joseph/Flickr)]