

To the Senate inquiry into academic freedom,

My submission is a short one. My experience with university was fairly positive overall. My chosen degrees – Commerce and Computer Science – do not deal very much with controversial topics, so I encountered relatively little academic bias/bigotry. However, I did come across one lecturer who thought it acceptable to take pot-shots at Christianity and the Bible, even though the subject was economics, which should not have required him to bring up such topics at all.

In one lecture, he claimed that the Bible says that the earth is the centre of the universe. Being a Christian myself, I talked with him at the end of the Lecture and said that the bible does not say that. When he asserted that it does, I asked him whether he had ever read the bible, and if so, could he please tell me where it said that. He said that he had read the bible (I presume he meant that he read at least part of it) and that he had seen a *picture* that portrayed the earth as the centre of the universe. Flabbergasted at his ignorance, I said that the bible does not have any pictures. His response was simply to assert that it does, and that was the end of our conversation. Having read the whole bible myself, I can say that I have never come across a passage that says that the earth is the centre of the universe – and there are no pictures. I am sure that the bible he read had pictures, but I would have expected a lecturer to get his facts straight before making false claims, misrepresenting my beliefs and insulting Christians in front of two to three hundred students in that economics lecture. Many of those students would have just assumed that what he said was true, and go away with prejudice against Christians because of it. Some of them would have known better – there were a fair number of Christians in that lecture, including some friends I was sitting next to. However, I was the only one who went and challenged the lecturer about it afterwards.

Christians students know all too well about bias against them at universities, but it is so pervasive that they feel too powerless and intimidated to do anything about it. That is why I was the only one to challenge the lecture about his claims. When I told my friends about his response, they were equally as astonished, but didn't pursue the issue any further. My sister, who was at UniSA for one semester studying Tourism and Hospitality, encountered anti-Christian bias in lectures a number of times.

The prejudice, ignorance and intolerance that Christians put up with all the time at universities has to stop. I urge the senate to carefully consider what can be done to ensure that university staff do not make false, unsubstantiated claims based on their own personal prejudices, and stop intimidating students whose views and beliefs differ from their own.

Thank you for considering my submission.

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