

3rd September 2009

Mr John Carter,
Secretary
Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
The Senate
POP Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Carter,

Senate inquiry into academic freedom—response to adverse comment

Thank you for drawing my attention to Lachlan Williams' letter of submission which damns the Political Science Department (now part of the School of Social and Political Sciences) at the University of Melbourne. I am mentioned along with all other political science colleagues (including some who were not on staff at that time) as being left-wing, and worse.

The charge is badly argued and supported. Indeed, the letter probably reflects its worthlessness as objective evidence. Williams' main gripe is with Prof Verity Burgmann with whom he took a first year subject.

It's a pity he didn't choose my first year subject "Introduction to Political Ideas" which I co-taught for several years with John Roskam, who is also a PhD student of mine, and currently the very outspoken head of the Institute of Public Affairs. That might have given him a more balanced view of the diversity in the Department. But I suspect from the tone of his letter that he is not concerned about evidence based views and balanced judgment, preferring to tar all with a cliché drawing on his experience with one.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Galligan
Professor of Political Science