

# **Yet Another Scandal at West Point? You Be the Judge (Part 3)**

By William F. Prince, COL USA (Ret.), USMA '70

Sharp-eyed readers of the STARRS newsletters, editions 11 (15 Oct. 2021) and 13 (27 Nov. 2021), will have noticed two articles, written by me, COL (Ret.) Bill Prince, USMA class of '70 titled "Yet Another Scandal at West Point? You Be the Judge" Parts 1 and 2. The two articles traced the teaching of Critical Race Theory (CRT) at the military academy. As those familiar with CRT understand, it is a particularly egregious form of racial stereotyping, which should have no place at a military academy. As readers of my two previous articles may remember, I had repeatedly reached out to West Point for help in my investigation but faced a stonewall from the academy. The West Point Association of Graduates (AOG) proved more helpful, and for that I am grateful.

I had hoped to draft Part 3 based on additional input from the academy. I forwarded Parts 1 and 2 to Terence Sinkfield, AOG's VP for Alumni Services, with a specific request for review. As I stated in my email to Mr. Sinkfield, "Most importantly, I want to make sure my facts are correct. I would be delighted to add an addendum to Part 1 and/or Part 2 with corrections or comments." In a 29 Nov email, Mr. Sinkfield advised that he had asked Ms. Jaye Donaldson, the VP for Communications & Marketing, to provide "...a review within the next couple of weeks before the Army /Navy game." Hope springs eternal!

Having not heard from Ms. Donaldson "...before the Army /Navy game" I sent a tickler to her on 20 Dec. What I received was disappointing. Rather than a review of the veracity of my investigation, I received a, let us be frank, rather lame response that "...advocacy is not part of the AOG's mission..." Hello! I had not asked for the AOG, in Ms. Donaldson's words to "...lobby the superintendent (commander) of West Point on how to run the academy." Of course, that excuse flies in the face of the AOG's mission statement to "...serve West Point and its graduates; its purpose is to further the ideals and promote the welfare of the USMA." Since I have not received any conflicting information from either West Point or the AOG, I can only assume they were unable (or unwilling) to find fault with any aspects of my investigation.

In continuing my research, I discovered the existence of West Point's Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity (ODIEO), established during the

Obama administration, in May 2014. My first reaction was to wonder how West Point survived for 212 years without a staff focused on “Diversity, Equity, (and) Inclusion” as highlighted in a May 13, 2021, article in West Point’s official publication, *The Pointer View*. Perhaps George Patton, USMA 1909, would have benefited from a more “inclusive” outlook and never would have said anything about using the enemy’s guts to grease the treads of his tanks. As for equity – well, perhaps the Union forces in the Civil War should have been more equitable; after all, the ragged, half-starved Confederate forces went into every battle hopelessly out-numbered. And for diversity – I am reminded of the quote attributed to MG Joseph “Fightin’ Joe” Hooker, USMA 1837, on the eve of the Battle of Chancellorsville, “God Almighty will not be able to prevent the destruction of the rebel army!” (That battle didn’t work out quite as planned for “Fightin’ Joe” even considering the lack of “equity” between the two forces.)

I was somewhat relieved to read that this West Point entity has the title “The Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity.” I have noted with great concern that offices normally titled “Diversity, Inclusion & Equity” have sprouted mushroom-like in government, academia, and business. These DIE offices seem primarily focused on promoting discriminatory percentage-based demographic quotas, resulting in distrust and irresolvable accusations of so-called systemic racism and white supremacy.

In fairness, I thought it important to ascertain what West Point’s ODIEO actually does. According to the westpoint.edu website, the ODIEO is “...the focal point for West Point Diversity and Inclusion outreach initiatives, projects and plans...” It is to “...develop and facilitate affinity groups...” and to “...develop or assist in developing curriculum when needed.” The ODIEO created the Diversity Forum, the mission statement of which reads, “Nested in the West Point Leadership Center, the Diversity Forum provides diverse exposure, unique education opportunities, and empowerment activities for cadets to lead on topics of diversity, inclusion, and equity.” That last clause raised, in my mind, some concerns. While we should all support equality (equal opportunity), equity, in the current vernacular, carries some dangerous baggage. The social revolutionaries equate “equity” with equality of outcome; any deviation is sure proof of racial discrimination. Adoption of the social revolutionaries’ concept of “equity” only leads to feelings of victimhood when outcomes are invariably not equal.

When I queried the ODIEO directly, I received a prompt and helpful reply. *The Pointer View* article referred to above had mentioned “...14 diversity and inclusion clubs.” Also as noted above, the ODIEO’s mission is to “develop and facilitate

affinity groups...” In her email to me, Ms. Lisa Benitez, the Chief Diversity Officer, confirmed that they are the same as the 14 Diversity Clubs coming under the direction of the Directorate of Cadet Activities (DCA). In reviewing the list of those 14 Diversity Clubs, I saw nothing untoward. (Let me make clear, I believe ODIEO to be composed of well-meaning, dedicated professionals. I do, however, question the need for this new entity and fear the potential for misuse or the future weaponizing of the office by individuals pushing a radical, woke, agenda.) Regarding the Diversity Forum, Ms. Benitez advised that it is “...not a West Point DCA Club. They formed as a group during the summer/fall 2020 ...” “Their role to date has been to promote speakers and events primarily with the Leadership Center...”

As readers of Part 1 of my investigation know, a key concern was the invitation of Dr. Carol Anderson of Emory University to address cadets and faculty. A slide from Dr. Anderson’s 11 Feb. 2021 presentation reportedly contained the seminar title, “Understanding Whiteness and White Rage.” In a 25 Aug 2020 tweet, Dr. Anderson described (then Commander-in-Chief) President Trump as a “white nationalist” and the Republican Party platform as a platform of “white supremacy.” Further, she has claimed that the motivation behind the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the Constitution was the insistence by Southern whites on having access to the weapons they might need to quell slave revolts; a theory totally rejected by reputable historians.

Again, I need to thank Ms. Benitez for her second timely response. In a 17 Jan. email, I advised her that I had been unable to ascertain who, or which office had initially invited Dr. Anderson and whether she would be invited back to address the cadets and faculty. Ms. Benitez responded only that she had heard nothing about Dr. Anderson returning.

In summary then, I believe Parts 1, 2 and this current article provide as much detail as I am able to glean regarding the arrival of CRT at West Point. Based on my investigation, I “...give it as my fixed opinion...” (old grads will recognize that quote) that some in positions of leadership at West Point have promoted racial stereotyping by deliberately exposing cadets and faculty to CRT. The following two aspects of my investigation concern me greatly:

- 1) As detailed in Part 2, there appears to be a concerted effort on the part of some in leadership positions at West Point to stonewall inquiry into the issue, to include attempting to ignore very legitimate questions from a

member of the House Armed Services Committee. Further, I find it unconscionable that West Point would attempt to stonewall a lawful FOIA request. Even more damaging to West Point's reputation is finding itself the subject of a lawsuit for stonewalling the FOIA request.

- 2) Many have expressed outrage over what some have termed AOG's attempt to avoid engagement in this scandal and thus ignore its mission statement to "...serve West Point and its graduates; its purpose is to further the ideals and promote the welfare of the USMA." Instead, there appears to be a decision on the part of AOG to hide behind a rather lame excuse that AOG does not "...lobby the superintendent (commander) of West Point on how to run the academy." The AOG represents thousands of graduates who have every right, indeed a sacred responsibility, to call upon West Point leadership to live up to our motto of Duty, Honor, Country.

Thus, it seems appropriate now to issue a call for action. I plan to use multiple venues to call upon West Point Superintendent LTG Darryl Williams and AOG President Todd Browne to publicly and specifically condemn all forms of racial stereotyping to include Critical Race Theory. In addition, I have begun encouraging other members of "The Long Grey Line" to pause in providing any financial support to the AOG, unless or until Mr. Browne condemns racial stereotyping.

To the readers of this investigation, we need to stay in the fight, and support the STARRS mission!