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Air Force Academy Report Released — No “Overt Discrimination”

Thursday, June 23, 2005

The Pentagon has released its promised report on claims of religious discrimination at the [Air Force Academy](#), and the official investigation found evidence of “insensitivity,” but no evidence of “overt religious discrimination.” This report will not satisfy those who have attempted to capitalize on this controversy in order to push their own anti-evangelical animus, but it sets the record straight in a number of ways.

“There is a lack of awareness on the part of some faculty and staff, and perhaps some senior cadets, as to what constitutes appropriate expressions of faith,” said Lt. Gen. Roger Brady, Air Force deputy chief of staff for personnel. Nevertheless, the investigating panel found no evidence to justify the kind of claims made by groups such as [Americans United](#) — an organization that will not be satisfied until evangelical cadets forfeit or are denied their own First Amendment rights.

Predictably, the editorial writers of [The New York Times](#) are not pleased. Their editorial, published today, labels the Academy’s avowedly Christian cadets as “evangelical zealots.” The editorial characterizes the official report as “obfuscating intolerance,” noting: “This muddle stands in stark contrast to an earlier investigation by [Yale Divinity School](#) that found widespread problems with intolerance at the academy.”

This remark is misleading in more than one way. There was no official study undertaken by the [Yale Divinity School](#). There was a group of graduate students, led by a professor of pastoral counseling, that had visited the school in order to observe and analyze issues of sexual harassment. While there, this group complained about evangelical cadets, officials, and chaplains who shared their Christian faith with others and were vocal and public in identifying themselves as Christians. The report is exactly what one should expect from a group of observers from the [Yale Divinity School](#) — not exactly a bastion of evangelical fervor. “Intolerance” in this case is defined by any overt Christian witness. This controversy deserves a close watch.

WITNESS THESE LINKS: Robert Weller, [Religious Insensitivity Cited at Academy](#), The Washington Post, Thursday, June 23, 2005. Laurie Goodstein, [Air Force Academy Staff Found Promoting Religion](#), The New York Times, Thursday, June 23, 2005. Other coverage at [CNN](#), [BBC News](#), and [Los Angeles Times](#).

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