

PORTLAND STATE PROF RESIGNS OVER 'IDEOLOGICAL INTOLERANCE' AT UNIVERSITY

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[Philip Caldwell](#), [The Washington Free Beacon](#), 8 September 2021

A philosophy professor at Portland State University who earned national prominence for his critiques of critical theory scholarship resigned Wednesday, accusing university administrators of enabling an environment of "ideological intolerance" and harassment toward him.

Peter Boghossian, an assistant professor at the university, sent a letter to Portland State's provost explaining his resignation, saying he was proud of his work acquainting his students with the Socratic method and inviting a diverse range of lecturers to engage in conversations in classes. But he said the university has become unbearably intolerant of intellectual exploration and free thought. The letter was [published](#) in journalist Bari Weiss's Substack newsletter.

Portland State "has transformed a bastion of free inquiry into a Social Justice factory whose only inputs were race, gender, and victimhood and whose only outputs were grievance and division," Boghossian said. "Students at Portland State are not being taught to think. Rather, they are being trained to mimic the moral certainty of ideologues."

The professor detailed retaliation he faced after he participated in an effort to expose the weak standards of peer-reviewed academic journals. In 2017 and 2018, he submitted intentionally absurd hoax papers to journals, with such titles as "The Conceptual Penis as a Social Construct," to expose the journals when the papers passed review and were published.

After the hoax gained national attention, Portland State filed charges of "research misconduct" against Boghossian, accusing him of performing unauthorized research on human subjects. Activists and even a professor disrupted and derailed panels he hosted. Students harassed and spat on him on campus. Bags of feces were left at his door. And colleagues urged students to avoid his classes. Boghossian said Portland State did nothing to address the harassment and levied no punishment against perpetrators.

In 2017, the university levied a Title IX investigation against Boghossian, which he said failed to substantiate unfounded accusations against him. But the Title IX investigator recommended Boghossian receive coaching and told him he was forbidden from giving his opinion about "protected classes."

Boghossian said the persistent harassment and hostility from administrators and faculty made his working life intolerable, and his principles obligated him to no longer abide by the administration's rule.

Institutions should "remind us that the freedom to question is our fundamental right. Educational institutions should remind us that that right is also our duty," Boghossian said. "Portland State University has failed in fulfilling this duty. In doing so it has failed not only its students but the public that supports it. ... It has become clear to me that this institution is no place for people who intend to think freely and explore ideas."

Philip Caldwell is an assistant editor at the Washington Free Beacon. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 2020, where he covered sports for the Michigan Daily. He can be reached by email at caldwell@freebeacon.com or on Twitter at @PhilipECaldwell.

There are no comments yet.