

**Department of Women's Studies, CSULB:
Response to the work of Professor Kevin MacDonald**

The Department of Women's Studies is in full support of the intellectual and academic freedom of scholars to pursue their chosen research interests. Women's Studies has waged long, arduous and successful struggles in the US and elsewhere for recognition as a legitimate field of scholarship and teaching, and those of us who teach and research in this field are well aware of the pernicious consequences of limiting intellectual freedom.

Academic freedom does not mean that published research is immune from legitimate and scholarly criticism, and in fact, academic freedom includes the freedom to debate and challenge scholarship that promotes ideas contrary to an inclusive and egalitarian society.

The field of Women's Studies is committed to the creation and promotion of research and teaching that challenges racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and related bigotries that undermine the possibility for all populations to exist free from discrimination, deprivation, hostility, violence and marginalization. Women's Studies is dedicated to analyzing and critiquing social institutions that support or promote oppressive conditions against any targeted populations. Informed by feminist methodology and feminist theory, the core mission of Women's Studies is to promote positive social transformation that eradicates the full range of bigoted institutions that prevent people from realizing the highest possibilities for their lives. Further, Women's Studies rejects any claims to a natural, biological or essential basis for social hierarchies that impute lesser or greater social value to designated populations. As such, the mission of Women's Studies and the ethical and political impulse of feminism stand in direct contrast to the fields of socio-biology, evolutionary psychology and, by association, the work of Professor Kevin Macdonald.

Professor MacDonald's work has rightly come under scrutiny and condemnation by a number of institutions and departments at CSULB and elsewhere for its reliance on racist, Anti-Semitic and essentialist ideas about the social value of particular populations, namely Jews, African-Americans and Latinos. Arguing from the fields of evolutionary psychology and socio-biology, Professor Macdonald's research suggests that there is a genetic basis for ranking White Europeans, Jews, African-Americans and other groups according to intelligence, individualism and capacities for assimilation. This research is well-documented by the *Southern Poverty Law Review*, several CSULB departments including History, Jewish Studies, Anthropology, Linguistics and Psychology, and in documents under review by CSULB Academic Senate.

Challenging Professor MacDonald's work in isolation from the fields of study that grant him legitimacy runs the risk of individualizing him and his research as exceptional and unsupported by the academy. This is not the case. Professor MacDonald works in fields that are considered to be legitimate by academic standards, and unfortunately, research into the genetic basis for the social value of racial and ethnic groups, women and homosexuals continues under the auspices of many fields of study.

As such, we wish to raise some broader questions about any research that promotes bigotry, intolerance and racial superiority. What are the social, political, intellectual and academic conditions that enable racially supremacist research to be conducted, funded, and legitimated in today's academy? What do we do in our fields of study to counter racially supremacist ideas? How do we shape our research and teaching to undermine the social conditions that make racial supremacy possible? How does our work contribute to transforming the academy and the larger society to counter racial supremacy and bigotry?

The Department of Women's Studies stands in solidarity with other departments on campus that have issued statements about Professor MacDonald's work. We call on all who are concerned about his work to recommit our efforts to transforming the academy and society in ways that render racially supremacist research and the circulation of bigoted ideas untenable.