**After dropping my course, instead of speaking to me about his complaints, a student wrote to the Texan He hoped to enlist enough readers to get me thrown out of U.T. Here is his letter and the responses all of which were not supportive of his position including one from an exceptionally bright former student whose political views I did not even know**. **Note some of his facts are erroneous ( e.g. who owns the major newspapers such as the alleged paper of record the NYT etc. )and also he resorts to ad hominem arguments attacking not only me but my employees as well. He never quite says what my argument was nor what his answer to my argument was. My argument was that since major corporations now own the newspapers and major t.v. channels, maybe we should reinterpret what freedom of the press should mean. Somehow, my using a living constitution/policy which I don’t agree with, set him off, though he thinks at bottom that the Constitution should be reinterpreted by justices whenever they want to. And I think he agrees with me to quote him “the press is only as free as the people who own it allow it to be.” The recent revelations about Google and Facebook censoring content reminds us that this truism applies even more today than in 2001, We see a growing concentration of power over mass media by fewer an fewer**

**entities as well as a vast expansion of using that media for self serving purposes.**

**Deadly Toxin February 2, 2001.**

**Sager too opinionated**

The first two weeks of school have brought to my attention a major problem within the Government Department. Alan Sager is not fit to teach a class that focuses on the development of civil liberties within our judicial system.

Dr. Sager is the head of the Republican Party in Travis County and also owns the local Supercuts. His extremely conservative views and the juvenile way in which he expresses himself in class do not give this course the attention it deserves.

My father has spent his life fighting for civil liberties. First as an ACLU lawyer, then later in private practice. He went before the Supreme Court in the job discrimination case, Clara Watson vs. Fort Worth Bank and Trust. Therefore, it is an insult to people like my father and countless others who have sacrificed for the cause of civil liberties that a man like Alan Sager could be allowed to interpret their accomplishments.

Without the leadership of liberals all over America, we would not have the safeguards that civil liberties ensure. Therefore, you can understand my consternation when, in class, Dr. Sager had the nerve to call into question the basic right of freedom of press. His ideology is the tired old conservative whine, "the liberal media." Well, in my mind the press is only as free as the people who own it allow it to be.

Activist conservatives own over 80 percent of the papers in this country. That is why I am out of that class and hopefully Dr. Sager will not be allowed to teach it again. There is no room in a public university for Dr. Sager's personal opinions. I have no doubt that Dr. Sager is a well-read man, but his politics are as bad as his haircuts.

John Thomas Brender

Government Senior

**A great professor**

While I share Mr. John Thomas Brender's liberal views and disagree with almost every political view that Dr. Sager expresses in his class, I find Mr. Brender's assertion that Dr. Sager should not be allowed to teach at the University to be absurd and misguided.

Mr. Brender contends that Dr. Sager's conservative views make him unfit to teach a class on civil liberties. Mr. Brender proposes that the University should "silence" such views and not allow Dr. Sager to teach. Is he serious? Let me see if I have this straight, because Dr. Sager does not agree with your views regarding civil liberties, and specifically the freedom of expression, he should be banned from the hallowed halls of the University of Texas. In my

humble, liberal opinion, silencing somebody because they do not agree with you seems to run counter to the notion of freedom of expression.

I would completely understand your concern with Dr. Sager's conservative ideology if he allowed it to affect his grading, but I can assure you that as opinionated as he is, politics do not factor into his evaluations of his students' performances. Both liberal and conservative students excelled or did not excel in his class based on their intelligence and work ethic, not their political leanings.

Dr. Sager is an extremely dedicated professor who takes an active role in the lives of his students. When I took his class, he would always conduct informal office hours at Trudy's to create a more relaxed atmosphere for open discussion, and he would invite his entire class (sometimes nearly 100 students) over to his house for an "award ceremony" at the end of the

semester to honor students (both liberal and conservative) who had excelled in his class. These are the actions of a dedicated educator, not a "juvenile" right-wing nut.

The first time I took a class with Dr. Sager, I found myself gritting my teeth on a daily basis, wondering how he could interpret the Constitution the way that he does, and while I may have been taken a back the first two or three weeks, I soon realized that Dr. Sager's class was challenging me and forcing me to reconsider and defend my liberal views. Liberals should not hide in the corner and isolate themselves from conservative thought. Rather than dropping the class, you should be sitting on the front row, challenging his ideology on a daily basis.

One last thing, Dr. Sager often boasts that his class will more than prepare you for law school, and as much as I questioned that assertion when I was in his class, I can now say, speaking from experience, that Dr. Sager's class will prepare you for law school. I walked into Constitutional Law with a better understanding of the material than any of my Ivy-educated classmates, and I

have Sager to thank for that.

My advice to you, Mr. Brender, would be to apologize to Dr. Sager and see if he will still let you take his class. I guarantee that he will challenge you to work hard and defend your views on a daily basis, and at the end of the semester, you will have learned a thing or two about the Constitution and civil liberties.

**Brian T. Stansbury**

**Second-year law student University of Virginia**

**Afraid to learn?**

This is in response to Sager Too Opinionated (Feb. 1). Mr. Brender, in your four years here as a liberal arts student have you not learned how to form a constructive argument instead of rant for five tired paragraphs? So you say Dr. Sager is too conservative to teach your class? Are you afraid to learn something from one of the most qualified professors at this institution? In the middle of your ranting you managed to toot your father's horn. Did your dad fight along other liberal civil rights leaders such as Jesse Jackson and Bill Clinton (both fought for women's rights by having extramarital affairs)? Maybe it was along with Sen. Edward Kennedy who "forgot" that a young woman was in the car he drove into the water while drunk or Sen. Al Gore Sr. who voted against civil rights legislation. Clearly we need more people of such outstanding moral character to teach at the University. Now for the liberal media bias; the fact this letter won't be printed while yours was is a prime example of how the liberal media controls the "news." (Communists also believe in censorship.) Take for example how the liberal editors at Newsweek (owned by MSNBC and The Washington Post not the activist conservatives you speak of) decided not to break the Monica Lewinsky story. Surely they felt this wasn't news worthy and that is why they reported on it after Matt Drudge broke the story. **Chris Oehme Engineering senior**

**Let the man teach**

In the Feb. 1 edition of The Daily Texan, I read a truly enthralling Firing Line by Mr. John Brender that lambasted Dr. Alan Sager for actually daring to teach with a conservative slant! How dare he not toe the line of liberal academia and actually represent other (shudder, shudder) views that don't fit in here! The fact is that Mr. Brender and most other liberal academics fear conservative academics like Dr. Sager because they threaten the monopoly of thought that encompasses not only the University of Texas but also a substantial majority of universities and colleges across the United States. Take that away from liberals, and what do they have? I would think that the Department of Government would be pleased to have the head of a county political party teaching at the University. Access to real world politics and hearing a different point of view from what most professors offer are two major advantages that Dr. Sager brings to the table as a teacher. I am not saying by any means that all liberal professors are evil. I may not agree with what they say, but I do respect their knowledge and I think that, for the most part, hearing opinion from both sides of an issue is a good thing. The University is supposed to promote academic discourse, yet that cannot be done if Mr. Brender's wishes are followed and Dr. Sager (and others like him) and their personal opinions are removed from the classroom. Dr. Sager is more than qualified to teach civil liberties or any other government class related to the law. He graduated from the University of Michigan Law School and received his Ph.D. from Northwestern. He also clerked for Chief Justice Burger on the United States Supreme Court. To say that there is no room in a public university for Dr. Sager or his opinions truly proves that any challenge by a conservative to the liberal monopoly over higher learning scares people. He truly does prepare his students for law school by having a heavy workload, calling on students and assigning a ton of reading. Perhaps those reasons also played a role in Mr. Brender's departure from the class. Dr. Sager is not a "major problem" (as Mr. Bender says) in the Department of Government. He is an asset to the department, and should be allowed to teach his class in the style that he chooses. Hook 'em horns. **Daniel Knight UT alum and first-year law student**

**Opinions count**

The little furor over Dr. Sager reflected in several letters in The Firing Line caused me to animadvert on the general subject of opinionated professors. My view is that a faculty ought to reflect a diversity of opinion, and ideally students would have a choice of whom to select for various courses. Alas, this is not often the case, but as several letters point out, students can profit by a different opinion from their own, and sharpen their debating skills, if the professor is prepared to allow this. Some are not, as I found during my attendance at the University, over the years 1940 to 1948. Those were the bad old days when an ultra conservative Board of Regents appointed by Gov. W. Lee O'Daniel instituted a policy of controlling faculty and courses. Four full professors who supported FDR's New Deal policies were fired, tenure having been severely limited by the Board. Three untenured professors were also fired who spoke up at an anti-union rally. Their crime was to defend the federal labor laws of the time, which unions generally supported. UT President Homer P. Rainey, a good man who was by no means a wild-eyed radical, was fired in 1944, partly do to his opposition to the banning of John Dos Passos' book USA. The University was censured by a number of academic organizations, including the American Association of University Professors and Phi Beta Kappa, a condition that lasted for about nine years. One spokesman for the regents opined that if that kept faculty of national repute from coming to the University then Texas would be better off. There were further dramatic events including a student strike and an 8,000 student march on the capitol and the governor's mansion. Alas, I missed all this fun and games, being in the USAAF at the time, but I read about in The Texan! So you see, friends, even those of you who don't like Dr. Sager, you are one heck of lot better off than we were in the 1940s. Weird goes ever as she will! **Fisher L. Forrest UT alum**

UT profs call Gore's image inconsistent By Patrick Badgley Daily Texan Staff Vice President Al Gore's image problem resurfaced following Wednesday night's second presidential debate, UT professors said Friday, calling his polite and controlled performance a stark contrast compared to the first debate. UT Government Professor David Prindle said Gore came into the second debate as a "different candidate" not interrupting his opponent, GOP candidate Texas Gov. George W. Bush, and keeping himself from making what could be interpreted as rude gestures. However, the change might have been too dramatic, preventing Gore from interrupting when it was needed so he could depict himself as polite. "In the first debate, he was aggressive and rude, and in the second debate, he was polite," Prindle said. "Neither of them worked. There was negative commentary on both of his performances." Travis County Republican Party Chair Alan Sager said Gore's strategy during the debates has focused on isolating certain statistics in order to distort the governor's record. He said that making Bush's tax-cut plan appear to only benefit the wealthiest Americans is one example of how Gore wants to say that Bush doesn't care about other groups. "[Gore] has to embellish the truth," said Sager, also a UT government lecturer. "That's the only way he can win because Bush's policies are stronger than Gore's." Gore's criticisms of Bush's Texas record have continued days after the debate, highlighted by the Democrat's assertion that Bush's tax-cut plan is his top priority. A statement issued by the Gore campaign Saturday addressed Bush's tax cut as a sign of Bush's choice to help the wealthy over middle-class and poorer families. "[Bush] has very different priorities," Gore said in a speech while campaigning in Michigan Saturday. "He prefers a massive tax cut for the wealthiest of the wealthy, and I believe his record in Texas gives us an important window onto those priorities." In the release, Gore said he hopes to expand health-insurance coverage to all children by 2005. Sager said Gore referred to the Texas environment's poor condition and Texas' low rankings for providing health insurance to women and children in order to call the governor's compassion into question. "When you say you don't take care of children and don't work to fight pollution, the underlying message is 'you're a mean bastard,'" Sager said. However, during the Wednesday debate, Gore said he was not questioning the governor's heart but examining his priorities and focusing on the issues he would concentrate on as president. Sager added that in addition to Gore's attempt to make Bush's policies look bad, he is also misrepresenting what he has done with the federal bureaucracy. Most of the federal-government cuts that came as a result of the Clinton/Gore administration, Sager said, can be largely attributed to the downsizing of the U.S. military. In addition, because many industrial businesses are located in Texas, Sager said the governor cannot control all of the pollution in the state.

Sager's "editorial" I'd just like to know why Alan Sager is allowed a front page editorial of his views, without labeling the article as what it truly is: a soapbox editorial from Alan Sager? Was he too busy with his Republican Party duties to write his own editorial, that the Texan staff felt it necessary to let him dictate it to them? Or perhaps he was busy in his lectures, figuring out how to best slander any Supreme Court Justice he ever disagreed with? I took an upper division constitutional law class from Sager,a lecturer in the government department, and much like this article, he taught one side of the issue as the gospel truth, and that the other side was hogwash. The reason half the people who take Sager's class love it and the other half HATE it, is he lectures Republican, ultra-conservative doctrine to his classes and neglects the rest of the case, so those who agree with that doctrine have a great time, and anyone who was looking for a balanced view of the subject are left wanting. I've run out of constitutional law classes to take at the University, since I enjoy the subject thoroughly, and no other professor I've had at UT had such a lack of respect for the writings of half the men and women who have sat on that bench, or taught only his own biased view of the cases the way Alan Sager did in his class, just as in this article, to paint such a partisan and unrealistic picture of the Constitution, the cases that have come before the Supreme Court, and the men and women who have sat on that Court. Please keep this in mind when deciding what part of his editorial you will take as partisan bias and what part you'll take as objective discussion. To Sager's credit, he'd make a great neighbor. He's funny, and is glad to talk with students, during class, or after, he knows his side of the argument quite well, and most importantly, he does not hold against his students their views. I came out of the class with a good grade, even though I chose, in the mock court we did, to represent Justice William Brennan, who Professor Sager told us he didn't think should even be on the Court. But even an editorial by a nice guy, should be labeled as such, not passed off as reporting an objective view and allowed nearly and entire article on the front page. Abbie Swan Government/linguistics senior

Sager has opinions A recent Firing Line article harshly criticized Dr. Alan Sager for something that he was not responsible for, so I felt a response was in order. The letter accused Dr. Sager of editorializing on the front page of The Daily Texan, when he was merely quoted for his opinion. My understanding of journalism is that reporters interview people and aim to write their stories objectively, while giving the public different sides of an issue through the voice of an expert or witness. If the article appeared to have a strong viewpoint, that is not Dr. Sager's fault. He does have a busy schedule, but writing articles for The Daily Texan is not one of his obligations. Furthermore, Dr. Sager is entitled to his own opinion just like everybody else. The Firing Line article was aimed to warn people who had read the front-page article that Dr. Sager has strong political opinions, but I think educated readers can delineate such bias for themselves. I just wanted to clarify these points and point out that the argument about objective journalism in this case falls on the shoulders of The Daily Texan reporting staff, not the person they interviewed. Laura Seeman Government senior