

Letter in support of Prof. Ana Candela from SOC100 Tas

March 4, 2022

Dear Associate Dean Nancy Um, Dean Celia Klin, Provost Donald Neiman,

In light of the recent accusations against a Binghamton University faculty member, Professor Ana Candela, we the undersigned express our unwavering support for our colleague and her policy of class participation. Progressive Stacking is a practice that is true to the very same values that Prof. Candela is being denounced of attacking, namely, equal participation for all. These accusations, and any failure to clarify and uphold a praxis of equality, are based on political misrepresentation and manipulation.

As Teaching Assistants, we agreed to use this method in order to address an empirically verified phenomenon which is that certain demographics speak more than others, not least because they have historically been denied the right to speak and equal participation. The education process is most successful when viewpoints of the most diverse type can be freely expressed, which is precisely why we understand progressive stacking to be an effective way to ensure our students' success. Conversation is also a practice learned in our classrooms, and for the above reasons it may require our intervention. As the TAs of the Sociology 100 class, we are certain that no student was ever denied the right to speak. On the contrary, Progressive Stacking seeks to counter-balance forces that have unfortunately been solidified.

Today, the United States is witnessing right-wing attacks on intellectual freedoms as instructors across the country are being targeted for their use of concepts such as Critical Race Theory and Progressive Stacking. Privileged sectors respond negatively to any practice that strives to provide equality—whether in the national context or in the micropolitics of a classroom. It is precisely in these moments when the intellectual tradition of universities like ours need to come to the fore and express support beyond any doubt. While we can agree or disagree on a particular method, there is no doubt that the targeting of Prof. Candela constitutes an attack on academic freedoms. For this reason, we call for the immediate reversal of the university administration's response and reinstatement of the syllabus section.

Students in the United States and all over the world choose Binghamton University's Sociology program for its international prestige, intellectually challenging environment, and progressive approach. We must speak clearly against all acts that foster ignorance and regressive intellectual environments.

Sincerely,

Sociology 100 Tas (11 persons)