

## **Journalists and UNC's Bill Friday criticize objectivity of Vajda's Alcoa “documentary” and subpoena of unaired footage**

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### **TUES: THE PRESS ON THE PRESS (7/16/2010)**

It looks like UNC-TV GM Tom Howe can't decide whether or not he wants an outside review of Vajda's three-part Alcoa report that aired on NC Now last week.

Last week, UNC's J-School got a request from Howe, asking them to review the series to decide whether it meets universally accepted standards of journalism -- and whether they'd have accepted the segments for broadcast.

J-school insiders tell me the resulting reviews were not good. That's when Howe apparently changed his mind, telling the faculty who reviewed the tape that he didn't want their feedback after all.

Read more ... <http://wunc.org/programs/news/Isaac-Hunters-Tavern/tues-the-press-on-the-press>

### **'A shameful episode in timidity' (7/13/2010)**

The worst thing about the Alcoa/UNC-TV fiasco is not that the station caved to a subpoena from the North Carolina Legislature--although that was bad enough--it is that UNC-TV abandoned its editorial responsibility and oversight of the story. ...

The result is quickly apparent, even for a casual viewer. The series is less journalism and more advocacy. Sources are stacked on one side, statements about health risk and environmental damage are made without credible sources, 40-year-old documents are made to look modern, and a lawyer for people suing Alcoa dominates. Additionally, Alcoa projects in other states are slid into the program so that they appear to reflect on the Yadkin project and facts favorable to Alcoa were ignored. Any UNC journalism student producing this kind of “story” would get a failing grade.

Read more ... <http://weblogs.jomc.unc.edu/talkpolitics/?p=1407>

### **Legislators overstep and UNC bows low (7/13/2010)**

... some key figures in North Carolina higher education did nothing to stop it when the Senate Judiciary II Committee subpoenaed information from UNC-TV, the statewide public television system that operates under the UNC system and its Board of Governors. ... it violates basic journalistic standards to allow the government to intervene in their operations. That's the kind of thing that happens in banana republics or communist regimes.

Had UNC President Emeritus Bill Friday still been running the system and overseeing UNC-TV, "I'd have sat on it," he said Thursday. ... The issues of this episode are not the same, but one similarity is clear, says Friday: "It's the intellectual equivalent of the Speaker Ban Law."

Read more ... <http://www.newsobserver.com/2010/07/13/578174/legislators-overstep-and-unc-bows.html>

### **Editorial: Muddying the waters (7/7/2010)**

In addition to believing the state has a right to take over Alcoa's dams on the Yadkin, state senators also apparently believe they have a right to exert control over the press, too -- or at least the publicly funded portion of it.

While UNC-TV may technically be a “state entity,” as news accounts have described it, it shouldn't be treated as the private investigative arm of the state Senate. Surely the senators recognize how this type of meddling in public media compromises independent reporting, as well as raising questions about their commitment to First Amendment freedoms.

This was a damaging step for UNC-TV's editorial independence. Along with seeking control of the Yadkin dams, these senators have illustrated their willingness to assert control over North Carolina's public broadcasters.

Read more ... <http://www.salisburypost.com/Opinion/070710-edit-unctvalcoa-qcd>