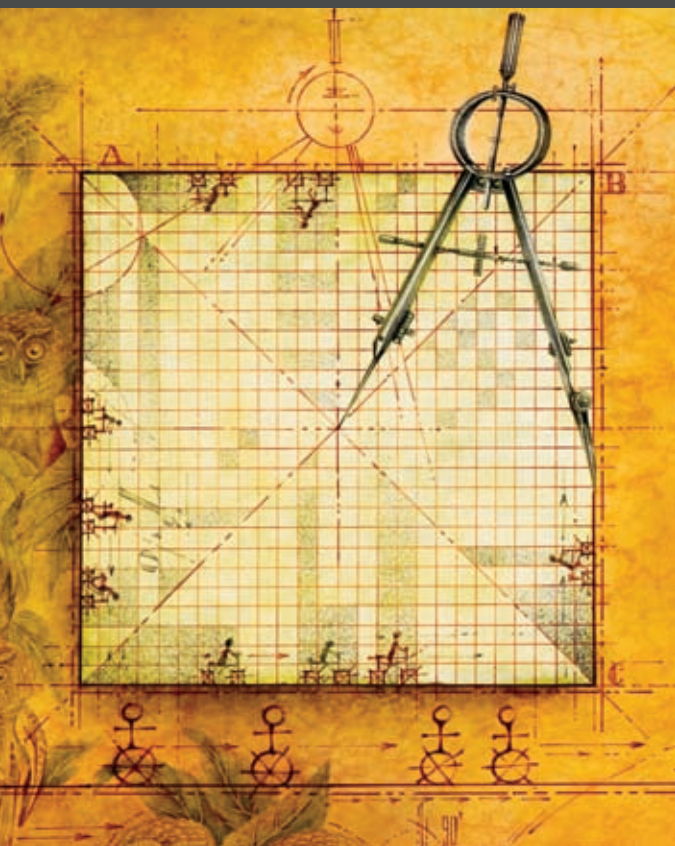


Getting Back to First Principles

2009 Annual Report



ACTA
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF
TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI



The American Council of Trustees and Alumni is an independent, non-profit organization committed to academic freedom, excellence, and accountability at America's colleges and universities. Founded in 1995, ACTA is the only national organization dedicated to working with alumni, donors, trustees, and education leaders across the United States to support liberal arts education, uphold high academic standards, safeguard the free exchange of ideas on campus, and ensure that the next generation receives a philosophically rich, high-quality education at an affordable price. Our network includes alumni and trustees from more than 700 colleges and universities, including over 10,000 current board members. Our quarterly newsletter, *Inside Academe*, reaches over 12,000 readers.

One of my heroes, James Bryant Conant, served as president of Harvard for twenty tumultuous years starting in 1933. The man who did perhaps more than anyone else to nationalize America's oldest university had on the wall of his office in Massachusetts Hall a cartoon. It depicted a turtle, and the caption read: Behold the tortoise—he only makes progress by sticking his neck out. In a very real sense, ACTA sticks its neck out every time it insists that core curricula require a core, and that diplomas should be worth rather more than the paper on which they are printed.

- *Richard Norton Smith, award-winning historian*

ATHENA Roundtable 2009

C Contents

From the President	2
Getting Back to First Principles	
Academic Excellence	4
Academic Freedom	8
Accountability	12
ATHENA Roundtable	18
Leadership and Staff	22
Our Partners	26



“Academic Freedom,
Academic Excellence, and
Accountability. These are the
principles we believe are the
foundation of quality higher
education. And they are the
principles that drive our work,
each and every day.”

From the President

GETTING BACK TO FIRST PRINCIPLES. In so many ways, that summarizes ACTA’s higher education focus in 2009.

In the K-12 world, we hear about the three R’s. But in ACTA’s universe, it is the three A’s—Academic Freedom, Academic Excellence, and Accountability. These are the principles we believe are the foundation of quality higher education. And they are the principles that drive our work, each and every day.

But on our college campuses, these principles are often ignored or abandoned. That’s why we hear so often of classrooms where topics are off-limits, of college graduates who can’t write or compute, and of college price tags that keep going up and up, while satisfaction keeps going down.

In too many ways, ACTA believes higher education has become a credential—based on reputation, not education. That’s why, with your support, we are working hard to return higher education to first principles—demanding quality instruction that prepares students for life after graduation, ensuring a free exchange of ideas in the classroom, and helping trustees and policymakers deliver a rigorous and high quality education at an affordable price.

Thanks to your support, we’ve made immense progress in 2009. Read on to find out about our exciting new college-guide website, WhatWillTheyLearn.com, that provides parents, policymakers, and students with information about what they are expected to learn and at what price. Read on to learn about *Protecting the Free Exchange of Ideas*, ACTA’s report on the positive measures being taken by institutions across the

country to teach students how to think, not what to think—featured in *USA Today*.

Take a close look at our groundbreaking reform efforts in the states—hard-hitting report cards issued in key states—designed to re-focus higher education’s attention not on more dollars but on what really matters, namely a strong general education, intellectual diversity, informed and engaged governance, and affordable cost.



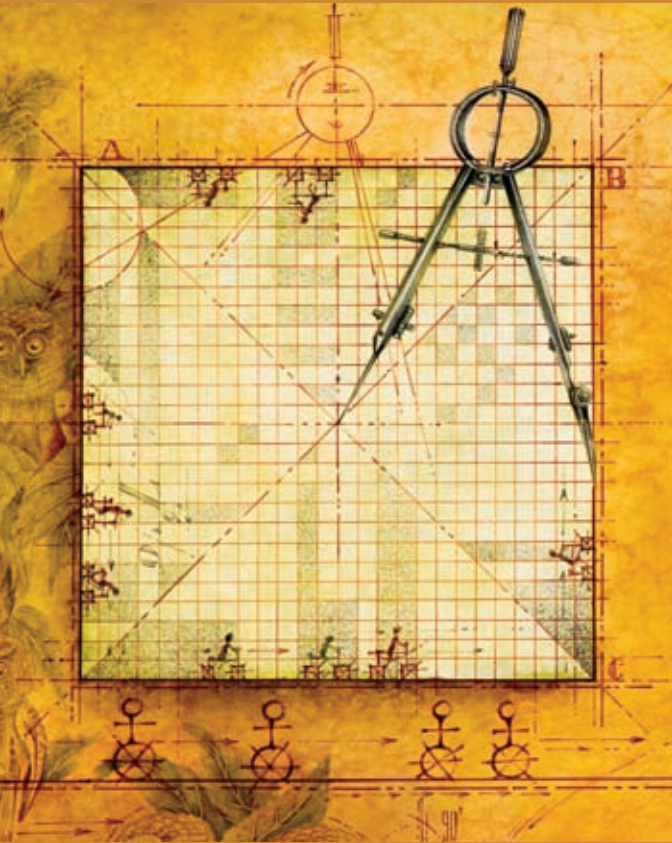
And don’t miss our section on Accountability, where we showcase ACTA’s unique and high-profile work with policymakers, trustees, and donors around the country—stakeholders who, for too long, have been told to hand over the dollars, no questions asked. ACTA’s aggressive campaign to return higher ed to first principles has been seeing success—and the following pages will show you how.

With your support in 2009, ACTA’s efforts received incredible media coverage and public support. By year’s end, ACTA’s work had reached more than 35 million readers and viewers—on the web and in newspapers, including such high-profile publications as *The Washington Post*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Chicago Sun-Times*, and *Inside Higher Ed*. And in response, we received an outpouring of letters and telephone calls—emotional and heart-warming thank yous from trustees, parents, and policymakers across the country who testify that ACTA is helping turn higher ed around.

ACTA’s message is two-fold. First, as we see it, the real story of higher ed right now is not the sensational tale of all that is wrong—but the vital, path-breaking work that is being done to improve, reform, and even rescue our colleges and universities. Second, that work—ACTA’s work—could not be done without your invaluable support. I welcome your comments and send you my sincerest thanks!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anne D. Neal". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Anne D. Neal
President



Academic Excellence

EVERYONE AGREES THAT AMERICA'S COLLEGE

students should receive an excellent education. Too often, though, that's not happening—even after students and their parents pay tens of thousands of dollars in tuition. In 2009, ACTA made major progress in fighting this harmful trend.

On August 19 at the National Press Club in Washington, DC we launched our new “What Will They Learn?” project—an audacious effort to show the American people why and how our college students are not getting the knowledge they need. Just as *U.S. News & World Report* was about to release the latest issue of its fabled college rankings, we took out a full-page ad in *U.S. News* noting that nearly two-thirds of employers say too many recent college graduates are not prepared to participate successfully in today's economy.

To find out why this is, and what they can do about it, our ad directs readers to WhatWillTheyLearn.com, ACTA's brand-new college-guide website. There, we make available—for free—an easy-to-understand evaluation of each university's core curriculum. We delve into the complicated course catalogs and figure out whether seven key subjects are required: composition, literature, foreign language, U.S. history or government, economics, mathematics, and science.

What our evaluations show is disturbing, but not surprising: The reason so many college graduates are not prepared is that crucial subjects are often optional.

College graduates
should be prepared for
the workforce and the
voting booth.

“I found myself often nodding in agreement when I was reading ACTA’s new report.”

– Stanley Fish, *New York Times*

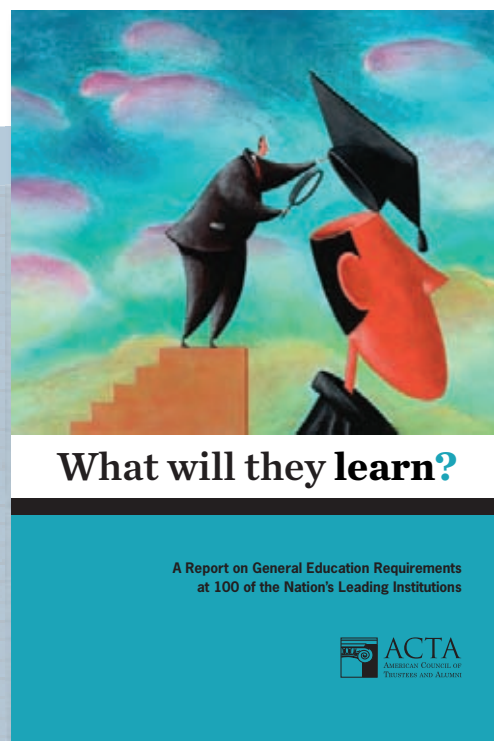
To drive this point home, we also released a printed report, entitled *What will they learn?* It focuses in on 100 of the highest-profile universities, giving 42 a “D” or an “F” for their core curricula and only five an “A.” Perhaps most interestingly, the report found an almost inverse relationship between tuition and curricular strength: The average tuition at the 11 schools that required none of our core subjects was \$37,700, but at the five that got an “A,” it was \$5,400.

And drive the point home we did. The Associated Press devoted one-third of its story on the new *U.S. News* rankings to the “What Will They Learn?” project. Stanley Fish, a professor and columnist for the *New York Times*, devoted three consecutive weeks of his blog posts to the issues we raised—even going so far as to say, “I found myself often nodding in agreement when I was reading ACTA’s new report.” Our new resource was featured in newspapers with a combined readership of over 20 million, on some of the most prominent

Asking the Right Questions

“Even as policymakers seek to expand the number of people who go to college...students there are not learning what they need to know. According to a study by the National Center for Education Statistics, only 31 percent of college graduates can read and understand a complex book....In a 2006 survey [of employers]...only 24 percent thought graduates of four-year colleges were “excellently prepared” for entry-level positions. College seniors perennially fail tests of their civic and historical knowledge. And rates of leisure reading have taken a nosedive.”

– From ACTA’s report *What will they learn?*





Academic Excellence

internet news sites, on television stations including Fox Business Network and CNN, on many radio stations across the country, and on Voice of America, which broadcasts around the world. Over 50,000 have visited WhatWillTheyLearn.com—and the statistics show that they are staying and exploring the site, comparing colleges just as we intended.

This, to be sure, is just a start, and we are enhancing and expanding WhatWillTheyLearn.com continuously. But it is an excellent start—one that did a great deal to show the American people, and especially the folks who are signing tuition checks, what is really happening on campus.



FIND OUT WHAT
THE COLLEGE RANKINGS
DON'T TELL YOU.

what will they learn.com

63% of employers say too many recent college graduates are not prepared to participate successfully in today's economy.
— USA Today

This full-page ad for ACTA's **What Will They Learn?** project appears in the 2010 *U.S. News & World Report* college guide.

“WhatWillTheyLearn.com is an invaluable and unique additional resource for parents.”

– Mel Elfin, founding editor, *U.S. News & World Report* college rankings



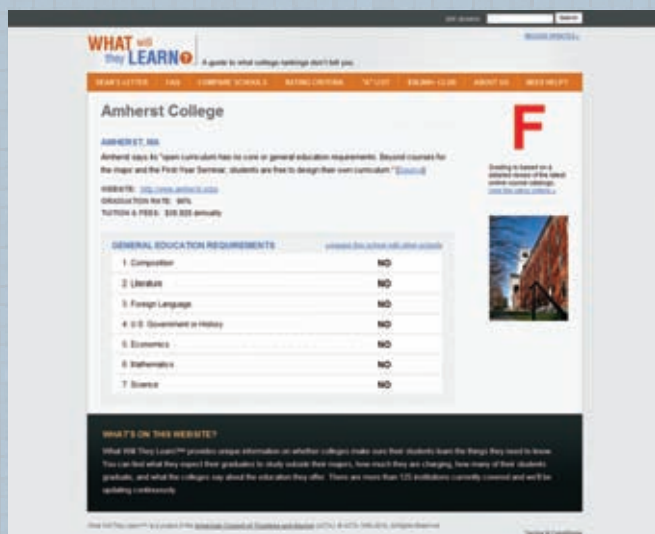
On September 18, ACTA president Anne D. Neal appeared on CNN to speak out in favor of greater civic literacy. Neal put the spotlight on our colleges, which—as ACTA’s college-guide website WhatWillTheyLearn.com points out—overwhelmingly do not require a broad course in U.S. history or government. She previously appeared on Fox Business Network to make the case for better economics education, given that economics is now indispensable in daily life but required by only three institutions listed on WhatWillTheyLearn.com.

Providing Effective Tools

WhatWillTheyLearn.com

Home Page ▶

College Report Card Page ▼



Traffic on Website Since Launch

52,986 Visitors

624,498 Page Views



College students
should be taught
how to think, not
what to think.

Academic Freedom

IN RECENT YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN NO SHORTAGE of indications that something is wrong with the intellectual climate on our campuses—speech codes, newspaper thefts and burnings, speakers shouted down, students and faculty members complaining about rampant groupthink, and more. All of which begs a question: What exactly do we do about it?

The answer isn't as easy as it might sound. When it comes to matters of academic freedom, it is critical to act wisely, and it is easy to make a misstep. That is where ACTA comes in. We not only insist that those who oversee our universities take action to ensure a vigorous exchange of ideas; we also lay out ways they can do so responsibly.

And in doing so, we focus on *institutional change*. While we do work closely with individuals whose rights are threatened—including a professor who was denied tenure for, among other things, objecting to one-sided campus panels and a student who was forced to go to class in a police car after her First Amendment advocacy was met with terrifying death threats—we do not stop there. Rather, our main focus is working with those at the top (especially trustees) to ensure that the rights of the many professors and students—the many who do not contact us—are respected.

Five years ago, we wrote to the presidents of hundreds of universities and asked what their institutions had done about this problem. What did we find? In our 2005 report *Intellectual Diversity: Time for Action*, we found that not one had taken

“Thank you for acknowledging Penn in ACTA’s latest report, *Protecting the Free Exchange of Ideas*. I have shared this news with my colleagues and greatly appreciate all you and your organization do to promote excellence in higher education.”

– Amy Gutmann, president, University of Pennsylvania

concrete steps. But in 2009, when we took a look at the very same question, we found—thanks to the hard work of ACTA and others—a sea change.

The results are catalogued in our report *Protecting the Free Exchange of Ideas*, which showcases ten best practices for ensuring that students are taught how to think, not what to think—and dozens of colleges that are moving in the right direction.

Highlighting Successes



Thursday, June 18, 2009

Mary Beth Marklein

Colleges strive to ensure intellectual diversity

Dozens of public and private colleges have taken steps to ensure their students are exposed to a range of intellectual views on campus, and to ensure that students can freely express their views, says a report being released Thursday.

“If you want to produce informed citizens, you have to hear both sides” of an argument, says Anne Neal, president of the Washington-based non-profit American Council of Trustees and Alumni. ACTA plans to mail its report, based on a review of more than 200 schools, to more than 9,000 trustees as part of a campaign to “reinvigorate the free exchange of ideas” on campuses, she says.

The report highlights 40 examples at public and private institutions in 24 states, including a Tufts University lecture series that features speakers, such as historian Shelby Steele and author Salman Rushdie, who hold “provocative and perhaps controversial points of view,” and a University of Missouri system requirement that orientation programs explain what students can do if they think they are being penalized because of their beliefs.

Despite such cases, “the free exchange of ideas ... is in peril in today’s academy,” says the report. It cites a 2006 case in which a social work student sued Missouri State University after she said her grade suffered when she refused to sign a letter supporting gay adoption as part of a class project. (The case was settled out of court.) The University of Delaware revised an orientation program in 2007 after some students and parents said the exercises sought to shape their attitudes on sensitive issues, including race and sex.

Some free-speech groups argue that ACTA mostly targets liberal faculty,

but Neal notes that it recently criticized a decision by private Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., founded by evangelical Christian Jerry Falwell, to end recognition of a College Democrats club. While private universities “do have the right to restrict student and faculty expression ... the decision is nonetheless unfortunate, as it is likely to make for a less vibrant intellectual environment on campus,” an ACTA blog post says.

In recent years, ACTA has promoted a number of legislative efforts to require public universities to report what they do to prevent bias against students because of their political and religious beliefs.

No proposals have become law, but Neal says legislative pressure has led to some reforms. In South Dakota, the board of regents requires faculty at its six universities to include a “freedom in learning” statement in course outlines that says, in part, that students “should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study.”

Critics of such policies say there’s a reason not one of more than 30 states has passed bills introduced since 2004 related to free speech on campus: they represent “a manufactured controversy that distracts from the real issues affecting higher education,” says Megan Fitzgerald of the Chicago-based Free Exchange on Campus Coalition, a non-profit founded in 2006 to rally against groups such as ACTA.

With a few high-profile exceptions, the coalition says, independent investigations of a liberal bias on individual campuses have turned up nothing. That may be subject to interpretation, however, ACTA says, for example, that a 2007 campus survey of students at the University of North



A University of Missouri student walks by the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute on the Columbia, Mo., campus. The University of Missouri requires that orientation programs explain to students what they can do if they feel they’re being penalized for their beliefs.

Carolina-Chapel Hill found that “at least 13% of undergraduates felt they had witnessed at least one classroom situation in which unpopular or provocative ideas seemed to have been unwelcome, either because of the instructor’s viewpoint or viewpoints of most students.” But Ron Strass, the school’s executive associate provost, says the survey “was very valuable in that it helped us determine that this was not a major issue and it didn’t sort by political point of view.”

Neal says it’s “simply disingenuous” to deny problems. “Our report shows the different ways institutions are indeed taking voluntary concrete steps to address this,” she says.



“Trustees have many important jobs, but one of the most critical is ensuring intellectual pluralism and academic freedom. As the American Council on Education has pointed out, ‘individual campuses must give meaning and definition to these concepts.’ The institutions profiled here have done so. May more follow in their footsteps.”

– From ACTA’s report *Protecting the Free Exchange of Ideas*



Academic Freedom

Some of the well-known colleges and universities that have taken concrete action include the University System of Georgia, the University of Missouri System, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Old Dominion University, the University of Pennsylvania, the City University of New York, Amherst College, and Dartmouth College. Notably, just the institutions we cite in our report (and it was not intended to be exhaustive) are responsible for educating 700,000 students each year.

There is more work to be done. But it is real progress. It's also news, which is why *Protecting the Free Exchange of Ideas* was featured in *USA Today*—reaching millions of readers across the country the day it was released.

Many of the reforms we now see were taken at the behest of ACTA and mirror our recommendations over the years. To pick just a few examples: significant steps protecting intellectual diversity in Georgia, North Carolina, and Missouri, in light of ACTA's state higher ed report cards; reforms at Old Dominion University and the South Dakota public university system in response to the introduction of sunlight legislation based on our previous report *Intellectual Diversity: Time for Action*; a unique lecture series at Harvard Law School came at the behest of a member of ACTA's Donors Working Group; and notable protections of students' right to learn at the City University of New York and Dartmouth College, where ACTA has been active for over a decade.

“Your new book on the politically correct university is terrific. I like the article on history teaching... in particular. Thank you for this.”

– Carl J. Schramm, president, Kauffman Foundation

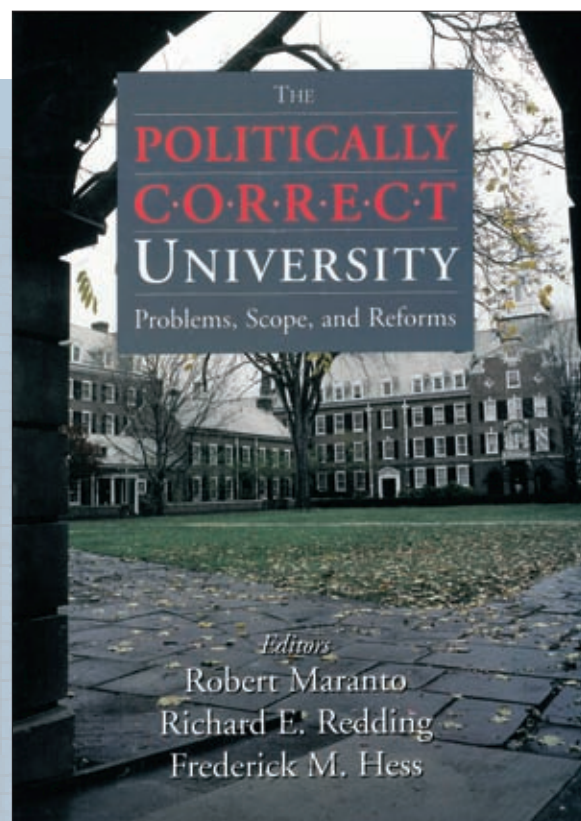
Simply put, the culture has changed on intellectual diversity. Thanks to intense public advocacy by ACTA and others, in 2009—for the first time—many institutions are actually clamoring to be recognized for protecting the free exchange of ideas. Five years ago, college presidents seemed to think they were supposed to deny the problem and ignore us. Now, they know they need to be on the right side of this issue, and they are responding to us accordingly.

Speaking Out

ACTA plays an important role in publicly framing the meaning of academic freedom and how to protect it. One way we did that in 2009 was by contributing a chapter to the new book *The Politically Correct University*, published by AEI press.

Our chapter focuses on the role of alumni and trustees, and it points out: “Engaged alumni can press administrators and trustees to be accountable in ways no one else can,” and “trustees are legally and financially responsible for the well-being of their institution.”

It also features chapters by ACTA co-founder and former U.S. Senator Hank Brown, ACTA trustee and National Association of Scholars chairman Stephen H. Balch, and other leaders in the fight for academic excellence. Copies are available from Amazon.com.





A ccountability

WHAT IS ONE OF THE FEW THINGS IN AMERICA that has shot up in price even more quickly than health care?

You got it: higher education. And when it comes to public universities, these massive tuition increases have come at the hands of trustees and legislators who are accountable to taxpayers. ACTA is helping to rein in college costs by changing policymakers' incentives.

The reason is, trustees and policymakers often have little incentive to keep college costs under control. They have an extremely difficult time getting good data on higher education quality. Not only that, internal constituencies are often quite vocal about asking for more money—lobbying trustees, staging rallies at state capitols—but the people paying the bills don't always make their voices heard. What, then, is the policy-maker's incentive? To appease the loudest voice.

ACTA's series of State Higher Education Report Cards are particularly important in addressing this problem. First of all, they provide real data on what kind of learning environment students are getting. They delve into the core curriculum and document whether key subjects such as American history and college-level math are required—and they survey students as to whether they are being taught how to think or what to think. They also assess boards of trustees, looking at whether they are structured well and whether they are doing their job. And finally, they put a spotlight on how the universities are spending their money. Is tuition skyrocketing? Is spending concentrated in the classroom or on administration? How many students are getting their degrees in four years? And so on.

College students deserve
an excellent education at
an affordable cost.

INFORMED POLICYMAKERS ACTIVE TRUSTEES ENGAGED ALUMNI & DONORS

Our report cards show, loud and clear, what's really happening on campus. Just like the report cards you received in school, they have grades. And with them, the performance of state universities is no longer a mystery; it's spelled out in a series of P's (for Pass) and F's (for Fail).

These report cards are not just interesting studies. They spur real change. In 2008, our report cards on Georgia and Missouri resulted in extensive, voluntary intellectual diversity audits and policy reviews in both states and the scuttling of a harmful would-be revision of the core curriculum in Georgia. And the discussion we started continues to bear fruit: In 2009, the University of Missouri unveiled a new accountability reporting system, done at the behest of its Board of Curators. It has collected a variety of performance data and made it available to all on the Internet, in a key advance for transparency.

Grading Higher Ed in the States

GENERAL EDUCATION						
Institutions do not have strong general education requirements. Students in Illinois can graduate without ever having taken college-level mathematics or broad introductions to literature, U.S. government or history, and economics.						
GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS BY INSTITUTION						
Institution	Comp	Lit	Lang	Hist	Econ	Gov/ Math Sci
University of Illinois System						
Urbana-Champaign	√		√			
Chicago	√		√			√
Springfield	√					√
Southern Illinois University System						
Carbondale	√					√
Edwardsville	√					√
Chicago State University	√					√
Eastern Illinois University	√					√
Illinois State University	√		√			√
Northern Illinois University	√					√
Western Illinois University	√					√
	P	F	F	F	F	P
OVERALL GRADE: F						
INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY						
While students at major Illinois universities generally feel free to speak their minds outside the classroom, they do not report an atmosphere conducive to a robust exchange of ideas inside the classroom.						
KEY INDICATORS OF INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY						
Offering Different Perspectives, Competing Ideas, and Alternative Claims of Truth						F
Teaching Students to Think Critically						F
Offering a Safe Learning Environment for Students						P
Ensuring Professional Responsibility in the Classroom						F
OVERALL GRADE: F						
GOVERNANCE						
The University of Illinois Board of Trustees has recently been plagued with transparency and accountability problems; however, the replacement of nearly all of the former members gives the board an opportunity to refocus on improving academic quality and regaining the public trust.						
The Southern Illinois University Board of Trustees has also encountered transparency and accountability issues. It needs to be more engaged in matters of academic quality and in holding university officials accountable.						
BOARD STRUCTURE AND TRANSPARENCY OF OPERATIONS						
						UI SIU
Names and contact information of board members publicly available and easily accessible						F F
Board meets frequently						P P
Board members attend regularly						P P
Effective board size						P P
Periodic review of bylaws and/or policies						P F
Pre-service training and/or professional development						F F
Transparency of board activities and actions						I P
Functioning committee structure						F P
Executive Committees						P P
Involvement in presidential search committees						F F
Renewal of presidential contracts based on regular evaluation						I F
Development of a long-range plan						P F
BOARD ACCOMPLISHMENTS						
						UI SIU
Actions to improve academic quality						F F
Actions to assess student learning						F F
Actions to control costs and increase efficiency						F I
Avoiding the rubber stamp						I F
OVERALL GRADE, UI SYSTEM: F						
OVERALL GRADE, SIU SYSTEM: F						



"Our report card finds that at the most basic level, the course on which Illinois' public universities find themselves is unsustainable. Costs are rising too quickly, and quality is not high enough."
 - From ACTA's report For the People



Accountability

Because of this success, ACTA dramatically ramped up its series of report cards in 2009. We entered partnerships with state-based think tanks in the State Policy Network to publish additional report cards and to make them even more effective. Our first foray in this renewed campaign came in Illinois, where we launched a new report card in October at the State Capitol in Springfield.

Our report card, *For the People*, made its public debut at a press conference, following a legislators' breakfast that attracted top leaders in both houses. The director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education was in attendance; she publicly praised our assessment, circulated it widely, and later urged the governor's office to study it. The report card was featured in several newspapers—including op-eds in the Springfield and Urbana-Champaign papers and news articles in the other major college towns—as well as on radio shows statewide and on television broadcasts reaching over 340,000 people. And we have much more outreach planned for the spring of 2010, all designed to turn our report card's conclusions into policy reforms.

What were the conclusions? Sadly, they were not pretty.

Illinois' public universities have remarkably weak core curricula across the board, making even college-level mathematics a mere option on most campuses. Students at the two best-known public campuses, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Southern Illinois University Carbondale, reported an extremely troubling intellectual environment. We found precious little evidence that the University of Illinois and SIU boards were engaging

“Thank you for the excellent DVD, “How to Think or What to Think.” I’ll be showing it and discussing in the fall at a meeting of the full faculty.”

– Mitchell M. Zais, member, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and president, Newberry College

the key issues in a way that would ensure quality education. And—perhaps most notably—we found average tuition hikes in recent years of 56 percent during the period reviewed, even after accounting for inflation.

Put another way, the people of Illinois are paying more than ever for higher education, and it is far from clear they are getting their money’s worth. Now, it is up to their public servants to respond appropriately to these findings—and we will keep the pressure on.

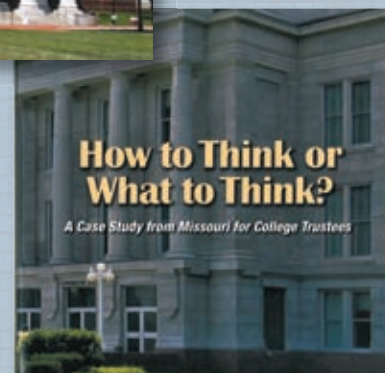
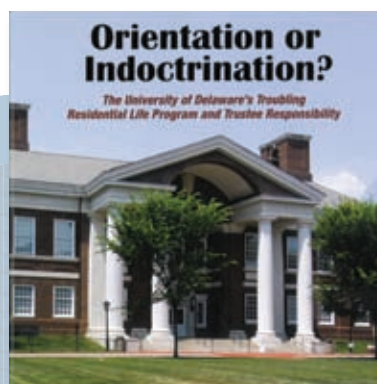
ACTA ALSO CHANGES THE INCENTIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY EDUCATING STATE LEGISLATORS NATIONWIDE—who constantly tell us they can’t get good information about what is being done with the massive sums they appropriate for state universities. We do this as co-chair of the Higher Education Subcommittee at the American Legislative Exchange Council. In 2009, we showed legislators hard-hitting DVDs—one on freshman orientation indoctrination at the University of Delaware and the other on ideological intimidation at Missouri State University—and gave them some pointers on checking for such problems at the institutions they oversee, as well as drafting a model resolution on higher education quality, which was adopted unanimously. These DVDs were also sent to our network of over 10,000 trustees.

Educating Decision Makers

We showed legislators and trustees hard-hitting DVDs and gave them some pointers on checking for such problems at the institutions they oversee.

Orientation or Indoctrination? shows a key campus challenge in living color. The issue in view is the University of Delaware’s dormitory “curriculum” for freshmen, which drew national headlines in 2007 and 2008 for its flagrant disregard for the First Amendment and freedom of conscience.

How to Think or What to Think? tells the story of a Missouri student who was penalized for not signing an advocacy letter that conflicted with her conscience. After she filed a federal lawsuit, an outside review of the program in which she was enrolled found a “toxic” atmosphere rife with “bullying.”





Accountability

REACHING OUT TO TRUSTEES HAS BEEN ONE of ACTA's unique contributions to higher education reform. Every month, we send thousands of trustees easy-to-understand and concise guides to their responsibilities.

This outreach has earned us repeated praise from trustees such as Bill Gates Sr., who sits on the board of the University of Washington, and former U.S. Senator Dennis DeConcini, who is a member of the Arizona Board of Regents. The materials we send include written guides with brass-tacks counsel for boards, DVDs illustrating campus challenges, and selected press articles that provide case studies in responsible trustee action.

We reach board members via our Trustee Database, which allows us to mail directly to their homes and businesses, rather than relying on university administrations to pass material along. Our database grew in 2009 to 10,000 trustees, who collectively govern over 600 top colleges and universities responsible for the education of over 6,000,000 students. This hard-to-find but extremely valuable information gives us unequalled access to the "owners" of the university, allowing us to—among other things—weigh in when we hear of a successful program to applaud or a problematic one to stop.

In the past year, we have sent missives to boards from coast to coast. No other organization has such an asset; indeed, a recent survey on higher education governance issued by the Association of Governing Boards, the other major trustees' group, failed to survey a single trustee. And trustees are responding.

“So, donors, keep on gambling to make the world a better place but remember: Join forces with a proactive watchdog organization, such as ACTA....”

– Diana Davis Spencer, president, Kathryn W. Davis Foundation, in a speech at the Philanthropy Roundtable’s annual meeting

HELPING ALUMNI AND DONORS GIVE in a way that addresses—not reinforces—the challenges on campus is another excellent way to change the incentives in higher education. ACTA had a golden opportunity to do this in 2009, as we were asked to chair higher education programming for the annual meeting of the Philanthropy Roundtable, a large group of individual donors and grant-making foundation officials.

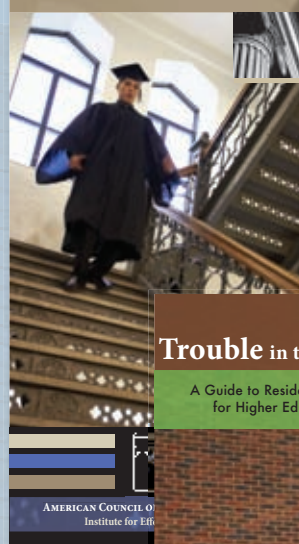
Reaching Out to Trustees

Every month, we send thousands of trustees easy-to-understand and concise guides to their responsibilities. In 2009 we published three such guides: *Restoring a Core: How Trustees Can Ensure Meaningful General Education Requirements*; *Measuring Up: The Problem of Grade Inflation and What Trustees Can Do*; and *Trouble in the Dorms: A Guide to Residential Life Programs for Higher Education Trustees*.

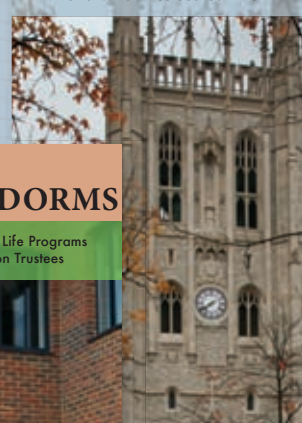
“[W]hen I became the new Chair of UDC’s Board of Trustees in May 2009, the first thing I did was to set up a retreat for Trustees and the senior staff. With a fairly new President (8 months) and a completely new senior staff, we thought it important to set our goals for the coming year and get on the same page....I found, ordered and used a number of your periodicals, particularly on Board direction, as a key part of what we all have felt was a very successful half-day retreat.”

– Emily F. Durso, former chair, University of the District of Columbia Board of Trustees

Restoring a Core
How Trustees Can Ensure Meaningful General Education Requirements



Measuring Up
The Problem of Grade Inflation and What Trustees Can Do



Trouble in the DORMS
A Guide to Residential Life Programs for Higher Education Trustees





A THENA Roundtable

WE HELD OUR ATHENA ROUNDTABLE—ACTA’s annual meeting—on November 5 and 6, and it was a record-setter in terms of both attendance and enthusiasm. The Roundtable took place at George Washington’s Mount Vernon, beginning with a keynote address by award-winning historian Richard Norton Smith on Washington and Lincoln’s views on education. ATHENA also featured a crowd-pleasing colloquy on academic freedom with Princeton University professor Robert P. George and Florida International University professor Stanley Fish, famed intellectuals both.

Other speakers included:

- University of Virginia professor James Ceaser, who outlined a course he is teaching (thanks to outside donor support) on the American political tradition;
- Connecticut State University System trustee Gail H. Williams, who summarized the CSU System’s recent raising of admissions standards;



Audience members respond to historian Richard Norton Smith’s keynote address at the 2009 ATHENA Roundtable held at George Washington’s Mount Vernon.

- College of William & Mary graduate Andrew R. McRoberts, who detailed the success of his concerned alumni group, the Society for the College;
- Former University of the District of Columbia board chair Emily F. Durso, who updated the group on UDC's reform plans, aided by ACTA's trustee materials;
- Shimer College president Thomas K. Lindsay, whose institution is a Great Books college in Chicago and a unique opportunity for donors; and
- George Mason University president Alan G. Merten, who outlined GMU's unique approach to providing a quality education.



Emily Durso



Stanley Fish



Robert George



Andrew McRoberts, Richard Vedder, and James Boyle



Alan Merten



Thomas Lindsay



Richard Norton Smith



ATHENA Roundtable

Following the Roundtable, we adjourned to the historic Cosmos Club to present the fifth annual Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education to Robert David “KC” Johnson, a professor of history at Brooklyn College. Professor Johnson is a longtime friend of ACTA and defender of academic excellence, not to mention one of the most outstanding young historians in the country, and we delighted in giving him some much-deserved recognition.

In addition to the prize, Professor Johnson received heartfelt tributes from Stuart Taylor, Jr., senior writer for the *National Journal*, and Brooklyn professor emerita Paula Fichtner.



Selection committee member Abigail Thernstrom, Stuart Taylor, KC Johnson, Paula Fichtner, Catherine Merrill Williams, Anne Neal, and ACTA board chairman Robert Lewit

“If it were not for ACTA, I would not be here this evening.”

– KC Johnson, accepting ACTA’s 2009 Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education

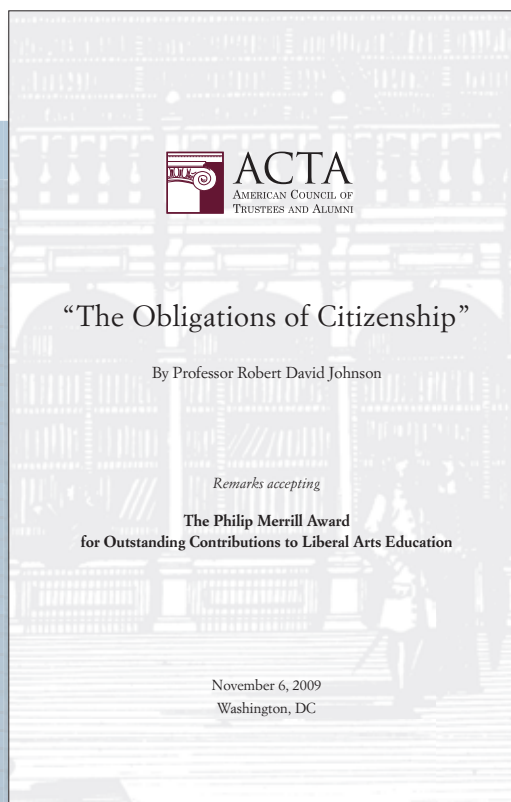
Mr. Taylor, who was Professor Johnson’s co-author on *Until Proven Innocent*, the definitive history of the Duke lacrosse case, praised his hard work investigating this amazing scandal of political correctness and miscarriage of justice. Professor Fichtner lauded his stalwart defense of the traditional study of military, diplomatic, and political history—as well as his courage in fighting his 2002 denial of tenure all the way to the City University of New York chancellor’s office. Catherine Merrill Williams, daughter of the award’s namesake and publisher of *Washingtonian* magazine, presented the award—an original caricature of President Lyndon B. Johnson (subject of Professor Johnson’s latest book) by Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Bill Mauldin.

“The Obligations of Citizenship”

“We live in an extraordinary era in the history of American higher education. Excepting a brief period at the high point of McCarthyism, ours is the only time in which a majority of the humanities and social sciences professoriate has successfully limited the range of acceptable research questions on the nation’s college campuses. The result has been an academy too often characterized by ideologically and pedagogically one-sided course offerings; extraneous litmus tests in the personnel process; and extremist articulations of shared assumptions on issues of race, class, and gender.”

– Professor Robert David “KC” Johnson

For the complete text of Professor Johnson’s speech, given upon accepting the 2009 Philip Merrill Award, please visit ACTA’s website, www.goacta.org, or call our office.





L

eadership and Staff

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert T. Lewit, M.D. – Chairman
Former CEO, Metropolitan Psychiatric Group

Stephen H. Balch, Ph.D.
Chairman, National Association of Scholars

Edward F. Cox, Esq.
Trustee, State University of New York

John D. Fonte, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute

Lee E. Goodman, Esq.
Attorney, LeClair Ryan

Edwin Meese III, Esq.
Former Rector, George Mason University

Anne D. Neal, Esq. – Ex Officio
President, American Council of Trustees and Alumni



ACTA board member Dr. Robert T. Lewit took over as chairman in 2009. Lewit has been a member of ACTA's Decade Society for several years and established ACTA's Robert Lewit Fellowship in Education Policy. He is an active alumnus of Harvard University and a retired psychiatrist.

STAFF

Anne D. Neal
President

Lauri Kempson
Vice President, Operations

Charles Mitchell
Program Director

David Azerrad
Program Officer

Sandra E. Diaz
Program Officer

Heather Lakemacher
Jerry L. Martin Fellow

Noah A. Mamis
Program Officer

Michael D. Schilling
Office Manager

Maurice Black, Ph.D.
Research Fellow

Erin O'Connor, Ph.D.
Research Fellow

Jerry L. Martin Fellowship in Higher Education Reform

In March of 2009, Dr. Jerry L. Martin —ACTA's founding president in 1995, and the chairman of our board since 2003—announced his intent to retire in order to concentrate on his scholarly activities. It is no exaggeration to say Jerry is ACTA's Founding Father: Our unique "inside-outside" approach to higher education reform (alumni push from the outside, trustees pull from the inside) was his brainchild, and during his time as our leader we made huge progress implementing it. As a former tenured professor and former chairman of the philosophy department at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Jerry has a deep understanding of academe as well as an extraordinary knack for speaking to other constituencies, such as trustees, and turning his excellent ideas into concrete action.

In his honor, the Board of Directors established the Jerry L. Martin Fellowship in Higher Education Reform, and in June of 2009 Heather Lakemacher became the inaugural fellow. Heather is a recent graduate of Shimer College, a Great Books college in Chicago with which ACTA has worked for years—where she also served as a trustee. Concurrent with her fellowship, Heather participates in the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation's Associate Program, an intensive and selective program that cultivates future leaders in the non-profit sector. Her work, consistent with Jerry's fabled command of the written word and passion for engaged trusteeship, focuses on writing, editing, and trustee relations.





Leadership and Staff

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

ACTA's summer internship program has continued to grow—this past summer hosting six bright-eyed interns. In addition to their invaluable contributions to our essential database of trustees, they performed a variety of research and writing tasks which were indispensable. ACTA also continued its series of intern events, including a seminar with Mark Schneider, visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and former commissioner of the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, and a tour of the dome of the U.S. Capitol.

ACTA's work also benefited richly from a brand-new fellowship established by our supporters. The Friess Family Fellowship was a two-month position for a graduate student made possible by Foster, Lynn, Steve, and Polly Friess, members of ACTA's Society of Fellows. The Friess Family Fellow plays a full part in the research work of ACTA and attends higher-education meetings and conferences.

Carrie Brochu is a graduate of the University of Connecticut, where she earned a B.A. in Anthropology. She has also completed her M.A. in International Peace and Conflict Resolution from American University.

Shant Boyajian was ACTA's Friess Family Fellow, and is a third-year student at the Catholic University of America's

Columbus School of Law. He is a Federalist Society member and an executive editor on the *Journal of Contemporary Health Law and Policy*. After graduation, he plans to work as a public policy lawyer in Washington, D.C.

Nicoletta Dimova, who first joined ACTA in 2007, is a recent graduate of American University where she received her degree in International Relations with a specialization in Middle East Studies and Foreign Policy. She is now attending the London School of Economics and Political Science where she will be pursuing her Masters in Comparative Politics: Conflict Studies.



Lewit Fellow Evan O'Brien, interns Jeremy Schiffres and Nicoletta Dimova, and Friess Fellow Shant Boyajian.

Evan O'Brien was ACTA's Robert Lewit Fellow in Education Policy, and is a 2009 graduate of Harvard College, where he studied History and helped run Harvard Model Congress tournaments in Boston, San Francisco, and Brussels, Belgium. He is now working at a high school in New York.

Jeremy Schiffres is a junior at Yale University, majoring in Political Science. He is a former Chairman of the Conservative Party, a member of the Yale Political Union, and plays trumpet in a pops orchestra.

Kelli Trease Ross came to ACTA via the Koch Internship Program. She is a recent graduate of Grove City College, with a B.A. in Communication Studies. She was a Koch Student Fellowship Intern at the Center for Vision and Values and a member of the Women of Faith Leadership Team.



ACTA
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF
TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI

American Council of Trustees and Alumni

1726 M Street, NW, Suite 802

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 1-888-ALUMNI-8 or 202-467-6787

Fax: 202-467-6784

Email: info@goacta.org • Website: www.goacta.org