



Promoting
Academic
Freedom and
Excellence

2 InBox

3 A Conversation on COVID-19 with the Experts

Breaking News

ACTA Fights to Protect
Civics Education in Florida

4 Effective Trusteeship

Featured Trustee:
Peter Alcock

5 Heard on Campus

Fiscal Responsibility is
in the AIR

6 Academic Renewal

ACTA Convenes High
School Counselor Focus
Groups

A Wise Giver's Guide to
Honoring and Preserving
Donor Intent

7 Meet ACTA's Interns

From the Bookshelf

The Fifth Wave by
Michael M. Crow

8 ACTA Launches New
GoACTA.org Website

www.GoACTA.org

info@GoACTA.org

1-888-ALUMNI-8

Joshua Katz: ACTA's Newest Hero of Intellectual Freedom



Princeton professors Keith Whittington, Robert George, Joshua Katz, and John Londregan with Debra Parker, Program Manager of the James Madison Program, gather to honor Professor Katz as ACTA's newest Hero of Intellectual Freedom.

Last month, ACTA President Michael Poliakoff honored Joshua Katz, Cotsen Professor in the Humanities and Professor of Classics at Princeton University, as our newest Hero of Intellectual Freedom. Professor Katz published “A Declaration of Independence by a Princeton Professor” in *Quillette* in response to a recent letter issued by Princeton faculty that poses a dangerous threat to academic freedom on campus.

The faculty letter, which asserts that “Anti-Blackness is foundational to America,” was released on July 4 and signed by roughly 350 professors. Among many other demands, the statement calls for a committee to “oversee the investigation and discipline of racist

behaviors, incidents, research, and publication on the part of faculty.” Dr. Katz spoke out against this clear abrogation of academic freedom in his “Declaration,” writing, “This scares me more than anything else: For colleagues to police one another’s research and publications in this way would be outrageous. Let me be clear: Racist slurs and clear and documentable bias against someone because of skin color are reprehensible and should lead to disciplinary action, for which there is already a process. But is there anyone who doesn’t believe that this committee would be a star chamber with a low bar for cancellation, punishment, suspension, even dismissal?”

(continued on 3)

ACTA's 25TH Anniversary Celebration Rescheduled

It is with regret that due to COVID-19 restrictions we must postpone ACTA's 25TH Anniversary Celebration, which was to take place in November of this year. But as good fortune would have it, we have been able to reschedule the same exciting roster of events for **November 11–12, 2021**. Please join us at **ACTA's 25TH Plus One Anniversary Celebration**, culminating with a gala cocktail reception and dinner at the Library of Congress, as we review a quarter century of shared work for academic freedom and excellence and look ahead to the frontiers before us. Please visit **GoACTA.org/anniversary** for details.

**Leslie Lenkowsky, Professor Emeritus
Indiana University**

“Congratulations to ACTA for honoring Professor Katz. Important to stand up and be counted at this perilous time. And congratulations to you on your *Forbes* column.”

**Douglas V. Henry, Dean
Honors College, Baylor University**

“With gratitude for your invitation to help inaugurate the ACTA Scholars initiative, I’m delighted to let you know we mailed all of the signed certificates yesterday . . . I know our graduating students will receive the ACTA Scholar recognition with pride. . . . I look forward to seeing the fruits of this thoughtfully conceived and adeptly practiced effort to recognize liberal learning marked by depth, breadth, and rigor.”

Editor’s Note: The National Society of ACTA Scholars acknowledges and promotes achievement in liberal learning. Graduates gain admission to the society after completing rigorous studies in the arts and sciences within a collegiate program distinguished for its dedication to liberal arts education. Students from Baylor University and Hampden-Sydney College were the first to achieve recognition.

**J. Tyler Pugh, Trustee
Roanoke College**

“I write to you once again to thank you and ACTA for yet another excellent publication, *10 Things Everyone Should Know About American History*. So often, the goal of education seems to emphasize obtaining the ‘brass ring’ of status and position while ignoring the fundamental elements that got us here in the first place. . . . This booklet should be required reading for all incoming college freshmen, particularly those seeking a liberal arts education.”

**Dr. Assad Meymandi, Distinguished Life Fellow
American Psychiatric Association
Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry, University of North
Carolina–Chapel Hill School of Medicine**

“I am writing to thank you for sending me a copy of Dr. Guelzo’s pamphlet on American history. Happy 4th of July! . . . Thank you again.”

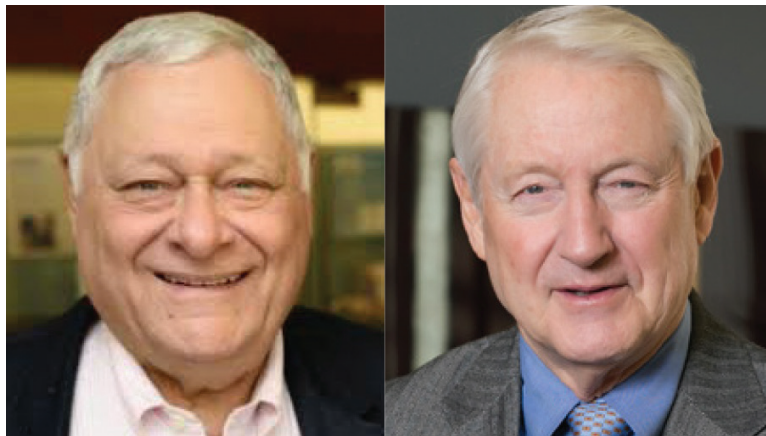
A Conversation on COVID-19 with the Experts

ACTA has launched a series of discussions on our podcast, *Higher Ed Now*, that are devoted to understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on America’s colleges and universities. As part of our series, we sat down with **Stephen Joel Trachtenberg**, president emeritus of The George Washington University, and **Hank Brown**, former president of the University of Colorado and former U.S. senator.

The coronavirus has exposed the unsustainability of high tuition prices and has exasperated Americans’ growing dissatisfaction with the quality of education they receive for their hefty investment. To tackle the predicted reduction in enrollment, colleges must adopt a model that is much more efficient and much less expensive. To do so, President Emeritus Trachtenberg

posed several key questions. “I’m not a great expert on the Bible,” he remarked, “but I am not aware of any instruction in that great book that a bachelor of arts

rather than a three-year B.A. degree? . . . Might you not cut it back to a three-year program . . . or three years on campus, one year online?”



President Emeritus of The George Washington University, Stephen Joel Trachtenberg, and former University of Colorado president, Hank Brown.

degree needs to be a four-year program. If we can see a three-year baccalaureate at a distinguished institution, like Oxford and Cambridge, is it reasonable to ask why we in the United States with our ingenuity are locked in to a four-year B.A. degree

Another money drain that afflicts colleges nationwide—underutilized campus buildings—must also be overhauled. “Let me ask you another question. Do you know of any enterprise that has billions of dollars invested in real estate buildings with facilities that close down for four months a year? Why exactly do we have calendars that have 12 months in them, but the university calendar somehow has been deprived of May, June, July, and August? Shouldn’t we be running our universities full speed?”

Former University of Colorado president **Hank Brown** explained the significance of president and trustee

(continued on 4)

ACTA Fights to Protect Civics Education in Florida

On May 26, ACTA filed a petition calling on the Florida Department of Education to uphold Florida Statute 1007.25. ACTA was joined in the petition with Michael and Logan McLeod, on behalf of their sons who attend public Florida high schools; Frank Baglione and Robert Holladay, both professors at Tallahassee Community College; and the Tallahassee Historical Society.

Statute 1007.25, which was approved by the state in 2017, mandates that students “demonstrate competency in civic literacy” in order to graduate from a public college or university. In May, the Florida Department of Education proposed Rule 6A-10.02413, which weakened the 2017 legislation. ACTA’s petition asserted that the Florida Department of Education had gone beyond the powers, functions, and duties delegated by the state legislature by proposing that rule.

We are proud to announce that on August 5, the Department of Education withdrew the rule, in response to ACTA’s

challenge. The rule would have allowed community college students to demonstrate civic literacy by attaining a mere 60% on an exam derived from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Naturalization Test’s civics component. The new exam, created by the Lou Frey Institute at the University of Central Florida, replaced 56 of the original 100 questions on the U.S. citizenship test, making them all multiple choice. Students would have only needed to score a 60, the equivalent of a “D,” in order to pass the test. The withdrawal of the proposed rule means that college students will continue to be required to complete a foundational course in U.S. history or government, or to demonstrate proficiency on a collegiate-level exam such as the AP U.S. History Exam.

With American public discourse so polarized, it is imperative that our state legislatures and institutions of higher education continue to invest in rebuilding a shared understanding of historical



memory through rigorous civics education. ACTA President Michael Poliakoff commented, “In 2017, Florida cemented itself as a national leader by specifying meaningful civics standards to guide curricular reform on college and university campuses, including that graduates demonstrate an ‘understanding of the basic principles of American democracy’ and ‘knowledge of the founding documents.’ The proposed rule would have undermined lawmakers’ bold efforts. The renewal of civics education has never been more important, and we look forward to working with Florida’s public leaders in their efforts to improve civic literacy.”

Joshua Katz, *continued from 1*

Rather than defend Professor Katz and his right to academic freedom, Princeton University President Christopher Eisgruber and the campus newspaper, the *Daily Princetonian*, condemned his article. President Eisgruber asserted that Dr. Katz failed to exercise his right to free speech “responsibly,” though the president did eventually walk back threats of a university investigation into his remarks. Despite the fierce response from his institution and a smear campaign on social media, Professor Katz has continued to advocate for civil dialogue. “Independence of thought,” he writes, “is considered the hallmark of academia, but everyone deserves it. In the United States, thank heavens, freedom to think for oneself is still a right, not a privilege.”

ACTA is proud to add this courageous professor to our distinguished list of Heroes of Intellectual Freedom, which most recently includes Sarah Lawrence College Professor Samuel Abrams

and University of California–Davis Professor Abigail Thompson. This initiative recognizes principled members of the academic community who protect and foster the free exchange of ideas and a diversity of viewpoints. “America’s institutions of higher education,” said ACTA President Michael Poliakoff, “would be better

served if they had more scholars who are willing to voice their opposition to the political and social orthodoxies that dominate the academy.”

At the award ceremony, Professor Katz was presented with an 1802 etching of the ancient ruins of the Library of Alexandria. The event was attended by

several high-profile ACTA friends, including Robert P. George, Keith Whittington, Solveig Gold, and FIRE’s Samantha Harris.

We thank Professor Katz for his willingness to stand in defense of academic freedom on campus and urge more higher education leaders and faculty to follow his example.

“Independence of thought is considered the hallmark of academia, but everyone deserves it. In the United States, thank heavens, freedom to think for oneself is still a right, not a privilege.”

—Professor Joshua T. Katz

Effective TRUSTEESHIP

Featured Trustee: Peter Alcock

ACTA's featured trustee, Peter Alcock, serves on the board of Pine Manor College. Facing economic difficulty precipitated by the pandemic, Pine Manor, a school with a distinct mission, recently merged with nearby Boston College. Armand Alacbay, ACTA's Vice President of Trustee & Government Affairs, interviewed Mr. Alcock about the merger process.

Armand Alacbay (AA): What is it that makes Pine Manor so unique?

Peter Alcock (PA): Pine Manor embarked upon a mission to enroll college-capable, but not necessarily college-ready students. Our mission was to identify those students . . . to provide whatever remedial courses they needed to take and then go forward with college level work, with some guidance and some close monitoring by the faculty. The objective was to have these students graduate in four or five years, to be competitive in terms of writing skills, oral skills, critical thinking, and so forth, with other college graduates around the country, so they'd be competitive in the job market. . . . About 80% of them were Pell Grant students as well.

AA: How has the coronavirus affected things?

PA: We were cashflow positive for the last four years and then the COVID-19 crisis happened. . . . Forty-seven percent of our budget was student tuition and fees, which is very low for many small liberal arts colleges. That's obviously not survivable unless you've got a huge endowment you can dip into. Even despite all that, the other sources of income that we would have, we had access to dorm rooms and so forth, all



Pine Manor trustee Peter Alcock and ACTA's Vice President of Trustee & Government Affairs Armand Alacbay.

went away. Everything went away at the same time.

Boston College actually called us up and said, 'We are a mission driven institution and we're a Jesuit institution. And we have a mission to help uplift the poor. We see that you're doing that educationally . . .' So, our president and President Leahy of Boston College got together. They decided that our missions were compatible . . . They looked at us and said, 'These people seem to have broken the code here . . . This would be a great combination to help us expand our reach into the community and be able to enroll more urban students. And it would allow Pine Manor to pursue its dreams and have the financial wherewithal behind it.'

AA: What is the actual arrangement between Boston College and Pine Manor?

PA: Pine Manor will function as the Pine Manor Institute for Student Success. . . . Let me quote something that was written by the president of Boston College that states it rather succinctly: 'Boston College will strive through its recently announced integration with Pine Manor College . . . to recruit

(continued on 6)

A Conversation on COVID-19, *continued from 2*

leadership, commenting, "[The most important thing] is to lead by example. Our senior administrators, presidents, and chancellors of campuses should be thinking about cutting their own salaries by at least 10% and perhaps as much as 25% to 50%. Why? It does save some money, obviously, but what's more important, it sends a message to everyone on campus that the leadership of that campus is going to lead by example. That they're going to take adjustments in their compensation during this crisis period, just as they're asking others to make sacrifices. And second, what's most important is that the leadership of these universities draw in trustees of their regions immediately. . . . The fact is, they are not going to be effective unless the trustees send a message that they're 100% behind the efforts."

Over the course of their illuminating interviews, both former presidents delved deeper into these and other reforms that colleges can make to solve the current difficulties they face. "While it is tempting to say that the crisis we're living through is the worst ever," Senator Brown remarked, "the reality is America has faced much more difficult crises many times, and always come out the stronger for it. . . . if we listen to each other, if we work together, we can put this kind of crisis behind us and solve it and move forward." Please listen to the full interviews at GoACTA.org/podcasts. ●



HEARD ON CAMPUS

Removing Statues from Campus

The trend of removing statues, monuments, and building names from college campuses has accelerated this summer. In late June, Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs removed Woodrow Wilson’s name, citing his support as president to segregate the civil service. Some Princetonians also advocate removing a statue of John Witherspoon, signer of the Declaration of Independence and Princeton’s sixth president, since he voted against the abolition of slavery. Other efforts are underway to remove statues of “Pioneer Man” and “Pioneer Mother” at the University of Oregon; eliminate the name of Nobel Laureate Elihu Root from buildings at Hamilton College; and remove the iconic statue of Abraham Lincoln at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

While noting that memorials to Confederate slave owners whose principal distinction was war against the United States may merit relocation, ACTA sees an unbridgeable chasm between those personages and those to whom we owe our freedoms and who built our nation. ACTA dissents from the erasing of history that we now witness, favoring an approach that preserves monuments while identifying both the successes and the moral failures of those individuals. Joining distinguished historian of the American West, Patricia Limerick, ACTA President Michael Poliakoff recently wrote, “it will be a sorry nation without the inspiration of great men and women who aspired to serve humanity, with that

inspiration made all the greater because they were—just as we are—well short of pure glory.”

Professor Reinstated to Press at University of Chicago

In June, distinguished economics professor and editor of the *Journal of Political Economy* at the University of Chicago, Harald Uhlig, was removed from his post as editor of the journal and placed under investigation after a student claimed that he made discriminatory comments about Martin Luther King, Jr., in a class six years ago. He has now been restored as editor after the university found no “basis for a further investigation or disciplinary proceeding.” The student publicized his allegations against Professor Uhlig after criticism erupted over the professor’s tweets questioning Black Lives Matter demands to defund the police. The campaign to “cancel” him commenced, with other economists calling for him to resign from the journal.

The University of Chicago introduced the renowned Chicago Principles on Freedom of Expression in 2015, prompting many schools to adopt similar statements protecting free speech and academic freedom. The university must honor this legacy by upholding free expression for all its campus members. ●



CartoonStock.com

Fiscal Responsibility is in the AIR

Higher education finance has become an area of yet more urgent importance given the exigencies forced on institutions by the COVID-19 pandemic. ACTA has continued to lead the way in this complex field, and last month, members of our Trustee & Government Affairs Department were invited to speak at the Association for Institutional Research’s (AIR) annual meeting. As one of the largest global organizations focused on supporting higher education research, AIR provides scholarly analysis and training to institutional research (IR) officers at schools across the world.

In their presentation—titled “Boards, Budgets, and Benchmarks: How IR Can Support Engaged Governance”—ACTA’s Armand Alabay and Kyle Beltramini explained how researchers can assist trustees seeking to understand their institution’s spending habits. Drawing on several firsthand accounts given by trustees, Mr. Alabay stressed that IR officers need to provide their boards with context for their findings while avoiding “data dumps of opaque charts and death by PowerPoint.” He went on to demonstrate the latest updates that ACTA has made to **HowCollegesSpendMoney.com**. Drawing from the largest publicly available source of higher education data in the United States, this site gives trustees, college administrators, and policymakers a glimpse of their institutions’ spending habits and can be used to compare spending trends with other schools across the country.

A recording and transcript of the presentation is available on our website at **GoACTA.org**, or you can reach out to Mr. Alabay directly at Armand.Alabay@GoACTA.org for more information. ●



ACTA Convenes High School Counselor Focus Groups

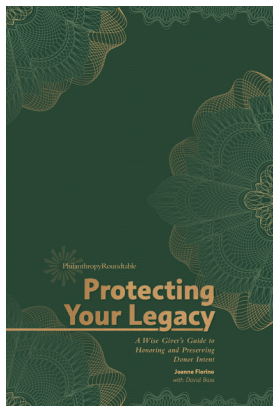
With many colleges incorporating online instruction into their degree programs, while others keep their physical campuses closed for the fall semester, selecting the right school has become an even more challenging endeavor. It is essential that students have the knowledge they need to choose institutions that offer rigorous instruction—in the online and traditional classroom—and put academic excellence at the center of their missions.

Over the summer and into the fall, ACTA will hold eight focus groups to familiarize high school counselors with our college search tools. During the online seminars, ACTA's Academic Affairs Department introduces counselors to our What Will They Learn?® core curriculum ratings project, the

history of general education in the United States, and the resources available on WhatWillTheyLearn.com, including employer testimonials of the value of the liberal arts. Focus group participants have confirmed that the website's comparison tool is particularly helpful, allowing users to compare the general education programs of schools across the country to see which colleges offer the most rigorous curricula.

High school counselors are crucial in helping students pick the best university to attend so that they receive the strongest possible education for their investment. By holding these seminars, we hope to ensure that counselors have access to the resources they need in order to direct students through the complex higher education landscape. ●

A Wise Giver's Guide to Honoring and Preserving Donor Intent



The latest guidebook from Philanthropy Roundtable, by Joanne Florino with David Bass, provides sage advice for donors thinking about their long-term gift

planning. *Protecting Your Legacy: A Wise Giver's Guide to Honoring and Preserving Donor Intent* addresses practical strategies for defining your mission, choosing a time frame for your giving, finding the right vehicle, and governance.

The guide devotes a full chapter to giving wisely to colleges and universities, in recognition of the unique challenges that donors to this sector face. "Unless you are careful, college and university administrators may ignore, creatively interpret, disregard, or directly violate your donor intent," warns Ms. Florino. The chapter balances cautionary tales of donor intent gone awry—such as the Robertson gift to Princeton University—with stories of

donors who have successfully navigated higher education giving.

Before writing the book, the authors conducted nearly 30 donor interviews. These firsthand donor accounts not only make for an engaging read, but also provide a wide range of models for donors to follow. One of the interviewees, Tom Riley, president of the Connelly Foundation in Philadelphia, drives home the importance of honoring and preserving donor intent. He writes: "Our American system thrives in a way that other systems don't because of charitable giving—these institutions of civil society, this enormous nonprofit sector, that provides so much of what's good and appealing about American life. But when donor intent is undermined, it has a chilling effect on giving. That's not just bad for the person—that's bad for everybody."

For any donor considering a major gift, particularly a major gift to higher education, this compelling and informative guide is a must-read. If you would like to receive a complimentary copy, please contact FAR Director Emily Koons Jae at ejae@AcademicRenewal.org or 202-798-5451. ●

Alcock, *continued from 4*

and graduate more underrepresented first-generation students. This institution will build on the successes of Pine Manor College, helping students facing major challenges in the pursuit of higher education to obtain college degrees . . .

AA: What advice would you give to other trustees who are deciding what's best for the future of their institution?

PA: The board has to look at two things. One is strategy and the other is finance. Strategic thinking and financial knowledge are critical skills that trustees themselves must have. From a strategy point of view, they need to ask, "What are we doing that's special?" If they're running a ragged edge financially, as Pine Manor was, by the way, and then COVID-19 hits, they're not going to be able to survive. That's a serious problem. I can't tell a trustee what to do in that case, but if they can't survive, one of the things that they might look at is possibly a merger with an institution that has a different or complementary structure. ●

Meet ACTA's Interns

Despite a global pandemic, ACTA was glad to welcome eight remote interns from all over the East Coast to work on our annual *What Will They Learn?* survey. Though not able to gather together at the ACTA headquarters in Washington, DC, the interns enjoyed virtual guest speakers, including Dr. Murray Bessette, director of academic programs for the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, and Andrew Heim, manager of special projects for Hillsdale College in Washington, DC.



Madeline Berzak, originally from New Jersey, is a rising junior at American University in Washington, DC. She is studying political science with a concentration in public policy and is minoring in American history. **Thomas Curro** is a rising sophomore studying politics and economics at Hillsdale College. He plans to attend law school. **Matthew MacDonald** is a rising senior at Ashland University majoring in political economy and political science with a minor in history. **Aryn Ruiz** is from Atlanta, Georgia, and attends Georgia Gwinnett College, where she is majoring in history, concentrating in Western Civilization.

Sophia Temple is a rising senior at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill where she is a public policy and global studies double major with a minor in education. **Leo Thuman** is a senior at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. He is majoring in political science and minoring in economics. **Elizabeth Von Mann**, from central Kentucky, has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in creative writing from Morehead State University and will pursue a master's program in publishing at The George Washington University. Our Robert Lewit Fellow in Education Policy, **Daniel Acosta Rivas**, was born in Caracas, Venezuela, and is a junior at American University, completing a dual degree in economics and political science with a minor in communications.

Even while separated by thousands of miles, our interns helped to advance ACTA's mission of academic excellence through their dedicated work. Ms. Berzak spoke of her experience: "While interning with ACTA, I have been exposed to the world of higher education like never before. I've learned about the origins of a liberal arts education as well as its modern-day importance and cultivated valuable research skills that I will take with me throughout my professional career." ●

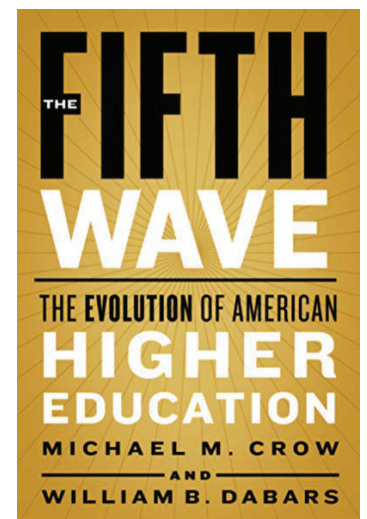
The Fifth Wave: The Evolution of American Higher Education by Michael M. Crow and William B. Dabars

As president of Arizona State University (ASU), Michael M. Crow has been a pioneer in showing that a great university can simultaneously excel in teaching, research, and service. Both in his leadership of ASU and his pivotal role in the Innovation Alliance, Dr. Crow has demonstrated that an institution of higher education should be judged not by its selectivity and how many applications it can reject, but rather by how well it can apply its research excellence to address the nation's need for wider, fairer, and lifelong access to a high-quality education.

In *The Fifth Wave*, President Crow and William B. Dabars, senior director of research for the New American University in the Office of the President at Arizona State University, describe in detail a vision for "accessibility and academic excellence without stratification across universities." The authors make clear the absolute necessity for our nation to reduce the demographically unequal distribution of enrollment share in higher education. A key factor in realizing

this vision is the commitment of the Fifth Wave universities to applying the intellectual power of a research university to the best pedagogies, "to serve any learner from any socioeconomic background at any stage of work and learning through broad accessibility to world-class knowledge production."

The imperative to end the squandering of educational resources in unproductive and frivolous ways has never been more urgent. Michael Crow's vision of the New American University is a call to higher education's sacred democratic mission to prepare students for a dynamic global economy and the privilege, as well as the challenges, of citizenship in a free society. ●





ACTA
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF
TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI



1730 M Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036

P 202.467.6787 | F 202.467.6784
info@GoACTA.org | www.GoACTA.org

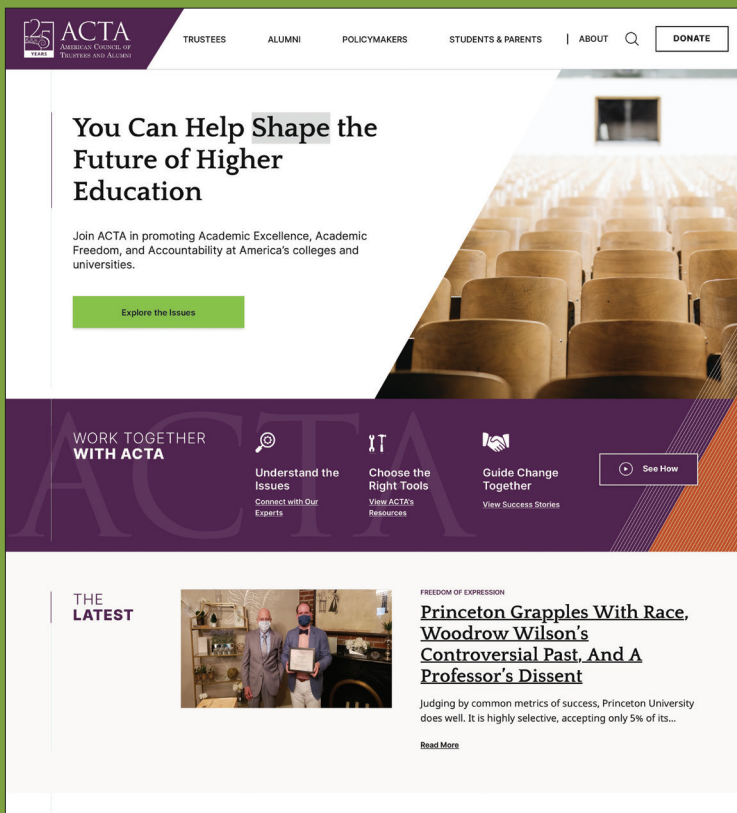
INSIDE ACADEME

published by ACTA, Washington, DC

Publisher: Michael B. Poliakoff
Editor: Greta Wagley
Production & Design: Lauri Kempson

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

ACTA Launches New GoACTA.org Website



To mark our 25TH anniversary year, ACTA has launched a completely redesigned website. The new **GoACTA.org** is structured around the needs of ACTA's main stakeholders: trustees, alumni, policymakers, and students and parents. The many resources we provide to these four groups—including our guides and essays, speeches and surveys, podcasts, and much more—are easily accessible on the website, both to view and download. Users can also request physical copies of all of our publications and make contributions to ACTA through our easy-to-use donation portal.

ACTA's blog, **The Forum**, can be viewed on the site and now features a series of short essays written by our excellent team of summer interns. GoACTA.org includes all past issues of this publication, **Inside Academe**, to read online or download. On the site, college leaders can also sign up for our Trustee eNewsletter, **Inside the Walls**.

Please visit GoACTA.org to see all that the website has to offer. ●