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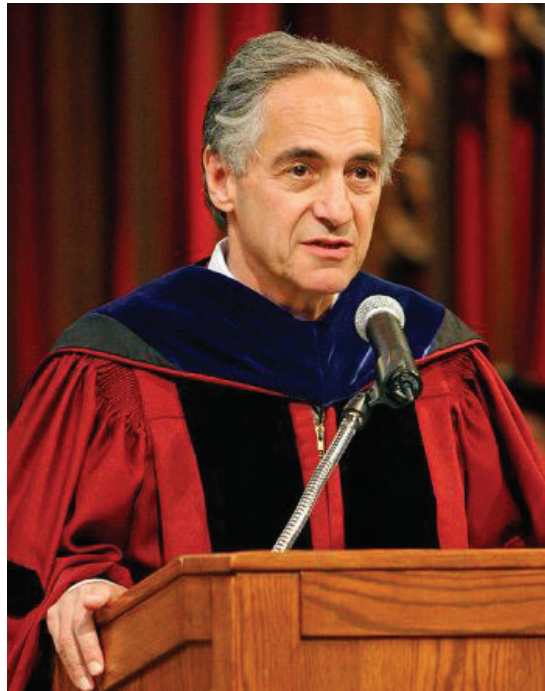
Robert J. Zimmer Wins Merrill Award

When ACTA friends and supporters convene in October for the ATHENA Roundtable conference, ACTA will present the 2017 Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education to Robert J. Zimmer, president of the University of Chicago.

An experienced higher education administrator and distinguished professor of mathematics, President Zimmer has led the University of Chicago—among the highest-ranked research universities in the world—for over a decade. Under his direction, the University has become the national leader in defending free expression and academic freedom. He was instrumental to the University's creation of the Chicago Principles, which unmistakably establish free expression as a value essential to the mission of higher education.

A growing number of institutions, in-

cluding Purdue, Princeton, and the University of Wisconsin System, have adopted the Chicago Principles as a model for the protection of open discourse and inquiry on campus.



“The fearless example set by the University of Chicago, manifest in the Chicago Principles, has been a beacon for us all,” said ACTA President Michael Poliakoff. “President Zimmer’s unwavering courage, character, and vision in defense of academic freedom today offer a model for all university leaders in search of a clear, articulate, and

powerful commitment to first principles.”

The award selection was recommended by a distinguished national committee of education and civic leaders. Past Merrill Award recipients include constitutional scholar Robert George, former U.S. Senator and

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Register Now for ATHENA Roundtable 2017

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info@GoACTA.org

1-888-ALUMNI-8

ACTA's **2017 ATHENA Roundtable** event will be held on **October 20** at the Ronald Reagan Building. Join us for a morning discussion with higher education leaders, an afternoon tour of the White House Visitor Center, and an evening dinner gala for the presentation of the 13th annual **Philip Merrill Award**. To register for the event or find out more information, please visit www.GoACTA.org/events/ATHENA.

Gary L. Gregg II, McConnell Chair in Leadership and Director, McConnell Center University of Louisville

“I wanted to thank you for the copy of *Inside Academe* and for the nice mention of the McConnell Center in [the February issue]. . . . I really do appreciate all that ACTA has done to highlight our work and the wider work you do to help us keep some degree of sanity in higher education today.”

Victor M. Cassidy Chicago, IL

“Thank you for inviting me and my wife to the ACTA dinner [salon] on April 12. It was a pleasure to see you again and to get an insider’s picture of ACTA. . . . You really do know academe from the inside. . . . Please continue to fight the good fight. We are with you all the way!”

Audrey Kapetansky Columbus, OH

“We are impressed by all ACTA is doing, and by the increasing number of references to your research and findings. Carry on!”

Linda Frey, Professor of History University of Montana

Marsha Frey, Professor of History Kansas State University

“A thousand thanks for lunch and the delightful company. . . . ACTA does such important work, and you play such a vital role in reforming our university system.”

Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Founder AHA Foundation

“[T]he work of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni matters: It calls clearly for the freedom to discuss and study the challenging issues of our times. In so doing, ACTA defends the most important principles of the West, which offer the best hope for future students. It is through such principles that women gain the equality that ought to be their birthright, and civilization advances.”

Editor’s Note: The above is an excerpt from Ayaan Hirsi Ali’s 2016 Philip Merrill Award acceptance speech, which ACTA reprinted in a March 2017 release.

Merrill Award, continued from 1

University of Colorado President Hank Brown, historian David McCullough, human rights advocate Ayaan Hirsi Ali, and historian Niall Ferguson.

After his selection, President Zimmer joined ACTA to reflect on the Merrill Award and the centrality of free expression to academe. Edited excerpts are reprinted below.

On the University of Chicago’s historic commitment to free expression: “The University was founded as a research institution from the beginning, attracting faculty for whom an environment of open discourse and intense research was very

important. It’s important to recognize that the University’s support for academic freedom is deeply driven by the faculty culture. Commitment to free expression needs to be embraced by most of the faculty to sustain a culture that supports it.”

On the Committee on Freedom of

Expression, which crafted the Chicago

Principles: “Even three years ago, when the Committee formed, concerns about an erosion of free expression nationwide were mounting. Alarming, the depths of the problem on campuses have continued

“It’s important to recognize that the University’s support for academic freedom is deeply driven by the faculty culture. Commitment to free expression needs to be embraced by most of the faculty to sustain a culture that supports it.”

—President Robert J. Zimmer

to deepen. I believed it was important that the University have a very clear statement of our view as an institution, and very important to appoint a faculty committee from across the University to craft such a statement. It’s not my statement; it’s a statement of the University of Chicago.”

On his assessment of the state of campus free expression today, as nearly twenty major institutions have adopted the Chicago Principles:

“I’m cautiously hopeful. I’m very gratified that there has been a trailblazing group of institutions that have stepped up to the issue in such a strong way. But it’s still a very small number of institutions.

Unless you have a faculty that’s going to demonstrate a commitment to open discourse on a day-to-day basis, that is going to understand that you actually need to help students recognize the real value to their education of free expression, open discourse, challenge and argument—and encourage students to challenge their own assumptions—then any progress is going to be very difficult. Deans, provosts, and presidents need to create an environment in which the

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Effective TRUSTEESHIP

ACTA Releases a Blueprint for Reform: *Bold Leadership, Real Reform 2.0*

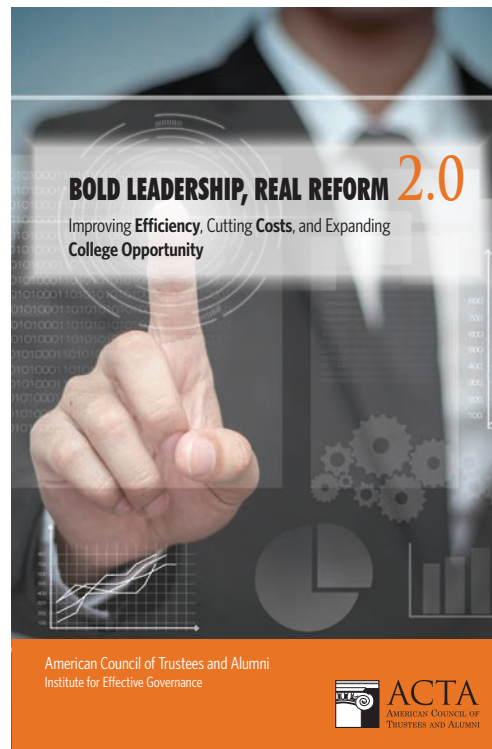
Just weeks ago, ACTA unveiled its newest guide for college and university trustees, *Bold Leadership, Real Reform 2.0: Improving Efficiency, Cutting Costs, and Expanding College Opportunity*. In the new report, ACTA revisits schools featured in 2015's *Bold Leadership, Real Reform: Best Practices in University Governance* guide and identifies additional "Blueprints for Reform."

As the new volume explains, these initiatives offer innovative models for higher education trustees, such as shared course initiatives and online consortia, curricular consolidation, and the use of institutional analytics to identify bottlenecks and improve operations. The programs are hosted at schools of every size and type, including Purdue University, the University of Colorado, and Harvard University. And they have a proven record of success: The University Innovation Alliance (UIA), for example, is a collaboration between 11 universities.

Since coming together in 2014, UIA-member schools have incorporated more data-driven accountability mechanisms and are on track to increase the number of students who will graduate by 94,000.

"This guide is a playbook for trustees looking to leapfrog the conventional wisdom about higher education finance," said Armand Alacbay, ACTA's vice president of trustee and legislative affairs. "Here, we take the opportunity to chronicle some of the true heroes of higher education reform, who are using technology, innovation, and inter-campus partnerships to enhance student outcomes while holding the line on costs."

Since its release, *Bold Leadership, Real Reform 2.0* has been highlighted in *Education Dive* and *Ed Surge*, two major higher education news websites. And Bridget Burns, executive director of the University Innovation Alliance, joined ACTA's Higher Ed Now podcast to discuss the importance of collaboration



and forward-thinking for colleges and universities.

To request a copy of the report, call 202.467.6787 or email info@GoACTA.org.

ACTA Takes on College Athletics

This spring, as March Madness hit its peak, ACTA called attention to the dark side of college athletics. From an epidemic of overspending at the public's expense to a spate of high-profile violations of academic standards, college sports are in dire need of reform. As a follow-up to our December *U.S. News & World Report* op-ed on the financial cost of gridiron glory, ACTA published a second *U.S. News* op-ed, titled "The Ugly Truth of March Madness": In their pursuit of success on the court, far too many schools are abandoning expectations for student-athletes in the classroom.

Building upon the op-ed, ACTA President Michael Poliakoff turned a spotlight on this betrayal of students' interests in a statement published by the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, the University of Kentucky-area's local newspaper: Colleges, he

explained, have sacrificed academic standards for student-athletes, normalizing a "culture of low expectations that does not serve students well in the long run." And in the March 24 episode of ACTA's Higher Ed Now podcast, ACTA Vice President of Trustee and Legislative Affairs Armand Alacbay and Research Associate / Editor Alexis Zhang took to the airwaves to discuss this ongoing problem and what higher education leaders can do to fix it. Ultimately, they concluded, trustees must exercise greater oversight over athletic departments, reasserting the primacy of academics on campus. ●

Download the podcast on college athletics
at GoACTA.org/higher_ed_now/podcasts.

“SPEAKING UP”

New Report Warns of BDS Threat to Free Expression

This March, ACTA released *Campus Free Speech, Academic Freedom, and the Problem of the BDS Movement*, a groundbreaking essay on the threat to academic freedom posed by the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement. While the report remains firmly neutral on such questions as the two-state solution or the settlements, it shows how members of the BDS movement have sought to politicize curricula and academic associations, and to silence Israeli speakers on campus, even engaging in overtly anti-Semitic behavior.

ACTA outlines steps trustees and higher education leaders can take to safeguard academic freedom and institutional neutrality, while allowing the broadest range of social and political views to be heard in campus debates. ACTA urges college and university governing boards to establish clear First Amendment policies, looking to national best practices such as the Chicago Principles of free expression, to protect their institution's political neutrality, and to encourage intellectually-diverse, scholarly perspectives in university departments and centers that address Middle Eastern affairs.



Inside Higher Ed recapped the report in great depth, as did the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law. Mark G. Yudof, president emeritus of the University of California and former chancellor of the University of Texas System, pronounced ACTA's analysis "superb." He observed, "The essay provides trustees and regents with the knowledge they need to understand the challenges to free speech and the troublesome underpinnings of the BDS movement. . . . This essay is a reliable reference for governing boards." ●

ACTA's No U.S. History? Report Still Resonates

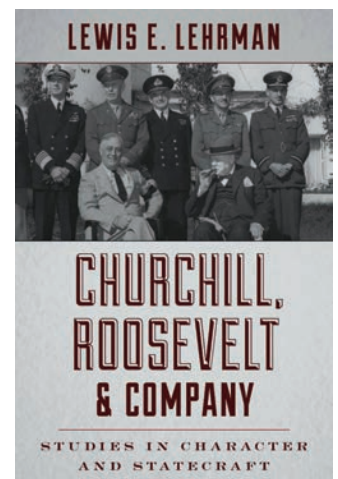
One year on, ACTA's 2016 report, *No U.S. History? How College History Departments Leave the United States out of the Major*, is still making waves. In February, the *Duke Chronicle* published two pieces on the findings of *No U.S. History?*, a report which shows how two-thirds of "top"-ranked universities fail to require even a single course in American history of their history majors. Duke's campus newspaper sought to defend the Blue Devils' abandonment of this vital requirement. One professor explained that Duke's courses do not attempt to emphasize civics, for, "We don't try to communicate an American ideological notion about citizenship—that's not our goal."

The *Duke Chronicle's* articles caught the eye of commentators nationwide, who recognized the folly of its argument. Brooklyn College professor and ACTA Council of Scholars member KC Johnson wrote, "As with so many other responses to [ACTA's] U.S. history report, Duke's seems to confirm the merits of the critique." *Wall Street Journal* editorial writer David Feith lamented this "alas characteristic example of civic education failure in higher ed." And *National Journal* politics editor Josh Kraushaar simply declared: "Idiocracy." ●

From the Bookshelf

Churchill, Roosevelt & Company: Studies in Character and Statecraft by Lewis E. Lehrman

Lewis Lehrman's newest book, *Churchill, Roosevelt & Company: Studies in Character and Statecraft*, examines the "special relationship" between the United States and Great Britain during World War II. By exploring the complexities that colored the Winston Churchill-Franklin Roosevelt relationship, as well as the interactions of their subordinates, Mr. Lehrman offers a penetrating analysis of this long-standing alliance. These insights are sorely needed: Just as the "special relationship" faces 21st century challenges, American historical knowledge is slipping precipitously. In one ACTA survey, more than a quarter of college graduates were unable even to name Franklin Roosevelt as the American president during World War II. For those committed to understanding this key moment in our history, *Churchill, Roosevelt & Company* is a must-read. ●





H E A R D C A M P U S O N

Middlebury's Offense Against Intellectual Freedom

Demonstrating contempt for free expression, student protestors at Middlebury College violently disrupted a lecture by political scientist Charles Murray, who was forced to speak via live stream, while students noisily thumped windows and activated fire alarms nearby. In the ensuing melee, a Middlebury professor was assaulted and required hospital attention.

To their credit, following this shameful event, over 100 Middlebury professors signed a statement supporting free inquiry. And, after ACTA and other higher education leaders expressed vocal outrage, Middlebury announced that it had disciplined more than 40 student protestors for violating the College's student handbook, though it remains unclear whether the punishments fit the severity of the offense against what should be the academy's core values.

Colleges and universities need to do more and prevent such disruptions before they occur. Higher education cannot afford more events like Middlebury.

Wellesley Waffles on Free Speech

Freedom of expression also came under fire at Wellesley College. Despite their purported commitment to free speech, a group of Wellesley professors and the campus newspaper each sought to redefine the term radically.

Following Title IX critic Laura Kipnis's visit to campus, the professors authored an open letter, charging that the mere invitation of a controversial speaker can cause students "harm" by creating a need to "invest time and energy in rebutting

the speakers' arguments." The *Wellesley News* went further, declaring: If students do not allow Wellesley to re-educate away "previously-held biases . . . then hostility may be warranted."

In a *Boston Herald* op-ed, ACTA urged Wellesley to redouble its support for free expression by adopting the Chicago Principles. As free speech controversies flare at campuses like Wellesley and Middlebury, ACTA's recommendation is more urgent than ever.

Hopeful Signs of Reform

Fortunately, two recent developments are promising signs for diversity of thought in academe.

In response to troubling campus incidents, two of the nation's most distinguished scholars and academic leaders—Princeton's Robert P. George and Harvard's Cornel West—crafted a statement on "Truth Seeking, Democracy, and Freedom of Thought and Expression." ACTA leadership joined more than 4,000 individuals across higher education, of all ideological stripes, in signing the statement and publicly affirming the need "to listen to and respectfully engage those with whom we disagree."

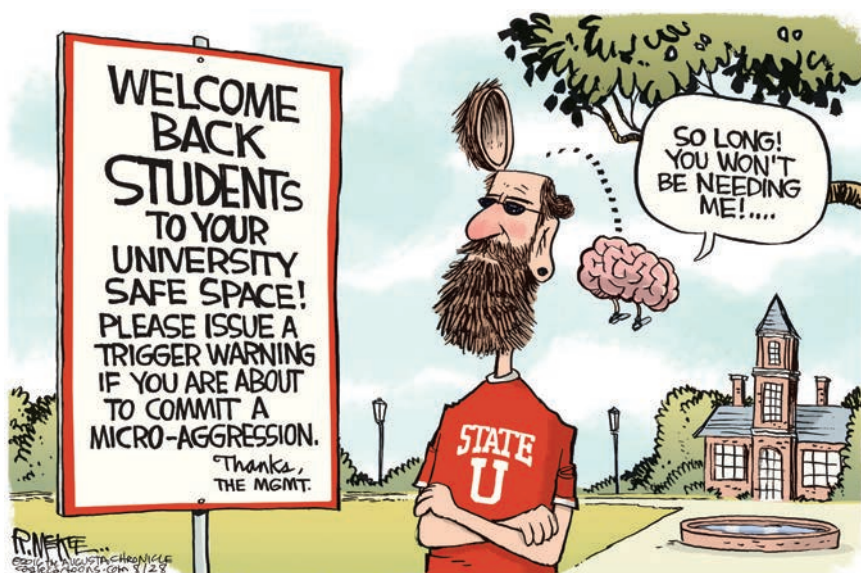
And Heterodox Academy, led by New York University's Jonathan Haidt, has just launched its Viewpoint Diversity Experience. College students can use the Experience to understand better and consider more thoughtfully diverse viewpoints, so that they can constructively take part in robust, intellectually open conversations. ●

Merrill Award, continued from 2

faculty can themselves feel free to become models of critical discourse and demonstrate the value of free expression in challenging students and thereby ultimately enriching students' education. You can't expect students just to know that and understand it. It needs to be worked through and demonstrated and talked about."

On what universities should do moving forward: "There's no question that institutions need to be more assertive. The idea that colleges and universities tolerate—and, in some cases, are complicit in—this type of illiberalism is, to me, very disturbing. The more one can be clear and the more one can try to evolve an appropriate culture, the better."

To read more from ACTA's interview with President Zimmer, visit GoACTA.org. ●



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ACTA Announces Three New Oases of Excellence

ACTA is pleased to announce three new additions to the Oases of Excellence network, which now includes 62 programs. These excellent programs at colleges and universities nationwide are committed to the study of crucial, but all too often neglected subjects, including the American founding, Western Civilization, capitalism, leadership, and the Great Books.

The **Eric Voegelin Institute at Louisiana State University (LSU)** is a center “devoted to the revitalization of teaching and understanding of the ‘Great Books’ of Western civilization.” The Institute sponsors a variety of programs in accordance with the legacy of its eponymous forefather, famed LSU professor Erich Hermann Wilhelm Voegelin. It is directed by James R. Stoner, Jr., LSU’s Hermann Moyses, Jr., Professor of Political Science.

The **Center for the Study of Government and the Individual at the University of Colorado–Colorado Springs** aims to explore and analyze the relationship between government and its citizenry, from all manner of

perspectives. It facilitates faculty and student opportunities for scholarship, debate, and further study. The Center is led by Joshua Dunn, professor and chair of political science at the University of Colorado–Colorado Springs.

And **The Freedom Project at Wellesley College** promotes free expression and diversity of thought, providing a forum for students and professors to discuss and debate issues, expand their intellectual horizons, and develop a deep understanding of freedom. It is directed by Thomas Cushman, Wellesley’s Deffenbaugh de Hoyos Carlson Professor in the Social Sciences and Professor of Sociology.

ACTA’s Oases of Excellence are making valuable contributions to their campuses in challenging times. In recent weeks, the influence of our Oases has been highlighted in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *Boston Herald*, as well as by radio stations such as *WBUR* and *WGBH*. ●

FAR Launches Special Purpose Funds

ACTA’s Fund Academic Renewal (FAR) provides college donors with a way to direct their philanthropy to projects that reflect their values and vision—gifts that enable colleges and universities to live up to their highest ideals. This month, FAR announced five Special Purpose Funds, designed to enable individual donors to pool their resources and increase the impact of their gifts. These Funds advance programming in essential liberal arts topics and foster intellectual openness on campus.

FAR Executive Director Jacqueline Pfeffer Merrill explained, “The liberal arts and sciences are struggling on most campuses. Concerned alumni are worried about weakened academic requirements and overt attempts to

suppress views that challenge campus orthodoxies. These Special Purpose Funds will connect donors with faculty champions who can help translate their interest in the study of traditional liberal arts to outstanding campus programming.”

Alumni can support Funds in American History, Government, & Statesmanship; the Western Tradition; Science & Mathematics; and Economic Literacy. Or, they can choose to support the Free to Teach, Free to Learn Fund, which promotes open discourse and diversity of viewpoints on campus. FAR will collect alumni contributions and disburse grants to outstanding programs led by distinguished faculty.

The Special Purpose Funds



complement FAR’s College Funds, which enable donors to pool resources in support of particular colleges and universities, and FAR’s General Fund, which broadly promotes academic excellence and intellectual openness in higher education. Thanks to the generosity of the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation, these and other FAR services are available to donors and their advisers at no cost. To learn more, visit AcademicRenewal.org or contact info@AcademicRenewal.org. ●

In Memoriam: John Roderick Wilson



ACTA mourns the passing of **John Roderick Wilson**, a dear ACTA friend and supporter for the past 15 years. Mr. Wilson had three careers, each highly successful, which reflected his patriotism and vibrant personality. He was a fighter pilot during the Korean War who attained the rank of Captain in the United States Air Force, a broadcast executive in sales and management, and a philanthropist dedicated to education.

A 1952 graduate of Colgate University, Mr. Wilson served as a trustee of Colgate University and as a board member of A Better Colgate, the university's independent alumni association dedicated to improving the educational experience of Colgate students. He also served as a trustee of Piedmont College and the Atlanta International School, as well as the Cheetah Conservation Fund in Namibia.

Mr. Wilson's generous contributions helped ACTA create and grow our Oases of Excellence initiative, which highlights intellectually diverse and academically rigorous programming made possible by private philanthropists and entrepreneurial faculty members. In addition to supporting the Center for Freedom and Western Civilization, Colgate's very own Oasis of Excellence, he sponsored ACTA's upcoming Oases of Excellence Faculty Conference, which will bring prospective and current faculty leaders together for the first time this summer.

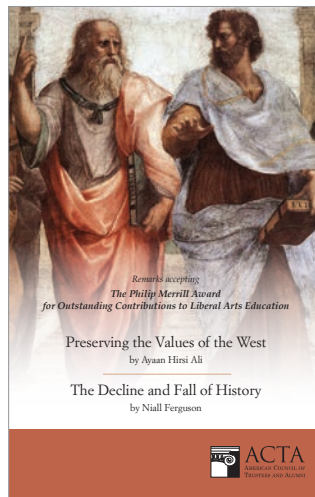
ACTA's staff extends our deepest sympathies to Mr. Wilson's family. In honor of his contributions to ACTA and American higher education, we have named our summer conference the John Roderick Wilson Oases of Excellence Faculty Conference. ●

Merrill Award Winners Speak to the Nation and Beyond

When over 160 ACTA friends gathered last October for the presentation of the 2016 Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education, they were captivated by the speeches given by Merrill Award winners Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Niall Ferguson. Now, higher education supporters across the country—and even the globe—are, too.

The speeches—"Preserving the Values of the West" and "The Decline and Fall of History," respectively—continue to command attention: *The National Review* excerpted both speeches on its website; Niall Ferguson's speech has been viewed more than 21,000 times on YouTube; and Ayaan Hirsi Ali's has even been translated into German!

In their powerful defense of Western Civilization and the study of history, Dr. Ferguson and Ms. Hirsi Ali inspire ACTA's work on the history and legacy of Western Civilization. ACTA recently republished their remarks in booklet form. To request a copy, please email info@GoACTA.org. ●



Fighting for Accreditation Reform

After stepping down as ACTA's president last summer and becoming ACTA's senior fellow, Anne D. Neal has set her sights on overhauling America's broken accreditation system. She brings to this cause insights gained from her 13 years at ACTA's helm, as she spearheaded our rise to the forefront of the higher education reform movement.

Ms. Neal made the case for reform in a February op-ed in *The Hill*, a publication widely read by movers and shakers around the Capitol. Congress, she explained, "should seize the opportunity to hold out-of-control bureaucrats accountable." States should have "the freedom to pursue educational innovation and simplify the gatekeeping process to ensure transparency and accountability for consumers."

With her recent reappointment to the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity, which advises the U.S. Department of Education on accreditation issues, she will be poised to continue leading the fight for accreditation reform. ●

ACTA is honored to announce that Dr. Niall Ferguson has joined our Council of Scholars.

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ACTA
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF
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INSIDE ACADEME

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University of Montana Professor Linda Frey and her twin sister, Kansas State University Professor Marsha Frey, recently visited ACTA's offices to discuss the importance of academic freedom with President Michael Poliakoff and the staff.

University of Montana Faculty Endorse the Chicago Principles

Slowly but surely, the academic tide is turning in support of freedom of expression. Nearly 20 colleges and universities have adopted formally either the Chicago Principles of free expression or an equivalent policy, and student governments at schools such as Northwestern University have emphatically called for greater free speech protections.

The latest step forward comes from the University of Montana. Linda Frey, a distinguished professor of history at the University, introduced a resolution endorsing the University of Chicago's Statement on Principles of Free Expression, and the faculty senate overwhelmingly passed it. The resolution clearly underscores the faculty's recognition that free expression is the lifeblood of all intellectual pursuits.

ACTA applauds Professor Frey for leading the way at the University of Montana, and we urge more professors and institutions to raise high the banners of freedom of inquiry and freedom of expression, which have long been the pride and glory of American higher education. ●