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New Book Suggests Ways for College Donors to Control How Their Gifts Are Spent

By [JOSHUA ROLNICK](#)

A group of trustees and **alumni** who favor traditional curricula released a new guidebook on Monday that is designed to help donors be "intelligent" about giving.

Described in a news release as "the first book designed to show donors how to avoid pitfalls in their college giving,"

The Intelligent Donor's Guide to College Giving

was mailed to 3,000 major donors and trustees, said Jerry L. Martin, president of the **American Council of Trustees and Alumni**. Mr. Martin co-wrote the book with Anne D. Neal, vice-president and general counsel of the organization.

"Our basic advice is give money only to the best programs. And obviously that will encourage institutions to produce programs of high quality," said Mr. Martin, who added that his association had planned for more than a year to publish such a guidebook.

In the guidebook, the authors criticize "the latest nuances of political correctness." The book says that donors should consider supporting programs that embody "classic educational values."

It advocates a free-market approach to higher-education philanthropy. "You should be as wise a shopper in your higher education giving as you are in selecting a stock or mutual funds," the guidebook says.

The book explains how donors can control how their gifts are spent. Donors should give to a specific program or create their own, the book says, and state the purpose of their gifts in writing. The authors also advise donors to find faculty members

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who will advocate the projects that the donors wish to support. Donors should even be willing to go to court, the book says, to insure that institutions do not misuse their gifts.

Since its founding, in 1995, the council has been part of a debate over the role that donors and trustees should play in shaping curricula at colleges and universities. Two groups that represent fund raisers and trustees, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, declined to comment on the new guidebook.

But Patricia A. McGuire, president of Trinity College in Washington, said, "what is bothersome at times in this rhetoric is that it suggests that the power of gifts can force institutions to make choices about curricula and students that are not up to the donors to make."

Mr. Martin responded that the guidebook emphasizes the importance of academic freedom. "A college should not accept a gift that is not in its best interests," he said, adding that the guidebook is not meant to support the council's own vision of what constitutes a good curriculum. "Our only mandate to the donors is that they support excellence," he said.

The guidebook is available free by calling 1-888-**ALUMNI**-8.

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