

# CAPITALISM MAGAZINE

## "The Unbearable Whiteness of Barbie" and Other College Stupidity

by [Walter Williams](#) (August 1, 2006)

Colleges and universities will start their fall semester soon. You might be interested in what parents' and taxpayers' money is going for at far too many "institutions of higher learning."

At Occidental College in Los Angeles, a mandatory course for some freshmen is "The Unbearable Whiteness of Barbie." It's a course where Professor Elizabeth J. Chin explores ways in "which scientific racism has been put to use in the making of Barbie [and] to an interpretation of the film 'The Matrix' as a Marxist critique of capitalism." Johns Hopkins University students can enroll in a course called "Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n' Roll in Ancient Egypt." Part of the course includes slide shows of women in ancient Egypt "vomiting on each other," "having intercourse" and "fixing their hair."

Harvard University students can take "Marxist Concepts of Racism," which examines "the role of capitalist development and expansion in creating racial inequality." You can bet there's no mention of the genocide in Africa and former communist regimes like Yugoslavia. Young America's Foundation and Accuracy in Academia publish lists of courses like these, at many other colleges, that are nothing less than student indoctrination through academic dishonesty.

Parents are paying an average tuition of \$21,000, and at some colleges over \$40,000, to have their children exposed to anti-Americanism and academic nonsense. According to a 2000 American Council of Trustees and Alumni study, "Losing America's Memory: Historical Illiteracy in the 21st Century," not one of the top 50 colleges and universities today requires American history of its graduates.

A survey conducted by the Center for Survey Research

### Required Reading:

#### [The Indispensable Condition of Peace in the Middle East](#)

Only when the initiators of force learn that their actions lead to their own destruction, will peace be possible in the Middle East.

#### [How The U.S. Government Created a Crisis in the Middle East](#)

America helped empower Hezbollah, by confusing freedom with democracy.

#### [Appeasing a Mortal Enemy: The U.S. - Israeli Suicide Pact](#)

The longstanding commitment of Israel and America to "diplomatic engagement" with Palestinians and Islamists--a euphemism for appeasement--is suicidal.

and Analysis at the University of Connecticut gave 81 percent of the seniors a D or F in their knowledge of American history. The students could not identify Valley Forge, or words from the Gettysburg Address, or even the basic principles of the U.S. Constitution. A survey released by the McCormick Tribune Freedom Museum found that American adults could more readily identify Simpson cartoon characters than name freedoms guaranteed in the First Amendment.

The academic dishonesty doesn't end with phony courses and lack of a solid core curriculum; there's grossly fraudulent grading, euphemistically called grade inflation. For example, Harvard's Educational Policy Committee found that some professors award A's for average work. A *Boston Globe* study found that 91 percent of Harvard seniors graduated with honors, that means all A's and a few B's.

I doubt whether these "honor" students could pass a 1950 high school graduation examination. According to the Department of Education's 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy, only 31 percent of college graduates were proficient in prose, only 25 percent proficient in reading documents and 31 percent proficient in math.

Who's to blame for the increasingly sad state of affairs at America's colleges and universities? It's tempting to blame professors and campus administrators, and yes, they share a bit of the blame for shirking their academic duty. But the bulk of the blame rests with trustees, who bear the ultimate responsibility for what goes on at the college.

Unfortunately, trustees know little detail about what goes on at their institutions. Most of them have their time taken up by their non-college obligations. As such, they are simply yes-men who, in making decisions, must rely on information, often incomplete or biased, given to them by the president and the provost.

A good remedy would be for boards of trustees to hire a campus ombudsman and staff that's accountable only to the trustees. During my brief tenure as a trustee of a major East Coast university, I made this suggestion only to be asked by the president whether I trusted him. My response was yes I trusted him, but I wanted verification.

## About the Author

Born in



Philadelphia in 1936, Walter E. Williams holds a bachelor's degree in economics from California State University (1965) and a master's degree (1967) and doctorate (1972) in economics from the University of California at Los Angeles.

## Author Archives

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