

In This Issue...

- 2 In Box
- 3 Reforming Accreditation in Higher Education
What We Learned from What Will They Learn? 2013-14
- 4 Bluefield College Receives ACTA "A"
- 5 ACTA Spreads the Word about Historical Literacy
Accreditation: What Trustees Can Do
- 6 2013 ATHENA Roundtable
- 8 Gary Gallagher Receives 2013 Philip Merrill Award
- 9 Trustees Gather in Cambridge to Discuss University Governance
- 10 ACTA Makes National Headlines
Selingo Discusses the Future of Higher Ed at ACTA Salon
- 11 Trinity College Alumni Fight for Free Association
ACTA Says Goodbye to Longtime Board Member

TIME Magazine Leads with ACTA

ACTA continues to build national consensus for high academic standards and a broad and rigorous core curriculum. Our impact is evident in *TIME* magazine's October 7th cover story, "Class of 2025: How They'll Learn and What They'll Pay," which led with ACTA's research.

The story begins by citing the findings of ACTA's 2012 "American History Literacy Survey," conducted by GfK Roper. We uncovered a shocking level of historical and civic illiteracy among American college graduates, who had trouble correctly identifying the Chief Justice of the United States and the length of congressional terms of office. After highlighting these disturbing results, the article goes on to discuss two of ACTA's key reform proposals: measuring student learning and strengthening core curricula.

With rampant grade inflation at countless schools, it is harder than ever for parents,

students, and employers to know what a college degree is worth. That is why learning assessments like the CLA+ exam are so important. As ACTA's vice president of policy, Dr. Michael Poliakov, told *TIME*, "Exit exams are an excellent idea because they are a quantifiable way of giving institutions and individuals the measure of the kind of progress they're making."

He also spoke about the need for a rigorous core curriculum, arguing that while some students at prestigious schools know enough to succeed without a core, "that is not the reality for all students." Students need a core, because it "makes sure that all students develop the skills they need to be successful."

New York Times columnist Frank Bruni continued the conversation, picking up on our survey findings in his Sunday column.

And our campaign for curricular

(continued on 2)



Make a Tax-Advantaged Gift to ACTA!

Congress has reauthorized legislation that allows individuals to make a charitable gift from their IRA accounts without incurring federal income tax on the withdrawal through December 31, 2013. If you or another family member are 70½ or older, please consider taking advantage of this opportunity. Contact Development Director Jacquie Merrill for further information at jmerrill@goacta.org or (202) 467-6787.

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**Norman Dorsen, Stokes Professor of Law
and Counselor to the President
New York University**

“I’ve been dipping into your [*Free to Teach, Free to Learn*] pamphlet since it arrived. ... It is a very substantial effort, and I’m grateful to you for sending it. ... [O]verall the work is excellent and the overall conception creative. You and your colleagues should be congratulated.”

**Editorial Board
Connecticut Law Review**

“It should be noted that some of the most trenchant comments concerning the restructuring of the Penn State Board came from the Washington-based organization known as the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, which has established itself as a major conscience of the operation and functioning of the educational Boards of Trustees.”

**Harvey Silverglate, Esq., Chair, Board of Directors
Foundation for Individual Rights in Education**

“This is terrific [*TIME* magazine article]—the idea of a real education has now gone mainstream! ... I’m so proud of ACTA for working to save civilization from the trendy but ambitious and self-serving bureaucrats who would bury civilization with training rather than education.”

**David Olive, President
Bluefield College
Bluefield, VA**

“I continue to reflect on what a grand day we had yesterday as we launched our new academic year at Bluefield College. Your announcement of the College receiving an A rating from ACTA, followed by your superb remarks during convocation, were truly a blessing to our campus community.”

Editor’s Note: Bluefield College is one of the newest schools to receive an “A” rating from ACTA’s What Will They Learn?™ project. ACTA’s vice president of policy, Michael Poliakoff, was invited to speak at Bluefield’s convocation. See article on page 4.

**David Stoesz, Professor of Social Work
Co-Author of *A Dream Deferred: How Social Work
Education Lost Its Way and What Can Be Done*
Alexandria, VA**

“Brava for your orchestration of this event! I read Brown’s paper with keen interest and fully support his reform agenda.”

Editor’s Note: On September 30, ACTA co-sponsored a panel on accreditation reform with the American Enterprise Institute. The discussion centered on a new policy paper by the head of ACTA’s accreditation reform initiative, former U.S. Senator Hank Brown. See article on the following page.

TIME Leads with ACTA, continued from 1

excellence continues. Just a few weeks after *TIME*’s cover story, ACTA released our 2013-14 What Will They Learn?™ ratings on WhatWillTheyLearn.com. This year, we evaluated nearly 1,100 schools and celebrated three new schools achieving ACTA “A”s!

Higher education faces ongoing challenges, as the study reveals: the average grade is a “C,” and nearly one-third of schools receive a “D” or an “F.” Silly courses abound, such as the University of Indiana’s “Cultural Politics of Lady Gaga” and Middlebury College’s “Blame It On Bossa Nova: The History of a Transnational Phenomenon.” Vampires, zombies, aliens, hip-hop, and Harry Potter often substitute for the fundamental and foundational courses all students need for success in career and community.

This year ACTA deepened our study with new resources. ACTA partnered with the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) to assess the state of free expression on campus. For the first time, What Will They Learn?™ reports whether institutions respect free speech and academic freedom. Unfortunately, only 4% of the schools evaluated get a “green light” on free speech.

Also for the first time, What Will They Learn?™ reports the four-year graduation rate of each school. There, too, we encountered some serious trouble: the average graduation rate at public colleges is 26%, and we found nearly 40 “tuition traps,” with “D” or “F” core curricula, tuition over \$25,000, and graduation rates under 50%.

But the good news is, colleges don’t need expensive tuition or a generous endowment to offer an excellent core curriculum. Our “A” list includes nearly every kind of institution: public and private, religious and secular, large research universities, and small liberal arts colleges. Indeed, the average “A” school costs 23% *less* than the average “F” school.

In other words, any college that thinks seriously about what it means to be educated, and takes appropriate action, *can* ensure that its graduates receive a broad-based education. Several schools have begun using What Will They Learn?™ as a guide for curricular excellence, and more schools are taking up the initiative! See what everyone’s talking about at WhatWillTheyLearn.com or call (202) 467-6787 for a printed copy of the report. ●

Reforming Accreditation in Higher Education



Hank Brown, Judith Eaton, Arthur Rothkopf, and Amy Laitinen discuss accreditation reform.

On September 30, ACTA made a major advance in its campaign to bring about a top-to-bottom overhaul of the existing system of college accreditation. A capacity audience at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) attended “A Higher Bar for Higher Ed: Reforming Accreditation for the 21st Century,” jointly sponsored by ACTA and AEI. The audience received copies of *Protecting Students and Taxpayers*, former Senator Hank Brown’s new white paper on the past, present, and future of accreditation, and how to fix the broken system.

For many years, ACTA has driven the effort to reform the accrediting system. Two previous ACTA policy papers prepared the ground for ACTA’s current reform efforts: in 2003, *Can College Accreditation Live Up to Its Promise?* and in 2007, *Why Accreditation Doesn’t Work and What Policymakers Can Do About It*. ACTA’s Anne Neal serves on NACIQI, the advisory committee that oversees accreditors, and in June she testified before Congress on accreditation reform. And our message is being heard: earlier this year, President Obama himself called for

changes to the accreditation system. Accreditation is not something the public, or even most education policymakers, talk about. Yet it is among the most urgent issues in higher education. Six agencies, holding a virtual monopoly on accreditation in their regions, serve as the “gatekeepers” to the lion’s share of federal student financial aid. At the same time, these accreditors, trusted by Congress to ensure higher education quality, have presided over dysfunction—low graduation rates, low academic standards, high levels of default on student loans, and poor teaching—that have degraded American higher education and most recently prompted White House intervention.

Although the accreditors have not paid adequate attention to higher education quality issues, many institutions have faced ire from accreditors for perfectly reasonable management and policy decisions. The University of California system, for instance, found itself having to fend off accreditors’ complaints as it

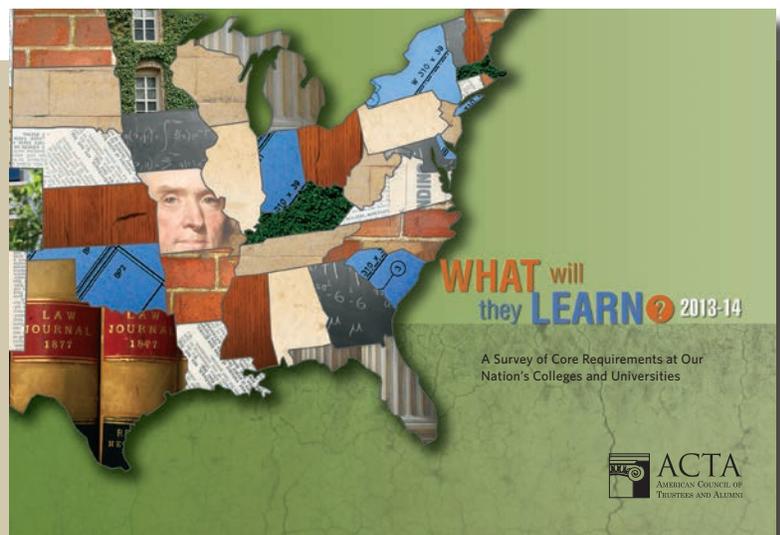
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WHAT WE LEARNED from What Will They Learn? 2013-14

The study examines four crucial components of higher education excellence and value: the curriculum (rated “A” through “F”), the four-year graduation rate, freedom of speech on campus, and college cost.

This year’s report highlights the tremendous disconnect between perception and reality in higher education:

- American colleges and universities earn a disappointing “C” for core curriculum.
- The national four-year graduation rate is just 40% among institutions studied.
- Many institutions seem to be “tuition traps” for their high cost, low grad rates, and weak core curriculum.



Visit WhatWillTheyLearn.com to see the latest ratings, or take a look at the written report at GoACTA.org.

Bluefield College Receives ACTA “A”



Judge Richard Bray from the Beazley Foundation, ACTA's Michael Poliakoff, and Bluefield president David Olive.

Congratulations to Virginia's Bluefield College, one of What Will They Learn?™'s newest “A” schools! ACTA evaluated over 1,000 schools as part of its What Will They Learn?™ project, but just 2% received the prestigious “A” grade that Bluefield has. Bluefield was able to receive its new grade as a result of a generous grant from the Beazley Foundation, which enabled the hire of an economics professor to teach in the general education program and the addition of an economics requirement to its core.

In celebration of receiving its ACTA “A,” Bluefield College invited ACTA's vice president of policy, Dr. Michael Poliakoff, to address its convocation at the beginning of the academic year. In a speech that invoked the great thinkers of the past, Dr. Poliakoff praised Bluefield for standing apart from the “distressing” national trend of curricular decline and encouraged its students to “let the divine gift of a discerning heart and mind lead you in an unending quest to prepare for meaningful lives of service.”

We are sure that with their strengthened core curriculum, Bluefield's students will be well prepared for the challenges of the workplace and for lives of engaged citizenship. ●

Accreditation Reform, *continued from 3*

attempted to rein in runaway administrative spending.

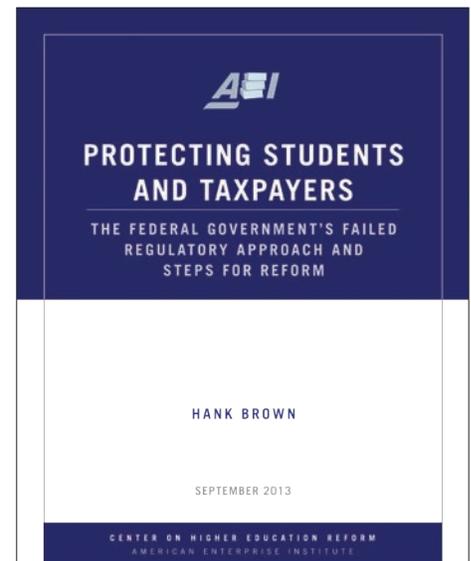
Bringing together key experts in higher education accreditation, “A Higher Bar” first documented the ways in which accreditors have harassed institutions and stifled reform. It then turned to a series of highly-feasible solutions. In the opening address, former Senator and past president of the University of Colorado, Hank Brown, now head of ACTA's accreditation initiative, declared:

“We have placed handcuffs on the ability of trustees, regents, and presidents of universities to run their institutions. ... If any of you have long thought that college administrators simply keep their heads down and don't do much, you are absolutely right. And they do it because we've constructed a system that penalizes strong leadership.” (See full quote on following page.)

Joining Senator Brown on the

panel were Judith Eaton, president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation; Arthur Rothkopf, president emeritus of Lafayette College; and Amy Laitinen of the New America Foundation. Each brought a unique perspective to the reform conversation, but there was strong agreement that higher education quality issues are in desperate need of attention and that the gatekeeping role is a significant problem that needs to be addressed. Arthur Rothkopf emphasized that the lack of transparency in higher education has been a great obstacle to quality and progress.

ACTA and Senator Brown propose a number of important ways to create a better form of higher education quality assurance. We hope to create a new, modern accreditation system by separating eligibility for federal funds from the accreditation process—thereby returning accreditors to their role as



voluntary, peer-review-based quality assurance organizations. We also propose ensuring transparent performance metrics at all schools, introducing competition among accreditors, and expanding states' ability to accredit institutions of higher learning.

We believe that we now can certainly say one good thing about accreditation. Due to ACTA's work, it's beginning to change. ●

“SPEAKING UP”

ACTA Spreads the Word about Historical Literacy

ACTA is leading the way in the battle to promote historical literacy. On September 10, ACTA president Anne Neal spoke at Indiana’s Ball State University as part of its “Town and Gown Conversations” series. Her talk, entitled “Honoring George Washington’s Legacy: Do Americans Need a Reminder?” lamented the “historical amnesia” afflicting much of America’s youth.

Sadly, survey after survey demonstrates that young people lack basic knowledge about American history and government. Neal noted that studies show “more teenagers could name the Three Stooges than could name three branches of government.” One study found that 10% of teens didn’t know George Washington was the first president of the United States!

Neal argued that this ignorance is a direct result of our educational institutions’ misplaced priorities: “Our colleges and universities have abandoned their responsibility to prepare our next generation of leaders for effectiveness in the workforce and informed citizenry.” This is one reason it is vital to bring back the strong core curricula Americans want and need. A core that requires classes on U.S. history and government can help produce a well-educated, historically literate citizenry.

ACTA’s work didn’t stop at Ball State. Our director of trustee affairs, Armand Alacbay spent November 4th at the “Dare to Think” educational summit in Florida. There, he delivered a talk entitled “Losing Our Collective Memory,” in which he noted that, in addition to needing a core curriculum, Americans *want* a core curriculum: 70% of Americans believe colleges should require core subjects such as those reviewed in *What Will They Learn?*[™]. Alacbay also appeared on a panel entitled “Raising the Bar and

(continued on 9)

Accreditation What Trustees Can Do



ACTA’s new trustee guide outlines the ways that trustees can work effectively with the flawed and sometimes adversarial system of college accreditation. The guide explains how accreditation can inhibit responsible governance and offers practical solutions. It calls on trustees to be firm in resisting inappropriate interference from accreditors—and it urges them to contact members of Congress to encourage reform.

Quoting Hank Brown on Accreditation Reform

September 30, 2013
American Enterprise Institute

“We have placed handcuffs on the ability of trustees, regents, and presidents of universities to run their institutions. If you do anything that offends anybody—and believe me, that is not difficult to do on a college campus—if you don’t support a particular movement strongly enough or if you support it too vehemently, if you have an opinion on almost any subject, you will be subject to calls for your resignation by a faculty vote of no confidence.

We have constructed a system where good management, good guidance, on American campuses is sadly lacking. And part of the problem is the accreditation process.

Think about this: the University of Virginia’s accreditor placed the university on warning because they did not like the way the board dismissed UVA’s president. Whose job is it to hire and fire a president? According to Virginia’s elected officials, it’s the board’s job. But a bunch of accreditors who don’t have

responsibility for overseeing the school—and who don’t pay its bills—put the whole board in jeopardy for doing its job.

Or consider the University of Hawaii, where the accreditor demanded reports on the hiring of a new athletic director. Or the University of California, where the board’s decision to look into administrative costs led to their being called ‘unnecessarily harsh.’

If you take nothing else from this discussion, understand how difficult it is to direct and manage well an American college or university. And part of the reason is because of an accreditation system that is not transparent, that puts people’s jobs in jeopardy if they do anything. If any of you have long thought that college administrators simply keep their heads down and don’t do much, you are absolutely right. And they do it because we’ve constructed a system that penalizes strong leadership.”

2013 ATHENA Roundtable Shaping the Future of American Higher Education

What will higher education look like in ten years? And how can we shape it for the better? Those are the questions trustees, educators, policymakers, and alumni leaders asked when they gathered for ACTA's 2013 ATHENA Roundtable. Hosted at the newly-opened National Library for the Study of George Washington at Mount Vernon, the conference was enlightening and empowering for all those who attended.

ACTA president **Anne Neal** and regent **Barbara Lucas** of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association opened the event by welcoming attendees to the home of George Washington. The keynote address, from esteemed classical architect **Allan Greenberg**, introduced the audience to their surroundings with a photo tour through the unique architecture of the home Washington built. Noting the care Washington put into designing every part of Mount Vernon, Greenberg highlighted Washington's belief that, for Americans, "the place of work should be a work of art."

Next, ACTA's vice president of policy, **Michael Poliakov**, moderated a panel on "Educating for Citizenship" which featured former Undersecretary of the Army and aerospace engineer **Norman Augustine**; Director of the Center for the Core Curriculum at Columbia University, **Roosevelt Montas**; and **Burck Smith**, founder of the innovative online education provider StraighterLine. After Dr. Poliakov shared the alarming findings of ACTA's historical literacy surveys and warned that a republic "cannot be both ignorant and free or ignorant and prosperous," Montas, spoke of how Columbia's core curriculum addresses precisely those challenges.

"All education is education for citizenship," Dr. Montas argued, and the key question we must ask ourselves is what kind of citizenship are we educating for. Mr. Augustine spoke of the unexpected role a knowledge of history has played in his personal and professional life, and Smith raised tough questions about the nature of general education and discussed how

technological innovation could change the landscape of higher education.

The next panel featured former U.S. Senator **Hank Brown**,



Burck Smith, Roosevelt Montas, Norm Augustine and Michael Poliakov



Dean Colson



Rick O'Donnell



Rubenstein Leadership Hall, The National Library for the Study of George Washington



Helen Dragas and Tom McMillen



Charles Barzun



Kevin Carey

Kevin Carey

former Lafayette College president **Arthur Rothkopf**, **Kevin Carey** of the New America Foundation, and **Rick O'Donnell**, administrative director of ACTA's accreditation initiative. They discussed the urgent need to reform America's broken college ac-

creditation system. Though the panelists represented different perspectives, there was consensus on the need to decouple federal student aid from college accreditation and widespread agreement on

scripts—participants returned for a lively colloquy on “Understanding Academic Freedom.” Professors **Philip Hamburger** and **Alan Charles Kors** led a discussion about freshmen orientation programs, noting that these programs set the tone of a school’s environment for new students. Sadly, the programs too often focus on defining “acceptable” thought and opinion and instilling a politically correct sensibility. The audience was eager to share thoughts and experiences throughout an active and fruitful conversation.

The final panel of the day was moderated by Anne Neal and featured trustees **Helen Dragas**, **Dean Colson** and **Tom McMillen**. The topic of the panel was “Empowering Trustees.” Helen Dragas, member and former rector of the University of Virginia Board of Visitors, urged trustees to investigate issues at their institutions—and to keep asking questions until they get real answers. Mr. McMillen emphasized the need for trustees to be both active and assertive on athletics and other issues, and to be engaged in the decision-making process at their schools. Mr. Colson, chairman of the Board of Governors of the State University System of Florida, spoke forthrightly about leading a major university system and emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability. The consensus was that university trustees are the only stakeholders responsible for the well-being of the whole university, and that they must confidently exercise their fiduciary authority.

In an environment of skyrocketing tuition and declining academic quality, change in American higher education is inevitable. It is up to trustees, professors, policymakers, and all those who have a stake in the future of higher ed to make sure that change is positive.

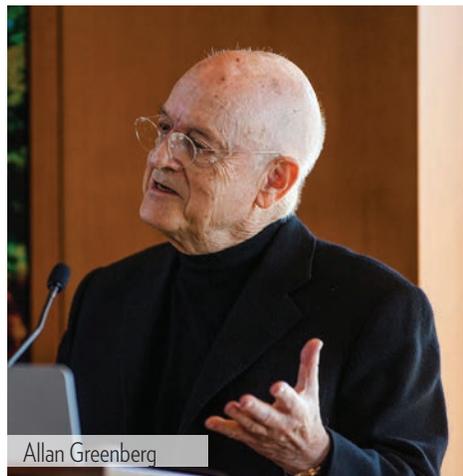
Each year the ATHENA Roundtable fosters a conversation between key stakeholders about how to move higher ed in the right direction. We are happy to report that this year’s ATHENA was a great a success! ●



Alan Charles Kors and Philip Hamburger



George Washington at Mount Vernon



Allan Greenberg



Carey, Arthur Rothkopf and Hank Brown

the need for better data and clear measures of student outcomes.

After a break for lunch and a guided tour of the library—including a viewing of the Rare Books Vault, which includes Mount Vernon’s collection of Washington’s original manu-

Gary Gallagher Receives 2013 Philip Merrill Award

“It takes an act of will to make this subject boring,” Professor Gary Gallagher said of the Civil War, the subject to which he has devoted his career, as he accepted ACTA’s ninth annual Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education. Throughout a long and outstanding career, professor Gallagher has shared his enthusiasm with his students—some in college, and many others long since graduated.

Gallagher is the John L. Nau III Professor in the History of the American Civil War at the University of Virginia and one of America’s leading experts on our bloodiest conflict. He is also a captivating lecturer who simply comes alive when talking about the war or about the importance of history for understanding current debates and issues. By the time he accepted the award, ACTA’s guests had no doubt about how he attracts 200 students to a course taught at eight in the morning, or why, despite his well-deserved reputation as a hard grader, his students routinely rate him as among the finest teachers they have ever had.

Before Gallagher spoke, guests enjoyed



Anne Neal with Gary Gallagher, John Nau and Gary’s son Will.

tributes from old friends and colleagues who reflected on his storied career.

Susan Welch, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Penn State, spoke of his “passion for teaching; anywhere, anytime, and any student.” Melvyn P. Leffler, a fellow UVa historian, spoke about Gallagher’s role as a scholar and public intellectual, saying that “He has demonstrated that serious scholars can attract a huge following ... from a public wanting to grasp how values and

principles have shaped personal identity, national memory, and public policy.”

Businessman John L. Nau III, who endowed Gallagher’s chair at UVa, spoke of the impact that Gallagher has had, not only on students, but also on other audiences: “Gary’s tours of Civil War battlefields are lessons in leadership and decision-making ... great lessons for college students and ... great lessons in corporate leadership.”

And Thomas M. Rollins, founder of The Teaching Company and last year’s Merrill winner, shared stories about Gallagher’s taped lectures—some of the best the company ever produced. “Over 100,000 people have watched and listened to Gary’s lectures. ... They didn’t do it for course credit, or for a certificate, or for a grade: they did it because they’d found a great teacher and scholar who is pretty close to perfect at what he does.”

The purpose of all our work at ACTA is to ensure that America’s students can receive a demanding and rewarding liberal education from great scholars like Professor Gallagher. It was a pleasure and an honor to recognize his exceptional teaching and scholarship. ●



We gathered for the occasion at **Anderson House**, a visually striking house museum in Washington, DC. It serves as the home of The Society of the Cincinnati, America’s oldest patriotic organization, which was founded after the Revolutionary War by officers in the Continental Army and French officers who had fought at their side.

Effective TRUSTEESHIP



Trustees Gather in Cambridge to Discuss University Governance

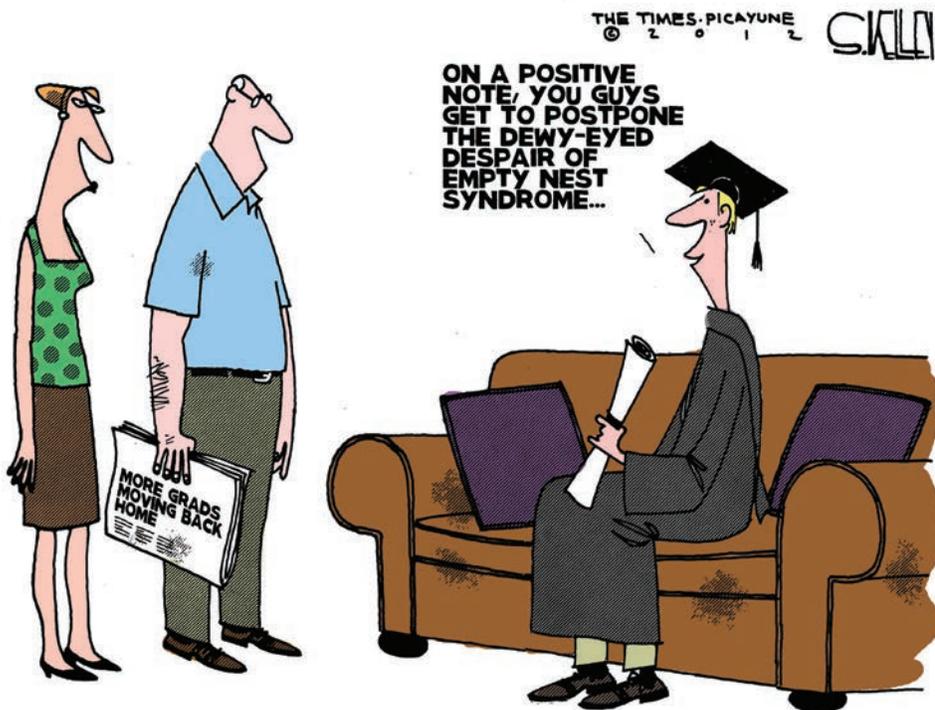
On September 26, trustees from colleges and universities across the Northeast gathered at the Harvard Faculty Club in Cambridge for ACTA's seventh regional trustee seminar, hosted in partnership with the Aspen Institute. The program included attendees from Goucher College, the University System of New Hampshire, Wellesley College, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Johns Hopkins University, Ithaca College, and Lawrence University.

The day-long seminar on "Envisioning the Future of Higher Education" explored fundamental questions about the role of trustees in safeguarding academic excellence and cost-effectiveness. Using the Aspen Institute's method of facilitated discussion, sessions were structured as Socratic inquiries focused around key texts, moving from classic works on education to contemporary articles on higher education policy. Dr. Todd Breyfogle of the Aspen Institute and ACTA's Dr. Michael Poliakoff led the discussions.

Participants began the day with a session on "Access and Excellence." They clarified what constitutes academic excellence and explored the relationship between career training and the liberal arts. Next, the seminar took up the topic of academic freedom. Trustees read central texts in the history of academic freedom in order to understand what role trustees should play in defending free inquiry on their campuses. The day ended with sessions on university governance, metrics, and taking action to turn ideas into concrete change. Trustees learned that bringing about change isn't impossible and that schools from Maryland to Tennessee have managed to hold the line on costs through more effective management of resources.

Participants called the event "excellent" and "engaging" and said there was "lots of ground covered." Trustees said that they left with a commitment to be more vocal and involved in strengthening their institutions.

Throughout the year, ACTA organizes similar events for trustees seeking guidance about effective university governance. For more information, see GoACTA.org or contact ACTA at (202) 467-6787. ●



Steve Kelly Editorial Cartoon used with the permission of Steve Kelly and Creators Syndicate. All rights reserved.

Speaking Up, *continued from 5*

Rigor" alongside National Association of Scholars president Peter Wood; Paul Horton, history teacher at the University of Chicago Laboratory School; and Will Fitzhugh, publisher of *The Concord Review*.

Alabay called on participants to "vote with their feet," choosing schools that offer a broad-based core curriculum and a vigorous academic culture.

In their talks, both Neal and Alabay emphasized that America is bound together not by race or ethnicity, but by a shared set of ideals. When we lose the memory of those who embodied those ideals, individuals like George Washington, we lose our bearings as a nation. That is why ACTA will keep fighting to save America's memory. ●

ACTA has been all over the news these past few months! It seems not a week has gone by without seeing ACTA's work cited in the papers or reading a piece by one of our experts.

ACTA made a strong appearance in the *Wall Street Journal* to talk about the Council for Aid to Education's CLA+ exam. Not only was ACTA's vice president of policy, Dr. Michael Poliakoff, cited in their article on the topic, but he was also interviewed in a *Wall Street Journal Online* video segment. He argued for the importance of learning assessments like the CLA+, which help bring accountability to colleges and universities by measuring the quality of the educations they provide.

In another case, ACTA friend Benno Schmidt took to the *Journal's* pages to defend academic freedom. He cited our *Free to Teach, Free to Learn* trustee guide and offered ACTA's vision of a robust and open exchange of ideas on college campuses.

Our press secretary, Daniel Burnett, saw his work published in several newspapers. The *Washington Post* published his op-ed

on the leadership crisis at Howard University. Burnett argued for cutting administrative bloat, ending expensive capital projects, and keeping tuition low at the historically-black school. The *Orange County Register* published another piece by Burnett blasting the misuse of university funds by deans of the University of California system.

ACTA's president Anne Neal and senior communications officer William Gonch published an article in the Jewish Policy Center's fall issue of *inFocus Quarterly*. "Four Ways to Improve Higher Education" is a summary of ACTA's reform agenda, arguing for stronger core curricula, active trusteeship, and accreditation reform.

Then of course there was the *TIME* magazine piece, covered on page one of this issue.

ACTA's extensive press coverage has meant that more readers than ever before are hearing our message of academic freedom, excellence, and accountability. ●

Selingo Discusses the Future of Higher Education at ACTA Salon

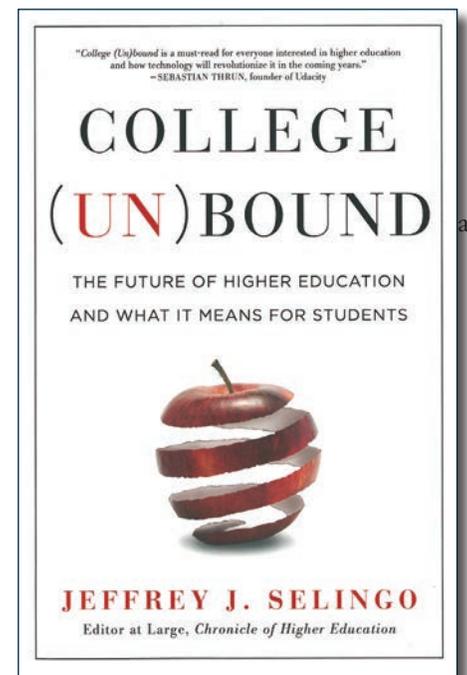
On October 24, one house was abuzz with talk about how to improve higher education. That's because ACTA president Anne Neal was hosting a dinner salon, a small and very special gathering of ACTA friends and supporters.

Attendees gathered to hear author and journalist Jeffrey Selingo, editor-at-large of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, speak about his new book, *College (Un)Bound*. In his book, Selingo lays out the challenges facing higher ed and takes the reader on a tour of people and institutions seeking to meet those challenges. ACTA has praised the book as "chock full of innovative experiments that are improving student outcomes," and Selingo discussed many of them with those in attendance.

Selingo made clear that the cost structures of higher education are unsustainable. Although he acknowledged a history of doomsday predictions about the future of American colleges, he gave good reasons to believe that this time the financial pressures will be unremitting. After he spoke, the audience engaged Selingo in a conversation that ranged from concerns about quality and standards in higher education to affordability and access.

Attendees also heard from Anne Neal on ACTA's campaign to reform America's higher education accreditation system and to restore a rich core curriculum to America's colleges and universities.

Throughout the year, ACTA donors have the opportunity to meet with higher education experts such as Selingo. It's just one way we thank those who make all of our work possible. ●



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

Trinity College Alumni Fight for Free Association

Kudos to Trinity College Alumni, who are fighting to protect free association at their alma mater. Trinity, the Connecticut “little ivy” and feeder school for Wall Street, has been struggling lately. It has acquired a reputation as a party school, its core curriculum receives an “F” in *What Will They Learn?*[™], and it costs nearly \$60,000 per year to attend.

Instead of addressing its problems head-on, president James F. Jones has chosen to blame Trinity’s Greek letter organizations. In a 2011 white paper, he proposed eliminating fraternities and sororities. Most students and alumni did not notice the proposal—but in late 2012 he convinced the board to pass a regulation requiring that all student organizations become co-ed.

The school denies that it intends to end Greek life, but the regulation will have that effect. Most Greek organizations’ national councils are required by their national charters to maintain all-male or all-female membership; including the opposite sex would force them to disaffiliate or disband.

Alumni were rightly angry, and they are fighting back. Trinity alumni have founded Concerned Alumni for a Better Trinity College to coordinate their efforts. Their petition to rescind the coeducation rule has received 4,400 signatures—which represents approximately 20% of Trinity College alumni. Many alumni also withheld donations: the Trinity College Fund’s donor goal for FY 2013 was 12,278 donors, but they received donations from only 7,445 people, nearly 40% short.

Alumni are also pursuing a lawsuit against the school. And in a particularly promising development, they have founded an organization called the Foundation for Student Freedom of Association (studentfreedom.org) to fight for students’ rights at Trinity and across the nation. As the group’s website notes, 97% of colleges and universities restrict students’ rights to free association. With luck they will win their fight at Trinity and go on to fight for students’ rights nationwide.

Concerned Alumni for a Better Trinity College is an excellent example of engaged alumni using their minds—not just their pocketbooks—to improve their alma mater. If you’re a Trinity alum and want to join the fight, visit www.savetrinity.org. And if you want to start an active alumni group at your school, we can help: write to ACTA at info@goacta.org. ●

ACTA Says Goodbye to Longtime Board Member

ACTA congratulates Lee Goodman, one of our longest serving and most dedicated board members, on his recent appointment to the Federal Election Commission! Mr. Goodman is superbly suited to his new position, and we are certain he will serve his country with great distinction.

Sadly, this new and exciting chapter in Mr. Goodman’s life means he must resign from service on our Board of Directors, and it is with a heavy heart that ACTA accepts his resignation.

Mr. Goodman has worked with ACTA since he served on the Virginia governor’s staff over a decade ago. He joined our board in 2004, and he has played a big part in bringing ACTA’s ideas into the mainstream of higher education policy.

Though Mr. Goodman’s departure is surely ACTA’s loss, it is the country’s gain. We thank Mr. Goodman for his great service and wish him the best of luck! ●



Lee Goodman, with his wife Paige, is sworn into the Federal Election Commission.



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**Best wishes for a joyous holiday season and
and a New Year full of possibilities.**

With sincere thanks for your support,
American Council of Trustees and Alumni

