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WhatWillTheyLearn.com Expands to Over 700 Schools

When it comes to figuring out whether universities are making sure students learn what they need to know, it's clear: the traditional college rankings, with their excessive focus on reputation, are not the place to go.

That's why we launched WhatWillTheyLearn.com last year and why—in response to enthusiastic feedback from parents, students, guidance counselors and trustees—we expanded the number of schools to more than 700

this year. Our one-of-a-kind, college-guide website now grades leading public and private institutions in all 50 states based on the strength and coherence of their curricula.

Since we unveiled the updated and expanded site at the National Press Club a little

over a month ago, more than 85,000 people have visited WhatWillTheyLearn.com. *The Washington Post's* Kathleen Parker gave a ringing endorsement to the initiative in her nationally-syndicated column, paving the

way for a flurry of media coverage (see page 4).

Schools that received high marks, like Texas A&M and Midwestern State, issued press releases touting their accomplishment. Frank E. Laughon, a trustee at Randolph-Macon College in

Virginia, informed us that “ACTA is a large driving force” in the institution's initiative to support excellence.

Attention is welcome as our overall findings reveal that colleges and universities have on the whole abdicated their responsi-

(continued on 3)



NBC correspondent Kristen Dahlgren reports on WhatWillTheyLearn.com rankings of L.A. schools. Similar broadcasts aired in major markets across the country.

Register by Oct. 4 for ATHENA Roundtable!

Join us for the ATHENA Roundtable on **November 4-5** at The Union League in Philadelphia for a day of stimulating conversation on “The Purposeful University.” Other events include a tour of Independence Hall, a special wine tasting for Society members, and presentation of the Philip Merrill Award to Benno Schmidt. Register online at www.goacta.org or call us at 202-467-6787.

www.goacta.org

info@goacta.org

1-888-ALUMNI-8

Jim Van Houten, Trustee
Minnesota State Colleges & University System
St. Paul, MN

“I wanted to express my appreciation for ACTA’s efforts to lead the charge in terms of helping trustees and regents to remember that they are first and foremost fiduciaries for those outside—the owners—of higher ed colleges and systems. Your independent and objective evaluations make it possible for governing boards to push back against the often strong bargaining power of administrators and faculty. Although well intended, these folks often forget for whom the systems were created, and therefore, to whom they are accountable. There are other organizations, but they seem to be run and managed by university staffs rather than governing boards. Also well intended, they have often lost sight of for whom higher ed exists. Congratulations again for ACTA’s efforts to lead us all back from the darkness.”

William L. Armstrong, President
Colorado Christian University
Lakewood, CO

“It was really a thrill to see ACTA’s ‘What Will Any Learn’ rankings. Seeing CCU recognized in this way is a huge boost to the morale of our faculty, staff, trustees, students and parents. Many, many thanks, not only for speaking well of CCU, but for all you do to get higher education back on track.”

Fred Bosley
Fair Oaks, CA

“As a step-grandfather, with no children of my own, I have not dealt with college selection issues since my personal experiences 40 years ago. I appreciate your organization’s approach regarding the benefits of a well-rounded college education. It is an important contrast to the other college rankings which appear to be based more on historical reputations than objective reviews of what is actually being taught. I am helping my step-son begin research colleges for his 14-year-old daughter; I will inject a bit of your organization’s ‘well-rounded’ perspective into the process. Good luck with your work.”

William A. Rooney
Schaumburg, IL

“Received the reprint of your letter to the editor of the New York *Daily News* [“Blame adults for the party school epidemic”]. Would like you to know that your letter was singularly well written and very much to the point ... Facts with the numbers to support them are seldom put together with the effectiveness that is contained in your letter.”

Editor’s Note: The ACTA op-ed ran in the New York Daily News in May (see page 11). It is available on www.goacta.org.

ACTA’s on Facebook!

ACTA has entered the world of social media with the launch of our Facebook fan page. Any page is accessible to everyone, making it a quick and easy way to share with friends how ACTA is making a difference in higher education.

On our page, you’ll find the latest news about our efforts to improve the quality of education at colleges and universities, links to recent media coverage, information about upcoming events, pictures of past events, and anything else that catches our attention.

For example, you can learn about our recent presentation to the trustees of Indiana’s public universities, find out which college football conference outranked all others in the classroom, and decide which headline you prefer for Kathleen Parker’s column about WhatWillAnyLearn.com.

To become a fan, just go to www.facebook.com/goacta and click on the “Like” button at the top of the page. After you’ve clicked “Like,” click the “Suggest to Friends” link on the left side of the page to invite your Facebook friends to join you.

We hope you’ll become a part of ACTA’s Facebook community as we shake up higher ed. ●



Want Fries With That?

Contrary to what certain higher ed pundits would have you believe, high academic standards and rigorous requirements are key to keeping students in school and improving graduation rates.

So argued ACTA president Anne Neal at an Educational Policy Institute conference on student success.

“Studies show that students are less likely to drop out if they are integrated into college through shared academic experiences,” Neal said. “There is likewise a growing consensus that undergraduates need strong, well-defined core curricula, that the prevailing ‘cafeteria-style’ approach to general requirements does students a profound disservice by privileging diletantism and choice over guided, structured learning.”

Speaking at a panel entitled “Want Fries With That?: Making Retention Meaningful,” Neal noted that most schools do not realize that a strong core curriculum not only provides the shared, sustaining academic experiences so necessary to student retention, but also offers an exceptional opportunity to improve undergraduate learning outcomes.

In her remarks, she drew attention to two innovative new programs: the residential first-year liberal arts program at the Catholic University of America and CUNY’s community college experiment, where a strong first-year core curriculum is part of a comprehensive effort to improve student retention and success. Catholic is a small, private, four-year institution; CUNY is a large, dispersed, urban, public system. Catholic and CUNY students are quite different in terms of their backgrounds and their academic needs, yet both schools envision a core curriculum as a staple of student success.

“As students perceive themselves to be progressing through a coherent, structured course of study, they will recognize the value of their education and stay in school,” Neal noted. ●

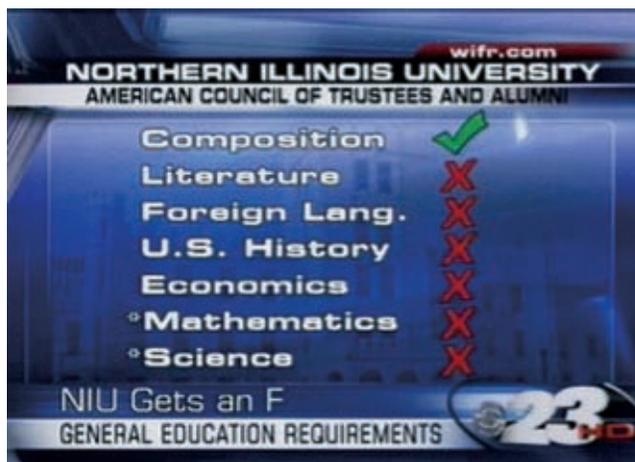
What Will They Learn, *continued from 1*

bility to direct students to the most important subjects they will need for success after graduation.

“The crisis in higher education is about more than money—it’s about what we are paying for,” said ACTA president Anne D. Neal at the official launch. “And when it comes to ensuring graduates possess the basic skills and knowledge they need to succeed, universities are shortchanging students.”

On WhatWillTheyLearn.com, each institution is assigned a grade from “A” to “F” based on how many of the following seven core subjects it requires: Composition, Mathematics, Science, Economics, Foreign Language, Literature, and U.S. Government or History. Among the key findings:

- Only 16 schools in the nation earned a grade of “A” for requiring six or more of the seven subjects.



CBS affiliate in Rockford, Illinois airs a story on how local universities fare on WhatWillTheyLearn.com.

- More than 60% of all institutions received a “C” or worse for requiring three or fewer subjects.

- Nearly 40% don’t require college-level mathematics.

- Less than 5% require economics.

- Less than a third require intermediate-level foreign language, a survey course in U.S. government or history, or literature.

- Average tuition at the more than 100 “F” schools is \$28,200. At the 16 “A” schools, it’s \$13,200.

- Public institutions are doing a relatively better job of ensuring students graduate with some of the basic skills and knowledge they need than private institutions: More than half (52%) of all privates receive a “D” or an “F” for requiring two or fewer subjects, while a little under half (44%) of all publics receive a “B” or better for requiring four or more subjects.

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WhatWillTheyLearn.com Makes National Headlines

2010 is shaping up to be ACTA's best media year ever—in large part due to the excellent coverage received by the expansion of WhatWillTheyLearn.com. *The Washington Post's* Kathleen Parker, one of the most widely syndicated columnists in the country and the winner of the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Commentary, led the way with a ringing endorsement. Her column ran in nearly 200 newspapers across the country, nearly two dozen of which have a circulation above 100,000. Dozens of other newspapers also carried stories about ACTA's alternative to traditional rankings.

On August 16, WhatWillTheyLearn.com was featured on National Public Radio's "Morning Edition," which is carried by more than 660 NPR stations across the United States and around the globe. Nearly 14 million listeners heard ACTA president Anne Neal contend that college students "deserve more than a do-it-yourself kit for \$30-, \$40-, \$50,000 a year." Later that week, Ms. Neal appeared on WNPR-Connecticut Public Radio's "Where We Live" to discuss the importance of a coherent and rigorous core.

ACTA also made its presence felt on television. NBC correspondent Kristen Dahlgren presented the grades for local schools in several major media markets. All in all, stories about "What Will They Learn?" ran on some 40 different television programs.

And lastly, but no less importantly, the website also made a splash on the web. WhatWillTheyLearn.com was discussed alongside the *U.S. News & World Report* and *Forbes* college rankings on *The Huffington Post*, the number-one ranked blog on the internet.

The media attention continues, but here's a sampling:

Kathleen Parker, *The Washington Post*, August 15, 2010
"Colleges come up short on what students need to know"

At a time when the cost of higher education is increasingly prohibitive—and emphasis tends to focus on status—students and parents can find solace in the possibility that a better education can be found in one's own back yard... the study and Web site do fill a gap so that parents and students can make better choices. As a consequence, colleges and universities may be forced to examine their own responsibility in molding an educated, well-informed citizenry.

Michael Barone, *Washington Examiner*, September 5, 2010
"Higher education bubble poised to burst"

ACTA reports that most schools don't require a foreign language, hardly any require economics, American history and government "are badly neglected," and schools "have much to do" on math and science. ACTA's whatwilltheylearn.com website provides the grisly details for each school, together with the cost of tuition. Students and parents can see if they will get their money's worth.

Jay Mathews, *The Washington Post*, August 16, 2010
"A's for public universities, F's for privates"

American Council researchers have read all of the impressive university Web sites that promise students will be required to take a core of subjects that introduce them to the wisdom of all or most of those disciplines. But then the researchers look at the course lists and discover you can get the required lit credit for a seminar on comic books and the required science credit for a tour of Boston harbor.

Morning Edition on National Public Radio, August 16, 2010
"Some colleges fail in general education"

It's a big week for colleges and universities all across the country. *U.S. News & World Report* publishes its annual rankings tomorrow. Meanwhile, a different sort of scorecard is out today. And the results might surprise you. Harvard got a D. Yale and Brown flunked. ... The American Council of Trustees and Alumni graded more than 700 colleges and universities according to the courses they require outside a student's major. More than half of private colleges got a D or F for requiring two subjects or fewer.

Justin Snider, *The Huffington Post*, August 18, 2010
"Colleges That Graduate Students Deep in Debt"

The "What Will They Learn?" rankings, a project of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), gives Yale, Williams, Amherst and Swarthmore each an F for requiring students to take one or zero courses in its favored subject-areas (composition, literature, foreign language, U.S. government or history, economics, mathematics, and natural or physical science). Princeton escaped with a C for requiring three courses in these seven areas, while Harvard squeaked by with a D (requiring two of the seven).

What Counts as College-Level Math?

It really depends on which university you choose to attend. At some institutions, nothing below Calculus will get you off the hook for your math requirement. Others, however, have taken a more expansive view of the subject. At Radford University, for example, “Math and Humanity” fulfills the math requirement. At Cal State-Fresno, you can take a class called “What is Mathematics?” At the University of Colorado-Boulder, “Mathematics from the Visual Arts” will do the trick.

One of the most difficult aspects of assessing gen ed requirements for the expansion of WhatWillTheyLearn.com was to determine what exactly should count as a college-level course in mathematics.

On July 21, ACTA invited three distinguished mathematicians to answer this very question. Dr. George Andrews, Evan Pugh Professor of Mathematics at Penn State University, Dr. Sidney Gulick,



Drs. George Andrews, Sidney Gulick, and James Sellers study college catalogs.

Professor of Mathematics at the University of Maryland, and Dr. James Sellers, Director of Undergraduate Mathematics at Penn State University, met with ACTA policy director Dr. Michael Poliakoff and the rest of the “What Will They Learn?” team.

The professors read course descriptions, scanned syllabi, even reviewed

assignments given to students in the classes—all in an effort to determine which courses were true college-level math classes and which were not.

Their advice was of great value to our research team and helped ACTA establish clear guidelines for evaluating math curricula. ●

What Will They Learn, *continued from 3*

Part of the reason students are being permitted to graduate with such important gaps in their knowledge is that distribution requirements have replaced the idea of a coherent core curriculum at so many colleges and universities. Instead of specifying which particular classes students must take, these institutions allow students to pick and choose from a list of courses that fall under a common rubric.

At the University of Illinois, for example, students can choose from nearly 200 courses to satisfy the Western/Comparative Culture requirement. Under this scheme, “Introduction to Popular TV and Movies” is on equal footing with “U.S. History to 1877.” Similarly, the University of Florida offers over 500 classes for its Humanities requirement, including “Gardens of the World” and “Philosophy and History of Recreation.” The University of Rhode Island allows “Floral Art” and 36 other classes to satisfy its Natural Sciences requirement, and Emory University permits students to choose from almost 600 different classes to fulfill its History, Society, Cultures requirement, including “Gynecology in the Ancient World.”

As former Harvard College Dean Harry R. Lewis explains on the website: “The venerable and honorable notion of ‘general education’ has, in other words, been reduced to a game. Students have to work their way through a vast menu of general education requirements, and do their best to find courses that fit the various categories as well as their schedules.”

Looking ahead to the coming months, we will be notifying guidance counselors that the website has been expanded, encouraging trustees to examine general education standards at their institutions, and, of course, continuing to add schools to the website to give more parents and students the type of important information about college that they just can’t get anywhere else. ●

Case closed?

Posted by David Azerrad on August 3, 2010

While the University of Illinois's decision to reinstate Professor Kenneth Howell—who had summarily been dismissed after a student anonymously complained about an email he had sent—marks a step in the right direction, the university still has a long way to go to ensure the intellectual climate on campus is open to the free exchange of ideas. As we noted in a letter to the University of Illinois Board of Trustees, sent before the reinstatement had been announced: “the decision to terminate Professor Howell’s employment marks the latest in a series of disturbing episodes in which UIUC [University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign] administrators have demonstrated a disregard for free speech and intellectual diversity.” ACTA’s recommendation that the board “undertake a systematic review of university policies and practices regarding free inquiry, free speech and academic freedom” still stands.

For students to aim high, colleges must set the standards

Posted by Eric Markley on July 22, 2010

At the first-ever meeting of state education executives from both the K-12 and Higher Education sectors, the decay of the core curriculum was the elephant in the room. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reports that higher education leaders complained, as they often do, that the K-12 system does not produce enough graduates ready to do college-level work. The reality is, however, that most colleges themselves fail to define what “college-level” learning is. When asked what it means to be a college graduate, higher education offers fine rhetoric, but few facts and seldom a clear answer. The K-12 system can’t be blamed for missing the target when higher education refuses to set one. When colleges lower their standards, they take away one of the main motivations for students to excel in high school in the first place. If colleges and universities were to make it clear that incoming students will be required to do serious work in the core subjects and articulate those standards, they would likely find a willing partner in the K-12 system.

ACTA Offers Alternative to Tuition Hikes



Across the country, colleges and universities are feeling the pinch: endowments have tumbled, donations are down, and states’ appropriations have been drastically reduced. The standard response at most institutions has been to raise tuition.

But tuition costs have more than quadrupled over the past 30 years. There are now some 50 institutions in the country that charge \$50,000 or more year in tuition, fees, room, and board. Surely there must be another solution.

ACTA offers one with its latest trustee guide that tells boards that reflexive tuition increases are no longer tenable and that they must learn to do more with less by cutting costs. Written by ACTA policy director Dr. Michael Poliakoff, *Cutting Costs: A Trustee’s Guide to Tough Economic Times* was sent to more than 10,000 trustees at some 600 colleges and universities across the country.

Robert L. McDowell, a former member of the Virginia Military Institute Board of Governors endorsed the report in a letter to trustees: “Based on my experience, I simply don’t believe the cost increases we have been seeing in colleges and universities are sustainable. ... If trustees don’t take on this issue, who will?”

Cutting Costs encourages trustees to review their institutions’ financial information and work with administrators to cut

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Effective TRUSTEESHIP



Regents Making a Difference in Tennessee

One of WhatWillA^{ey}Learn.com's key findings is that a famous name and high tuition do not guarantee a commitment to a solid core curriculum. Another is that trustees can make a difference in ensuring a good curriculum at the schools they oversee. Both of those facts are on display in Tennessee.

Vanderbilt is the state's big-name, big-money institution, enjoying a stellar reputation and attracting outstanding students from across the country. Alas, its students can avoid many important subjects once they arrive on campus: A^{ey} don't have to take a math class if they don't want to; they aren't expected to take a foreign language beyond what they had in high school; and staples of higher education such as history and literature surveys are replaced by "distribution requirements" that allow students to select any class they like from a very long list.

Less than two miles away from Vanderbilt is Tennessee State University. TSU is an unheralded, historically black state school, whose students' SAT scores are well below those at Vanderbilt. Yet it is Tennessee State, not Vanderbilt, that requires its students to study a foreign language beyond the elementary level. It is Tennessee State, not Vanderbilt, that

requires a college-level math class of all students, as well as survey classes in literature and U.S. history. And, it is Tennessee State, not Vanderbilt, that receives an "A" grade in our report.

Credit goes to the Tennessee State faculty and administration for holding their students to high standards. A big assist, though, goes to the state's Board of Regents. A^{ey} board created core curriculum standards that apply to all of the schools they govern. A^{ey} result: the five Board of Regents schools (TSU, East Tennessee, Middle Tennessee, Memphis and Austin Peay) earn two "A"s and three "B"s. Of the seven requirements ACTA looked for in the study, these schools required an average of 5.4, compared to 3.3 at Tennessee's other institutions.

Furthermore, since the Board of Regents requires a similar general education core at the 13 community colleges it oversees, it has streamlined transfers between the system's two- and four- year schools. Effective, efficient core curricula improve educational quality while lowering cost of instruction. A^{ey} basic general education core that every student needs can be delivered much more cost effectively than the array of boutique courses so often offered in lieu of a well-defined core.



WHAT will
they LEARN?

As Charles Manning, chancellor of the Tennessee Board of Regents system, explained: "I have worked hard, along with my colleagues, to ensure every graduate of our universities receives a solid general education. A strong core curriculum has been important in every generation, but in today's environment of global competition, it has never been more vital."

As the ACTA staff worked through the catalogs and supporting materials of 714 colleges and universities, we sometimes asked ourselves, "where are the adults?" In some cases, catalogs boasted that there were no required courses, thus leaving undergraduates without the structure most of them need to ensure a thorough college education. A^{ey} Tennessee Board of Regents and its chancellor and the faculties of the five regents universities deserve much credit for their leadership in higher education. ●

Cutting Costs, *continued from 6*

costs. It outlines ten areas that trustees should look into to reduce expenses, from expanding distance education, trimming capital expansion and administrative costs, to partnering with other institutions—including community colleges—to accomplish shared goals. A^{ey} guide also provides examples of creative ideas that have been implemented across the country.

"It takes no courage or foresight to raise tuition," said ACTA president Anne D. Neal. "Now is the time for trustees to take a hard look at their institution's finances and identify some real cost-saving opportunities." ●

Jody Wolfe Joins the Board

It is with great pleasure that ACTA's Board of directors welcomes its newest member: **Jody Wolfe**.

Retired after nearly 25 years in professional law enforcement, Ms. Wolfe has served on a number of non-profit boards in New York and Miami with a range of interests, including child welfare, foster care review, substance abuse prevention, independent school education, and the arts.

Ms. Wolfe is the daughter of the late Joseph Mailman and now serves as president of the Mailman Foundation. In that role, she helped direct a \$33 million grant

to the Columbia School of Public Health. The Foundation has also been an important benefactor to institutions such as the Mailman Research Center in Psychobiology at Harvard's McLean Hospital in Massachusetts; the Mailman Center for Child Development of the University of Miami Medical School, Miami, Florida; and the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City.

"Jody has been a supporter of ACTA's from its creation, and her energy will be an invaluable addition," said ACTA board chairman Robert Lewit. ●



15 and Going Strong



New staff members Brianna Edelblut, Lynn Gibson, and Jose Herrera.

Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation's Associate Program. He played college baseball at the University of Toronto and earned a B.A. in economics from George Mason University. He is a managing partner with Leadership Team Development and a former research associate at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Brianna Edelblut is assistant to the president, providing key support on a range of projects. She also works with the program director on donor relations and the vice president on special projects and events, including this fall's ATHENA Roundtable. She earned a B.A. in literature from Patrick Henry College, and participates in the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation's Associate Program. ●

ACTA's 15th year has been one of tremendous growth. Not only did we expand the board and enlarge our office space, but we also added several new employees to the staff.

Lynn Gibson is ACTA's new program director and heads up our development efforts. She brings over 15 years of experience in public policy, higher education, and philanthropy. Before joining ACTA, she served as director of community relations at the Philanthropy Roundtable and as a special assistant and public liaison with the U.S. Department of Labor. She spent the fall of 2009 at the Maxim Institute in Auckland, New Zealand working on a project addressing welfare reform in that country. Ms. Gibson holds a B.S. in biology from Grove City College and an M.A. in higher education administration from Slippery Rock University.

Jose Herrera assists with ACTA's media outreach as well as other projects, and participates in the

In Memoriam: David Wolper



Lovers of history and America have lost a great friend, David Wolper, who produced *Roots*, *The Thorn Birds*, and other remarkable films. What he has also left behind is a remarkable legacy of professional and voluntary achievements that offer a model for all of us. It is just barely a year ago that Mr. Wolper wrote a letter for ACTA that was sent to our more than 7,000 trustees. He was deeply disturbed about historical illiteracy and its troubling consequences for a nation that relies on an educated citizenry. In his honor and to press his point, ACTA is pleased to reprint here an excerpt from his letter of July 4, 2009. It highlights, so well, Mr. Wolper's energy, passion and love of country. All of us at ACTA are saddened by his loss, but uplifted by his example.

“... As someone with a lifelong interest in American history and a deep and abiding love for my country, I naturally want to see the next generation grow up with the same

knowledge and appreciation I have. That is why I became involved with the American Council of Trustees and Alumni—and why I am writing to you this Independence Day. Throughout my career in movies and television, I have produced programs dealing with themes in American history—*Roots*, *North and South*, *Sandburg's Lincoln* and *The Making of the President*, to name a few. I also served as the chairman of the committee overseeing America's bicentennial. So imagine my disappointment when I asked my college-aged children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews some basic questions about American history—none of them were able to answer correctly. ... It is Fourth of July, most of our fellow citizens will be spending the day attending parades and celebrating with family and friends. But will they understand just what it is they are celebrating? Do the students at your institution understand? I urge you to make this Independence Day an occasion to see whether your college is ensuring that its graduates understand what the fireworks are all about. ...”

Meet ACTA's Summer Interns

The generous donations of ACTA's supporters once again made it possible for us to hire a strong corps of interns for the summer of 2010. The interns contributed key writing and research and were instrumental in the expansion of our “What Will They Learn?” project.

As part of their internship, they attended a series of summer seminars with important figures in higher education, and also got the opportunity to take a guided tour of the Capitol dome. They brought energy and enthusiasm to their work and left with valuable experience for their careers.

The summer 2010 interns were: **Ed Golden**, a senior at Boston College majoring in history; **Jeffrey Killion**, a junior at Vanderbilt studying economics and political science, who offered a student's perspective at the “What Will They Learn?” press conference on the need for a comprehensive core; **Charlie Sharzer**, a junior at Yale majoring in both astrophysics and music composition; and **Kathy Tucker**, a senior at the University of Florida studying psychology.

Our thanks to all of them for a job very well done.



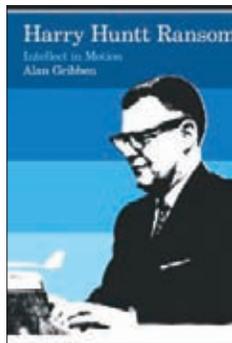
Summer interns Charlie Sharzer and Jeffrey Killion (front row); Kathy Tucker and Ed Golden.

ACTA's friends and supporters believe in a rich liberal arts education. And it's no wonder: they have clearly benefitted from one! Outlined below are books written by members of our donor societies and other special friends which explore a rich range of topics via biography, history, and comedy. Bravo!



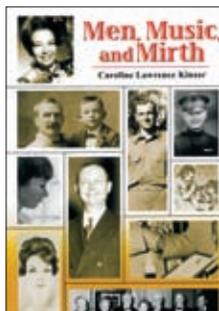
GS-14
by Jason Ford

In this delicious comedy, a fed-up government manager does the unthinkable: tells the truth, gets the job done, and fires lazy people. He wrestles with employees who are busy taking “three months of classes on why America is evil,” or who insist on confessing to “false consciousness” (“College-speak for ‘I know you are wrong, but I can’t prove it.’”). It is achingly familiar to anyone who has toiled in government bureaucracy or paid taxes to support one. *Premiered at D.C. Fringe Festival.*



Harry Hunt Ransom: Intellect in Motion
by Alan Gribben

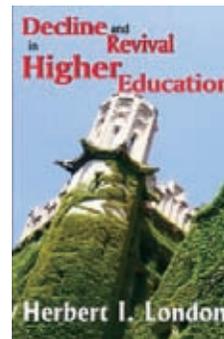
Harry Hunt Ransom was a renowned professor and college administrator, who rose to the office of chancellor during his 36-year career at the University of Texas. Author Alan Gribben offers new insight into what shaped Ransom’s career as a defender of the humanities. Ransom’s tenure included some of the most tumultuous years America’s campuses have ever seen. A biography tells the story of both the life of an individual and higher education, and gives special credit to former ACTA National Council member, Hans Mark, for its inspiration. *University of Texas Press.*



Men, Music and Mirth
by Caroline Lawrence Kinzer

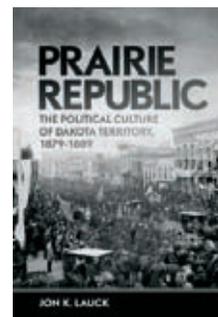
Men, Music and Mirth is part memoir and part commentary. It chronicles the triumphs and tragedies of daily life—including Ms. Kinzer’s time at Marquette Law School where she served as Editor in

Chief of the Law Review—and discusses such issues as teachers’ unions, multiculturalism, moral relativism, and the problem with ed schools. *Available on rosedogbookstore.com.*



Decline and Revival in Higher Education
by Herbert I. London

In this collection of articles, drawn from a quarter-century of public life, Hudson Institute president Herbert London chronicles higher education in a period of dramatic change. He traces the decline of liberal education at America’s universities, but also finds hopeful trends in the oases of traditional programming that serve as a counterweight to campus orthodoxies. London writes not as a disinterested observer, but as one of the most active participants in the struggle. *Available at Amazon.com.*



Prairie Republic: The Political Culture of Dakota Territory, 1879-1889
by Jon K. Lauck

Anyone who’s seen a western knows the old west was full of illiterate and often uncivilized gunfighters and cowboys. Historian John K. Lauck, however, looks past Hollywood and finds an 1880’s Dakota Territory with less illiteracy than any state in New England, and one in which settlers were passionately engaged in the task of creating republican self-government in the wilderness. Lauck examines how Dakotans created a civil society from scratch—based on the foundations of family, church, and fraternal organizations—and considers how that civil society is holding up in the 21st century. *Available at Amazon.com.* ●

Blame adults for the party school epidemic: Playboy list scratches the surface of a broad problem

David Azerrad, *New York Daily News*
May 21, 2010

“Where would someone who wants to live the Playboy lifestyle want to go to school?”

That’s the question Playboy asked in compiling its recently released rankings of the 2010 Top Party Schools. Yes, Playboy is now offering college advice.

The men’s magazine narrowed the list down to 10 (sorry, New York, none of your institutions of higher education are among them). It is however hard to see how such a short list does justice to just how widespread the Playboy lifestyle—booze-soaked parties, three-day weekends and easy hook-ups—has become.

That American college students party—that is, get hammered—is of course

well-known. What people don’t realize is that rampant binge drinking is not a self-contained problem. Only because our colleges and universities are increasingly abandoning their educational mission is the party culture thriving.

College tax credit shouldn’t require community service

Anne D. Neal, *Washington Examiner*
July 15, 2010

Who could be opposed to community service? Don’t we need to volunteer, get outside ourselves, and do something nice for others? Our country, after all, has a great tradition of volunteerism—what Tocqueville called our “spirit of association.”

That’s the thinking behind the Treasury and Education departments’ current study of the feasibility of making community service mandatory for anyone

who wants to receive a tax credit for college tuition.

Their study responds to a congressional mandate in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, commonly known as the stimulus bill. Given our history, the federal government’s interest in college students doing community service might seem like great news. But is it?

By definition, volunteerism is just that: voluntary. You volunteer—no one makes you do it.

It would seem reason enough to object to such a mandate. But there is a bigger issue at stake. A college education is about education. It’s about cultivating a love of learning in students and giving them the skills and knowledge they need to become informed citizens and effective workers. It is most emphatically not about having the government dictate how students spend their time and live their lives.



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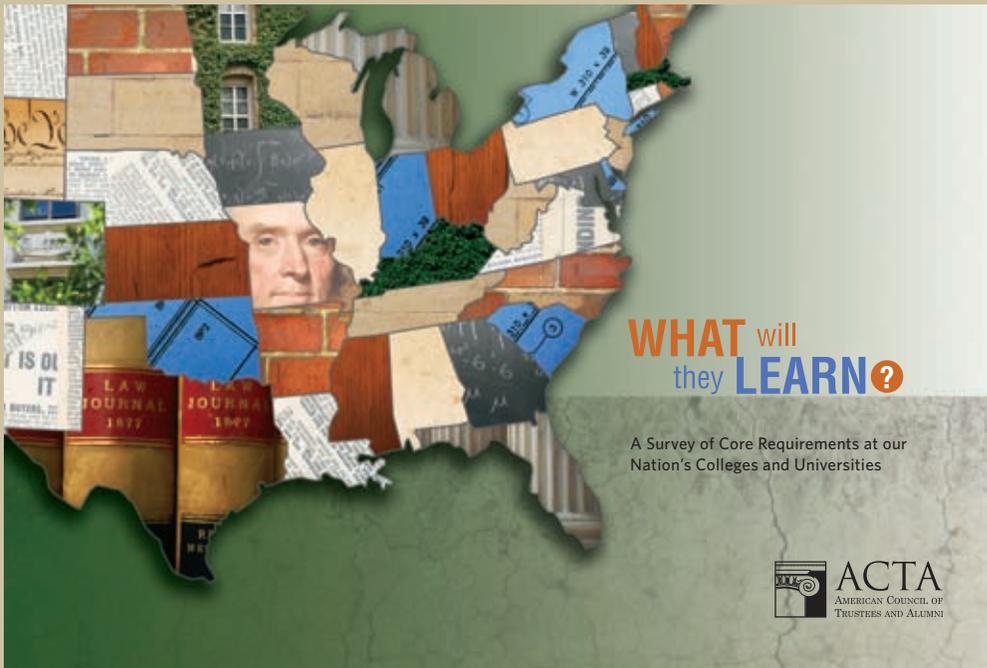


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“The study and Web site fill a gap so that parents and students can make better choices. As a consequence, colleges and universities may be forced to examine their own responsibility in molding an educated, well-informed citizenry.”

- Pulitzer-winning columnist
Kathleen Parker, *Washington Post*
August 16, 2010

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