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## “What will they learn?” Project Makes a Splash

By David Azerrad, Program Officer

Three months ago, ACTA unveiled a new college guide website that, unlike all the other rankings, grades universities on education and not reputation. WhatWillTheyLearn.com assigns each institution a grade ranging 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.

Launched at the National Press Club, WhatWillTheyLearn.com has since attracted more than 40,000 visitors, in part due to a full-page ad on the inside cover of the 2010 *U.S. News & World Report* “College Rankings” issue. The website has also garnered national media attention, as we briefly outlined in the previous issue of *Inside Academe*.

Stories about ACTA’s new college guide have appeared in more than 160 different newspapers across the country with an estimated total readership of 20 million. Most notably, ACTA’s initiative was praised in two separate *Wall Street Journal* columns, featured in the *Daily News* (New York),

the *Houston Chronicle*, *Investor’s Business Daily*, and picked up by the Associated Press. ACTA’s focus on education and our arguments for a rigorous and



coherent curriculum have been discussed on CNN, Fox Business News, and numerous local television and radio stations as well as Voice of America, which broadcasts across the world.

The website also made a splash on the blogosphere, with endorsements by *The*

(continued on 3)

## Coming Soon...

A new book sponsored by the Gates Foundation on increasing accountability in higher education will include a chapter by ACTA president Anne D. Neal. See page 5 for details.

www.goacta.org

info@goacta.org

1-888-ALUMNI-8

## Trustees

**Dennis DeConcini, Member  
Arizona Board of Regents  
Tucson, AZ**

“Thank you for the copy of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni’s *What will they learn?* I’ve had an opportunity to review this study and can appreciate the information contained therein. I found the trustee’s guide [*Restoring a Core*] is helpful as well. The Arizona Board of Regents will indeed be using some of the material you have enclosed.”

## Students

**Bryan A. Shay, High School Student**

“Firstly, I would like to express my deepest thanks for publishing a report (*What will they learn?*) that genuinely has the well being of students and parents close at hand. As a freshman student currently considering the wide range of schools that I may attend in the near future, this report is invaluable to making a wise and meaningful decision. Your bold and honest criticism of the program requirements, or lack thereof, at many institutions is a breath of fresh air, especially of the exorbitant A-list schools hiding behind an all too often unchallenged reputation. Again my deepest thanks....”

**Neal Bansal, Student  
California Institute of Technology**

“I applaud your efforts to hold colleges accountable for the education that they provide, especially with the publication of *What will they learn?* As a college student, I have long been disappointed by the low educational standards (that continue to become watered down) set by this nation’s top universities. I hope that *What will they learn?* can be a catalyst for change and uniformly raising standards at the university level....”

## The Public

**Gordon Williams  
Greensboro, NC**

“I absolutely love your website.... Too many kids are not getting the well rounded knowledge they need to be successful as entrepreneurs and workers in American business. I’m particularly pleased that you place such a high emphasis on American History.... The criteria used in [other popular rankings] in my opinion are extremely nebulous. I like the way your rankings are so specific and very easy to understand. Keep up the good work!”

**Ned McCune  
Costa Mesa, CA**

“There is a crying need for the ACTA college guide. The *U.S. News & World Report* guide reduces all colleges to a peerage ranking, as if all that matters is how impressed people will be when you tell them where you graduated.... Your guide holds great promise for advancing all your other goals in American higher education.”

## Professors

**David Crump, John B. Neibel Professor of Law  
University of Houston  
Houston, TX**

“Thanks for your ratings. I hope they become better known. The *U.S. News* ratings are misleading, and your system is geared much more closely to what prospective students really should consider in choosing an education.”

**Kenneth Chastain, Professor Emeritus  
University of Virginia  
Charlottesville, VA**

“Thank you for your report *What will they learn?*... May it serve as a catalyst to inspire fundamental changes in graduation requirements in our nation’s colleges and universities. In the ‘90s I chaired the Committee to Review the Area Requirements at the University of Virginia. The committee members quickly discovered that our ‘area requirements’ were in effect ‘area electives,’ which permitted students to slip through a path of least resistance without obtaining a basic liberal arts education.... In the committee’s report, the members recommended a required introduction to the basic areas of knowledge. As you may anticipate, the report was overwhelmingly rejected by the A&S faculty, who preferred to vote for their favorite course rather than the students’ general education.”

## Others

**Deedie Dowdle, Spokeswoman  
Auburn University  
Auburn, AL**

“Studies such as this one are helpful in our review and efforts to improve.”

**Marc Scheer, Author  
*No Sucker Left Behind*  
New York, NY**

“This could be the best new education website of the year, just because it forces people to look at schools in a new way.”

# University Cuts Economics Department During Recession

One of the major findings of ACTA's new report *What will they learn?* is that on the vast majority of campuses—98 out of the 100 in our report—economics is optional. Needless to say, this is odd treatment of a subject that is absolutely critical to a good education—not to mention to informed citizenship. The University of Southern Mississippi, though, is taking the practice of giving short shrift to the “dismal science” to new heights. According to *Inside Higher Ed*, Southern Miss is cutting its economics department as part of a plan to reduce university spending. Southern Miss apparently based the decision on low student interest, as indicated by fewer than five graduates per year—the least of any department.

As one professor put it, “I’m just sort of baffled. It seems to me similar to not having an English Department or a biology department. Here we are in the worst economic mess in 70 years, and to not give our students a chance to understand their own personal economic situation—their finances—and understand what some of the remedies are that are being talked about by the president and Congress and state legislators, I think is a shame.”

Of course, it is important for universities to be as efficient as possible. But nixing a resort-like student center and shuttering the economics department are two very different things. This move at Southern Miss strikes us less as cost-conscious than—as the professor put it—baffling. ●

## What will they learn?, continued from 1

*Washington Post's* education columnist Jay Mathews, *USA Today's* higher education reporter Mary Beth Marklein, and *The New York Times's* Stanley Fish.

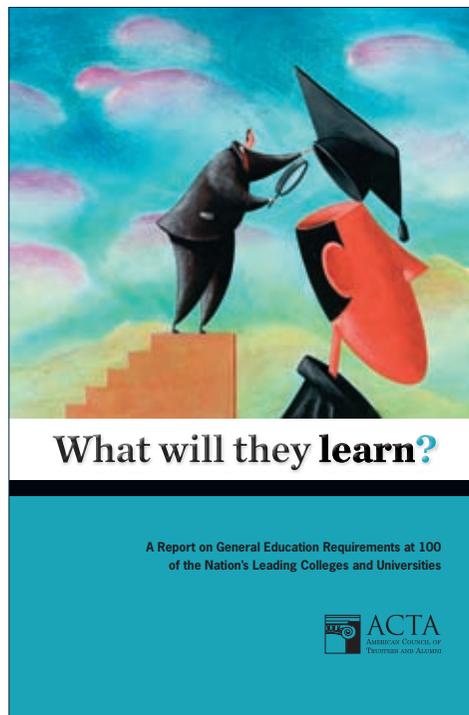
Since the launch, we have already received 53 requests from students, administrators, and professors to add their universities to the website. So far, we have added ten, bringing the total number of schools to 137. Together these universities educate some 2 million students.

Alongside the website, ACTA also published a report on general education at 100 leading colleges and universities, as well as a trustee guide on implementing more rigorous core requirements. Both were sent to the 10,000 trustees in ACTA's database.

The printed report, also entitled *What will they learn?*, concludes that many of our leading universities have essentially abdicated their responsibility to direct their students to the most important subjects. While 42 institutions receive a “D” or an “F” for requiring two or fewer subjects, only five receive an “A” for requiring six subjects: Brooklyn College, Texas A&M, the University of Texas at Austin,

the University of Arkansas, and West Point. No institution requires all seven.

One of the most interesting findings in the report is that there is an almost in-



verse correlation between tuition charged and the strength of the core curriculum. The average tuition at the 11 schools that require no subjects is \$37,700. At the five schools that get an “A”, it's \$5,400.

Along the same lines, state flagship universities do a markedly better job with general education (average grade of “C”) than the top liberal arts colleges and national universities (with an “F” average) while charging much lower tuition and fees.

In light of ACTA's previous work on historical and economic illiteracy, we were not surprised to find, sadly, that only two out of the 100 universities require economics (University of Alaska at Fairbanks and West Point), and only 11 require U.S. government or history. On Constitution Day, several newspapers noted the latter and called on universities to get their act together. The *Sunday Telegraph* in New Hampshire entitled its editorial “Constitution depends on an educated citizenry.”

We couldn't agree more. In the coming months, we will be adding schools to the website and bringing it to the attention of tens of thousands of high-school guidance counselors—one more way to give parents and students the type of important information about college that they just can't get anywhere else. ●

## Report Card Uncovers Challenges (and Opportunities) in Illinois

Throughout the summer, the University of Illinois was embroiled in a scandal over a shadow admissions process that allowed politically well-connected students to circumvent the university's normal system. A review commission appointed by Governor Pat Quinn eventually determined that trustees and senior administrators had exercised inappropriate influence over the admissions process. Since then, six trustees, the university system president, and the Urbana-Champaign campus chancellor have all resigned.

Needless to say, then, when ACTA released—on October 29—a brand-new state higher education report card on Illinois, at the State Capitol, many minds in the Land of Lincoln had already been thinking about accountability issues. Now they have some excellent data to use in addressing them.

The report—entitled *For the People*—surveys ten public four-year universities that together educate more than 90

percent of the students enrolled at such institutions in Illinois. It offers a Pass or



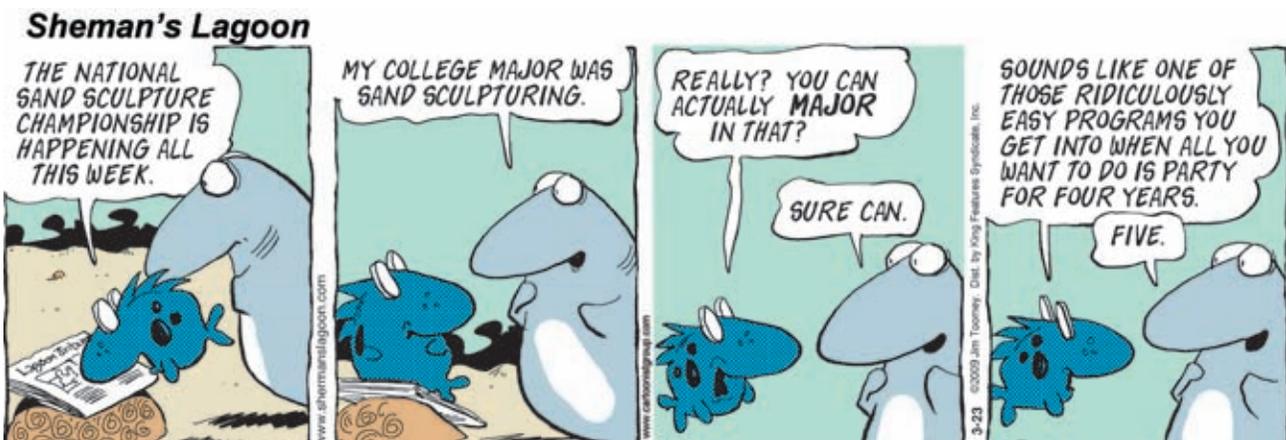
Fail grade in four key areas: what a college education costs, how the universities

are governed, what students are learning, and whether the marketplace of ideas is vibrant.

*For the People* identifies some bright spots within the state. Both the University of Illinois at Chicago and Illinois State University get good grades for their general education requirements, and several universities are praised for keeping administrative spending under control.

On the whole, however, the results are disturbing. Between 2002 and 2007, in-state tuition and fees jumped by an average of 56 percent at the ten institutions surveyed, even after adjusting for inflation. Only one school had a six-year graduation rate above 70 percent. Crucial subjects like economics, U.S. history or government, and college-level math are not required at most universities. And significant numbers of students report an intellectual climate on campus that is not conducive to a robust exchange of ideas.

(continued on 8)



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# Effective TRUSTEESHIP

## UDC Stays the Course

By Heather Lakemacher, Jerry L. Martin Fellow

Since the 1970s, the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) has been a four-year public university with open admissions. However, declining enrollments, poor graduation rates, and financial issues have plagued the university over the past several decades.

During the past year, the board of trustees and president Allen Sessoms have embarked on an ambitious plan to turn UDC around by splitting the university into a community college with open admissions and a four-year university with admissions requirements. In order to implement these changes, the board has also closed underperforming programs, increased teaching loads, and offered early retirement to professors who disagreed with the plans for reform.

Despite the naysayers, the plan seems to be on track. Emily Durso, the former chair of the UDC board, was part of a panel discussion at this year's ATHENA Roundtable and described the opposition that the board faced when they first rolled out the plans for reform. In particular, many students were upset by the board's decision to increase tuition rates to levels comparable to other public universities—while keeping the community college fees low. Ms. Durso explained how board members and

Dr. Sessoms met repeatedly with groups of students in order to explain the new direction for the university, how the tuition increases and admissions standards fit into the plans for reform, and the additional financial aid that would be available for students who had started prior to the tuition increases.

What have been the results? Enrollment at UDC is up by more than 20% this fall, and students have access to a number of new programs designed to prepare them for key professions such as health care. Kudos to UDC's leaders for standing firm, and may they keep at it. ●



Emily Durso, former chair of the University of the District of Columbia board of trustees, speaks at ATHENA Roundtable.

## Coming Soon: Increasing Accountability in Higher Education

By Sandra Diaz, Program Officer

On November 17, ACTA president Anne D. Neal participated in a conference sponsored by the Gates Foundation and held at the American Enterprise Institute. Entitled “Increasing Accountability in Higher Education,” the conference featured a number of high-profile experts presenting papers on a wide range of topics—including the future of technology and student data, higher education entrepreneurship, and the role of international ranking systems. ACTA made its mark by focusing on one of the most crucial aspects of higher education reform: the role of boards of trustees in advancing academic excellence, academic freedom, and accountability.

Neal's paper, “What's Governance Got to Do With It,” will eventually become a chapter of the new book, along with those of the conference's other participants. In addition to ACTA's call for informed and engaged trustees, Education Sector policy director and ACTA friend Kevin Carey calls for reform of our higher education accreditation system. The *Wall Street Journal's* Naomi Schaefer Riley weighs in on academic freedom and tenure—suggesting ways universities can build accountability back into the academic profession. And there are many others.

This timely conference and book address growing concerns of students, parents, and the public about the costs of higher education and the return on their investment. Many thanks to the Gates Foundation for helping ACTA make an important contribution to a very timely discussion! ●

# 2009 ATHENA Roundtable: Getting Back to First Principles

This year's ATHENA Roundtable—ACTA's annual meeting—was a record-setter in terms of attendance and enthusiasm. Conference participants came from across the country—one even from Nevada—to engage the issue: “Getting Back to First Principles.”

The conference started on the afternoon of November 5 with a private tour of Mount Vernon and a special viewing of the exhibit “George Washington & His Generals.” The next morning, participants were welcomed to the Mount Vernon conference facilities by ACTA president **Anne D. Neal** and Mount Vernon executive director **James C. Rees** for a day of speakers and panel discussions.

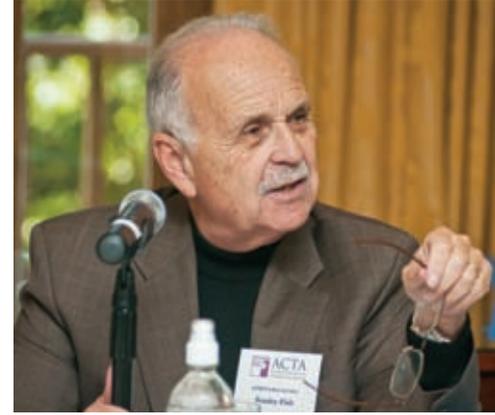
Keynote speaker **Richard Norton Smith**, a first-rate historian who frequently appears on C-SPAN and PBS's *News Hour*, spoke compellingly about never shrinking away from the opportunity to present history as a vibrant story. In particular, he told the stories of two life-long learners—George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. “History,” he said, “does not teach you what to think; it teaches you how to think.”

Following his speech, **Joann DiGennaro**, a trustee of Shimer College, moderated a panel discussion on “Meeting the Challenges of Higher Education.” **James Ceaser**, a University of Virginia professor, spoke about teaching a course—“The American Political Tradition”—that is funded almost entirely by outside supporters. He hopes that the model will soon be transplanted successfully to other universities. **Gail Hill Williams**, a Connecticut State University System trustee, spoke next about her board's efforts to raise academic achievement by raising admissions standards and working with high schools and community colleges to reduce the need for freshmen remediation. **Collin Hitt** from the Illinois Policy Institute then spoke about how his group—partnering with ACTA on a State Report Card—has been drawing attention to the rising cost of a college education in Illinois. (See page 4.)

The next panel focused on “Alumni, Parents, and Policymakers” and was moderated by **Richard Vedder**, the director of the Center for College Affordability and Productivity—who reminded the audience that “an ignorant board is an ineffective board.”



ACTA Society of Fellows members, Caroline and William Philipbar



Stanley Fish



Alan Merten



Andrew McRoberts, Richard Vedder



Collin Hitt and ACTA supporter Walter Boese

**James Boyle**, president of College Parents of America, spoke about how his organization, which exists as a resource for parents of college students, has been advocating for greater accountability on cost, health, and safety issues on campus. **Andrew McRoberts**,

the president of the Society for the College, then explained how he and other concerned alumni put public pressure on the College of William and Mary to change its bias incident reporting policy and repeal its speech code, which infringed on students' First

Ensuring that no one napped after an excellent lunch at the Mount Vernon Inn was a stellar colloquy on "Getting Back to First Principles" between two famed academics: **Stanley Fish**, a professor at Florida International University, and **Robert**

**George**, a professor at Princeton University. The two speakers both agreed that one of the primary purposes of a liberal education is to help students master a particular body of knowledge by exposing them to the breadth of scholarly research in that discipline. Professor Fish argued that the role of the instructor ends there, but Professor George went on to argue that it also extends to helping students learn how to make moral judgments about the content of that research. In a fantastic demonstration of academic debate at its best, the two passionately—but collegially—argued their positions for more than an hour, much to the delight of the audience.

The afternoon closed with a panel discussion on "Strong Boards and Strong Presidents: Working Together," moderated by City University of New York trustee **Kathleen M. Pesile**. George Mason University president **Alan Merten** attributed the success that GMU has had over the past 37 years to four things: being more innovative and entrepreneurial than many universities, being in a great location, intentionally building on strengths, and making their faculty visible to the public. **Emily Durso**, the former chair of the University of the District of Columbia board of trustees, spoke about the board's critical role in moving UDC from a four-year university with open enrollment to a community college with open enrollment and a four-year university with admissions standards. She said the changes couldn't have been accomplished without dedicated trustees and a president who was willing to take the heat—and thanked Kay Pesile for

her *Washington Post* op-ed lauding the board's moves. **Thomas Lindsay**, the president of Shimer College, closed by talking about the noble purpose of liberal education and the promotion of it by ACTA. ●



Robert George



Robert Lewit and Richard Norton Smith



David Vedder, and James Boyle



Gail Hill Williams



Tom Rice



James Ceaser

Amendment rights. **Tom Rice**, a member of the Georgia House of Representatives, concluded by discussing his role in pushing the University System of Georgia to undertake a massive—and entirely voluntary—effort to ensure intellectual diversity.

# KC Johnson Receives 2009 Philip Merrill Award

By Noah Mamis, Program Officer

Following the ATHENA Roundtable, ACTA and its supporters gathered at the historic Cosmos Club in Washington to present the fifth annual Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education. This year's recipient was Robert David "KC" Johnson, a history professor at Brooklyn College.

The evening began with a welcome by ACTA president Anne D. Neal and a brief history of the Cosmos Club by A. Graham Down, president of the National Capital Association of Scholars.

After dinner, the assembled guests heard two tributes to Professor Johnson. The first was from Stuart Taylor, Jr., senior writer for the *National Journal* and Johnson's co-author on *Until Proven Innocent*. The book is the definitive history of the Duke lacrosse case, and Taylor praised Johnson's hard work investigating the case.

Professor emerita Paula Fichtner, also of Brooklyn College, followed, praising Professor Johnson's stalwart defense of the traditional study of military, diplomatic, and political history, as well as his courage in pursuing his fight for tenure all the way to the CUNY Chancellor's office.

Catherine Merrill Williams, Mr. Merrill's daughter and the publisher of *Washingtonian* magazine, presented the award—an original caricature of President Lyndon B. Johnson by Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist Bill Mauldin. Professor Johnson followed with a gracious speech accepting the award. Referring to his tenure case, Johnson



Selection committee member Abigail Thernstrom, Stuart Taylor, KC Johnson, Paula Fichtner, Catherine Merrill Williams, Anne Neal, and ACTA board chairman Robert Lewit

said, "If it were not for ACTA, I would not be here this evening."

ACTA will be publishing the tributes to KC and his remarks in the coming weeks. ●

## Illinois Report Card, *continued from 4*

These types of findings indicate an obvious need for reform, and ACTA is pleased to be partnering with the Illinois Policy Institute—a nonpartisan research organization—to ensure that this analysis becomes part of that reform. ACTA's similar reports in Georgia and Missouri have already been a catalyst for concrete changes including controlling costs, enhancing intellectual diversity, and strengthening the curriculum. By working with IPI on the ground, we anticipate that we will be able to advocate for these kinds of positive changes in Illinois even more effectively.

Already, IPI's collaboration has proved invaluable. *For the People* was released at a well-attended press conference that coincided with legislative discussions about higher education funding. Numerous state legislators also attended a breakfast briefing. And our findings have already reached half a million state residents through newspapers, television, and radio. Our Illinois project continues, so stay tuned for updates. ●

### PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS

General Education	F
Intellectual Diversity	F
Governance	
University of Illinois System	F
Southern Illinois University System	F
Cost and Effectiveness	F



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

## Honoring Our Heroes at Harvard

By Sandra Diaz, Program Officer

Although ROTC has not had an active presence on campus for nearly forty years, Harvard has a dedicated group of students and alumni working hard to foster appreciation for military service—and to educate the Harvard community about its graduates’ illustrious history in our country’s armed forces. Out of all the universities in the United States, Harvard ranks third in the number of

Medal of Honor recipients, after West Point and the Naval Academy.

Now, Paul Mawn, a Harvard alumnus and retired U.S. Naval Reserve captain, and the Advocates for Harvard ROTC have established a “Hall of Heroes” on campus to commemorate these honorees. And it looks like these efforts are bearing fruit: President Drew Faust agreed to the installation of a plaque dedicated to the Medal of Honor recipients at the campus’ Memorial Church. The plaque was unveiled this past Veterans Day in a ceremony at the

church featuring President Faust and current Harvard students who undertake ROTC service through a program at neighboring M.I.T.

This memorial to Harvard’s Medal of Honor recipients is a small but important step in the ongoing work of restoring ROTC to its rightful place in the academy. The Advocates for Harvard ROTC should be commended for their efforts, which have the potential to benefit not only Harvard but all of the nation’s universities. ●

## Reforming the Politically Correct University

By David Azerrad, Program Officer

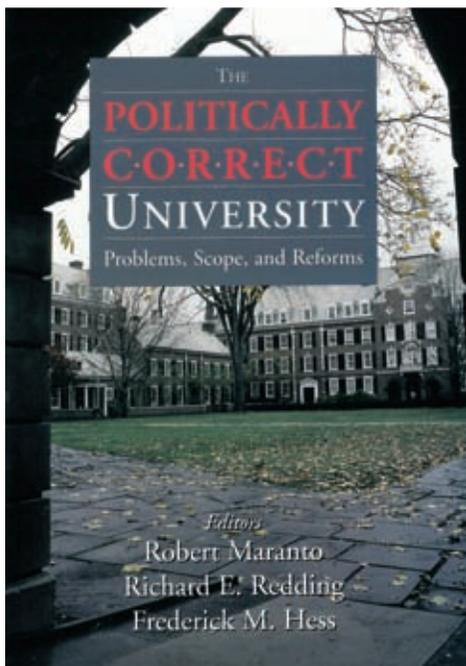
The evidence of an unhealthy intellectual climate in academia has been accumulating for years now. Political correctness—the “stifling culture of moral and political uniformity based on progressive ideals,” as Yale law professor Anthony Kronman calls it—has now become commonplace, leading some to speak of the politically correct university.

The pressing question, of course, is what to do about it. How can we restore free inquiry, robust debate, and intellectual fairness at our colleges and universities? A new anthology from the American Enterprise Institute entitled *The Politically Correct University: Problems, Scope, and Reforms* aims to do just that.

In her chapter, ACTA president Anne

D. Neal outlines the constructive steps that alumni and trustees

can take—and have taken—to reinvigorate the free exchange of ideas on campus. “Engaged alumni can press administrators and trustees to be accountable in ways no one else can,” Neal writes, citing cases where alums from Dartmouth, Colgate, Hamilton College, CUNY, and the University of Chicago did just that. Likewise, “trustees are legally and financially responsible for the well-being of their institution.” While faculties and presidents have historically kept trustees at arm’s length, Neal cites encouraging developments at the University of Colorado, SUNY, South Dakota, CUNY, Cal State, and others. The book is available for purchase on AEI’s website, [www.aei.org](http://www.aei.org). ●



## Where was the board?

Posted by Cole R. Milliard on September 18, 2009

*Inside Higher Ed* reports that the Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey is being sued by the state for breach of fiduciary duty. According to the story, the complaint alleges that Stevens' president along with the chair and two vice-chairs of its board of trustees spent the university's endowment contrary to donor intent and board guidelines and improperly compensated the president, all the while concealing Stevens' deteriorating financial position from the rest of the board.

Although the full picture has yet to emerge, one thing is clear. Trustees have a fiduciary responsibility to ask questions and get answers. This case is an important lesson to all trustees and donors that good governing structures and careful monitoring are essential to ensure that endowments and other gifts are not misused.

*Cole R. Milliard is an intern at ACTA and a third-year law student at The Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law.*

## Pesile Awards Honorary Degree to Jill Biden

Kathleen M. Pesile, a trustee at the City University of New York (CUNY) and the chairman of ACTA's Institute for Effective Governance, recently had the privilege of awarding an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree to Dr. Jill Biden, the wife of Vice President Joe Biden. The award was presented during Kingsborough Community College's graduation ceremonies, where Dr. Biden also gave the commencement address. Kingsborough is one of 23 institutions that together form CUNY, a university system that has undergone significant reforms in the past decade because of a dedicated board and help from ACTA. It is just one of the more than 1,000 community colleges throughout the United States which are playing an important role in helping students prepare for careers or transition from high school to a four-year college or university. ●



Kathleen Pesile, Kingsborough Community College president Regina Peruggi, and Jill Biden.

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## “SPEAKING UP”

### Foundation President Speaks Out on Donor Intent

*Editor's Note: In October, the Philanthropy Roundtable held its annual meeting in Colorado, with ACTA chairing its higher education discussions. ACTA Leadership Society member Diana Davis Spencer, who was featured earlier this year in cover articles in the Wall Street Journal and Inside Academe, spoke about donor intent. Her comments are excerpted here.*

....Donors, did you realize that we share a common denominator with gamblers? Both donors and gamblers take risks—hopefully calculated!

So, this morning, I want to share with you the calculated risk my father took when he established The Shelby Cullom Davis Endowment for Business and Economic Enterprise at Trinity College....he was determined to enlighten students on the virtues of business by giving them the opportunity to meet outstanding business executives in residence as well as by taking courses in Entrepreneurship and the Free Enterprise.

Apparently, during the grant negotiations, Trinity's President wrote a letter to my father suggesting that if these funds grew exponentially, the college could use the excess “as the school saw fit.” Well, that indeed was a red flag, and my father's response was a firm “NO”!

Now, fast forward thirty plus years. Early last spring, I received an unexpected letter from Trinity's Chair of this endowment, Gerry Gunderson....appraising me of his four-year battle to have Trinity return funds, which had been subverted for other purposes....[As] Chair of the Davis Endowment, [he] felt obligated as a last resort to notify the Attorney General. It took two years for the Attorney General to deem Trinity's action illegal. These

funds were returned to the endowment, ironically just at the time Trinity learned of the *Wall Street Journal's* interest in this matter....

What are the lessons learned?

First, institutional memory is very important. Frankly, Trinity stopped communication once my father ceased to be a watchdog and before I became involved in the Foundation. So, I would advise donors to write into an endowment provision a mandate to have institutions communicate pertinent information to successor generations.

Second, don't assume anything. My father didn't! He had seen other gifts of his go awry; thus, when he committed to this endowment gift he was very specific. First he collaborated with Trinity to select the endowment chair, and second he put it in writing that all funds should be used for “said endowment purposes only.” This statement was the deciding factor in the Attorney General's decision forcing Trinity to return these funds. What my father forgot was to mandate annual updates in writing to successor generations....

Third, get involved with ACTA....I wish we had been involved with ACTA back when the grant was made, but there was no ACTA in place until 1995. When I mentioned the Trinity scenario to ACTA's proactive leader, Anne Neal, she immediately spoke to the *Wall Street Journal's* John Hechinger, who was in the process of writing an article on donor intent and decided to highlight Trinity College. Great timing! Hechinger's riveting article made the *Journal's* front page and definitely created a buzz on this hot issue!

So, donors, keep on gambling to make the world a better place but remember: Join forces with a proactive watchdog organization, such as ACTA.... ●

## Kemper Puts Spotlight on History



Crosby Kemper

**A**s *What will they learn?* demonstrates, our nation's colleges and universities are not doing their part to educate students on American history and institutions. Happily, though, civic-minded people are taking matters into their own hands to remedy the sorry state of general education.

One of these is Crosby Kemper, the head of the Kansas City public library system, who is producing a short television series wherein he “interviews” various historical figures from the region—including Harry Truman, Langston Hughes, and Amelia Earhart—in order to make history come alive. Kemper describes his efforts as in sync with ACTA's work “to restore the humanities to their rightful place.” Such an effort could not have come at a better time. ●



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“One of my heroes, James Bryant Conant, served as president of Harvard for twenty tumultuous years starting in 1933. The man who did perhaps more than anyone else to nationalize America's oldest university had on the wall of his office in Massachusetts Hall a cartoon. It depicted a turtle, and the caption read: Behold the tortoise—he only makes progress by sticking his neck out. In a very real sense, ACTA sticks its neck out every time it insists that core curricula require a core, and that diplomas should be worth rather more than the paper on which they are printed.”

- *Richard Norton Smith, award-winning historian*  
*ATHENA Roundtable 2009*

