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What Will They Learn?™ Shakes Up Higher Ed Schools Reform in Response to ACTA Research

ACTA's fourth annual What Will They Learn?™ ratings were released this fall, and a number of schools are shaping up their general education programs in response.

Unlike any other college guide, What Will They Learn?™ does not look at reputation or selectivity, but at the actual content of a school's core curriculum. For each of the 1,070 schools evaluated, ACTA identifies

whether students are required to complete courses in seven key subjects: composition, literature, foreign language, U.S. government or history, economics, math, and science. Schools receive a grade from "A" to "F" based on how many of the subjects they require.

What Will They Learn?™ has achieved national prominence and been mentioned in papers across the country, including the *Wall*

Street Journal and the *Washington Post*. The project's website, WhatWillTheyLearn.com, has received more than a quarter-million visits, and a new What Will They Learn?™ video entitled "The \$200,000 Fraud" has been viewed by thousands.

Most significantly, What Will they Learn?™ is changing incentives in American higher education. A remarkable example comes to

us from Virginia: The Beazley Foundation, a major higher-ed funder, was so shocked by the findings that it pulled all funding from higher education in the state until schools improved their core curricula. The Foundation determined to work with schools that sought to move to "A" status in What Will They Learn?™—a status that, at the time, no Virginia school had achieved.

(continued on 2)



ACTA releases "The \$200,000 Fraud," a video synopsis of What Will They Learn?™ 2012-13 findings. View on www.whatwilltheylearn.com.

See George Washington's Presidential Library

Save the date for ACTA's 2013 ATHENA Roundtable, to be held at George Washington's new presidential library scheduled to open in the fall of next year. Mount Vernon broke ground on the magnificent 45,000-square-foot national library in the spring of 2011.

www.goacta.org

info@goacta.org

1-888-ALUMNI-8

**The Honorable William Armstrong, President
Colorado Christian University**

“We are very honored to be named as an ‘A’ school by ACTA. We appreciate this recognition more than you know.”

Editor’s Note: See article on page 1 about new What Will They Learn™ ratings.

**Judith K. Healey, President
Family Foundation Consulting
Minneapolis, MN**

“Fine facilitation at the Aspen Institute seminar at Harvard. ... Enjoyed the discussion. Thought-provoking all around.”

Editor’s Note: See article on page 5 about ACTA’s trustee seminars.

**Peter Milano
Bedford, NY**

“ACTA has an enormously important mission to accomplish. Failure is not an option. You need to play ‘hardball’ with the college/university establishment because we are running out of time in the struggle to maintain US leadership, in the struggle for liberty, free societies, and the rights to and of self-government by people around the world as well as in the USA!”

**Phyllis Hudecki, Secretary of Education
State of Oklahoma**

“I thoroughly enjoyed participating in your [ATHENA] meeting last week. I can’t thank you enough for inviting me.”

**William Dennis, Senior Fellow
Atlas Economic Research Foundation
Washington, DC**

“I have been to the last three Athena conferences. ... I thought the session last week was the best of the three, with a strong slate of articulate and thoughtful presenters.”

**J. Sterling Price, Consultant
London, OH**

“I was extremely pleased to read that The Teaching Company’s Thomas Rollins has been named this year’s Philip Merrill Award winner. As an appreciative (if too-infrequent) consumer of The Great Courses, I can happily attest to their value. Mr. Rollins’s enterprise is truly an asset for the Republic.”

**Guy Lay, President and CEO
GRP Media
Chicago, IL**

“The dinner and ceremony were amazing. I went to high school with Tom Rollins and have admired him my entire life. To see the tributes showered down on him were so moving for me, and I’m sure, for him. The event was more than I had hoped it would be, and I had enormous hopes for it!”

Editor’s Note: On November 9, ACTA held its 2012 ATHENA Roundtable conference and awarded the 8th annual Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education. See articles about the events on pages 6-8.

What Will They Learn?, continued from 1

In response, Regent University reformed its curriculum, adding requirements in literature and economics in order to earn an “A” from ACTA. And we are currently working closely with two other Virginia schools—one public and one private—to guide their curricular reforms so that they achieve “A” status as well. We look forward to announcing their success in the coming months.

On the other side of the country, Colorado Christian University also sought to strengthen its curriculum. CCU’s president, former U.S. Senator William Armstrong, sought out ACTA for expert advice on strengthening CCU’s general education program; the school added a rigorous new science requirement and raised its score to an “A.” And a new school—St. Katherine College in Encinitas, CA—has built its curriculum around the seven core areas of What Will They Learn?™. St. Katherine College says that their “integrative core is based on criteria defined by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni.” The seven What Will They Learn?™ subjects form the basis of their “Core Integration Series,” a sequence of advanced seminars at the heart of St. Katherine’s core curriculum.

But there is still much work to do. Only 21 colleges and universities (less than 2% of the schools evaluated) earned an “A” rating for requiring six or more of the seven key subjects. Most colleges (61%) earned a “C” or lower, requiring three or fewer subjects. And a whopping 89% of colleges and universities have four or fewer of the key general education courses.

Even schools that purport to have strong general education programs often fill their distribution areas with fluff. At the University of Indiana–South Bend, the “Literary and Intellectual Traditions” requirement can be fulfilled by a course entitled “Ways of Not Reading.” Dickinson College’s “Social Sciences” requirement may be satisfied with a course in “Fat Studies.” Even the Ivy League is

(continued on 4)

ACTA Makes Recommendations to Penn State's Board

The tragic consequences of a president grown too powerful and a board of trustees disengaged from their responsibilities have rocked Penn State and reverberated throughout American higher education. Legendary football coach Joe Paterno and Penn State president Graham Spanier were fired for failing to act when Jerry Sandusky's predatory behavior was reported to them. President Spanier, athletic director Tim Curley, and senior vice-president Gary Schultz, have now been indicted on criminal charges. And Penn State has agreed to sanctions from the NCAA, including a \$60 million fine.

It is impossible for any institution to guarantee that members of its staff will not violate its code of ethics and inflict serious harm from their positions of trust. It is, however, eminently possible for institutions to create structures whereby such actions are quickly reported and effectively handled. In the end, Penn State's most disturbing failure was that its

top administrators became fully aware of Sandusky's abuse of young boys in Penn State's facilities as early as 1998, yet failed both to inform the board of trustees and to take decisive action to stop the behavior and report the crime.

ACTA has taken action to guide Penn State's board to a new understanding of what it means to be trustees, to be fiduciaries, and to be more than a group of cheerleaders. As ACTA president Anne Neal told the *New York Times*, "For too long, the boards have been viewed more as boosters than as legal fiduciaries."

At the invitation of the Pennsylvania Auditor General, ACTA contributed extensively to the Auditor's special report: "Recommendations for Governance Reform at the Pennsylvania State University After the Child Sex Abuse Scandal." Our recommendations included restructuring the board, limiting the power of the president, eliminating board appointments with conflicts-of-interest, changing the

procedure for appointing trustees, and ensuring greater public transparency. We have shared our recommendations with members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and with Penn State's board of trustees.

Pennsylvania journalists have helped to spread this message. The *Harrisburg Patriot-News* echoed the question ACTA vice president Michael Poliakoff asked, how differently the Sandusky scandal would have played out if Penn State had the appropriate checks and balances. The *Associated Press* quoted Dr. Poliakoff's conclusion: "This culture of board deference must change at Penn State, and other colleges and universities need carefully to review their governance structure to ensure that boards are empowered and proactive." Only in this way will Penn State, and other colleges and universities around the nation, move to a level of responsibility that will help avert such tragedies. ●

New ACTA Survey Finds College Graduates Ignorant of American History

"Government of the people, by the people, for the people." Most Americans instantly recognize these words. Yet a new ACTA survey found that only 17% of college graduates were able to identify the Gettysburg Address as the source of Lincoln's iconic phrase. ACTA's survey, conducted by polling firm GfK Roper, tested knowledge of basic history, civics, and economics, and the findings were grim. Many college graduates are ignorant of the most fundamental facts about United States history. Only 20% of those surveyed could name James Madison as the "Father of the Constitution," and 62% did not know how long the terms are for members of Congress.

These dismal results are not surprising in the light of ACTA's fourth annual What Will They Learn?™ ratings released in October. They found that less than 20% of American colleges and universities require a course in American history or government.

WHAT THEY HAVEN'T LEARNED

Results from a New Roper Survey on American Historical Literacy

Of the college graduates surveyed, only **20%** could name James Madison as the "Father of the Constitution."

43% did not know that John Roberts is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Less than half of graduates—**48%**—knew George Washington was the American general at Yorktown.

What Will They Learn.com

ACTA Launches New Website

ACTA released its new website in November, featuring the full range of publications, outreach, and services ACTA offers to trustees, alumni, students and parents, and policymakers. GoACTA.org also outlines our extensive initiatives on behalf of academic excellence, academic freedom, and accountability. Social media is fully integrated on the site, so supporters can connect with us via facebook and twitter. And the site launches our new blog, *The Forum*, which invites readers into an ongoing conversation on higher education reform. Check us out at www.goacta.org—then sign up, pitch in, and join the discussion! ●

ACTA
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF
TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI

ACTA is an independent, non-profit organization committed to academic freedom, excellence, and accountability at America's colleges and universities.

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What Will They Learn?, continued from 2

not exempt. At the University of Pennsylvania, the “Cross Cultural Analysis” requirement can be satisfied by a course entitled “Monsters of Japan,” which promises to unravel the implications of beasts such as Godzilla and Pikachu.

ACTA paired the What Will They Learn?™ study with a multiple-choice survey of recent college graduates, conducted by GfK Roper, which tested knowledge of basic history, civics and economics. The results were equally troubling, documenting a startling lack of historical literacy

(read more about the survey on page 3 of this issue). “This study shows that while students, parents and taxpayers are paying a lot, they’re not getting a lot in return,” said ACTA president Anne D. Neal. “Students are graduating into one of

the most inhospitable job markets in American history and a time of challenging civic responsibilities; and they’re doing it with record debt. What Will They Learn?™ examines which

schools are making a solid commitment to a broad academic foundation, and which ones simply don’t make the grade. Regrettably, too many do not.”

In this time of economic uncertainty, the What Will They Learn?™ project is more important than ever. Visit WhatWillTheyLearn.com to see how well your school is preparing its students

for life after graduation. If you’re not happy with what you see, contact ACTA to learn how you can join the fight to ensure that every college graduate will have a solid intellectual foundation. ●

“...American students are continuously proving to know less in subjects like history. A study released last month by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni and GfK Roper saw abysmal results on surveys gauging American history literacy among college graduates.”

— *The Huffington Post*, November 14, 2012

Effective TRUSTEESHIP



ACTA Addresses Trustees in MA, SC, OH

ACTA continued its series of **regional trustee seminars** with the Aspen Institute this fall, hosting an event at the Harvard Faculty Club in September. Nearly two dozen current and former trustees from a variety of institutions, along with other higher education leaders—including former Harvard Dean Harry Lewis—gathered to exchange ideas on how more effectively to engage today's issues of affordability and academic quality in higher education.

Invited by South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley to the **Public Higher Education Conference in Columbia, SC** in October, ACTA president Anne Neal served as a panelist, along with presidents of South Carolina's main public universities. Nearly 250 trustees, policymakers, and business leaders attended. On the panel entitled "Funding, Regulatory Re-

lief, and Resources for Higher Education," Ms. Neal highlighted several challenges currently facing higher education trustees, including the need to address low graduation rates and skyrocketing tuition.

The event followed on the release of ACTA's state report, *Prepared in Mind and Resources?: A Report on Public Higher Education in South Carolina*, in 2011. Trustees in attendance received ACTA's message well: "Anne Neal brought a lot of value by educating our business leaders, legislators, and trustees in the state about the real issues affecting colleges and universities across the country," Coastal Carolina University trustee Natasha Hanna said. "She clearly has a grasp on what it's like on the inside throughout higher education."

In November, Anne Neal was featured as the luncheon speaker at the **2012 Com-**

plete College Ohio Conference, hosted by the Ohio Board of Regents, with Ohio Governor John Kasich joining by teleconference. Jim Petro, chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents, introduced Ms. Neal before hundreds of trustees representing four-year and two-year colleges across the state. Ms. Neal presented sobering statistics on graduation rates at Ohio schools, and offered practical steps on what trustees can do to encourage completion, such as broadening access by better scheduling and increased teaching loads.

Building on the success of this year's programs, ACTA is setting our **2013 calendar of trustee seminars and events**. If you are a trustee at a college or university and would like to host a seminar for your board or for trustees in your region, please contact Armand Alacbay at aalacbay@goacta.org. ●

National Summit on Keeping the Republic

According to legend, when Ben Franklin left Independence Hall in Philadelphia after signing the Constitution, he was approached by an elderly woman who wanted to know what the convention had decided. "Well, Doctor," she asked, "What have we got—a republic or a monarchy?" "A republic," he replied, "if you can keep it."

Since then, every generation has been asked to preserve our democratic traditions. And the American Village Citizenship Trust did its part by sponsoring the National Summit on Keeping the Republic. Chaired by Laura Bush, Mary A. Bomar, and Mrs. Vaughan I. Morrisette, the summit informed business, civic, and political leaders about "growing historical amnesia" and offered advice about how they might work to encourage greater understanding of America's past.

The Summit came to ACTA for that advice. The program included extensive coverage of ACTA's research in the area of historical literacy (or illiteracy) and on plans for restoring historical knowledge. ACTA's projects *Losing America's Memory* and *E Pluribus Unum* (prepared for the Bradley Foundation) became centerpieces of the Trust's call for restored historical and civic education. We sincerely hope that call will be answered and thank the Trust for its efforts. ●

Scholars Take Note!

George Washington's Mount

Vernon is offering a new fellowship program to encourage research on the "life, leadership, and legacy of George Washington and his place in American civic life and culture." The fellowships, offered by the Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington at Mount Vernon, will sponsor short- and long-term research by doctoral students, PhDs, and advanced scholars.

ACTA's annual ATHENA Roundtable asked a simple question of prominent scholars and university leaders: could higher education be working harder for our country's students? The answer was a resounding "Yes"—and a fascinating variety of thoughts about what actions we can take to improve university education

Dr. William Cook, professor of history at SUNY–Geneseo, offered the keynote. He spoke about the observations of the 19th century French visitor to America, Alexis de Tocqueville, and the decline of civil society since de Tocqueville's time. Dr. Cook noted the need to restore the social sciences to educational prominence as a vital first step in restoring civic knowledge and understanding of community on which a healthy democracy is predicated.

ACTA's Michael Poliakoff moderated the first panel, which asked, "Are Students and Employers Getting What They Need?" New York University professor Richard Arum shared some sobering statistics from his groundbreaking study, *Academically Adrift*, including the observation that the only European country where college students spend *less* time studying than the United States is the Slovak Republic. Dr. Arum identified the problem as one of incentives: colleges pursue "customer satisfaction" rather than focusing on maintaining high academic standards.

Judge Kenneth Starr, president of Baylor University, stressed the value of a common educational experience that comes from a core curriculum which prompts students to ask deep questions. Placing great responsibility on professors, he remarked: "Faculty need to be held accountable for mentorship and guidance. Great teaching is non-negotiable."

Phyllis Hudecki, Oklahoma's Secretary of Education, argued colleges should ensure students are well educated regardless of their particular field. Employers, said Hudecki, are looking for "the cream of the crop, regardless of major...focusing only on vocational skills is *not* fulfilling the mission of higher education."

After lunch, ACTA president Anne Neal moderated a lively colloquy, "Is Higher Education on a Collision Course?" Stephen Joel Trachtenberg, president emeritus of The George

Washington University, criticized what he described as a "confused" and "over-credentialed" culture in higher education. Trachtenberg called out universities for lightening teaching



Phyllis Hudecki



William Cook



Stephen Trachtenberg and John McCardell



Andrew Delbanco



Bob Shrum, Anne Neal

loads, pointing out that from 1988 to 2004 tenure-track faculty at public research institutions decreased their teaching load on average by more than a full course.

John McCardell, vice-chancellor and president of Sewanee, offered an eloquent condemnation of merit scholarships as

detrimental to qualified students in financial need and a critique of the unsustainable business model of higher education. Part of the problem, McCardell argued, was that, due to perceptions

budgetary committee, described Temple's decision to freeze tuition for its law school in the face of the recession. Finally, Judge **Janice Brown**, chair of the academic affairs committee

of Pepperdine University's board of regents, spoke out against what she described as "the dreadful project known as postmodernism, which has done great damage to the humanities."

The quest for solutions was the cornerstone of the final panel: "Where Do We Go From Here?" led by ACTA's director of trustee affairs, **Armand Alacbay**. Columbia professor **Andrew Delbanco** argued the need for professors in the humanities and the arts to understand how increased specialization, distance learning, and vocational thinking were endangering their field. "The future of humanities departments depends on the future of general education and core curricula," concluded Delbanco.

Mark Bauerlein, professor of English at Emory University, described starting a successful curricular center that emphasizes the great works of Western thought. The first priority, according to Bauerlein, is to establish credibility by proving that students *want* to study the traditional liberal arts: "If we offer these courses, and one-third of the seats are full, we have failed. If all the seats are full, this is automatic credibility."

And **Charles Kolb**, president of the French-American Foundation and former president of the Committee for Economic Development, described the business model of postsecondary education as "totally broken." He questioned the goal of increasing the number of postsecondary degrees without assessing curricular content: "If you're telling young people that they need more postsecondary credentials, you're asking them to take out a mortgage with no guarantee of equity, so the discussion of content is key. We need to succeed in this area as much for the economy, as for the

health and vibrancy of our democracy."

At a time when higher education is struggling to meet challenges, it is heartening to know that so many wise scholars and leaders are affirming ACTA's focus on cost, access, and quality to fulfill higher education's obligations to students. ●



Mark Bauerlein and Charles Kolb



Kenneth Starr



Richard Arum



al, Alan Kors and Tom Oliphant



Janice Brown

of prestige, "the American public really doesn't *want* a bargain." Successfully defying expectations, however, under McCardell's leadership, Sewanee cut tuition by 10%, with the result being a dramatic increase in applications and giving.

Trustee **Lewis Gould**, the chair of Temple University's

Tom Rollins Receives 2012 Philip Merrill Award

Friends of the liberal arts met at the headquarters of The Society of the Cincinnati, the nation's oldest patriotic organization, for a ceremony conferring the eighth annual Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education on **Tom Rollins**, founder of **The Teaching Company**.

While studying law at Harvard, Rollins watched a series of videotaped lectures on the Federal rules of evidence. Fearing deadly dullness, he was shocked to find the lectures engaging, thorough, and delightfully fun—all because of a great professor. He hatched the idea of a company that would distribute lectures by the very greatest professors to anyone who wanted to learn. Today that company—The Teaching Company—offers hundreds of courses, covering subjects ranging from Shakespeare to Differential Calculus.

Colleagues and dear friends gathered to offer tribute to Mr. Rollins—among them several professors who have offered courses through The Teaching Company. Professor **William Cook** of SUNY–Geneseo recounted the stories of people who have been touched by Tom's work. One young correspondent wrote that a Teaching Company lecture had convinced him to attend college; a Jesuit priest with macular degeneration wrote that the courses were his way of staying engaged with scholarship.

Professor **Daniel Robinson** of Oxford praised Mr. Rollins



Tom Rollins with his parents, his wife Vicki and their children.

for following Thomas Jefferson's call, in a letter to his old teacher, to "Preach, my dear Sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish & improve the law for educating the common people." Professor **Alan Kors** of the University of Pennsylvania spoke about Mr. Rollins's courage and dedication to the truth, both in his work and in his relations with his friends. And political consultant **Bob Shrum**, a longtime friend of Mr. Rollins, spoke kindly of

our shared enthusiasm for the liberal arts: "ACTA's mission was Tom Rollins's cause before either of you knew the other."

Accepting the award, Mr. Rollins spoke eloquently on the importance of the liberal arts—which, he said, are about everything. "The task of undergraduate education is to pass on what, at great pain, we have learned over 3,000 years." And he thanked ACTA for its "forceful, steadfast, and ingenious work on behalf of excellence and accountability in higher education." ●



The Philip Merrill Award was presented at the historic **Anderson House**—headquarters of The Society of the Cincinnati. Founded in 1783 by officers of the Continental Army and their French counterparts who served together in the American Revolution, The Society's mission is to preserve the memory of the American Revolution. It is the nation's oldest patriotic organization.



New Centers of Excellence Established in Texas and Virginia

NAS Founder to Direct Major Research/Teaching Center

Professor Steve Balch, founding president of the National Association of Scholars and founding member of ACTA's board, has joined with Texas Tech University to establish the **Institute for the Study of Western Civilization**. The Institute, an affiliate of the Honors College at Texas Tech, will sponsor research, teaching, and extracurricular speakers to address what the Institute calls "Western Civilization as a distinct phenomenon."

"Western Civilization has remade the world," the Institute declares, with the goal of exploring how and why it happened. The ideas and social practices that developed in the West have, over the past several centuries, had a transformative effect on the world. But there has been little research dedicated specifically to studying the emergence of the West and asking, "How did this happen? What made it distinct? How can we preserve the fruits of Western

experience while coping with the manifestations of its dark side—such as totalitarianism, the threat of nuclear war, and environmental degradation?"

The Institute will be that research center. Professor Balch describes it as a "lighthouse," that will encourage the study of Western civilization throughout the academy; a home for original, cutting-edge research and a model and resource for the rest of the American university system. As ACTA's research has shown, American students' understanding of their own history and origins is distressingly low. We wish Dr. Balch the very best in his mission to bring a greater understanding of Western civilization to America's undergraduates, graduate students, professors, and ultimately to each of us.

BB&T Grant Supports Study of Free Markets

Randolph-Macon College in Virginia has built a new center for curricular excellence, thanks to a generous grant from the BB&T Charitable

Foundation. The grant, part of a series dedicated to the Moral Foundations of Capitalism, supports **Capitalism Matters!**, an undergraduate program focused on what the program calls "the nexus of capitalism, ethics, leadership, and public policy."

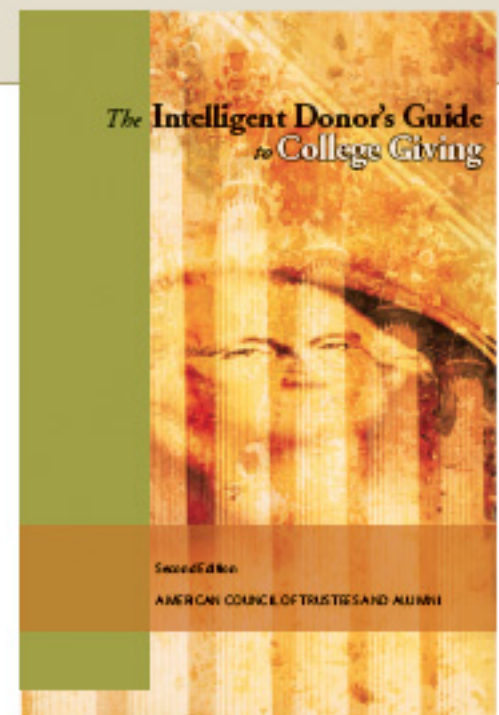
Dr. David Brat, chair of the Department of Economics and Business, directs the program. Through it, students learn to understand the nature of capitalism and other economic systems so that they can, in the words of the program, "engage in fact-based, civil, open, honest discourse" about capitalism and more deeply understand the challenges our society faces.

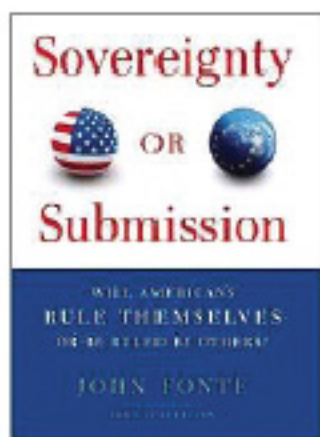
These programs are exceptional examples of the centers of excellence that ACTA advocates in our *Intelligent Donor's Guide to College Giving*, and we commend the faculty, administrators, trustees, and donors who have worked hard to make it a reality. ●

Intelligent Donor's Guide Added to Roundtable Resources

The Philanthropy Roundtable, a national organization dedicated to helping philanthropists achieve their charitable goals, is helping ACTA inform donors to colleges and universities. The Roundtable has added our *Intelligent Donor's Guide to College Giving*—the key guide to effective higher-education philanthropy—to the "Strategies in Giving" section of their online Library of Philanthropy.

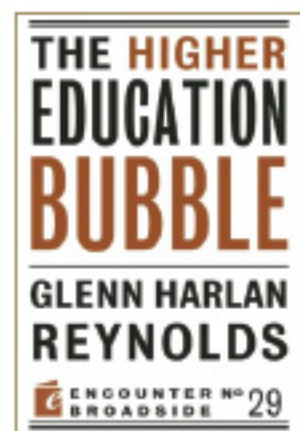
The *Intelligent Donor's Guide* provides readers with step-by-step information to ensure that their gifts to colleges achieve the goals they set and are not diverted to alternatives outside the donor's intent. If you would like a copy, please note your request on the enclosed reply envelope. ●





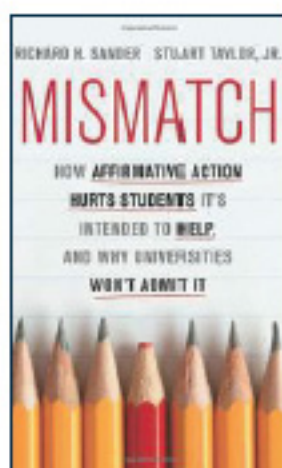
Sovereignty or Submission: Will Americans Rule Themselves or be Ruled by Others
by John D. Fonte

In *Sovereignty or Submission*, ACTA board member and Hudson Institute Senior Fellow John Fonte looks at the burgeoning conflict between democratic ideas of sovereignty, found in the American constitution and other liberal democracies, and a newer movement towards global governance. That movement—located in transnational NGOs, the UN and EU, and international legal, diplomatic, and academic conferences—seeks gradually to replace democratic decision-making with regulation by international experts. Dr. Fonte warns about the danger posed by the global-governance movement—not that it will finally triumph, but that it will gradually erode the authority of sovereign national and democratic governments. As we watch European elites attempt to grapple with an extended crisis of democratic legitimacy, Dr. Fonte’s book serves as a healthy warning to American diplomats and policymakers.



The Higher Education Bubble
by Glenn Harlan Reynolds
Skyrocketing tuition is rising faster than inflation or even health-care costs. Exploding student debt is now even higher than credit-card debt. For years ACTA has been saying that higher education is experiencing a bubble that is growing ever closer to bursting. Now, law professor Glenn Harlan Reynolds of *Instapundit* has a new Encounter

Broadside laying out the case that yes, there is a bubble. *The Higher Education Bubble* succinctly makes the case that higher education costs have grown far beyond Americans’ ability to pay, even as quality has declined. Excessive spending on facilities and administrators drives up costs while schools weaken their curricula (Reynolds cites *What Will They Learn?*) and allow their educational standards to decline. The book also offers helpful advice for students, parents, educators, and entrepreneurs looking to reinvent higher education in America.



Mismatch: How Affirmative Action Hurts Students It's Intended To Help, and Why Universities Won't Admit It
by Richard H. Sander and Stuart Taylor, Jr.

Does affirmative action benefit minority college students? A major new book by UCLA law professor Richard Sander and *National Journal* contributor Stuart Taylor examines a vast array of statistical data and concludes: no, it does not. Sander and Taylor argue that racial preferences create systematic “mismatch” in higher education. This means, the authors argue, that many racially-preferenced students are admitted to schools for which they are underprepared—although they would be very well prepared for other institutions. Because they are underprepared, they perform poorly, lose confidence in their academic abilities, and are less likely to advance and succeed. The authors urge university leadership to help students on the basis of economic need, rather than racial identity, in order to restore social mobility to American higher education and end the mismatch. They offer a new perspective on one of the longstanding debates in education, a must-read for anyone interested in higher-ed reform. ●

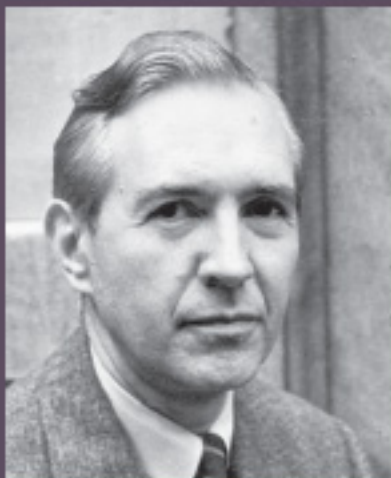
INSIDE ACADEME published by ACTA, Washington, DC

Publisher: Anne D. Neal • Editor: William Gonch • Production & Design: Lauri Kempson

Telephone: 1-888-ALUMNI-8 • Email: info@goacta.org • Website: www.goacta.org • Blog: www.goactablog.org

In Memoriam

ACTA mourns the passing of three dear friends who dedicated their lives and careers to academic excellence.



Jacques Barzun was a legend at Columbia for decades, partnering with Lionel Trilling to direct its storied core curriculum. He was also one of the great public intellectuals of the last century, and his book *From Dawn to Decadence* warned against growing nihilism in our culture. Barzun was a friend of ACTA, a member of our national council, and an intellectual ambassador for our work: his op-ed advocating the return of ROTC to Columbia surely swayed many readers toward our cause.

John Silber, the long-serving president of Boston University, “told it like it was”—not a quality you often find in college presidents. But Silber refused to play the figurehead and fundraiser: he challenged faculty to raise standards and expectations, and his reforms—often opposed by the faculty—contributed mightily to BU’s rise to prominence. We were honored by his generous praise of ACTA.



Eugene Genovese wrote to ACTA in 2007 thanking us for our “continued good efforts on behalf of civilized life.” To Professor Genovese, we must say the same. He was a passionate and committed thinker who loved truth; as a man who began his life as a communist and ended as a conservative, he was not afraid of intellectual challenge. His book, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* revolutionized our understanding of slave culture, and as a Brooklyn College alum he worked to defend its rigorous core curriculum.

We are fortunate to have counted all of these men as friends, and we bid them all a fond farewell. ●

UCLA Faculty Rejects Diversity Requirement

The UCLA faculty senate recently struck a blow for sensible education by voting down a proposed new “Community and Conflict in the Modern World” requirement.

Students can graduate from UCLA without studying literature, U.S. history, economics, or even math. But this proposal would have required every student to take one of a number of highly-specialized niche courses like “America in the Sixties” or “Mystics, Heretics and Witches in the Western Tradition.”

The requirement was defeated by a vote of 224-175. We thank the faculty senate for keeping a sensible eye on student priorities. ●





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"I now make it my earnest prayer that God ... would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind, which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation."



— From Washington's Circular Letter Addressed to the Governors of all the States on the Disbanding of the Army, June 14, 1783

ACTA sends our sincere thanks for your support
and best wishes for the New Year!