

1995

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni is founded.

1996

ACTA issues *The Shakespeare File: What English Majors Are Really Studying*. ACTA holds its first ATHENA (Alumni and Trustees for Higher Education Accountability) Roundtable conference. ACTA creates the Fund for Academic Renewal to help alumni target their gifts to excellent programs.

1997

ACTA successfully organizes alumni to save the core at Brooklyn College. The victory shows that attacks on academic excellence will not go unchallenged.

1998

ACTA publishes *The Intelligent Donor's Guide to College Giving*, the first book designed to show donors how to direct their funds to programs of their choice. ACTA issues *Failure to Set High Standards: CUNY's General Education Requirements*, which is praised by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

1999

The board of SUNY (the largest public university system in the world) votes to raise academic standards and adopts a new core curriculum in line with ACTA's call for academic excellence and accountability in higher ed. ACTA coordinates the creation of the Scholars for the University of Chicago to preserve the core curriculum.

2000

ACTA publishes *Losing America's Memory: Historical Illiteracy in the 21st Century*, including a Roper Survey showing that Beavis and Butthead are more familiar than Washington and Lincoln. A Congressional Resolution—calling on college and university trustees, administrators, and state education officials to strengthen American history requirements—passes Congress unanimously.

2001

A national debate over the appropriate role of college and university trustees between ACTA and the American Association of Governing Boards (AGB) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) hits the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*.

2002

President George W. Bush launches the White House Forum on American History, Civics, and Service, marking the culmination of a two-year effort by ACTA, and ACTA publishes *We the People* to encourage teaching and research on historical events. ACTA initiates the Trustees for Better Teachers project to raise standards in teacher education programs.

2003

ACTA launches the Institute for Effective Governance, a service organization for trustees. ACTA issues *Can College Accreditation Live Up to Its Promise?* Congress invites ACTA to testify on how accrediting agencies can improve education quality and accountability. The *Wall Street Journal* praises ACTA for documenting the nationwide epidemic of grade inflation in *Degraded Currency*.

2004

ACTA issues “Politics in the Classroom,” a survey in which nearly 50% of college students complain that professors “frequently comment on politics in the class even though it has nothing to do with the course.” ACTA publishes *The Hollow Core*, the first of ACTA’s reports to document the failure of general education curricula at leading U.S. colleges and universities. Colorado governor Bill Owens, along with Virginia Governor Jim Gilmore, write to every governor in the country praising ACTA’s work with trustees.

2005

ACTA publishes *Intellectual Diversity: Time for Action* and is featured in “Indoctrinate U.,” a documentary on political pressure in higher education. ACTA hits the front page of the *New York Times* and the *Financial Times* as the “go-to” resource for college donors who want to target their gifts. ACTA launches its blog, ACTA’s Must Reads, and establishes The Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education.

2006

South Dakota and Pennsylvania announce reforms in line with ACTA’s recommendations for ensuring a free exchange of ideas on college campuses. Legislation based on ACTA’s reports is proposed in four states: Missouri, Montana, Georgia, and Virginia. ACTA testifies before the Department of Education on education schools and teacher quality.

2007

ACTA issues 17 publications designed to bring authoritative insights on key higher education topics to trustees. ACTA releases *The Vanishing Shakespeare*, a study finding only 15 of the top 70 schools require English majors to take a course on Shakespeare.

2008

ACTA constructs a unique Trustee Database that includes over 10,000 individuals who collectively govern over 600 institutions which enroll over 6,000,000 students. ACTA publishes the first two of its state report cards, which examine four keys areas of public interest: what students are learning; whether the marketplace of ideas is vibrant; how universities are governed; and what a college education costs.

2009

ACTA launches WhatWillTheyLearn.com, a free online resource that grades colleges and universities on their general education curricula, the core courses that provide a strong foundation of knowledge. ACTA issues its third state report card as well as *Protecting the Free Exchange of Ideas*, a study showcasing the ten best practices for ensuring that students are taught how to think, not what to think.

2010

ACTA expands WhatWillTheyLearn.com to include over 700 of the nation’s major colleges and universities and attracts national media coverage, including the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. ACTA publishes a fourth state report card. ACTA’s president is named by the U.S. Senate to the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity to review accrediting standards. The Aspen Institute and ACTA hold the first of a series of trustee seminars focusing on academic leadership and the challenges facing higher education.

2011

ACTA expands WhatWillTheyLearn.com to include over 1,000 of the nation's major colleges and universities with a liberal arts mission. In an article entitled, "Eight Big Ideas for Improving Higher Ed," the *Washington Post* notes that "there's broad agreement that the general education system is flawed... The American Council of Trustees and Alumni in Washington has led the campaign [for stronger core requirements.]" ACTA presents the 2011 Merrill Award to Pulitzer-prize winning historian David McCullough. ACTA's report card series grows with analyses of the public systems in Idaho, Maine, and South Carolina. Working with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Apex Foundation, ACTA provides its wide universe of college and university trustees *Inside the Nonprofit Board: What You Need to Know for Satisfaction and Success*. ACTA also addresses large trustees conferences convened by the governors in Indiana and Virginia, and ACTA hosts a trustees' symposium in partnership with the Aspen Institute. Fifty governors receive a copy of *Leading the Charge: Governors, Higher Education and Accountability*, as well as an analysis of core curricula in their public institutions. "Where Were Penn State's Trustees?," a hard-hitting op-ed by ACTA, appears in the *Wall Street Journal* calling Penn State's trustees to account for failing their fiduciary responsibilities. Harvard, Yale, and Columbia restore ROTC on campus with ACTA's advocacy and alumni support. ACTA issues the second edition of *The Intelligent Donor's Guide to College Giving*.