

Reforming the Politically Correct University:
The Role of Alumni and Trustees

Anne D. Neal
President
American Council of Trustees and Alumni

aneal@goacta.org

Draft: Please do not cite without permission from the author

Prepared for the American Enterprise Institute Conference, “Reforming the Politically Correct
University,”
November 14, 2007

The collected papers for this conference can be found at www.aei.org/event1595

Should alumni and trustees remain silent when academic freedom is threatened, educational standards decline, or political agendas drive academic decisions? Yes, according to long-standing tradition.

The logic behind the tradition is deceptively simple. Academic decisions should be made on academic grounds, hence they should be made by academics.¹ And there are sound reasons for this logic. The McCarthy era demonstrated how the scholarly pursuit of truth can be threatened by coercive, extra-academic interference.

But it's also the case today that academic decisions are frequently made on anything *but* academic grounds. And alumni and trustees must take notice, and take action.

Too often, the contemporary academy focuses on faculty interests at the expense of student needs, academic freedom without academic responsibility, political agendas in the name of teaching students to think critically. Institutional policy and campus culture are alarmingly hostile to a wide range of viewpoints.² Course offerings often center on a narrow, politicized part of the disciplinary spectrum.³ A survey conducted for the American Council of Trustees and Alumni found that 48% of students at America's top colleges complained of campus presentations that "seem totally one-sided," while 42% faulted reading assignments for presenting only one side of a controversial issue.⁴

Over the last fifty years, higher education has gone from a post-World War II boom to an era of limited public resources, from decades of low tuition to tuition increases far in excess of inflation, from a system that exposed students to broad areas of knowledge to one where students pick and choose from a veritable smorgasbord of narrow and trendy offerings. Meanwhile, political correctness—what former Yale Law School dean Anthony Kronman defines as “a

stifling culture of moral and political uniformity based on progressive ideals”—has become commonplace.⁵

Academics themselves have long noted these unhealthy trends. In a 1994 poll conducted by the Organization of American Historians, historians cited “overspecialization” and “political correctness” as undermining their profession.⁶ Today, the problem is even more entrenched. In 2006, Princeton’s Stanley N. Katz lamented the professoriate’s progressive fragmentation, its inability to “develop and maintain either norms of conduct or of intellectual substance,” and its loss of faith “in the relevance of teaching undergraduates for the health of our democracy.”⁷ Katz was not just describing his personal experience; he was also responding to a plethora of recent polls showing a decline in public faith in higher education, along with a growing “public squeamishness about the ideological orientation of faculty members.”

As other chapters in this book show, the politically correct university is not the invention of outsiders, rather it is a very *real* problem, one created and propagated by those inside—administrators and academics who hold their students and colleagues to ideological standards rather than academic ones. As early as 1991, Yale president Benno Schmidt warned that “The most serious problems of freedom of expression in our society today exist *on* campuses. The assumption seems to be that the purpose of education is to induce correct opinion rather than to search for wisdom and liberate the mind.”⁸

Most institutions—and their internal constituencies—need checks and balances, and higher education is no exception. That is why informed alumni and trustees must articulate their concerns about academic trends that threaten American higher education’s future. Unlike university insiders, who are part of a complex and often deeply politicized environment, alumni and trustees can exercise independent judgment and speak freely—without reprisal. Able to

bring fresh insight and energy to old, entrenched problems, they can actively support fundamental academic values and steward their contributions to ensure students learn what they need to know.

Why should alumni and trustees help?

According to a 2007 survey by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 87 percent of the public believes that a college degree is key to getting ahead.⁹ But at the same time, public confidence in our institutions of higher education has waned. A 2006 poll conducted by the American Association of University Professors found that 58.4 percent of the American public has only some or no confidence in American colleges and universities; 60.2 percent believes higher education is suffering from low educational standards; 45.7 percent says political bias is either a very serious problem or the biggest problem facing higher education. Over 80 percent says the high cost of tuition is a “very serious” problem.¹⁰

While improving higher education should matter to all Americans, alumni and trustees have a vested interest in their alma maters. In 2006, alumni were the largest private source of higher education financial support, giving 30 percent of the total.¹¹ Many alumni serve on governing boards and advisory committees or otherwise stay active in their schools’ affairs long after graduation. And this is all to the good: Though they are often defined as “outsiders,” alumni and trustees are—by virtue of their education and subsequent life experience—qualified to participate in college and university affairs. As the University of Wisconsin political science professor Charles Anderson rightly noted, “[G]raduates of the university are members of the guild.... competent to participate, as citizens.”¹²

Alumni are often more strongly committed to good teaching, a coherent curriculum, affordable tuition, and academic freedom than are faculty members. While professors offer

expertise acquired over years of specialized research and scholarship, educated alumni bring with them a broader perspective and the ability to focus on the bigger picture.

As successful individuals with a wide range of experience, alumni are well positioned to understand what graduates need to know if they are to have meaningful, informed, and thoughtful lives.

Engaged alumni can press administrators and trustees to be accountable in ways no one else can. They can keep a vigilant eye on the breadth and quality of academic programs—and in so doing, they can help guarantee that the value of the education offered by their alma maters remains consistently high. By acting, they can make it clear that actions to lower academic standards or advance political correctness will not go unnoticed or unaddressed. Indeed, unless alumni speak out, too often the primary source of pressure on administrators will continue to come from the faculty—and administrators will continue to accommodate them accordingly. Without alternative voices, administrators often lack the support necessary to address concerns such as academic excellence and accountability.¹³ Communications from only one side threaten the balanced input needed to ensure a focus on student needs. As former Harvard dean Harry Lewis has observed: “The stakeholders can force change. .. The alumni, trustees and professors who recognize what has happened can apply enough pressure to steer the ship to a new heading.”

14

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni was launched a decade ago to focus on those conditions and to mobilize thoughtful alumni and trustees on behalf of rigorous general education, good teaching, high standards, and academic freedom. In the face of the academy’s historic resistance to accountability, ACTA stepped forward to help alumni and trustees understand their roles and maximize their effectiveness. As a result, the last ten years, have marked a renaissance in alumni and trustee engagement. Concerned alumni are now mobilizing

and making a difference. And those who serve as fiduciaries—aided by alumni pressure and support—are now acknowledging that they need to refocus the academy, and its faculty, on higher education’s educational and intellectual mission..

Here are just a few examples of how alumni and trustees are changing academic culture for the better.¹⁵

Committee for the CUNY Future—As academic standards declined in the face of open admissions, the Committee for the CUNY Future, a group of concerned alumni, formed in 1998 to speak out on behalf of reform. The Committee wrote letters to the press, appeared at public hearings, and coordinated a major movement to restore high academic standards to an institution that was becoming mired in remedial programs. The Committee’s high profile membership and articulate defense of educational excellence provided the impetus trustees needed to vote for curricular reform. CUNY’s educational quality and institutional profile have improved ever since. Some years later, when Brooklyn College’s acclaimed core was attacked by deans and the president, the alumni group fought to preserve the model curriculum—and won. Most recently, in 2006, the Committee successfully urged then-Governor George Pataki to reappoint the reform-minded CUNY trustee Jeffrey Wiesenfeld.

Scholars for the University of Chicago—In 1999, a coalition of University of Chicago faculty, students, alumni, and trustees came together to oppose the president’s efforts to weaken Chicago’s famed core curriculum. Scholars for the University of Chicago—which numbered among its members Nobel laureate Saul Bellow, sociologist David Reisman, and philosopher Mortimer J. Adler—mounted an articulate defense of the existing core, covered in the *New York Times* and other major media outlets. Chicago retained the core, and the president who announced the proposed changes resigned.

Dartmouth Alumni for Open Governance—For over a decade, Dartmouth alumni have taken an active role in ensuring that they have a voice in governance. Spearheaded by an active alumnus and ACTA member, William K. Tell, Dartmouth Alumni for Open Governance was founded during the late 1990s—and ever since Dartmouth alums have been at the forefront of a struggle that regularly draws headlines. Dartmouth’s governance structure is unique; its board of trustees is small, and alumni have historically elected half its members. The Dartmouth board is thus unusually accountable to alumni, and alumni have exceptional opportunities to participate in the management of the college.

In recent years, alumni have taken advantage of those opportunities, electing four straight dark horse petition candidates to the board, on platforms dedicated to educational quality, cutting costs, and encouraging the free exchange of ideas. Alumni also repeatedly voted to reject efforts to curtail the influence petition candidates can have. Seeing the status quo under attack, a majority of the board decided to do by fiat what it could not do by alumni consent, namely, double the number of board-appointed trustees, and so weaken the influence of the petition trustees.

Unwilling to surrender their pivotal role in governance, the Association of Dartmouth Alumni has reluctantly filed suit to preserve alumni rights. Meanwhile, the dispute has drawn public attention to a governance system where conflicts of interest reign, and opened a new frontier in higher education reform.

Students and Alumni for Colgate (SA4C)—In 2004, as Colgate trustees moved to eliminate fraternity life and dilute the core curriculum, concerned Colgate alumni launched SA4C with ACTA’s help. The effort includes a website and newsletter where Colgate alumni showcase curricular decline and administrative attacks on the free exchange of ideas and free association.

SA4C has also developed an extensive mailing list to provide alumni with an alternative perspective on their alma mater. In its latest initiative, SA4C has opened an escrow account where alumni who would normally give can deposit funds. A protest against Colgate's failure to offer alumni an adequate role in governance, the account will stay in place until independent alumni voices receive greater representation on Colgate's board.¹⁶

Hamilton College Alumni for Governance Reform (HCAGR)—Hamilton College alumni have long been concerned about dubious standards and political correctness run amok. In recent years, a president has resigned after admitting to plagiarism, and deans and faculty have invited such academic frauds as Ward Churchill and convicted Weatherman Susan Rosenberg to speak and teach. In 2005, concerned alumni founded Hamilton College Alumni for Governance Reform, launching a prominent website and—working with ACTA—playing a major role in promoting petition candidacies for the board of trustees. Most recently, HCAGR has helped establish the Alexander Hamilton Institute, a scholarly center focusing on the study of Western civilization and the college's namesake. When faculty scuppered a new center on campus because of its traditional subject matter, alumni took their dollars elsewhere and established the Institute off site. HCAGR's activities have received substantial media coverage from *National Review*, *The New Criterion*, *Newsday*, and other major publications.

Alumni as Donors

The essays in this volume amass much troubling evidence that educational excellence and intellectual openness are under attack. Disciplines are eroding into “interdisciplinary studies,” and the study of “culture”—a tremendously broad umbrella category—is overtaking the humanities and social sciences. Meanwhile, core areas of knowledge such as American history and the literary canon are no longer reliably required or responsibly taught. A 50-college study

conducted by ACTA in 2004 revealed that more than 60 percent of elite institutions no longer require math, and that 30 percent do not require a common writing course. None required students to study economics. In another recent study, ACTA discovered that over 80 percent of elite college seniors can't pass a basic, high school-level history test. In still another, ACTA learned that English departments no longer require majors to study Shakespeare.¹⁷

But thoughtful alumni can help turn things around by funding core disciplinary study themselves. They can earmark their gifts for specific programs and projects, and they can ensure that students have the opportunity to study ideas, authors, and works that have fallen out of favor in the politically correct climate of contemporary academe. “The much maligned ‘strings’ attached to restricted funds,” explains former Yale provost Frank Turner, “are in truth the lifelines that link colleges and universities to the marketplace of ideas within a democratic society.”¹⁸ As donors attend more closely to how schools use their gifts—and cry foul when those gifts are misappropriated—those lifelines become ever more substantial.¹⁹

Too often, colleges and universities have a lemming-like tendency to adopt unquestioningly the latest scholarly, ideological, or pedagogical fads. Assuming that what is new must be what is best, they abandon time-honored ideals such as liberal arts education, high academic standards, close reading, and rigorous thinking. When this happens, everyone loses. At such times, it's up to donors to set the standard for excellence. An outstanding program financed by alumni can put constructive, competitive pressure on other programs. Excellent alumni-funded programs are already doing just this, inspiring students with a taste of real intellectual seriousness, and motivating them to choose more demanding courses of study. Examples include Duke University's Gerst Program in Political, Economic, and Humanistic Studies²⁰; Brown University's Political Theory Project;²¹ Princeton's James Madison Program in

American Ideals and Institutions;²² the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's new Academy on Capitalism and Limited Government;²³ and, of course, Hamilton College's Alexander Hamilton Institute for the Study of Western Civilization.²⁴

Donors who are active stewards provide an invaluable service to their colleges and a priceless benefit to their country. By insisting that their money be spent wisely, donors can make a huge difference in the campaign to reclaim higher education.

Alumni as Trustees

Of course, when all is said and done, one group of alumni is particularly critical to reform: trustees. As fiduciaries of their colleges and universities, trustees are legally and financially responsible for the well-being of their institution. According to statutes in the public system and charters in the private one, they hold plenary authority for the institutions' financial and academic operations. "We need to be periodically reminded," former University of Wisconsin regent Phyllis Krutsch has explained, "that the mission and performance standards for our campuses and the ultimate fiduciary responsibility and accountability for results rests, not with academicians or experts of any kind, and not with government employees or even elected officials, but with lay boards."²⁵

By custom, however, the reality has been far different. As early as 1992, Hoover Institution scholar Martin Anderson charged college and university trustees with the "chief responsibility for the current sorry state of affairs."²⁶ More recently, federal judge José Cabranes—a former Yale trustee—laid much of the blame at the feet of disengaged and uninformed trustees.²⁷

As this chapter makes clear, higher ed constituencies have long treated alumni and trustees as outsiders: telling them to put up or shut up. And, for the most part, trustees have gone

along. Trustees are not trained or encouraged to question the status quo and are—effectively—prevented from doing their job responsibly. As a consequence, faculties have attained, over time, virtually unlimited power over academic concerns. It has become commonplace for boards and presidents to exercise little or no oversight of academic hiring and curricular matters on the grounds that they fall outside their appropriate purview. Meanwhile, evidence has been mounting of declines in academic accountability, scholarly rigor, and pedagogical quality—as these matters go unaddressed by the academics themselves.

The federal accreditation process has exacerbated the problem. While accreditors are charged with guaranteeing academic quality, there is ample evidence that these teams of faculty and academic administrators have used their power instead to apply intrusive, prescriptive—and often ideological—standards that infringe on institutional autonomy and self-governance.²⁸

Until recently, resources available for trustees have reinforced the notion that governance is an essentially passive exercise. Until ACTA was formed, only one other national organization—the Association of Governing Boards (AGB)—focused in any way on boards of trustees. Despite its name, the organization largely reaches trustees through presidents who “sign up” their boards for membership. “[T]he overwhelming message of AGB is for trustees to cheerlead for the campus administration,” explains one trustee. “... AGB too often adopts the proposition that any disagreement with the administration is micromanaging or intolerable failure to support the president.”²⁹ In a 1990s annual report, AGB went so far as to criticize “activist trustees,” suggesting that “[a]ctivism means insisting on sources of information independent from that provided by the chief executive” and amounts to “an attack on the university’s integrity—not responsible trusteeship.”³⁰

Given the current norms, it's not at all surprising that 40 percent of trustees surveyed by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in 2007 said they were "slightly" or "not at all" prepared for the job. Eighty-six percent of public college trustees and 73 percent of private, nondenominational trustees agreed that their institutions "should be held more accountable for what their students learn."³¹

Fortunately, forces are building that make the go along-get along culture ripe for substantive reforms. During the past decade, limited state budget resources, spiraling costs, and mounting concerns about graduates' lack of basic skills have prompted a demand for accountability. Taxpayers are being asked to foot increasingly higher bills, with no guarantee that their dollars are being spent well. Meanwhile, the scandals surrounding such figures as Ward Churchill and Lawrence Summers have raised public awareness of how politicized higher education has become. In response, the public is ever more vocal about quality and costs and ever more receptive to dynamic change.³² Trustees are rightly feeling pressure to bring rigorous accountability to their work.

A recent source of pressure has come from the blue-ribbon commission convened in 2005 by U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings. Intended to initiate a national dialogue on higher education, the Commission's hard-hitting report, *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education*, faulted trustees and education leaders for complacency and called for "urgent reform." While America rests on its laurels, the Commission noted, other nations are "educating more of their citizens to more advanced levels than we are."³³

Pressure has also come from Capitol Hill. While the Sarbanes-Oxley Act does not apply to nonprofits, the Senate Finance Committee has spent the past several years analyzing whether nonprofits merit similar rules. Bad press about corrupt student loan practices, presidential

malfeasance, administrative cover-ups, and excess compensation have drawn increasing attention to the challenges and responsibilities of higher ed trusteeship. Each new scandal underscores how urgently college and university boards need to get their house in order. As more and more commentators are observing, if they don't do so soon, it will be done for them.³⁴

Stakeholders—taxpayers, students, parents, donors, and alumni— want to know that institutions will not misuse or squander their investments. They want to know that dollars are going to instruction, not high living, and that funding—public and private—is being used to provide the best education possible at the lowest possible cost. When American University students—who pay over \$30,000 a year in tuition and fees—learned their president was eating gourmet meals and hiring French chefs on their dime, they and their parents rightly questioned what was really going on. Likewise, reports on conflicts of interest at respected institutions such as Dartmouth College and the University of California make the public wonder whether corruption is the rule rather than the exception.³⁵

When trustees reflexively defer to faculties on academic matters, they risk betraying the very lifeblood of the academic enterprise.³⁶ By law, college and university trustees are legally responsible for the academic and financial well-being of their institutions.

This does not mean boards should review course syllabi or interfere with reading lists. But it does mean that trustees must know about academic programs hosted by their institution, and it means, too, that they should judge those programs impartially and pragmatically. They should have a clear sense of what graduates attending their institutions are expected to know, and they should decide whether those expectations are appropriate. That, in turn, means that they should determine whether their institutions ensure that their students acquire the knowledge and skills they will need to be informed and engaged citizens.

The same goes for climate in the classroom. In 2005, ACTA issued *Intellectual Diversity: Time for Action* in response to mounting evidence that professors were allowing their politics to interfere with their teaching. Praised for its scrupulous respect for academic freedom, the report urged *boards* to ensure the robust exchange of ideas in the classroom—that is, to protect the academic freedom of students as well as faculty. Rejecting the common assumption that a proactive board is a wrong-headed one, the report underscored trustees’ right and duty to ensure that faculty members live up to their professional responsibilities³⁷ and reinforced that while “institutional autonomy” is a central value of academic freedom, it does not mean the academy is exempt from outside input or trustee involvement. Institutional autonomy exists not as an end in itself, but as a means of protecting the freedom of students and faculty to pursue the truth—wherever it may lead.

There are, already, promising signs of reform. The AGB’s 2007 *Statement on Board Accountability*, is almost a confession against interest, noting “a deep appreciation of the gravity of concerns regarding governance, threats to board authority, and institutional autonomy” and aiming to “[p]lace college and university governing boards at the forefront of the nonprofit sector’s response to concerns about governance and accountability.” Particularly noteworthy is the statement’s position on academic freedom: “The board is the prime guarantor of academic freedom and of institutional autonomy in educational matters,”³⁸ the AGB notes in language that neatly dovetails with ACTA’s position. Where the threat to academic freedom comes from the inside, trustees must protect the freedom of faculty members whose points of view may be unpopular—as well as the freedom of students to learn.

These shifts within the academic establishment reflect shifts beyond it. Governors across the country are taking steps to ensure that higher education trustees do a better job.³⁹ Former

Virginia governor James Gilmore personally interviewed and instructed each public university trustee to stress the importance of engaged and thoughtful stewardship. Former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney reenergized the Public Education Nominating Council to identify the most able and dedicated citizens to serve. And Ohio governor Ted Strickland recently gave Ohio regents authority to overhaul and unify the state university system. In such instances, we see how strong extra-academic leadership begets strong academic leadership.

And legislators are also getting involved. Faced with growing evidence of problems in higher education, the nation's largest nonpartisan, individual membership association of state legislators has passed model legislation encouraging trustee training from outside experts and calling upon institutional leaders to provide the public greater measures of accountability.

Trustees as Reformers

As demand for accountability grows, examples are also mounting of higher education boards doing their jobs responsibly and well—and, thereby, initiating needed reform.

The boards of Colorado's public institutions have undertaken an impressive statewide effort to develop a rigorous core curriculum, end grade inflation, improve teacher quality, and limit tuition increases. In response to the Ward Churchill scandal, the University of Colorado is also reviewing its procedures for hiring and promotion.⁴⁰ The State University of New York Board of Trustees has moved to mandate general education, to measure learning outcomes, to insist on quality teacher education, and to identify strong presidents. The South Dakota Board of Regents is requiring professors to inform students on syllabi that they will be evaluated solely on the basis of their academic performance—not their opinions or extracurricular conduct. And the University of Missouri Board of Curators is not only requiring statements on syllabi, but also

creating a Web site where students can register concerns about doctrinaire administrative and professorial behavior, with special ombudsmen reviewing the complaints.⁴¹

Boards are also recognizing that they are obligated to identify and select innovative leaders who are unafraid to question the status quo. Executive search firms are notorious for recycling candidates from a small, predictable pool. Many such consultants also base their fees on the size of the president's salary, an arrangement that undermines efforts to rein in salaries paid by public funds. Already, two massive state systems—CUNY and Cal State—have ceased employing “headhunters” to fill all vacancies. Their path-breaking example illustrates how boards can regain control over searches of immense institutional importance.⁴²

There is also growing recognition that private colleges and universities must address the irregularities that mar their governance structures. In 2005, the Senate Finance Committee convinced Independent Sector, a coalition of leading nonprofits and foundations, to recommend best practices for nonprofits. Advocating strong policies on governance, auditing, conflict of interest, travel reimbursement, and whistleblower protection, the report stated that “[f]ailures by boards of directors in fulfilling their fiduciary responsibilities may arise when a board leaves governing responsibility to a small number of people, some of whom may have conflicts of interest that mar their judgment.”⁴³ Scandals at Congressionally-chartered American University prompted major governance changes designed to diminish conflicts of interest.⁴⁴ Dartmouth's recent, highly publicized governance struggles offer a further case for review. Far from modeling best practices, Dartmouth's move to create a self-perpetuating, unaccountable board runs counter to federal and regulatory calls for transparency and independence—not to mention the desires of the thousands of alumni who have voted repeatedly for independent oversight.⁴⁵

Conclusion

In a democratic society, experts who wish to exclude others from decision-making must prove that their respective goals will be better achieved if decisions are left to a select few. As the troubling stories in this book make clear, the academy has failed to offer such proof. And as problems continue unaddressed, even those *within the academy* have begun to call out for alumni and trustee support.

“It is surely within the prerogatives of the board,” former Harvard President Derek Bok writes, “to urge the president to work with the faculty to develop a process designed to ensure continuing improvement in the quality of education... After all, trustees are supposed to act as a mediating agent between the interests of the institution and the needs of the surrounding society. Reviewing the purposes of a college to determine whether they address important social needs would seem a perfect illustration of this mediating function.”⁴⁶

Former Harvard Dean Harry Lewis has reached the same conclusion: “Universities were never truly ivory towers,” he writes. “They are privileged with independence and public support because they serve society. Thus public scrutiny is appropriate and important.”⁴⁷

And in a review of Bok and Lewis’ two books, Yale professor Donald Kagan added, “As things stand now, no president appears capable of taming the imperial faculty; almost none is willing to try; and no one else from inside the world of the universities or infected by its self-serving culture is likely to stand up and say ‘enough,’ or to be followed by anyone if he does. Salvation, if it is to come at all, will have to come from without.”⁴⁸

Rather than blaming the messenger and denying the problem, the academy must take responsibility for its actions, its integrity, and its future. Whether academic insiders will admit it or not, higher education’s runaway costs, inadequate curricula, political correctness, and

unethical behavior have everything to do with the closed and clubby mindset of most higher education leaders. That mindset must change.

Universities receive special privileges such as subsidies and tax exemptions on the condition that they serve the public good. The trust we place in them entails both extraordinary rights and heavy responsibilities. Ideally, faculty and administrators will take the initiative to make sure they fulfill that duty, but, failing that, trustees and alumni can and should step in.

Far from being an “attack” on the academic enterprise, recent cases of alumni and trustees activism have, in fact, been in defense of it. Concerned alumni have come to save universities from themselves. Colleges ignore them at their peril.

¹ This chapter incorporates in part, adapts and expands an article by ACTA’s founding president, Jerry L. Martin, entitled: “Alumni Have More to Offer Colleges than Just Cash,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Oct. 13, 1995. Thanks also go to Dr. Erin O’Connor, ACTA Senior Fellow, for her assistance.

² This hostility is most openly registered in cancellations of talks by controversial speakers, one-sided speaker panels, campus speech codes, disciplinary double standards, and the punishment and persecution of conservative and religious student groups. See Anne D. Neal, “Is Intellectual Diversity an Endangered Species on America’s College Campuses?”, testimony before the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee, October 29, 2003, as well as the case archive maintained by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, <http://www.thefire.org>, for a number of examples.

³ Brooklyn College history Professor Robert “KC” Johnson has documented the consequences of postmodernism in his field, history. He writes: “Compared to the history departments of old, the postmodernist history department is one where many advocates of the new social history have been successfully pushing fields like diplomatic history, military history, and constitutional history to the margins of the profession. See KC Johnson, “Intellectual Diversity and the Historical Profession,” *Historically Speaking*, forthcoming.

⁴ See *Politics in the Classroom: A Survey of Students at the Top 50 College and Universities*, American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2004. Available at: <http://www.goacta.org/publications/reports.html>.

⁵ Anthony Kronman, “Why Are We Here?”, *The Boston Globe*, September 16, 2007. http://www.boston.com/news/globe/ideas/articles/2007/09/16/why_are_we_here/?page=full.

⁶ David Thelen, “The Practice of American History,” *Journal of American History* 81 (December 1994) : 933-960.

⁷ Stanley N. Katz, “What Has Happened to the Professoriate?” *Chronicle of Higher Education* October 6, 2006. Available at: <http://chronicle.com/free/v53/i07/07b00801.htm>.

⁸ Benno C. Schmidt, Jr., “The University and Freedom,” speech presented at 92nd Street Y (New York: March 6, 1991), 1, 3. As quoted by Craig R. Smith in “Academic Freedom vs. Civil Rights: A Special Report of the Center for First Amendment Studies, California State University, Long Beach.” March 2004. Available at: <http://www.csulb.edu/~crsmith.acadefree.html>.

⁹ John Immerwahr and Jean Johnson, *Squeeze Play: How Parents and the Public Look at Higher Education Today*, May 2007. Available at: http://www.highereducation.org/reports/squeeze_play/index.shtml.

¹⁰ Neil Gross and Solon Simmons, “Americans’ Views of Political Bias in the Academy and Academic Freedom,” American Association of University Professors, June 2006. Available at:

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/research/Americans'+Views+of+Political+Bias+in+the+Academy+and+Academic+Freedom.htm>.

¹¹ Higher education institutions collectively raised nearly \$28 billion in 2005-6, according to the Council for Aid to Education's annual "Voluntary Support of Education" report; the largest portion of contributions came from alumni, amounting to 30% of the total. The data are available online at http://www.cae.org/content/pro_data_trends.htm.

¹² Charles Anderson. *Prescribing the Life of the Mind: An Essay on the Purpose of the University, The Aims of Liberal Education, the Competence of Citizens, and the Cultivation of Practical Reason*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993, p. 150.

¹⁴ Harry R. Lewis, *Excellence Without a Soul: How a Great University Forgot Education*. New York: Public Affairs Press, 2006, 18.

¹⁵ See ACTA's press archive for background on CUNY, Chicago, Dartmouth, Hamilton, Colgate, and Smith alumni efforts: http://www.goacta.org/press/press_releases.html.

¹⁶ See <http://www.sa4c.com/index.html>.

¹⁷ See *The Hollow Core: Failure of the General Education Curriculum, Losing America's Memory: Historical Illiteracy in the 21st Century*, and *The Vanishing Shakespeare*. Available at <http://www.goacta.org/publications/reports.html>.

¹⁸ Quoted in Jerry L. Martin and Anne D. Neal, *The Intelligent Donor's Guide to College Giving*, American Council of Trustees and Alumni, Washington, D.C., 1998, p. 7.

¹⁹ A case in point: the Robertson family, which is engaged in a protracted legal dispute with Princeton over its use of a major donation. See <http://www.robertsonvprinceton.org>.

²⁰ "The Gerst program aims at fostering an understanding of the central importance of freedom for democratic government, moral responsibility, and economic and cultural life. It focuses on the theoretical foundations of freedom and responsibility, the development of liberty in the Western and particularly the American historical context, the role of freedom in political and economic institutions, and the character of morally responsible behavior." See <http://www.poli.duke.edu/gerst>.

²¹ "The Political Theory Project currently is organized around three main themes: The American Experiment; Market Society and Social Order; and Globalization and Development. The Project sponsors a variety of activities: new courses for undergraduates, a University-wide lecture series, weekly Open Seminar Luncheons for undergraduates, academic conferences, research fellowships for graduate students, support for faculty research, and a postdoctoral fellowship program." See http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Political_Theory_Project.

²² The Madison Program is "[d]edicated to the pursuit of scholarly excellence in the fields of constitutional studies and political thought." See <http://web.princeton.edu/sites/jmadison>.

²³ The Academy's purpose is to advance "scholarly research and teaching" on "[f]ree market capitalism, limited government, individual rights, individual responsibility, enterprise and entrepreneurship," which it holds to be "the foundation of a productive and successful American society." See <http://aclg.uif.uillinois.edu>.

²⁴ See <http://www.theahi.org>.

²⁵ Phyllis M. Krutch, "Seven Principles for Effective Boards," testimony before the Governor of Virginia's Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education, September 8, 1999. Available at: <http://www.epi.elps.vt.edu/BRC/K.html>.

²⁶ See Martin Anderson, *Impostors in the Temple: The Decline of the American University*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992, pp. 195-196.

²⁷ University Trusteeship in the Enron Era, an address to the National Association of College and University Attorneys, June 26, 2002, published in *For Trustees Only*, American Council of Trustees and Alumni, January 2004. Also Jose Cabranes, "How to Make Trustees Worthy of Their Constituents' Trust," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 18, 2002. Available at: <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v49/i08/08b02001.htm>.

²⁸ "Why Accreditation Doesn't Work and What Policymakers Can Do About It: A Policy Paper of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni," July 2007; George C. Leef and Roxana D. Burris, *Can College Accreditation Live up to Its Promise?* Washington: American Council of Trustees and Alumni (2002).

²⁹ Drew Miller, "What Trustees Must Do, After A.U." Available at: <http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2006/05/16/miller>

³⁰ Richard T. Ingram, "Are You an Activist Trustee?" *Annual Report*, Washington: Association of Governing Boards (1997).

³¹ See Jeffrey Selingo, "Trustees More Willing Than Ready," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 11 May 2007. Available at: <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v53/i36/36a01101.htm>.

³² See Public Agenda's *Squeeze Play* poll, the AAUP's "Americans' Views of Political Bias in the Academy and Academic Freedom" poll, and Zogby Interactive's poll of public perceptions of faculty, available at: <http://www.zogby.com/news/ReadNews.dbm?ID=1334>.

³³ The Commission's conclusion was devastating, suggesting strongly that parents and taxpayers have no proof that the vast investment they make in higher education is worth it. Not surprisingly, the Commission called upon universities to increase productivity, cut costs, and to improve student learning – issues that trustees are in a unique position to promote. Citations to the report and what trustees can do are outlined in *The Spellings Commission and You: What Higher Education Trustees Can Do in Light of the Department of Education's Recent Report*, American Council of Trustees and Alumni, October 2007.

³⁴ *Higher Education Trustees Can Do in Light of the Department of Education's Recent Report*, American Council of Trustees and Alumni, October 2007.

³⁵ See ACTA's memo to the Dartmouth Association of Alumni at <http://www.goacta.org/press/Press%20Releases/dartmouthmemo7-30-07.pdf>. See also *Inside Higher Ed's* coverage of corruption at the University of California at <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2005/11/07/uc> and <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2007/08/14/dynes>.

³⁶ Jerry L. Martin, "Alumni Have More to Offer Colleges than Just Cash," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Oct. 13, 1995: "In fact, overspecialization may make it more difficult for a narrowly focused scholar than for a well-educated alumnus to understand the kind of liberal education that an undergraduate needs to succeed after graduation. . . . Some professors care more about high salaries and low teaching loads than about teaching what students need to learn. Worse yet, some professors are more strongly committed to their own political and ideological agendas than to reasoned debate and the free exchange of ideas. Indeed, some of them now openly contend that all scholarship and teaching are, and ought to be, political. This viewpoint, though, has no visible support among alumni. Compared with such professors, many alumni show a more accurate understanding of academic freedom."

³⁷ This prescription, of course, makes good sense. Professors have academic freedom in exchange for a sacred trust—that they will use the freedom they are given over the classroom and over academic policy for valid educational ends, not to pursue their own pet causes or personal politics. In the past, the AAUP and others have balked at this idea. Both former and current AAUP heads have argued that faculty should be left alone when it comes to academic freedom. "It should be evident," Roger Bowen claimed in *The Montana Professor*, "that the sufficient condition for securing the academic freedom of our profession is the profession itself." See Roger W. Bowen, "Institutional Autonomy, Academic Freedom and Academic Responsibility," *Montana Professor*, Fall 2006, 25. Available at: <http://mtprof/msun.edu/Fall2006/default.html>.

³⁸ See *Statement on Board Accountability*, Association of Governing Boards, January 2007, pp. 2, 7. Available at: <http://www.agb.org/user-assets/Documentns/AccountabilityStatementFinalforWeb.pdf>.

³⁹ As the highest-level elected officials in their states, governors are the key to the cultural transformation. In most states, they appoint trustees and state education officials. They can set an agenda for change. They shape priorities for funding, can make use of the bully pulpit to identify key higher education issues, and can give the trustees a mandate to address those issues. Voters, too, have a pivotal role to play. They must demand that their governors appoint informed, engaged higher education officials who have the time and dedication necessary to tackle the absorbing and difficult work of trusteeship.

⁴⁰ Notably, in his letter to the Board of Regents recommending that Churchill be fired, President Hank Brown cited the important role of alumni and trustees in higher education reform. Brown wrote: "In 1995, I co-authored an article with Senator Joe Lieberman in which Senator Lieberman and I urged alumni and trustees to speak up on behalf of academic values and to encourage our colleges and universities to teach that, '[i]n the American marketplace of ideas, we should fight ideas with which we disagree by offering a better idea, not by denying others the right to voice their concerns.'" Letter to Patricia Hayes, May 25, 2007, p. 8, citing "Academic Freedom: Alumni Can Help Fight the PC War, Sens. Hank Brown and Joe Lieberman, *Roll Call*, Vol. 41, No. 6 (July 17, 1995).

⁴¹ Kavita Kumar, "UM websites will track grievances against professors," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 5, 2007.

⁴² Clara Lovett, president emerita of Northern Arizona University, issued a pioneering criticism of search firms in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and has worked with universities around the country to produce better searches, including CUNY, Cal State, and the University of Colorado. See Clara M. Lovett, "The Dumbing Down of College Presidents," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 5, 2002.

⁴³ The report is available at: http://www.nonprofitpanel.org/final/Panel_Final_Report.pdf.

⁴⁴ See Anne D. Neal, "Ensuring Quality Trusteeship in Higher Education," statement to Senate Finance Committee Roundtable, March 3, 2006. Available at: <http://www.goacta.org/publications/speeches-testimony/SenateStatement3-3-06.pdf>.

⁴⁵ A common conflict of interest involves presidents who serve as voting board members. The issue is taken up by the Urban Institute in a 2007 study entitled *Nonprofit Governance in the United States*: “having the CEO/executive director serve as a voting board member was negatively related to board activity level in financial oversight, setting policy, community relations, and trying to influence public policy, and positively related to none.” The report is available online at: http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411479_Nonprofit_Governance.pdf. Also instructive is the example of the Nature Conservancy. After negative publicity exposed irregularities in the organization’s governance practices, an independent panel that included former Harvard president Derek Bok recommended that the president/CEO not serve on the governance or any other committee. The Conservancy took the panel’s advice, and now announces on its website that the full board handles major strategic issues. See <http://www.nature.org/aboutus/leadership>.

⁴⁶ Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should be Learning More*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, 334-335.

⁴⁷ Lewis, *Excellence Without a Soul*, 15.

⁴⁸ Donald Kagan, “As Goes Harvard,” *Commentary*, September 2006. Available at: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/printArticle.cfm?id=10108>.