

REFORMING THE POLITICALLY CORRECT UNIVERSITY

A Research Project of AEI's National Research Initiative

THESE FIFTEEN STUDIES BY EIGHTEEN SCHOLARS ARE BEING RELEASED ON NOVEMBER 14, 2007, AND WILL BE GATHERED ALONG WITH THREE ADDITIONAL STUDIES IN A FORTHCOMING VOLUME TO BE PUBLISHED BY THE AEI PRESS IN 2008.

Summary

1. “By the Numbers: The Ideological Profile of Professors”

Daniel Klein of George Mason University and Charlotta Stern of Stockholm University summarize and assess research on the ideology, policy views, voter registration, and voting behavior of university faculty.

2. “Groupthink in Academia: Majoritarian Departmental Politics and the Professional Pyramid”

Klein and Stern argue that organizations that can self-select their membership tend to select and reward members with views similar to those of the dominant sector of the group. Since the predominant academic orientation is liberal or progressive, university faculties have become more ideologically homogenous over time.

3. “Left Pipeline: Why Conservatives Don’t Get Doctorates”

Matthew Woessner of Pennsylvania State University Harrisburg and April Kelly-Woessner of Elizabethtown College find that conservative students are substantially less likely to want to pursue doctorates than their similarly situated liberal and progressive peers.

4. “The Vanishing Conservative—Is There a Glass Ceiling?”

Stanley Rothman of Smith College and S. Robert Lichter of George Mason University find strong statistical evidence—in a national survey of university professors—that socially conservative academics must publish more books and articles to get the same jobs as their liberal peers.

5. “Campus Speech Codes: Absurd, Tenacious, and Everywhere”

Greg Lukianoff, president of the Foundation of Individual Rights in Education, finds that speech codes have seemingly increased in number, despite the 1989–1995 legal opinions declaring speech codes unconstitutional or unlawful.

6. “College Conformity 101”

National Association of Scholars author Peter Wood shows how the modern pursuit of “diversity” stems from Justice Lewis Powell’s opinion in the 1978 *Bakke* case, which declared that intellectual diversity in the classroom was essential to good teaching.

7. “The Negative Influence of Education Schools on K–12 Curriculum”

Sandra Stotsky of the University of Arkansas studies and analyzes the dominant pedagogical theory guiding most education schools and the training of this country’s teachers. Stotsky finds that this curriculum provides an ideologically motivated interpretation and inaccurate representation of history.

8. “When Is Diversity Not Diversity: A Brief History of the English Department”

Paul Cantor, a professor of English at the University of Virginia, examines literature departments and finds that they were much more intellectually diverse in the 1950s. Today, a stultifying uniformity reigns, as many literature departments study a variety of works only through the lenses of race, class, and gender oppression.

9. “Linguistics from the Left: The Truth about Black English That the Academy Doesn’t Want You to Know”

John McWhorter of the Manhattan Institute shows how the field of linguistics has departed from its original mission of investigating how languages and dialects differ among groups, and has increasingly become a vehicle for leftist political advocacy.

10. “Why Political Science Is Left But Not PC: Causes of Disunion and Diversity”

James Ceaser of the University of Virginia and Robert Maranto of Villanova University find that political science is less rigidly liberal than other disciplines. Yet, with roughly 80 percent of all political scientists being left-of-center, classroom discussions are nonetheless constrained.

11. “Political Correctness in the Science Classroom”

Noretta Koertge, professor emeritus at Indiana University, points out that science curriculums are being distorted for the sake of a politically correct “diversity” narrative and that, as a result, absurd claims are often made about the accomplishments of ancient Egyptians, Africans, Muslims, and other indigenous peoples.

12. “The American University: Yesterday, Today—and Tomorrow”

James Piereson, president of the William E. Simon Foundation, claims that the modern university is the product of the classical liberal ideal of free thought and that this ideal has found itself increasingly displaced by other priorities.

13. “Reforming the Politically Correct University: The Role of Alumni and Trustees”

Anne Neal of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni argues that since most institutions need checks and balances to thrive, trustees and alumni have a responsibility to take an active concern in the state of the academy, rather than merely leaving the job to academics.

14. “Where We’ve Come From and Where We Should Go: The Route to Academic Pluralism”

Stephen Balch of the National Association of Scholars explains and advocates the movement to create within universities more centers dedicated to exploring and representing conservative, traditional liberal, and libertarian perspectives.

15. “To Reform the Politically Correct University, Reform the Liberal Arts”

John Agresto, president emeritus of St. John’s College in Santa Fe, argues that a liberal arts culture should encourage challenges to all reigning orthodoxies, rather than merely substituting a particular new orthodoxy for the old.