



Scholarly Associations Gone Wild: Stop Publicly Funding Scholarly Groups That Trade Academics for Advocacy

Jay P. Greene and Frederick M. Hess

August 2024

Key Points

- Academic associations have a long history of connecting scholars and promoting scholarship, but too many today have traded their scholarly mission for a political one.
- Of the 99 academic associations examined, 81 percent have issued at least one official position on race or affirmative action, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Israel-Hamas conflict, immigration, or climate change. These statements almost uniformly reflect progressive orthodoxy.
- We estimate that public colleges and universities spend nearly \$200 million a year subsidizing faculty dues and paying conference registration fees to politicized associations. While faculty certainly have a right to participate in such organizations, they have no right to do so with public funds.
- We recommend that public officials stop allowing faculty to use public funds to pay dues and fees to associations that adopt political positions.

Higher education is thick with academic associations. These associations can play a vital role in fostering a robust exchange of ideas and cultivating a community of scholars. Unfortunately, today, too many have drifted from this mission and now operate more like political entities than scholarly ones.

On the one hand, this is to be expected. In an academic world rife with ideologues, it would be surprising if scholarly associations had somehow remained immune. On the other hand, this politicization raises hard questions about these entities' nature and purpose. It also poses a simpler query for policymakers: Why should the public subsidize these organizations? While the members of politicized associations clearly have

a First Amendment right to assemble and share their views, they have no special claim on the public purse.

And these academic associations are hardly cheap. We estimate that the average membership costs \$193 per year and the average conference registration is \$471. Each year, according to our calculations (which we'll explain a bit further on), these fees add up to about \$359 million, of which \$227 million comes from faculty at *public* colleges and universities. To the extent these funds support organizations engaged in political advocacy, it's a betrayal of academic integrity and taxpayers, who should not be obligated to subsidize professors' political activity.

Background

In the US today, there are thousands of academic associations, including the American Chemical Society, the American Historical Association, and the American Statistical Association. These scholarly organizations have existed for centuries, with the earliest “learned societies” dating back to 14th-century Europe.¹ The first in the US was the Massachusetts Medical Society, which was founded in 1781.² Their activities vary, but academic associations generally publish scholarly journals, host conferences, send out newsletters, put on talks and events, and lobby for research funding.³

So far, so good. Given that scholars in a particular discipline are scattered across thousands of colleges in the US (and around the globe), these associations can act as useful connective tissue. Indeed, a century ago, before the internet or jet travel, these associations’ ability to promulgate knowledge and create a community of scholars was invaluable.

Connectivity and community, however, are no longer the challenges they once were. It’s far easier now to disseminate research while debate unfolds in an endless loop over Zoom calls, social media posts, and email chains. As a result, these associations’ scholarly value is less clear. Moreover, their value depends on their ability to advance research, generate knowledge, and uphold academic norms.

At a minimum, associations should foster free inquiry and provide a forum for independent scholarly thought. Too many associations no longer do so. By repeatedly taking positions on divisive political issues, they delimit the bounds of permissible thought and permit advocacy to erode their commitment to academic inquiry.

This politicization is corrosive to academic research, which requires that scholars be free to challenge strongly held assumptions and benefits from an academic community that makes room for discordant views and alternative analyses. Issuing collective edicts is at cross-purposes with this ethos, especially when proclamations intimate that heterodox scholarship is outside the bounds of permissible thought (as when social science or public health associations adopt party lines on contested issues like affirmative action, climate change, policing, and gender).⁴

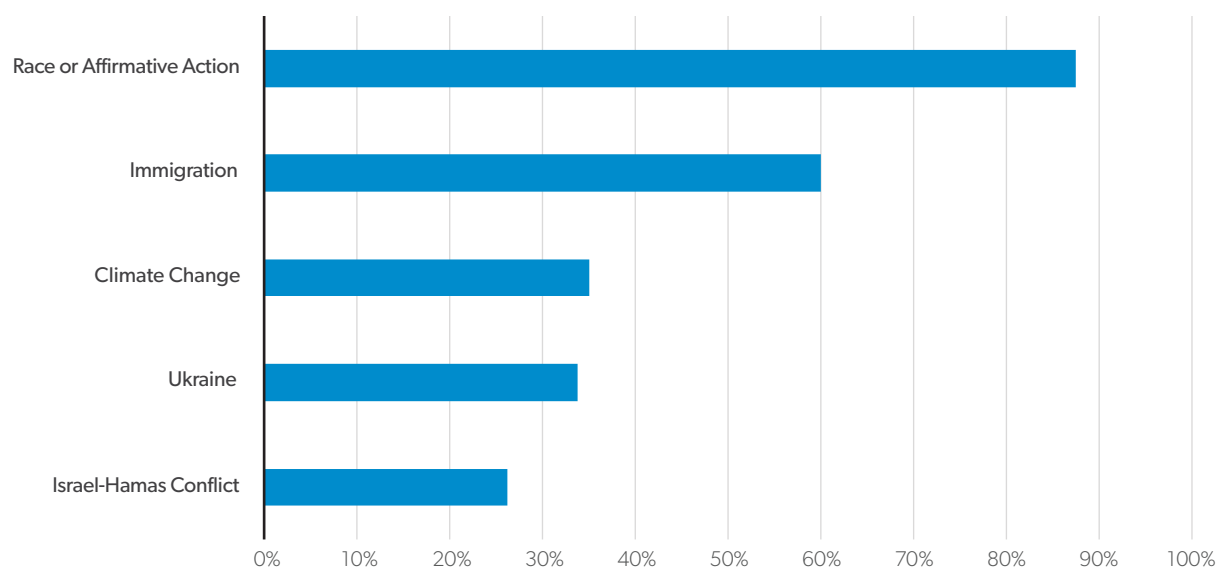
Now, most members of a given association have little to do with proposing or endorsing any given diktat. Rather, associations’ executive directors and a small number of activist board members who are more ideologically invested than their peers tend to push for ideological statements. Indeed, the most “scholarly” scholars tend to be more immersed in teaching and research than in politics, which is what allows academic activists to co-opt associations. Most members have no interest in picking fights and just want an excuse to spend four days on the university’s tab at the annual conference in New Orleans or San Diego, where they can reconnect with friends and catch up on professional gossip. But the result is that political stances get enshrined in formal association policies, held up as professional norms, and parroted in public forums, distorting these associations’ academic mandate in the process.

University policies vary, but full-time faculty typically receive a modest budget each year to cover membership, registration, and travel to academic conferences.⁵ For example, the University of Texas provides \$1,400 per professor for travel expenses.⁶ The University of North Dakota funds up to \$2,000 per professor for domestic conference travel and \$3,000 for intercontinental travel.⁷ The University of Cincinnati provides up to \$1,500 for domestic conference travel.⁸ Since these amounts often do not cover all costs, academics frequently request and receive additional support from their departments. Faculty who generate grant funding also routinely use a portion of those funds to pay the costs of membership, registration, and conference travel. Of course, when those funds (whatever their original provenance) are received by faculty at public institutions, they become public moneys. Part-time faculty and graduate students may pay these expenses out of pocket, but full-time faculty are reimbursed for many or most of them.⁹

Methods

We examined 99 academic associations that broadly represent the range of fields found at flagship state universities and determined whether they had taken public stances on five politically charged issues: race or affirmative action, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Israel-Hamas conflict, immigration, and climate change.

Figure 1. Associations with at Least One Statement, by Topic



Source: Authors' calculations.

We compiled a list of 99 university departments by examining the organizational structure of several major public universities. A Google search using the names of those 99 departments, along with the term “academic association,” produced the set of associations identified for this study. For example, a search for “History Department” and “academic association” yielded the American Historical Association. This approach did not necessarily identify the largest or highest-status academic associations in a given field, but it yielded a sample of the most prominent.

For each of the five issues listed above, we searched the academic association’s website for official organizational positions, which often come in the form of press releases, open letters, or statements. While some of the positions might seem innocuous, they set a precedent that scholarly associations will adopt official stances on contested issues. We deemed associations to have taken an official position on an issue if they announced a formal stance on any subject that could be a matter of scholarly examination and dispute. For example, associations lamenting police brutality presuppose that police brutality is a widespread problem requiring policy solutions. While some view that position as obviously correct, the reality is that it’s a matter of contentious scholarly dispute.¹⁰ We

recorded whether academic associations took any official positions on contested social or political matters.

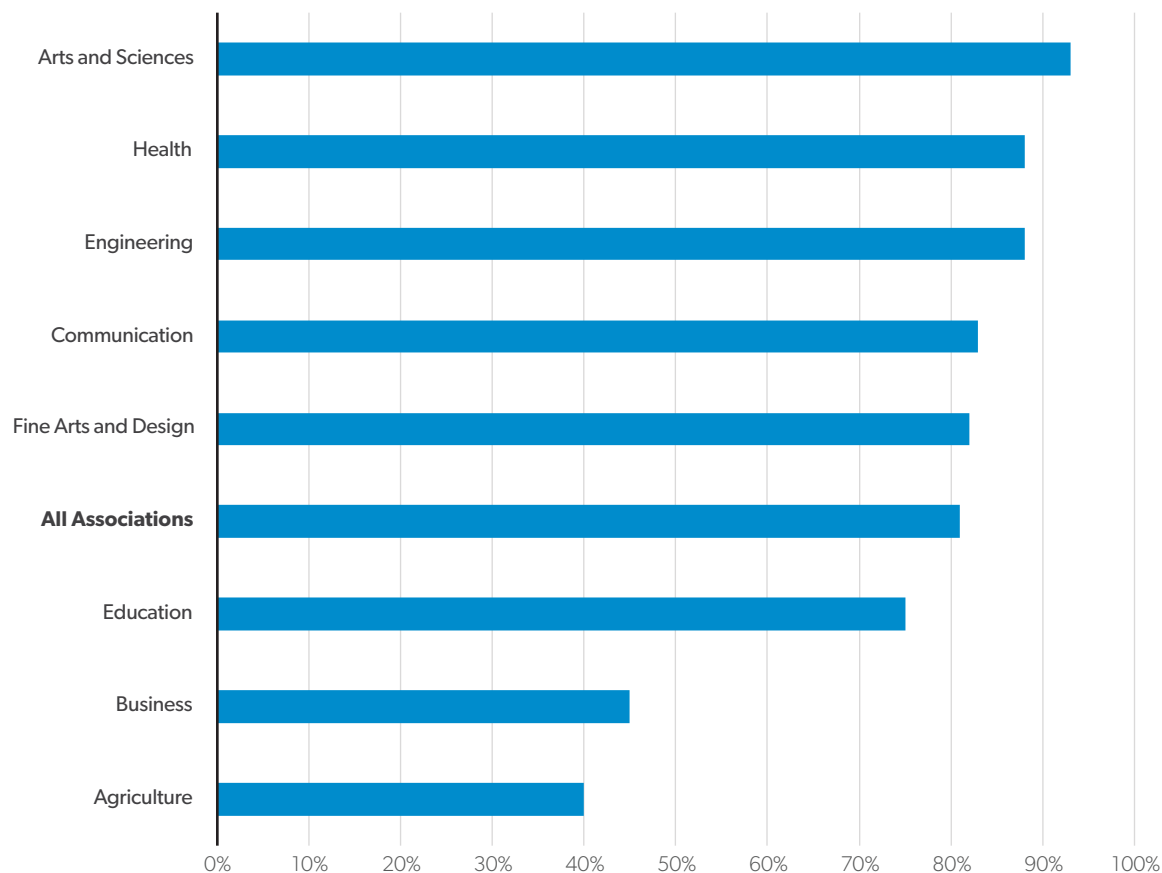
Findings

Of the 99 associations we examined, 81 percent have issued at least one official position on a contested social or political issue. If an association took an official position on one issue, it tended to take positions on several issues. Three-quarters of the associations that took any position had stances on more than one issue.

As Figure 1 shows, race or affirmative action was the most common issue on which academic associations took an official position. Eighty-eight percent of associations that took an official position on any issue took one on race or affirmative action. The next most common issue was immigration, at 60 percent. For climate change and Ukraine, the shares were 35 and 34 percent, respectively. Of those that adopted a position on at least one issue, 26 percent did so on the Israel-Hamas conflict.

The lion’s share of academic associations take official positions (Figure 2). There is no obvious difference in position-taking proclivity between the associations in the hard sciences, social sciences, or humanities. Among associations whose members are mostly in the arts and sciences, over 90 percent have official posi-

Figure 2. Percentage of Academic Associations with Political Statements



Source: Authors' calculations.

tions on at least one contested issue. Just under 90 percent of associations for faculty in engineering have adopted official positions. The figure varies from 70 to 90 percent for associations serving faculty in education, health, design, and the fine arts. The only areas in which associations are noticeably less likely to adopt positions are agriculture and business, where just under half do so in each field.

Associations routinely take positions on issues that seem far from their fields of study. For example, the American Mathematical Society issued an official apology for its “failure to effectively combat the compounded effects of racism.”¹¹ The nation’s mathematicians also issued a statement that “strongly condemns the Russian invasion of Ukraine” while “calling for an immediate halt to these hostilities and violations of international law.”¹²

Following the death of George Floyd, the American Society for Engineering Education declared that Floyd’s murder “was part of a pervasive pattern and practice of

learned, ingrained, and automatic behaviors that have and will require persistent, consistent, and resistant action to limit and eventually reverse.”¹³

The American Physical Society (APS), which represents physicists, has an entire web page devoted to its official positions on “education,” “national policy,” “human rights,” and “ethics and values.” It condemns the Russian invasion of Ukraine; urges “actions that will reduce the emissions and ultimately the concentration, [*sic*] of greenhouse gases as well as increase the resilience of society to a changing climate”; and “declares its support for the rights and freedoms in the [UN’s] Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”¹⁴ The American Statistical Association issued an official “response to President Trump’s [2017] executive order on visas and immigration.”¹⁵

Academic associations in the humanities and social sciences show a similar taste for political declarations. In June 2020, the Modern Language Association issued a statement (joined by nine other organizations)

condemning “the systemic racism in police forces, in educational institutions, and throughout society.”¹⁶ The American Philosophical Association joined a statement “in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and with people around the world, including in Russia, in condemning the ongoing acts of aggression against the Ukrainian people and territory by the agents and armed forces of the Russian Federation.”¹⁷ The American Sociological Association (ASA) issued a “call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza,” adding that “the ASA supports members’ academic freedom, including but not limited to defending scholars’ right to speak out against Zionist occupation.”¹⁸

There is no evidence of intellectual heterodoxy in the statements issued. They uniformly depict America as systemically racist, endorse race-based college admissions, oppose restrictions on immigration, deem climate change a catastrophic threat, denounce the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and oppose Israel’s military action in Gaza. In other words, they reflect the dogma one might expect from Democratic officials in Chicago, New York, or San Francisco. Agree or not, there is nothing obviously academic or scholarly about any of this.

The sole exceptions to this ideological homogeneity were statements issued by two of the 21 associations that opined on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and one of those pro-Israel statements is more than two decades old. In 2002, the APS opposed efforts to boycott Israeli scientists, saying, “The APS strongly opposes attempts to isolate any scientific community.”¹⁹ Similarly, in October 2023, the Association for Jewish Studies “unequivocally condemn[ed] Hamas for killing and kidnapping hundreds in Israel, targeting civilians, and perpetrating horrific atrocities.”²⁰ The 19 other academic associations that weighed in on the conflict issued statements that were unswervingly hostile toward Israel. On the other four issues, every statement (without exception) could have been lifted from the Democratic Party platform.

Some of the associations have adopted such strident positions that taxpayers and public officials might be shocked to learn they are subsidizing them. For example, the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) has issued six public statements expressing hostility toward Israel since Hamas attacked the Jewish state on October 7. In the most recent, MESA “condemn[s]

in the strongest possible terms the ongoing attack on Gaza by the state of Israel,” the “accelerating scale of genocidal violence being inflicted on the Palestinian population,” and the “cultural genocide that is the result of the wanton destruction . . . of the Gaza Strip.”²¹

The ASA responded to the Supreme Court decision ending racial preferences in university admissions by declaring that it “disagrees vigorously with the majority opinion and the reasoning behind it given that the accumulation of disadvantages based on race throughout American history cannot be undone without proactive policies and practices aimed at rectifying past discrimination and exclusion.”²²

The Public Cost

In sum, 80 of the 99 academic associations we examined adopted an official position on at least one of the five issues in question. We estimate that these 80 associations have 587,000 members and roughly 293,000 conference attendees. Membership dues and conference registration fees are often paid by public universities. Given that, on average, membership costs \$193 and registration costs \$471, public universities are providing these 80 academic associations with about \$163 million in yearly revenue.

To arrive at those figures, we first searched for each association’s total reported membership. Some organizations included both professional and academic members, requiring that we estimate the academic share. Information on the number of members was sometimes missing, so we estimated those numbers based on those of similar organizations for which the information was available.

We then found the annual membership cost for each organization on its website. When the cost was differentiated by salary or status, we used the dues charged to a “regular” member earning \$100,000 per year (roughly the national average for postsecondary faculty).²³ The cost for conference registration was on each association’s website. If that cost was differentiated by when attendees registered, we recorded the rate that was neither an “early bird” discount nor an on-site surcharge.

In total, we tallied 726,000 members in the 99 academic associations. Given that 63 percent of all faculty

work at public colleges and universities, we estimate that 457,000 of those members (63 percent) work in public institutions.²⁴ These associations earn a substantial share of their revenue from membership dues and conference registration fees. We estimated revenue earned from dues by multiplying the average number of association members by the average cost of dues. For revenue earned by conference registration fees, we assumed that half of an association's members attend the annual conference and then multiplied that number by the average registration fees.

Of course, there is more than one academic association per field—meaning there are many more than the 99 we examined. Meanwhile, the National Center for Education Statistics reports that there are 842,000 full-time faculty in higher education.²⁵ If 63 percent of those faculty work in public institutions, that's 527,000. If we assume that public funds pay for one association membership for each full-time faculty member and one conference registration for half that number, the total public outlay to these associations is about \$227 million. (This excludes the cost of conference travel, food, and lodging, since that revenue goes to airlines, restaurants, and hotels rather than the associations.) If 81 percent of associations take official positions, as we find here, that suggests public institutions spend \$183 million each year to subsidize academic organizations engaged in political activity.

Now, this estimate is admittedly imprecise. For instance, we assume public universities pay membership dues for one academic association for each full-time faculty member and conference registration for half that number. This estimate may be too high. Then again, academics may belong to multiple associations or attend multiple conferences. Further, we aren't considering the institutional membership dues many universities pay to academic associations, the subscription fees university libraries or individual faculty pay to associations to access their journals, or the cost of sponsorships or in-kind contributions. Ultimately, we think it's more likely we're underestimating than overestimating the amount of public funding that's being funneled into these academic associations.

Public institutions should not be using public funds to subsidize the political activity of faculty members or academic associations. When taxpayers help underwrite the costs of public universities, they should

expect those funds will promote educational—not political—ends.

What's the Remedy?

Once upon a time, academic associations played a crucial role in disseminating research, advancing science, and connecting communities of far-flung scholars. In the 21st century, these roles are less essential, as new technologies have made it remarkably easy for scholars to publish, collaborate, share ideas, and engage with one another from a distance. To the extent academic associations still have a necessary role, it is as a reliable, trusted guarantor of research fidelity and an honest broker for the field.

Today, though, many academic associations are disinclined to fulfill this scholarly mandate. Rather than serving as guardians of the discipline, cultivating room for scholarly dissent, and protecting members from the pressures of campus groupthink, many have opted to be avatars of progressive orthodoxy. This makes them superfluous and detrimental.

For perspective, it's worth considering how much \$183 million really is. This figure—which subsidizes these ostensibly "academic" advocacy groups—is roughly what George Soros and his affiliated nonprofits spent on the 2022 midterm cycle, and it's many times the amount Republican donor Peter Thiel spent during that cycle.²⁶ Again, professors, just like Soros and Thiel, have the right to organize and agitate. But just as there's no expectation that public funds should subsidize Soros's or Thiel's efforts, the same holds true for these no-longer-academic entities.

If academic associations were private entities supported by private funds, their loss of scholarly purpose would be troubling but not a public concern. That logic no longer applies when they collect vast sums of public funds. The legislators who fund public institutions and the trustees who oversee them should insist that no more public funding flow to these organizations. They can surely find better uses for these funds.

State policymakers should prohibit public colleges or universities from spending public moneys on membership dues or conference registration in organizations that have adopted official stances on contested political issues in the past five years or that fail to disavow such statements. For definitional purposes,

a “contested political issue” might be any matter that has been the subject of proposed legislation at the state or federal level in the past five years.

To enforce this policy, faculty members at public institutions would have to warrant that any organization whose dues or conference registration for which they were requesting funds had operated consistently with its academic mandate. If an organization were subsequently found to be in violation, faculty would be liable for repaying institutional funds—and the association would be ineligible for further public funds until it demonstrated compliance with its academic mandate. To simplify monitoring, public universities should collect a list of all academic associations for which they pay membership dues or conference registration fees and publicly report it on an annual basis.

Some academics will scoff at this proposal and argue that these organizations and conferences fill an important role. They will argue that for them, it’s not about the politics or the position-taking. They will say they need an organization that allows them to maintain professional ties, discover new scholarship, and share research. They will contend that the existing organization is the only game in town. Such academics should take heart. We’d suggest that, given their concerns, ending public subsidies for politicized associations will have two salutary effects.

First, it will strengthen the hand of the apolitical majority in many of these associations. Faced with consequences for politicization, less-political

members will have cause to assert themselves and restore these associations to their ostensible charge. Even if they continue to be dominated by the politically minded, constraining these associations’ ability to wade into political disputes will have substantial benefits.

Second, if these associations choose not to change their ways, it will create a large pool of public resources available for faculty who choose to start or join new, apolitical research associations. We are willing to wager that the result would be a wave of new academic societies that took their scholarly charge more seriously.

Finally, it’s worth making clear that ending public support for these organizations would in no way infringe on First Amendment protections. Faculty should be wholly free to join these organizations and pay for them out of their own pocket. If they choose to pay for membership dues, conference fees, or journal subscriptions on their own dime, that’s their prerogative. They can join these associations, just as they can freely join the National Rifle Association (NRA) or the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). But, when it comes to the NRA or the ACLU, no one expects taxpayers to defray costs. That’s because there is a First Amendment right to free association but not taxpayer-subsidized participation in politically active organizations.

Whether that \$183 million in public moneys is devoted to more fruitful purposes or to newly serious scholarly associations, the public and its elected officials will be better off.

About the Authors

Jay P. Greene is a senior research fellow in the Center for Education Policy at the Heritage Foundation.

Frederick M. Hess is a senior fellow and the director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, where he works on K–12 and higher education issues.

Notes

1. Environmental Studies Association of Canada, “What Is a Learned Society?,” <https://web.archive.org/web/20130529163615/http://www.esac.ca/about/what-is-a-learned-society>; and Académie des Jeux Floraux, “Académie des Jeux floraux,” <https://web.archive.org/web/20171212140453/http://jeuxfloraux.fr/2.html>.

2. Massachusetts Medical Society, “History,” <https://www.massmed.org/About/History>.

3. Alicia Wise and Lorraine Estelle, “Learned Societies, the Key to Realising an Open Access Future?,” LSE Impact Blog, June 24, 2019, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2019/06/24/learned-societies-the-key-to-realising-an-open-access-future>.

4. As the Cass Review in the United Kingdom illustrated, this kind of pressure can stymie healthy scholarly discourse—with troubling results. Hilary Cass, *Independent Review of Gender Identity Services for Children and Young People: Final Report*,

Cass Review, April 2024, <https://cass.independent-review.uk/home/publications/final-report>.

5. Matt Reed, “The Cost of Not Traveling,” *Inside Higher Ed*, July 23, 2017, <https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/confessions-community-college-dean/cost-not-traveling>.

6. University of Texas at Austin, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, “Faculty Travel Grants,” <https://provost.utexas.edu/the-office/faculty-affairs/faculty-travel-grants>.

7. University of North Dakota, “FIDC Travel Grant,” https://und.edu/academics/ttada/fidc_travel_grants.html#d62e124--1.

8. University of Cincinnati, Taft Research Center, “Faculty Travel,” <https://multisite.uc.edu/taft/research-grants/faculty-travel>.

9. Among others, the Ohio State University provides up to \$1,500 for tenured faculty and \$2,500 for untenured faculty; all full-time faculty at the University of Arkansas are eligible for up to \$1,000 to present research at academic conferences; eligible full-time faculty members at the University of Connecticut can receive up to \$2,200 for academic travel expenses; the University of Buffalo provides up to \$1,000 for conference travel; Indiana University grants up to \$2,000 for travel expenses, including conference attendance; the University of Missouri College of Arts and Science provides up to \$1,500 for domestic conferences and \$2,000 for international conferences; San Diego State University, the State University of New York at Binghamton, Washington State University, and Western Michigan University reimburse conference registration fees with no limit; Louisiana State University will match \$1,000 for academic travel. Links available upon request.

10. See, for example, Roland G. Fryer Jr., “An Empirical Analysis of Racial Differences in Police Use of Force,” Harvard University, July 2017, https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/fryer/files/empirical_analysis_tables_figures.pdf; and Tanaya Devi and Roland G. Fryer Jr., “Policing the Police: The Impact of ‘Pattern-or-Practice’ Investigations on Crime” (working paper, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA, June 2020), https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w27324/w27324.pdf.

11. American Mathematical Society, “American Mathematical Society Statement of Apology,” April 2, 2022, <https://www.ams.org/about-us/governance/policy-statements/apology-statement>.

12. American Mathematical Society, “American Mathematical Society Policy Statement Regarding the Russian Invasion of Ukraine,” March 7, 2022, <https://www.ams.org/about-us/governance/policy-statements/ukraine-statement>.

13. American Society for Engineering Education, “Policy Statement by the American Society for Engineering Education on the Implications of the Death of Mr. George Floyd,” June 2, 2020, <https://aseecmsprod.azureedge.net/aseecmsprod/asee/media/content/about%20ous/pdfs/policy-statement-on-the-death-of-george-floyd-june-2.pdf>.

14. American Physical Society, “Policy Statements,” <https://www.aps.org/about/governance/statements>; American Physical Society, “Russian Invasion of Ukraine,” June 24, 2022, <https://www.aps.org/about/governance/statements/ukraine-invasion>; American Physical Society, “21.4 Statement on Earth’s Changing Climate,” November 10, 2021, <https://www.aps.org/about/governance/statements/changing-climate>; and American Physical Society, “Statement to the United Nations,” November 9, 2018, <https://www.aps.org/about/governance/statements/human-rights>.

15. American Statistical Association, “ASA Issues Statement in Response to President’s Executive Order on Visas and Immigration,” <https://www.amstat.org/news-listing/2021/10/11/asa-issues-statement-in-response-to-president-s-executive-order-on-visas-and-immigration>.

16. Modern Language Association, “MLA Statement Deploring Systemic Racism,” June 2020, <https://www.mla.org/Resources/Advocacy/Executive-Council-Actions/2020/MLA-Statement-Deploring-Systemic-Racism>.

17. American Philosophical Association, “APA Board Endorses SAR Statement in Solidarity with the People of Ukraine,” March 3, 2022, <https://www.apaonline.org/news/597783/APA-board-endorses-SAR-statement-in-solidarity-with-the-people-of-Ukraine.htm>.

18. American Sociological Association, “Resolution for Justice in Palestine,” <https://www.asanet.org/about/governance-and-leadership/election/resolution-for-justice-in-palestine>.

19. American Physical Society, “Against the Call to Boycott Israeli Scientists,” November 10, 2002, <https://www.aps.org/about/governance/statements/israeli-scientist-boycott>.

20. Association for Jewish Studies, “Updated Statement on Israel from the AJS Executive Committee,” October 10, 2023, <https://www.associationforjewishstudies.org/about-ajs/resolutions-policies/statement-from-the-executive-board>.

21. Middle East Studies Association, “MESA Board Joint Statement with CAF Regarding the Ongoing Genocidal Violence Against the Palestinian People and Their Cultural Heritage in Gaza,” March 11, 2024, <https://mesana.org/advocacy/letters-from-the-board/2024/03/11/mesa-board-joint-statement-with-caf-regarding-the-ongoing-genocidal-violence-against-the-palestinian-people-and-their-cultural-heritage-in-gaza>.

22. American Sociological Association, “American Sociological Association Response to the Supreme Court’s Decision on Affirmative Action,” June 30, 2023, <https://www.asanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/statement-on-affirmative-action-june-2023.pdf>.

23. American Association of University Professors, “IPEDS FT Faculty Salaries,” January 29, 2024, <https://data.aaup.org/ipeds-ft-faculty-salaries>.

24. US Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, “Character-

istics of Postsecondary Faculty,” May 2024, <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/csc/postsecondary-faculty>.

25. National Center for Education Statistics, “Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty,” <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/csc/postsecondary-faculty>.

26. Brian Schwartz, “Nonprofit Financed by Billionaire George Soros Quietly Donated \$140 Million to Political Causes in 2021,” CNBC, January 4, 2023, <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/01/04/nonprofit-financed-by-billionaire-george-soros-donated-140-million-to-political-groups-in-2021.html>; and Luis Melgar et al., “Meet the Mega-Donors Pumping Millions into the 2022 Midterms,” *Washington Post*, October 24, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/interactive/2022/top-election-donors-2022>.

© 2024 by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. All rights reserved.

The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) educational organization and does not take institutional positions on any issues. The views expressed here are those of the author(s).