

A CRISIS OF COMPETENCE



The Corrupting Effect of Political Activism in the University of California

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A Report Prepared for the Regents of the University of California
By the California Association of Scholars,
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
1. Why Is It Wrong to Use the University for Political Purposes?	4
1.1 Moral and Legal Objections	4
1.2 The Effect of Politicization on the Quality of Education and Research	5
2. University of California Rules That Prohibit Use of Its Facilities to Advance a Political Ideology	9
3. Common Defenses of Political Activism in Higher Education	12
4. The Evidence from the University of California's Campuses	18
4.1 The Political Orientation of the Faculty	18
4.2 What Is Happening in the Classroom?	30
4.3 Impoverished Education Through Politicized Curricular Choices and Omissions	45
4.4 Required Programs, Core Courses, and General Reading Lists	49
4.5 Campus Events	52
4.6 Disrupted Lectures: Campus Hostility to the Free Expression of Ideas	55
4.7 Administrative Passivity and Complicity	56
5. Educational and Social Consequences of a Corrupted Academy	60
5.1 Evidence of a Sharply Inferior Higher Education	60
5.2 Damage to High School Education	65
5.3 Cancelling the Leveling Effect of Higher Education	67
5.4 The Decline of Respect for Academic Research	69
5.5 Decreasing Respect for Academia in American Society	71
5.6 Damage to the Nation's Cohesion and Sense of Itself	74
6. The Responsibility of the Regents	76

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, study after study has found that a college education no longer does what it should do and once did.¹ Whether these studies look directly at the capabilities of graduates, or instead at what employers find their capabilities to be, the result is the same: far too many college graduates have not learned to write effectively, they can not read and comprehend any reasonably complex book, they have not learned to reason, and their basic knowledge of the history and institutions of the society in which they live is lamentably poor. “An astounding proportion of students are progressing through higher education today without measurable gains in general skills” is the anguished conclusion of a respected national study, entitled appropriately *Academically Adrift*.² Further, students now spend on average little time studying outside the classroom, and the demands made of them by their faculty teachers have been correspondingly reduced.

Is it possible that the University of California is an exception to these national trends? Unfortunately, we can be certain that it is not. First, these national studies all include California, and none of them note any fundamental differences across states. Second, local studies of these issues always confirm the findings of the national studies. For example, the national finding that students now spend relatively little time studying outside the classroom has been confirmed by a study specific to UC that reached identical conclusions. A recent study of higher education in California concludes: “The California that many like to think of as a leader in higher education is average at best and trending in the wrong direction.”³

Public confidence in academia is dropping as the general public begins to understand that a college education is now much less likely to improve reading, writing, and reasoning skills, as well as general knowledge, than it used to. And this is happening just as the cost of a college education has been rising much faster than inflation. Students are being asked to pay considerably more and get considerably less. We are now seeing much increased concern with student debt and rising tuition costs. As this concern about cost joins with the growing concern about quality, the University must soon face a major crisis of public confidence.

The findings of these studies match all too well the specific complaints that are now commonly heard about the manifestations of a politicized higher education: that requirements for coursework in American history and institutions have been dropped, that writing courses often stress writing far less than tendentious political topics; that prescribed books are frequently no more than journalistic presentations of a simple political message instead of the more complex writings appropriate to an

1 Details of these studies together with a fuller treatment of their conclusions can be found in the main body of this report, below.

2 Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011

3 “Consequences of Neglect: Performance Trends in California Higher Education,” Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy, CSU Sacramento, July 2011.

academic context; and that faculty teach *what* to think rather than *how* to think: that is, they demand correct attitudes and beliefs of students more than they require independent reading and thought.

This report is concerned with the corruption of the University of California by activist politics, a condition which, as we shall show, sharply lowers the quality of academic teaching, analysis, and research, and results in exactly the troubling deficiencies that are being found in the studies to which we have referred.⁴ We shall show that this is an inevitable consequence of any substantial influence of radical politics in academia, because its characteristic interests and modes of thought are the very antithesis of those that should prevail in academic life.

“The Regents are responsible to the people, to the faculty, and to the students to see that...the value of the diploma is not diluted, that it maintain its meaning to graduates and to future employers.”

– Regents’ Policy on Course Content

The condition we investigate is now a well-documented pathology of the modern university, but the fact that this problem is not confined to the University of California does not lessen the need to deal with it forthrightly here. If it is a problem everywhere, it is certainly a problem here. If it is something that needs to be dealt with everywhere, it surely needs to be dealt with in the nation’s foremost system of public higher education. According to a recent (2007) Zogby poll, a majority (58%) of the public now believes that the problem of faculty political bias is a very serious one.⁵ Yet our concern is not with political opinions or bias *per se*, but rather with the associated question of competence and quality of education.

When individual faculty members and sometimes even whole departments decide that their aim is to advance social justice as they understand it rather than to teach the subject that they were hired to teach with all the analytical skill that they can muster, the quality of teaching and research is compromised. This is an inevitable result because, as we shall show, these two aims are incompatible with each other, so that the one must undermine the other.

The loss of public confidence is especially significant for an institution which relies on taxpayer funding for its support. Nobody who cares about higher education can be indifferent to a serious decline in the

4 The California Association of Scholars (CAS) is the California state affiliate of the National Association of Scholars. The Board of Directors of the CAS includes: Leila Beckwith, Pediatrics, UCLA; Glynn Custred, Anthropology, CSU East Bay; John Ellis, German Literature, UC Santa Cruz (President); Charles Gesheker, History, CSU Chico (Chairman of the Board); Gerald Gillespie, Comparative Literature, Stanford University (Treasurer); Gail Heriot, Law, University of San Diego; Charles Kesler, Government, Claremont McKenna College; Matthew Malkan, Astronomy, UCLA (Secretary); Harold Pashler, Psychology, UC San Diego; Sylvia Wasson, German, Santa Rosa Community College.

5 See, for example, “Skepticism of Faculty and Tenure” by Scott Jaschik, at www.insidehighered.com/news/2007/07/12/poll, July 12, 2007.

University's reputation, but the Board of Regents has a specific and unique reason to be concerned. Both the Regents' Standing Orders and the constitution of the State of California assign to the Regents (*not* the University's administration) the ultimate responsibility for maintaining the quality and reputation of the University, and that is as it should be: a university that has allowed itself to become politicized to any significant degree is unlikely to be able to reform itself. An especially clear statement of the responsibility of the Regents can be found in their own Policy on Course Content: "The Regents are responsible to the people, to the faculty, and to the students to see that...the value of the diploma is not diluted, that it maintain its meaning to graduates and to future employers. They are responsible to ensure that public confidence in the University is justified." This is why we address our report to the members of the Board of Regents. Our report proceeds as follows:

1. **Rationale:** We set out and explain the reasons why the university must never be used for political purposes, or as an instrument of social change or social justice as defined by particular social and political philosophies. These reasons are of two kinds. The first are akin to moral objections, an example being that the very idea of a democracy is injured when public funds are used for partisan political purposes. The second set of considerations concern the quality of teaching and research. Political purposes are so radically different from academic ones that the former will always corrupt the latter.
2. **Rules:** We review and explain the rationale of the many rules, regulations, and policy statements of the University of California and of the State of California which prohibit the use of the University for political purposes.
3. **Rebuttal:** We set out and rebut some common defenses of the current politicized state of the university. In particular, we deal with the mistaken notion that academic freedom is injured if we object to politicized education, and the equally mistaken notion (which both contradicts and is contradicted by the first) that if most teachers are not abusing their classroom, the problem cannot be serious.
4. **Evidence:** We set out evidence of many different kinds from the campuses which shows both that politicization is a serious problem that now compromises the quality of education and research, and that university regulations which ought to prevent this abuse are no longer being enforced by campus administrations.
5. **Consequences:** We discuss the many serious consequences of the University's failure to maintain itself free of politicization. These include, for example: a college-educated generation poorly prepared for citizenship with respect to writing and reasoning skills, and to knowledge of the history and institutions of its own society; a sharp decline in the quality of high school teaching; and seriously compromised upward mobility for minorities.
6. **Responsibility:** We discuss the origin of the problem, and the responsibility of the Regents to take corrective action. We also make some practical suggestions for Regental action.

1. WHY IS IT WRONG TO USE THE UNIVERSITY FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES?

1.1 Moral and Legal Objections

There are at least three important moral and legal objections to using the University to advance a political purpose.

Injury to Democracy

First, when governments use the resources of the state to help keep themselves in power, they are not in the fullest sense freely elected, and democracy is injured. When we see countries in which governments use their control of the media or of what is taught in their educational systems to maintain themselves in power, we easily recognize an undemocratic system of government. But the same principle applies equally to political parties that are not currently in power. In a genuine democracy elections are conducted on a level playing field, and both the government of the day and its opposition have the same access to the media that everyone else does. It follows that when state-funded institutions are used for political advantage the concept of democracy is injured, whether they are used by the incumbent party to retain power, or by an out-of-power party to promote its return to power. It is for this reason that both federal and state laws prohibit the use of public money or the paid time of public employees for partisan activity. The federal Hatch Act provides that federal employees “May not use their official authority or influence to interfere with an election...[or] engage in political activity while on duty.” In the state of California, the Government Code provides that “It is unlawful for any elected state or local officer, including any state or local appointee, employee, or consultant, to use or permit others to use public resources for a campaign activity, or personal or other purposes which are not authorized by law.” What is prohibited here clearly goes beyond electioneering for a specific candidate for office and includes any kind of promotion of a political candidate, party, or cause. An individual’s political stance is his or her own private matter, and state funds may not be used for private purposes. Another section of the Code makes this even clearer by proscribing any use of “state time, facilities, equipment, or supplies for private gain or advantage.”

Misuse of State Funds

The second legal/moral objection to use of the University for partisan political activity is that state funds are misused when those funds are appropriated by the legislature for one purpose but used by state employees for a quite different one. It is safe to say that the legislature could never be asked to appropriate funds to promote one political party or philosophy at the expense of another without an immediate public outcry. The same result would surely occur were the University to ask for an appropriation of funds so that it could pursue progressive social change. Legislatures do not give money to universities so that they can pursue political goals. That kind of political change is sought at the ballot box, to which students and faculty have the same access as any other members of the public.

Accordingly, when state funds are used either by or in universities to pursue political aims, those funds are used for a purpose for which they were not appropriated, and could never have been appropriated. And that puts at risk the University's relationship with both the legislature and the general public, and raises the question: how long can the University expect the public to stand by and acquiesce in this misuse of public money?

Publicly Funded Resources Used for a Private Purpose

Classroom time at a public university presupposes the expenditure of a good deal of public money. There is the construction, equipping, and maintaining of the building; the salary and benefits of the instructor; and the costs involved in multiple layers of campus administration. Though intangible, classroom time thus represents valuable public property created for a specific public use. An individual's political beliefs, on the other hand, are a private matter, and his or her wish to promote them is a private, not a public concern. When even five minutes of class time is used to promote an instructor's political beliefs, public property has essentially been converted to a private use. We have no difficulty in recognizing that this has happened when, say, a piece of university equipment is stolen—that too is the conversion of property paid for with public funds to a private use, which is part of the definition of theft. But when we compare these two cases, it is hard to distinguish them from a moral standpoint. In both, something that belongs to the public is taken by an individual for his or her own use.

1.2 The Effect of Politicization on the Quality of Education and Research

Moral and legal considerations show how the politicization of the classroom damages democratic government and the integrity of public life, but what is most important for the purposes of this report is that politicization has devastating effects on the quality of teaching and research. Put simply, a college education influenced to any significant degree by political activism will inevitably be a greatly inferior education, and the same holds for academic research. Political activism will tend to promote shallow, superficial thinking that falls short of the analytical depth that we expect of the college-educated mind. The habits of thought that it promotes are in every respect the exact opposite of those we expect a college education to develop. There are many reasons why this must be so.

Results Over Process

First, political activism values politically desirable results more than the process by which conclusions are reached. In education, those priorities must be reversed. The core of a college education is disciplined thinking – thinking that responds to evidence and argument while resisting the lure of what we might wish were the conclusion. Disciplined thinking draws conclusions only after it has weighed the facts against all the plausible explanations of those facts. Strong political beliefs will always threaten to break down that discipline and bend the analysis in a direction that political considerations urgently want it to go.

Stunted Intellectual Curiosity

Second, the fixed quality of a political belief system will stifle intellectual curiosity and freedom of thought when it dominates a classroom. In any worthwhile college education, a student's mind must have the freedom to think afresh and to follow wherever facts or arguments lead. But this freedom of movement is constrained when the end process of thought has already been fixed in advance by a political agenda. Students will never learn to think for themselves if their thought processes must always conclude by fitting into a particular set of beliefs. Intellectual curiosity is the indispensable prerequisite for analytical power and depth: you cannot reach the latter unless you have the former. Strong political commitments that dominate the classroom will stunt intellectual curiosity, and that can only mean that they will also stunt the analytical power that is a crucial goal of college education.

Action Over Analysis

Third, unlike educational goals, political goals involve specific actions. The need to act in the real world – to choose this course rather than that – makes us simplify a complex of many different factors so that we can decide among a few practical choices. Action is accordingly a blunt instrument compared to analysis. And so while academic teaching and research aim for intellectual depth, political action must tend toward simplification. If action is allowed to rule over analysis, it will always cripple it. To put this point in a different way: political activism tends toward brief slogans ("stop the war!"), while academic thought is likely to produce much more hedged and uncertain statements that weigh pros and cons, neither of which can be wished away. Academic thought will always try to keep in view a variety of factors, not all of which point in the same direction. Analytical knowledge is more complicated than political rallying cries. The latter are the language of the political street, not of the academy.

Lack of Openness to Competing Ideas

Fourth, political activism and academic thought are polar opposites in the way they deal with alternative explanations. When an academic scholar is becoming persuaded that a difficult research problem can be solved in a particular way, he or she knows that the next step must be a careful look at all the plausible alternative explanations, to see if any of them works as well. But this cannot be a perfunctory process: each of those other possibilities must be given the very best shot, and the most sympathetic hearing. Academics know that they must do this if they are to develop new knowledge that will withstand the scrutiny of other experts in the field, and the test of time. This is the essence of the disciplined thinking that they seek to instill in their students.

But political activists tend to have a very different attitude to alternatives to their own convictions: they must be defeated. They do not deserve sympathetic consideration, for they are at best wrong, at worst evil. A genuinely academic thinker must be able to believe for a moment that his own preferred explanation is wrong, so that he can look very hard at the case for other explanations, but that is almost a psychological impossibility for the political or social activist. A recent statement by the Association

of American Colleges and Universities correctly stressed the importance in higher education of “new knowledge, different perspectives, competing ideas, and alternative claims to truth.”⁶

The importance of this point would be entirely missed if we saw it simply as requiring a fair-minded tolerance of other views. The point goes much deeper. It is precisely by such means that genuinely academic thought proceeds – this must always be one of its core attributes. Academics live by competing ideas and explanations. When activists try to suppress all views but their own, their intolerance is certainly on display, but that is not the point. What really matters is that they are showing us that they are unable to function as academic thinkers, and that they are un-academic in the most fundamental way.

“Academics live by competing ideas and explanations.”

Unwillingness to Rethink

Fifth, when fundamentally new evidence comes to light with respect to any social or political question, another crucial difference emerges. There are two diametrically opposed ways of responding to new evidence. The approach of a disciplined thinker is to set the new evidence in the context of previous explanations of the issue in question to see how the new evidence might change the relative standing of those explanations. Which are advanced, and which are undermined by the new facts? But a person whose mindset is that of a political activist will want to assimilate the new evidence to his or her pre-existing belief system as quickly as possible, and in a way that does not change that system. Unexpected new evidence is a challenge to rethink, and it presents a most valuable opportunity to do so, but the political activist will be too much the captive of an existing mental framework to take advantage of so welcome an opportunity.

Inconsistency

Sixth, political advocacy and academic inquiry differ markedly with respect to intellectual consistency. In political contexts arguments are routinely deployed according to the needs of the moment, so that, for example, Democratic politicians are for congressional hearings and special prosecutors when Republicans sins are involved, but not when a Democratic administration will be placed at risk; and vice versa. In academic contexts, on the other hand, consistency is indispensable. Arguments must always be principled, never opportunistic, because academic teaching and research aim for results that will stand the test of time, not short-term fixes that serve the immediate political needs of the present situation.

⁶ “Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility,” a 2006 statement from the Board of Directors of the AAC&U.

Rejection of the University's Real Mission

We have left until last the most profound of all differences between academic scholars and political activists. It is one that concerns the very idea of the university, and the reason for its existence. Academia is a kind of repository of the accumulated knowledge, wisdom, and cultural achievements of our society; it preserves, studies, and builds upon that knowledge and those achievements. Academics are therefore naturally animated by a profound respect for the legacy of our past, and for the storehouse of knowledge and wisdom that it offers us. Their job is in part to pass it on to the next generation, while building on and modifying it.

But all the instincts of radical activists go in the opposite direction. Their natural tendency is to denigrate the past in order to make the case for the sweeping social change that they seek. Accordingly, they don't look at the past and see accumulated knowledge and wisdom, but instead a story of bigotry, inequality, and racial and sexual prejudice that needs to be swept aside. Political radicals are interested in the utopian future and their never-ending attempts to achieve it, not in the cultural past that must be overcome to get them there.

This is a fundamental difference of temperament, and it will quickly show up in a difference of curricular choices. In studying literature, academic scholars are interested in the great writers who exemplify the imagination and understanding of previous generations at their most powerful, but radical activists ignore these and instead gravitate to those who illustrate the failures of the past. In the study of U.S. history, radical activists focus on those episodes that show the nation's shortcomings rather than its lasting achievements, avoiding the more realistic and balanced approach of academic scholars. Whenever political activism achieves any substantial presence on campus, the study of our civilization's great legacy of wisdom and knowledge will be in the hands of people who are in principle hostile to it; they are the last people to whom this task should be entrusted. They will be far too concerned with fighting the battles of the present to think realistically about what can be learned from the past.

"Political activism is the antithesis of academic teaching and research."

When studies show that recent college graduates are alarmingly ignorant of the history and institutions of this country and of the civilization that produced it, we must understand why this has happened. One very important reason is that from the standpoint of political radicals, that

knowledge would keep old ideas alive, ideas that they wish to replace, but not by competition in which the stronger ideas prevail. Instead, to force the outcome that they want, they ignore or systematically slight those older ideas by removing material that embodies them from the curriculum. But ignorance of our civilization's development cannot be considered a choice among different kinds of knowledge; it is simply ignorance. The radical's choice rests on the assumption that there is no positive storehouse of knowledge that we need to know and build upon, and that assumption amounts to a rejection of the idea of a university.

For all of these reasons, it is beyond any doubt that where radical political activism has substantial influence on college campuses, education will be compromised. Political activism is the antithesis of academic teaching and research. Its habits of thought and behavior are un-academic, even anti-academic. This nation's universities have been the envy of the world precisely because, unlike those of some other countries, they have been free of politicization. We cannot afford to let them proceed further down a path whose disastrous effects are already well known.

2. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA RULES THAT PROHIBIT USE OF ITS FACILITIES TO ADVANCE A POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

It has long been understood that politics in the classroom is a hazard to the quality of a college education. Awareness of this has led to many institutional regulations and to relevant statements of policy by professional associations. In general, these regulations and statements have had two major thrusts. On the one hand, they have protected the instructor's right to form and express opinions on controversial subjects, both outside the classroom and in it, whenever they are germane to the subject of the course. On the other hand, they have also sought to protect against the classroom being used for political rather than educational purposes.

1915 AAUP: How to Teach Controversial Subjects

A justly celebrated statement issued in 1915 by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) sets out both principles and the relationship between them in a way that has made it a bedrock for all discussion since that time:

The university teacher, in giving instruction upon controversial matters, while he is under no obligation to hide his own opinion under a mountain of equivocal verbiage, should, if he is fit for his position, be a person of a fair and judicial mind; he should, in dealing with such subjects, set forth justly, without suppression or innuendo, the divergent opinions of other investigators; he should cause his students to become familiar with the best published expressions of the great historic types of doctrine upon the questions at issue; and he should, above all, remember that his business is not to provide his students with ready-made conclusions, but to train them to think for themselves, and to provide them access to those materials which they need if they are to think intelligently....The teacher ought also to be especially on his guard against taking unfair advantage of the student's immaturity by indoctrinating him with the teacher's own opinions before the student has had an opportunity fairly to examine other opinions upon the matters in question, and before he has sufficient knowledge and ripeness of judgment to be entitled to form any definitive opinion of his own. It is not the least service which a

college or university may render to those under its instruction, to habituate them to looking not only patiently but methodically on both sides, before adopting any conclusion upon controverted issues.

It would be hard to improve on this exemplary statement, yet its sensible and necessary recommendations are now frequently flouted. We should note that in the statement “indoctrination” includes not just overt persuasion, but also one-sided presentations of controversial issues that either fail to set out the “great historic types of doctrine upon the question at issue” or present them only in weak form and/or with undisguised scorn (“without suppression or innuendo”).

Policy Statements at the University of California

The 1915 AAUP statement has been incorporated verbatim into the regulations of many academic institutions nationwide. The recently (2005) amended Policy on Course Content of the Regents still uses language consistent with that statement:

Students who enroll on the campuses of the University of California are parties to a moral and contractual relationship in which the University, on its side, is obligated to provide quality education, to recognize student achievement with grades and degrees which have an accepted meaning for transfer to other institutions, for graduate work, and for careers. The Regents are responsible to the people, to the faculty, and to the students to see that the University is faithful to this contract. They have the responsibility to see that the value of the diploma is not diluted, that it maintain its meaning to graduates and to future employers. They are responsible to ensure that public confidence in the University is justified. And they are responsible to see that the University remain aloof from politics and never function as an instrument for the advance of partisan interest. Misuse of the classroom by, for example, allowing it to be used for political indoctrination, for purposes other than those for which the course was constituted, or for providing grades without commensurate and appropriate student achievement, constitutes misuse of the University as an institution.

We should note the categorical sweep of the last sentence: use of the classroom for political indoctrination violates the fundamental institutional character of a university.

University of California Presidents’ Directives

Essentially this same position can be found in the California state constitution and in the still binding policy directives of a series of UC presidents over the years. For example, Article IX, Section 9 of the constitution of the state of California provides that “The university shall be entirely independent of all political or sectarian influence and kept free therefrom.” A directive by President Clark Kerr in 1961



“[The Regents] are responsible to see that the University remain aloof from politics and never function as an instrument for the advance of partisan interest.”

- Regents’ Policy on Course Content

requires that “University facilities and the name of the University must not be used in ways which will involve the University *as an institution* in the political, religious, and other controversial issues of the day.” Another by President Charles Hitch in 1970 provides that “There are both educational and legal reasons why the University must remain politically neutral. Educationally, the pursuit of truth and knowledge is only possible in an atmosphere of freedom, and if the University were to surrender its neutrality, it would jeopardize its freedom.” And the latest version of the University’s Academic Personnel Manual (APM) states that among the examples of unacceptable faculty conduct is

“Unauthorized use of University resources or facilities on a significant scale for personal, commercial, political, or religious purposes.”

In 2003, the following language (which had been there since 1934) was removed from the APM:

The function of the university is to seek and transmit knowledge and to train students in the process whereby truth is to be made known. To convert or to make converts is alien and hostile to this dispassionate duty. Where it becomes necessary in performing this function of a university, to consider political, social, or sectarian movements, they are dissected and examined – not taught, and the conclusion left with no tipping of the scales, to the logic of the facts.

The ostensible reason for this change was that “passionate” teaching was not *per se* objectionable. The manner or style of the presentation had no necessary relation to its content, it was argued, so that a passionate presentation did not necessarily entail un scholarly one-sided propaganda.

However, even as he promoted these changes, then-President Atkinson stressed that “few would disagree with....condemnation of using the classroom to make converts to a particular political view or using the university as ‘a platform for propaganda.’” And he drew attention to the continuing relevance of the Regents’ 1970 Policy on Academic Freedom, which still provided that: “[The Regents] are responsible to see that the University remain aloof from politics and never function as an instrument for the advance of partisan interest. Misuse of the classroom by, for example, allowing it to be used for political indoctrination...constitutes misuse of the University as an institution.”

We should note again that these statements cannot be construed narrowly to refer only to advocacy on behalf of candidates or ballot issues in elections. The Kerr directive refers much more broadly to the “political, religious, and other controversial issues of the day.” It is just as clear that the phrase “political indoctrination” has a much broader reference than mere lobbying for votes in a particular election.

All of these policy statements from 1915 to the present day speak of the threat to the integrity of teaching and scholarship when the University is used to advance political agendas, and they explicitly prohibit any use of the university for a political purpose.

3. COMMON DEFENSES OF POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Two attempts to deny that this problem exists to any serious degree are now frequently heard. Both rely on weak arguments and concede a great deal more than they mean to. As a result, they provide us with important evidence that the problem of politicized classrooms is all too real and widespread.

Defense: Most Professors Teach Responsibly

The most commonly heard defense consists of the claim that *most* academic teachers conduct their classes professionally and responsibly, without politicization. But this concedes virtually everything: the word “most” is consistent with the existence of a huge problem. If even ten percent of classrooms are corrupted, that would be horrendous, and yet the word “most” would allow far more than that. The deepest problem of this defense, however, is that it implicitly concedes that the campus mechanisms that used to protect against corruption of the classroom have long since broken down.

If those mechanisms were still working, the occasional abuse would be dealt with as soon as it became known. This is what happened, say, forty years ago. At that time, nobody would have said that “most” classrooms are not politicized. Instead, it might have been said that an occasional case occurs, but that it is soon corrected. The difference between these two statements is enormous. The first admits that there may be a good deal of this objectionable practice about, but not so much that we should be concerned to any great extent. That implies that there is no need to do anything – we need not correct the abuses. But this flies in the face of all that we know about human affairs. Abuses that go uncorrected will proliferate, because it is precisely the act of correcting them that tells everyone that they are abuses. The position formerly held by deans was that if a single case were allowed to go uncorrected, the rule would no longer exist, and abuses would become common. That is the position we are in today. And so this defense implicitly admits that administrators have lost control of the situation and now tolerate politicization – it simply hopes that there is not too much of it. This is a half-hearted and incoherent attitude, one that ducks the question whether an important principle needs protecting. It is no more than an excuse for not grasping a very unpleasant nettle.

Defense: Professors Must Have Academic Freedom

The second of the two common defenses of political activism in the classroom is so inconsistent with the first that the two cannot be used together, though they often are. While the first concedes that politicization is wrong, but hopes that it is not widespread, the second denies that there is a problem

at all. It consists in an appeal to the academic freedom of professors, which would, it is alleged, be violated if their political expression in the classroom were restricted or censored. But this contention confuses the academic freedom of professors with the broader right that they share with all their fellow citizens, the constitutionally guaranteed right of freedom of expression.

Academic freedom is a doctrine that arises in the first place to protect a professor's need to discuss controversial social and political issues *while engaged in teaching a course which requires that the teacher touch upon them*. He or she must be free to take whatever position with respect to those controversial issues seems to him or her dictated by the facts and by the logic of the argument, without fear of reprisal from those in the class or outside it who might be offended by the political attitudes stated or implied in the class. Academic freedom exists so that the instructor's freedom to take the classroom discussion wherever its logic must lead is not restricted.

“Academic freedom is not about our freedom to say whatever we wish to say in the classroom: it is about our freedom to teach a subject in which we have been trained as we think it should be taught”

Outside the classroom, then, the professor enjoys constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression; inside the classroom, he or she enjoys academic freedom. If the two were not fundamentally different ideas, there would be no need for the concept of academic freedom – all we would need in that case would be the right to freedom of expression, which is almost limitless, though with certain well-understood exceptions. The existence of a second, quite separate concept means that a different and more limited idea must be involved. Academic freedom is not about our freedom to say whatever we wish to say in the classroom: it is about our freedom to teach a subject in which we have been trained as we think it should be taught. This second concept is narrower because it must always be subject to two important limiting factors: relevance and competence. deans can not interfere with *bona fide* conclusions that an instructor draws with respect to the subject matter of a course, but they do have a duty to intervene if an instructor persistently uses classroom time to introduce political material irrelevant to the subject matter of the course, or fails to cover material that is essential to an understanding of the subject. Both issues can arise when courses are politicized.

Testing for Relevance and Competence

The test of relevance is the easier of the two to apply. Political commentary that has no relation to course content is an obvious case, but even commentary that initially arises legitimately from course material but develops into a lengthy harangue directed largely at present-day political concerns may also fail the test of relevance.

The test of competence is no less serious. Take, for example, a subject such as the Arab-Israeli conflict. We can distinguish between an academic treatment of that subject and a politically motivated one. We commonly hear two different versions of the dispute: the case made for the Palestinian side, and the case made for the Israeli side. Each tends to appeal to historical events that the other side does not mention and arguments that the other side never considers. Both sides mention historic rights to land, but they are different kinds of historic rights. Both sides talk of people who were displaced from their homes by the 1948 war, but they interpret those displacements differently. “The right of return” is a phrase used in relation to one set, while “illegal settlements” is used in relation to the other. Violence against civilians is mentioned by both sides, but rarely does one side mention violence against all civilians – Jews and Arabs. One side speaks often of who initiated the many wars, the other mainly of the most recent acts of war.

“Genuine academic knowledge is only to be had when all the relevant facts and arguments are considered and weighed against each other.”

While the political case made by each side mentions only some relevant facts and arguments, an academic treatment must consider *all of them*. If an academic teacher does no more than marshal all the facts and arguments that favor one side, he or she is guilty of academic incompetence. Genuine academic knowledge is only to be had when all the relevant facts and arguments are considered and weighed against each other.

It may be tempting to call this an “even-handed” approach, or one fair to both sides, but that would miss the point entirely, since these are political judgments, and “fairness” is a political concept. In an academic context, we need an academic judgment. What students need, and what academic research needs too, is a *competent* account, one that is well informed and neglects no significant fact or argument that bears on an intelligent assessment of the situation. From this point of view, the *unfairness* of politically-motivated one-sidedness is irrelevant. What is relevant is that such a treatment falls far short of the level of analytical understanding to which academic work aspires. It constitutes politically driven academic incompetence, and deans need to make sure that such incompetence does not infect college level teaching.

The Historic, Reasoned AAUP Position on Academic Freedom

That the doctrine of academic freedom has never condoned politicization of the classroom is obvious from the fact that the historic AAUP policy statements promote the former at the same time that they condemn the latter. The 1940 statement says that “Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject.” The 1915 statement which was its forerunner touches

also on the question of competence: "The university teacher, in giving instruction upon controversial matters, should, in dealing with such subjects, set forth justly, without suppression or innuendo, the divergent opinions of other investigators; he should cause his students to become familiar with the best published expressions of the great historic types of doctrine upon the questions at issue."

In 1970, the AAUP issued an interpretive gloss on the meaning of the 1940 statement. It did so because the question had arisen whether the statement forbade controversial material. The AAUP of 1970 insisted that this was not so: "Controversy is at the heart of the free academic inquiry which the entire statement is designed to foster. The passage [in the 1940 statement] serves to underscore the need for teachers to avoid persistently intruding material which has no relation to their subject."

These statements show that the AAUP has led the profession in clarifying the distinction between academic freedom and freedom of expression, and in acting as a watchdog with respect to politicization in academia. And so it must be considered an enormously important indicator of the current extent of politicization in the academy that the AAUP itself is now so politicized that it attempts to confuse these two different concepts. In two recent statements⁷ it argues instead for a notion of academic freedom so broad that it would protect politicization of the classroom. In effect, the present AAUP leadership now promotes the second of the two defenses of politicization. It is no longer the AAUP of 1915, 1940 or 1970. Instead, it now reflects the power of radical politics within the profession.

Today's Radicalized AAUP Position on Academic Freedom

While the present AAUP leadership⁸ knows that it cannot disown the great statements of 1915 and 1940 without causing widespread alarm, it has offered a series of arguments designed to undermine their provisions and make them largely unenforceable and irrelevant. The 1970 gloss made the point that controversy is everywhere in academic work because it always deals with the latest advances in knowledge. Therefore, excluding irrelevance does not exclude controversy. But the present AAUP ignores this interpretation of the 1940 statement to argue that the two can be equated: "At root, complaints about the persistent interjection of 'irrelevant' material concern the interjection of 'controversial' material."⁹ Another passage develops this idea: "The danger in the use of the persistent intrusion standard lies precisely in the tendency to focus on and seek to constrain controversial subject matter [...which] *stifles the free discussion necessary for academic freedom*" [emphasis in the original].¹⁰ This is absurd. Irrelevant material is irrelevant, whether controversial or not, and insisting

7 These statements are "Freedom in the Classroom" (2007) and "Ensuring Academic Freedom in Politically Controversial Academic Personnel Decisions" (2011). Both can be found at the AAUP's website: www.aaup.org, as can the classic 1915 and 1940 statements of principle.

8 The current AAUP president, Cary Nelson, is the author of *Manifesto of a Tenured Radical* (NYU Press, 1997) and a self-described Marxist.

9 "Freedom in the Classroom." AAUP, 2007. <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/comm/rep/A/class.htm>.

10 "Ensuring Academic Freedom in Politically Controversial Academic Personnel Decisions." AAUP, 2011. <http://www.aaup.org/NR/rdonlyres/5F6ABEED-D344-4C61-808F-AD53CF6AC3D8/0/EnsureFreedomReportFinal.pdf>.

on relevance to what the class is about does nothing to stifle free discussion of class material: on the contrary, it preserves valuable class time so that it can be used for relevant as opposed to irrelevant controversies. Everyone involved in higher education ought to have an interest in stopping political ideologues from seizing an opportunity to preach their faith to captive audiences, in so doing neglecting the subject they have contracted to teach. The present AAUP leadership apparently does not.

The new AAUP stance also attempts to make “irrelevance” an idea too problematic to be useful, because there will sometimes be marginal cases where relevance is a judgment call:

In some contexts, the meaning of “irrelevance” is clear...[but] might not a teacher of nineteenth-century American literature, taking up *Moby Dick*, a subject having nothing to do with the presidency, ask the class to consider whether any parallel between President George W. Bush and Captain Ahab could be pursued for insight into Melville’s novel?

Indeed a teacher might, but that does not make the idea of irrelevance problematic. Irrelevance, like any other concept we use, calls for the use of judgment in marginal cases. Complaints against instructors are unlikely to be lodged with respect to political analogies that are sparingly used and well argued, but they may well be when the analogies are used with obsessive frequency, display a consistent partisanship, and strike most observers as so forced that they are obvious excuses to ridicule a hated political opponent.¹¹ A dean will always want to give any instructor the benefit of the doubt when the case is not clear-cut, because his judgment will otherwise fail to be convincing to the instructors’ peers. The fact that there are cases where the judgment might go one way or the other takes nothing away from the fundamental principle that persistently intruding material irrelevant to the subject of a course is an abuse of the classroom that requires decanal action.

In similar fashion, the present AAUP also attempts to make the notion of a competently comprehensive treatment of a subject so problematic as to be unusable: “There are always a potentially infinite number of competing perspectives that can arguably be claimed to be relevant to an instructor’s subject or perspective, whatever that subject or perspective might be. It follows that the very idea of balance and neutrality, stated in the abstract, is close to incoherent.” But the great 1915 AAUP statement shows that the relevant principle is perfectly coherent: “He [the instructor] should cause his students to become familiar with the best published expressions of the great historic types of doctrine upon the questions at issue.” The American Historical Association puts the same point, this time with the emphasis on scholarly integrity: “Integrity in teaching means presenting competing interpretations with fairness and intellectual honesty.”¹²

11 It is worth noting that analogies are least useful when the analogue is itself a hotly disputed one. If situation B is introduced to help interpret situation A, nothing will have been achieved if B turns out to be less, not more clear than A. In that case, the likely result is that everyone will start to argue about B and forget A, though the ostensible point of the exercise was to clarify A.

12 “Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct,” revised 2005.

In both cases the AAUP is arguing that if any marginal cases requiring judgment calls can be found, a concept is rendered unusable. But that is a profound misunderstanding, for virtually every concept that we use has both marginal cases and clear ones. This quibble should never divert us from the fundamental principle: one-sided advocacy of a political position without analysis of pros and cons, both of that position and of its major competitors, is not the appropriate style of an academic teacher. Academics instill understanding, not belief. Once more, the notions of “neutrality” and “balance” are red herrings which cannot be allowed to obscure the real issue, which is the need for a discussion that is competent from an academic standpoint.

The present AAUP leadership would evidently like to disown the 1915 and 1940 statements, but does not dare to do so. And so it quibbles with them. The statements distinguish academic freedom from freedom of expression; the present AAUP tries to blur that distinction. The statements preserve a role for controversy, but the AAUP pretends that they do not. The statements demand a competently full treatment of issues, and condemn introduction of irrelevance; the present leadership pretends that these are unworkable requirements. Why should the present AAUP do this? Evidently, the newly politicized AAUP finds the prohibition on the use of the classroom to advance a political agenda burdensome because its sympathies lie with campus activists.¹³

In the following section of this report we set out various kinds of evidence showing that politicization is a serious problem in the academic world in general and in the University of California in particular. But there is perhaps no single piece of evidence that is a more compelling indication of the state of the American academy than the present AAUP leaders’ attempts to undermine their organization’s own classic statements. The great watchdog organization that has led the way in keeping politicization in academia in check is now the cheerleader for politicization. And that sends an unmistakable message about the control that radical activists now exercise over much of the American academy.

***“Academics instill
understanding, not belief.”***

13 That sympathy became abundantly clear when the present AAUP leadership not only officially endorsed the “Occupy Wall Street” movement, but did so using a decidedly old-fashioned language of class struggle:

The Collective Bargaining Congress and National Council of the American Association of University Professors stand in solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street movement... We need to stand up for those who are trying to improve their circumstances and provide for their families... We applaud the action the Occupy Wall Street movement has taken to highlight the inequity and unfairness of the society in which we live... We are in this together.

Had the AAUP of 1915 or 1940 endorsed a partisan political position in this way, an outcry from the academic profession would have resulted. The present AAUP does so without fear of any such outcry; it is now an organization with a partisan political allegiance, knowing that its members accept and support that allegiance. It is relevant to note that the Council of UC Faculty Associations, claiming (though falsely) to speak in the name of all UC faculty, took the same partisan political position, using the same kind of language.

4. THE EVIDENCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA'S CAMPUSES

Evidence that the University has been affected by politicization comes from many different sources. Some of them relate directly to the teaching program, including such things as curricular requirements, the conduct of classes, printed syllabi, and reading lists. Others concern more general campus events such as teach-ins, lecture series, and conferences. Still others include departmental matters such as mission statements and faculty appointments. We take the different kinds of evidence one by one.

We should note that politicization exists mainly in the humanities and social sciences, and only minimally in the natural and applied sciences. However, this caveat is less encouraging than it may sound. The areas affected are precisely those that figure prominently in general education and in what might be called education for citizenship. That being so, nobody should be reassured when “only” the humanities and social sciences are affected.

4.1 The Political Orientation of the Faculty

American university faculties have, at least since the mid-twentieth century, leaned to the political left, and if recent surveys of faculty only found that this continues to be the case, there would be no need for concern. However, a great deal of recent empirical work has shown that what is now happening goes well beyond that traditional pattern in a number of ways. Some of the relevant studies have been of college and university faculty nationwide, but others have been devoted specifically to the University of California. We cite both, since the findings of the nationwide studies are virtually identical to those that are specific to UC; the two sets of studies thus confirm each other.

There are six major findings of these studies that show something far more disturbing than the traditional preponderance of liberals among university faculty:

1. The extent of the tilt to the left has been growing and has now reached a magnitude not remotely matched in the past. In some areas it is so extreme that it amounts to virtual exclusion of any but left-of-center faculty members.
2. The kind of leftism has also become considerably more extreme.
3. The more that politics is relevant to a field of study (the most obvious cases being those of political science and sociology) the greater the preponderance of left-of-center faculty members and the more complete the exclusion of any but left-of-center faculty members. The point is worth emphasis: exactly where programmatic concerns would most suggest a need for a wider range of voices, that range is most likely to be absent. This pattern is strongly suggestive of a conscious intent in the hiring process.
4. Younger faculty members are more solidly left-oriented than older faculty members, which means that the extent of the tilt continues to grow as retirements replaced by new appointments increase the imbalance.

5. College faculty members have become far more likely to admit that activism is a goal of their teaching.
6. The public is alarmed about the professoriate's radical leftism to a degree that has not been true in the past.¹⁴

If we were to take these findings individually, each one would suggest that an important change in the place of politics on campus has occurred during the last forty years. But taken together, they indicate a huge transformation in faculty attitudes, tolerance of politicization, and the entire intellectual quality of academic life. We now take a closer look at the studies that reach these conclusions.

A Sharp Shift to the Left Still Increasing

A study done in 1999 by the political scientist Stanley Rothman found a decisive shift from historical patterns.¹⁵ According to Rothman and his co-authors Robert Lichter and Neil Nevitte: "The results indicate that a sharp shift to the left has taken place among college faculty in recent years." In 1969, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education's survey had found that 45 percent of faculty had political views that were left or liberal, while 27 percent were middle of the road, and 28 percent either moderately or strongly conservative. By contrast, Rothman now found margins that were much more extreme. Whether the question was posed in terms of liberals versus conservatives or Democrats versus Republicans, the margins favored the former by nearly 5:1 in each case, and in some departments the results were overwhelming. For example, in English departments the margin was 88:3, and in Politics 81:2.

A more recent study by Neil Gross and Solon Simmons (2007)¹⁶ showed that the situation had continued to deteriorate in the years since Rothman's 1999 study, as the lop-sidedness became even more extreme. Rothman's 5:1 had now become 8:1. This result was all the more convincing since Gross and Simmons clearly wanted the reverse to be true and even claimed that what they had found was greater moderation; but they hadn't.

Gross and Simmons asked a large sample of faculty (from 927 different institutions) to self-identify as very liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, middle of the road, slightly conservative, conservative, or very conservative. The results in percentages were 9.4, 34.7, and 18.1 for liberals, and 1.2, 8, and 10.5 for conservatives, going from "very" to "slightly" in each case. Eighteen percent self-identified as middle of the road. Gross and Simmons then collapsed these seven categories into three (liberal, moderate

¹⁴ We set out the details of declining respect for academia in Section 5, below.

¹⁵ Stanley Rothman, S. Robert Lichter, and Neil Nevitte, "Politics and Professional Advancement Among College Faculty," *The Forum*, 2005:3.

¹⁶ "The Social and Political Views of American Professors," <http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org/news/1893/FacultyStudies.htm>, working paper by Neil Gross and Solon Simmons, October 24, 2007. Though only posted on the internet as a working paper for comment and suggestions, the study was warmly received and provoked much national discussion before the draft was taken down by the authors. Copies can still be found at various sites on the internet, for example, on the website of "Students for Academic Freedom."

and conservative) with both “slightly” groups included in the moderates. This massaging of their data allowed them to claim that though liberals outnumber conservatives 5:1, a large group of moderates outnumbered liberals, 46.6 to 44.1. These figures made the campus look more moderate than it had seemed to many critics of the academy, a result that gave much comfort to those on campus who eagerly welcomed what seemed a refutation of their critics. But the reality of what Gross and Simmons had found was very different.

In making this claim Gross and Simmons had relied on self-reporting, which is hazardous for two reasons. First, in a context that is tilted strongly in a particular direction, “moderate” could be understood as the mean in that context; that is, it could be well to the left of what “moderate” might be in other circumstances. And second, in the context of an academy that has frequently been criticized for being too far to the left, we might well find that academics are wary of confirming the case made by their critics, and for that reason reflexively claim moderation. Acknowledging the unreliability of self-reporting, Gross and Simmons asked for responses to a series of specific political policy questions which make up the “Pew” scale, on which 5 is a perfect conservative score, 1 is a perfect score on the left, and 3 is middle-of-the-road.

These more reliable results told the real story, one that is completely different to that which Gross and Simmons had publicly announced. On the Pew scale the group that identified itself as “slightly liberal” scored 1.7, exactly twice as far from the middle of the scale (3.0) as the conservatives were, with their score of 3.7. In other words, the people who claimed to be slightly liberal were in reality twice as liberal as the committed conservatives were conservative. Even the Gross and Simmons middle-of-the-roaders, with their score of 2.2, were more liberal than the conservatives were conservative. And the group that claimed to be “slightly conservative” was in reality slightly liberal at 2.8. The self-identified liberals got a score of 1.4, very close to the perfect left score of 1: that is, 44 percent of the total was very extreme.

What Gross and Simmons had really shown was that the faculty in their sample were 9 percent conservative (though not very), 10 percent slightly left, and 80 percent solidly left, with half of those extreme left. Ilya Somin¹⁷ reached much the same conclusion as to the true identity of these alleged “moderates” in a different way. He simply noted the huge discrepancy between the Gross and Simmons figures for moderates and their data for the 2004 presidential election. While according to exit polls the genuine moderates had voted for John Kerry by a 54-45 margin, almost all of the Gross and Simmons moderates had voted for him.

Contrary to their own claims for their work, therefore, the research of Gross and Simmons actually points to two rather different things: first, that the strong move to the left in academia that Rothman found in 1999 seems to have continued during the next decade, since Rothman’s overall 5:1 left/right ratio turns into an 8:1 ratio in the findings of Gross and Simmons. And second, that self-reporting of faculty political affiliation is very unreliable. But what was most impressive about these results was that

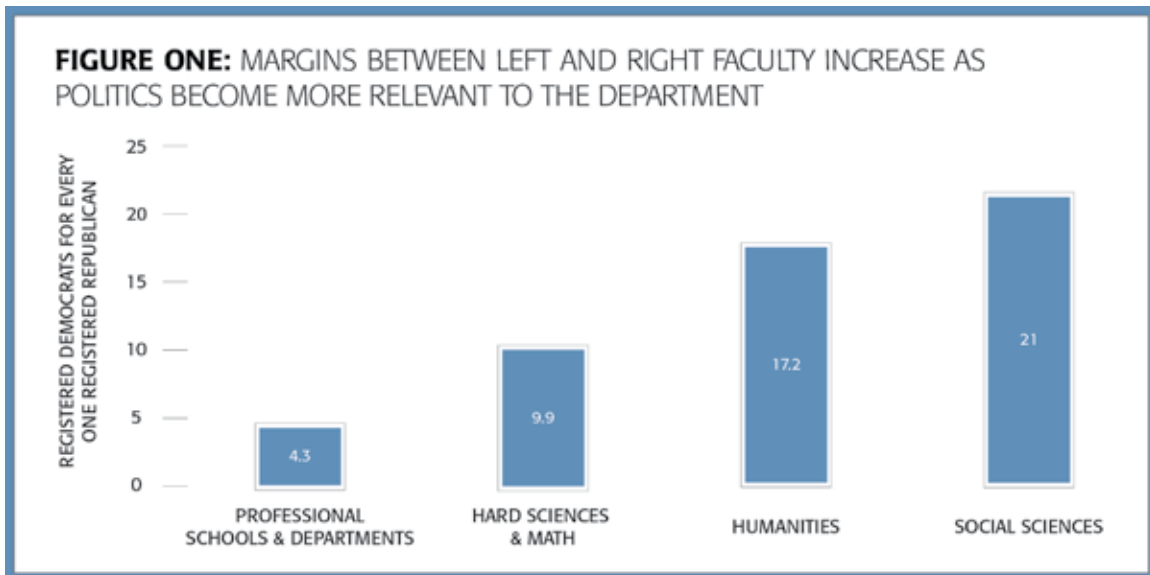
17 “Volokh Conspiracy,” October 9, 2007, <http://volokh.com/2007/10/09/academics-ideology-and-moderation/>.

“Left faculty now outnumber right faculty by huge margins in every department, but the margins become virtually exclusionary as politics become more relevant to the work of the department.”

they could not possibly be dismissed (as earlier work had so often been) as conclusions that investigators wanted to find because of their own political leanings. Gross and Simmons obviously did not want to believe what their own research told them.¹⁸ When their Pew data clashed with their data from faculty self-identification, they simply ignored the Pew data, even though they had collected it precisely because it would provide a check on the validity of self-identification.

Huge Margins at the University of California

There is no reason in principle to doubt that California shares fully in these national patterns, but it so happens that we can also draw on several studies that look specifically at the University of California. In 2004, Daniel Klein and Andrew Western examined voter registrations of UC Berkeley faculty in 23 departments chosen as representative of the humanities, social sciences, hard sciences, and professional schools.¹⁹ Their work found a ratio of about 4 Democrats to 1 Republican in departments in the professional schools and about 10 Democrats to 1 Republican in the hard sciences. In the humanities that ratio was 17:1, and in the social sciences it rose to 21:1. Once again, we see confirmation of the two findings seen in national data: left faculty now outnumber right faculty by huge margins in every department, but the margins become virtually exclusionary as politics become more relevant to the work of the department (Figure 1).



18 Gross and Simmons actually understate the extent of the left tilt for four-year and graduate institutions by including data for community colleges. As they and others have found, community colleges tilt left least, probably because of their ties to local communities. If we want conditions in the “ivory tower” to be the focus of our attention, it is best not to include community colleges.

19 “Voter Registration of Berkeley and Stanford Faculty,” *Academic Questions*, 18:1 (Winter 2004-5), 53-65.

Klein and Western also confirm that the tilt is getting more pronounced all the time because younger faculty members are more uniformly left than older faculty members. Their data show that on the UC Berkeley campus there were 350 full professors registered as Democrats to only 42 as Republicans, an 8:1 ratio. But when we take the two junior professorial ranks – Associate Professors and Assistant Professors – the data produced by Klein and Western give 98 Democrats and two Republicans, for an astonishing 49:1 ratio. This means that as older professors retire, the already extreme 8:1 ratio may well be replaced by one that is up to six times more pronounced. Moreover, these are campus-wide numbers that include all departments, including the sciences, which suggests that the tilt to one side of the political spectrum will soon accelerate in those departments too. This continues a development already seen in 1999 by Rothman, who commented that “the political differences across fields of study have narrowed considerably.” The data of Klein and Western thus demonstrate that the older pattern of a moderate preponderance of liberalism on campus cannot explain what is now happening on the UC campuses.

However, it is at the level of the individual department that we can see most clearly the extent of the problem. Two different surveys²⁰ give data for individual departments of the University of California campuses. Their methodology is quite different, but the two reach virtually identical results. We set out below results given by these surveys for particular departments. In some cases the contrasting figures refer to left of center/right of center, in others (indicated by asterisks) to Democrat/Republican:

UCB Sociology*	17:0
UCB Political Science*	28:2
UCB English*	29:1
UCB History*	31:1
UCB Psychology*	26:1
UCLA History	53:3
UCLA English	29:2
UCSD Politics	27:0
UCSD History	26:1
UCSB English	21:0
UCSB History	28:1

These are astonishing, and astonishingly consistent margins; yet they are consistent with national data, for even Gross and Simmons found that in the 2004 presidential election the overall margin favoring John Kerry over George Bush was 19:1 among professors of history, as it also was among professors of political science and of sociology. These figures confirm yet again both that the shift to the left of recent years has been striking, and that in those departments where it matters most to be able to draw on a spectrum of political and social views (that is, where such concerns are central to a department’s work),

²⁰ The first is again Klein and Western’s “Voter Registration of Berkeley and Stanford Faculty,” the second, “The One-Party Campus” by Karl Zinsmeister, is by the American Enterprise Institute with the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, as reported in the AEI magazine, September 2002.

the lopsided distribution is at its most extreme. Moreover, if we also remember the figures that Klein and Western recorded for political affiliation of junior professorial ranks, it seems clear that these already extreme departmental statistics will intensify as senior faculty retire and are replaced by the more ideologically uniform junior ranks.²¹

Most Extreme Ratio in “Education for Citizenship” Departments

There is one more thing to say about these departments. These are the ones most central to education for citizenship, that is, education about the history, culture, and political institutions of the society in which students live. Uniformity means an absence of challenge and consequently of intellectual depth.

A pattern of hiring in which the tilt to one side of the political spectrum becomes more extreme as political and social philosophy becomes more relevant to a department’s work is one that deserves our careful attention. To put the matter succinctly, the tilt to one side is at its most extreme exactly where the temptation for radical activists to pack their departments is at its most extreme. That temptation is all the greater when the departments concerned are those that are most central to education for citizenship. The most plausible explanation for this clear and consistent pattern is surely that it is the result of discrimination in the hiring process.

Left Extremism in Academe

But even these devastating numbers do not give us the full measure of the problem until we also take into account the second of the six major findings set out above: the greater tilt to one side has been accompanied by a shift towards more extreme political views. Gross and Simmons provide some notable evidence of this in the form of figures for the presence of Marxist radicals among college faculty. For example, they find that almost one in five professors in the social sciences self-identifies as “Marxist,” a figure that rises to 25 percent in sociology. Striking as these figures are, they are almost certainly understated. As we have seen, self-identification in political matters is highly unreliable, but that will be especially true with a word such as “Marxist” which does not play at all well with the general public. Many whose mental framework is formed in large part by Marx’s ideas prefer to describe themselves as “socialists,” “radicals,” or “activists.” Professors in the humanities seem to prefer these terms, for while Gross and Simmons show roughly equal numbers of self-described radicals or activists in the humanities and in the social sciences (about one quarter of the total), which suggests a roughly similar political situation in the two areas, humanist radicals are much more wary of the actual term “Marxist” than are their social scientist counterparts.

“The tilt to one side is at its most extreme exactly where the temptation for radical activists to pack their departments is at its most extreme.”

²¹ Among many researchers who have addressed this point, only Gross and Simmons have dissented from the overwhelming consensus that academia is still becoming more one-sided, and more extreme. This deviation is entirely the result of their flawed methodology that artificially inflates the numbers of moderates.

We can safely assume that the numbers of Marxist radicals among the faculty are certainly somewhat higher than those recorded through self-identification by Gross and Simmons. But even the understated numbers of Gross and Simmons are astonishing. In the real world, Marxism is well on the way to being an obsolete system of thought, having been tried (through force) in over twenty different countries during the period 1917-1990 and abandoned almost everywhere after the virtual economic collapse of the countries concerned. Yet this now discredited system of thought has a strong, sometimes commanding presence in social science and humanities departments of many major American campuses even as those departments virtually exclude one of the two most enduring political philosophies of the entire Western world. From any rational standpoint this must seem bizarre.

The time is long since gone when a large presence of Marxists could arouse panicky thoughts about a communist conspiracy, or a threat to constitutional government. Marxism is a spent force in the real world and a dying political creed almost everywhere. Those who still cling to it now seem more comic than threatening. However, while there is no reason to fear our campuses becoming hatcheries for revolutionary plots, there are many reasons to be concerned about these extraordinary numbers from an academic standpoint. First, there is the question how this could have happened. How did hiring that could draw on only tiny numbers in the general population produce so large a Marxist campus presence without a substantial amount of discrimination in favor not just of the left, but of the extreme left? This suggests an illegal political test in hiring. Second and far more important is the question of the academic temperament.

In their constant efforts to expand the frontiers of knowledge, academic thinkers must continually rethink and reevaluate everything as they come to terms with new evidence, new discoveries, and new theories. Sometimes new developments can make them see everything they thought they knew in a different way. All of this sounds a very long way from the temperament of people who cling to an obsolescent political theory and refuse to reevaluate it no matter how badly it turned out to work when subjected to an extensive test in the real world. This is why those extraordinary numbers are so important. To surround oneself with grossly disproportionate numbers of people who share a congenial political standpoint just as that standpoint is decisively failing the test of experience looks very much like a way of insulating oneself from the lessons of experience, and a means of avoiding rethinking, reevaluating, and responding to new developments. But that is tantamount to a refusal to be an academic. An academy that contains substantial numbers of people who do not think and behave as academics must do is in serious trouble.

"He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that."

- John Stuart Mill, On Liberty

It should not surprise us that when political views on campus become more extreme and the number of utopian radicals increases dramatically, campus priorities will change. And so a recent study by UCLA's prestigious Higher Education Research Institute found that more faculty now believe that they should teach their students

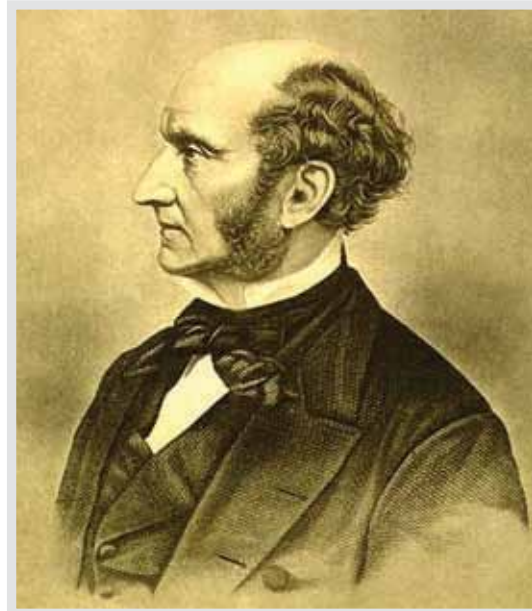
to be agents of social change than believe that it is important to teach them the classics of Western civilization.²² An academic goal now ranks below a political one. Once more, we see how political goals will always undermine academic ones.

It is possible to query the methodology of any one of the individual studies that we have mentioned. Some of them use as their opposed ideas Democrat/Republican, others liberal/conservative, still others left/right. Each has advantages and disadvantages. Some get their data from voter registrations, while others use self-reporting. Again, both have advantages and disadvantages: the former omit people who have not registered, the latter may miss even more through low rates of return. But none of these limitations appear to matter here since these studies that proceed in so many different ways always reach the same conclusion: a sharp shift to the left in recent decades, and the characteristic pattern of an even more extreme tilt, amounting almost to exclusion of opposing views, precisely in those departments where it matters most to have the full spectrum of social and political thought. When many different methodologies all lead to same result, we can be sure that what they find is real.

John Stuart Mill's Argument for Diversity of Thought

A very serious issue of quality and competence is posed by the almost one-party departments whose work is heavily involved in political and social questions. A political science department with one half of the spectrum of political thought virtually missing cannot be considered a competent department. But we miss the point here if we focus too much on those absent right-of-center professors. The problem lies not in those who are not there, but in those who are. It is hardly conceivable that the members of these departments have not noticed that one half of the spectrum of political and social thought is missing among their ranks. We can only assume, therefore, that most of them think that this is an acceptable state of affairs. And since the pattern is so pronounced and so obvious, a great many will surely also have noticed what they were doing as they made their hiring decisions. To promote, or even to acquiesce in, the development of such defective departments means a failure to grasp a fundamental principle of academic life: that staying intellectually healthy requires the clash of competing ideas.

Nobody has put this point better than John Stuart Mill. In the second chapter of his classic essay



John Stuart Mill

²² This is a study done by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute, titled "The American College Teacher." As Robin Wilson summarizes it in "Social Change Tops Classic Books in Professors' Teaching Priorities" in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* for March 5, 2009, "57.8 percent of professors believe it is important to encourage undergraduates to become agents of social change."

On Liberty, Mill said that “He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that.” In other words, you don’t really understand the case for the left until you also thoroughly grasp the case for the right, because the one answers the other, which means that each is a necessary part of the definition of the other. It follows that in an academic context an all-left department would not even be able to make a competent exposition of leftist thought: “They do not, in any proper sense of the word, know the doctrine which they themselves profess,” says Mill. If left professors think they can simply present the right’s case themselves, Mill has this devastating response: “Both teachers and learners go to sleep

“A political science department with one half of the spectrum of political thought virtually missing cannot be considered a competent department.”

at their post as soon as there is no enemy in the field.” And for that reason, he went on to say, the student must “be able to hear [the arguments] from people who actually believe them, who defend them in earnest, and do their very utmost for them.²³ He must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form.” As for those who do not: “All that part of the truth which turns the scale, and decides the judgment of a completely informed mind, they are strangers to.” Mill concludes by insisting that this discipline is always essential to “a real understanding of moral and human subjects.”

Your intellectual opponents not only keep you intellectually on your toes: more important still, you understand your own position only when you thoroughly understand theirs. This

is the quintessentially academic way of looking at things, one that was second nature to academics in generations past. It gives first priority to ideas and analysis, with ideological commitments a very distant second. An academic department where this spirit is missing to such a striking degree does not deserve a place in the academy. Political activists may want to pack their departments exclusively with ideological soul mates, but real academics know that insulating themselves from their opponents is intellectual suicide. In academic life people who disagree with you provide both a discipline and an indispensable spur to more and better thought.

Mill made another interesting remark about the need of both left and right for each other: “it is in a great measure the opposition of the other that keeps each within the limits of reason and sanity.” This remark is the key to the rise of political radicalism to dominance on the campuses. Where there are no right-of-center voices to keep the left healthy, the result is a much more extreme political culture. Political monocultures will inevitably degenerate into incoherence. The noted liberal scholar Cass Sunstein, in a recent article entitled “The Law of Group Polarization,”²⁴ has gathered together an impressive array of findings in social psychology to document Mill’s point that groups heavily dominated

²³ This does not imply that only committed advocates may put a particular case; to interpret Mill this way would ignore his dictum that he who only knows his own side of the case knows little of that. To say that students must be able to hear arguments from people who do their utmost for them is not to say that that is the only way in which they must hear them, but only that an environment which has excluded those people is a defective one in which the debate will atrophy.

²⁴ University of Chicago Law School, John M. Olin Working Paper, No. 91.

“In academic life people who disagree with you provide both a discipline and an indispensable spur to more and better thought.”

by one political perspective, whether left or right, will over time become increasingly extreme. This implies that one-party departments are ultimately as bad for those that they include as for those that they exclude. As elements of a college campus they will be an intellectual catastrophe.

Attempts to Explain Away Campus Political Imbalance

We have suggested that the pattern of a political imbalance reaching its greatest extent precisely in those departments where politics is central to the department’s work carries a strong implication of conscious intent. Nevertheless, other explanations are sometimes offered.

The first suggestion is self-selection: allegedly, liberals like academia, and conservatives don’t. The fatal weakness of this explanation is that survey results from the 1960s and before show that it is simply not true. In that era, there were certainly more left- than right-of-center academics, but there was still a healthy representation of both. At most, the attraction of one side to academia was somewhat greater than the other’s, but this was a very long way from exclusivity. Self-selection might explain the 45 to 28 left/right split of the 1969 Carnegie survey: it is easy to imagine that this could result from a somewhat greater attraction of intellectuals to utopian thinking, which might make the ivory tower more congenial to them. But even if we assume that to be true, it could not explain the sudden appearance of a massive increase in the shift to one side. We need only look at the data for the University of California at Berkeley to grasp how different the present is from 1969, and how the future is likely to be more extreme still. The mild tilt has become 8:1 in Berkeley’s senior ranks, but it has reached 49:1 in the more recently hired junior ranks.

There is a sense in which “self-selection” may now – but only recently – have become a factor, but this is a very different sense. The extreme tilt of the academy toward the left has now become a factor that probably repels potential academics who are not left-oriented. They may well conclude that an academic appointment is highly unlikely because the decks are stacked against them; or they may simply think that a campus atmosphere dominated by left



University of California, Berkeley

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“It is in a great measure the opposition of the other that keeps each within the limits of reason and sanity.”

- John Stuart Mill, On Liberty

radicals will not be a pleasant²⁵ or productive place for them to be. This is, however, not a *cause* of the extreme campus political tilt, but a *response* to it. It is not a cause, but a result of the monoculture. It results not from a lack of attraction to the academy, but from a wariness of the present state of the academy. It may be true that political science departments would now find it hard to find recently graduated Ph.D.s who could

remedy their present lack of ideological diversity, but that too is symptom, not cause. If Political Science departments were to recognize that they needed more ideological diversity to be healthy, they would make an effort to encourage graduate students who might fill that need. But there is no sign of that recognition, or of those efforts.

Another suggested explanation of the recent sharp increase in the political tilt of the academy has been that hiring decisions have been based on merit, and result in virtual exclusion of right-of-center personnel only because they are less flexible, less nuanced, or just less intelligent thinkers than their left-of-center colleagues. But this defense immediately runs into a problem: that this hiring pattern has occurred just as the quality of a college education has sharply declined. To repeat: too many college graduates have not learned to write effectively, they cannot read and comprehend any reasonably complex book, they have not learned to reason, and their basic knowledge of the history and institutions of the society in which they live is lamentably poor.²⁶ How can the teaching faculty that produced these results claim to be intellectually superior to their far more successful and politically more balanced predecessors?

The claim that radical activist faculty members are more flexible thinkers is also hard to square with their addiction to dogmatic and utopian systems of thought; it is hard to see a sign of superior intelligence in their clinging to a rapidly obsolescent political ideology.²⁷ The competing explanation offered by Stuart Taylor and KC Johnson is far more plausible: “Once ideologues achieve predominance, they replicate

25 This factor may also help to explain why the difference between the heavily tilted humanities and social sciences and the less tilted scientific and professional fields is narrowing. Rothman already noticed the beginning of this narrowing of the differences between the fields in 1999. Klein and Western’s data for Berkeley junior ranks suggests that the difference will soon be very much narrower. Since the teaching of physics has very little to do with politics, it is hard to think of any explanation of this phenomenon other than a generalized response to an uncongenial campus atmosphere. But if that is so, much scientific talent and expertise is being lost to academia. A smaller pool to choose from must mean lowered quality.

26 See Introduction.

27 James Piereson gives a long list of the most important developments of our time on which academic experts have been consistently wrong, and relates this to campus ideological conformity. His most important example is the fall of the Soviet Union and its satellites, said by academics to be in good shape right up to the point of their collapse. “The Left University,” *The Weekly Standard*, October 3, 2005.

themselves, metastasize, and take over entire departments.”²⁸ When we find large concentrations of activists, it is impossible to ignore the fact that this is in itself a sign of activism at work. Part of activism is swelling the ranks of activists. This explanation is straightforward, its facts are easy to verify, and it accommodates all the facts of experience. Moreover, it has now been confirmed by empirical research recorded in a new book by George Yancey.²⁹

A Demonstration of Bias in Hiring

Using faculty surveys to get at faculty bias in hiring runs into the difficulty that asking for self-reporting by faculty is rather like asking a criminal to confess. In any case, it would be a mistake to assume that we cannot have reliable evidence until we get faculty confessions. As we have argued above, there is abundant evidence in the suddenness of the sharp increase in the campus political tilt, the tilt being greatest where the motive for political hiring is greatest, and the absurdly large discrepancy between the distribution of political allegiances on campus and those among the general public. But Yancey has added substantially to this evidence through an ingenious questionnaire design that succeeded in overcoming what he calls the “social desirability effect”; that is, “the tendency individuals have to make themselves look good when they are answering surveys or questionnaires.”³⁰ For example, instead of using the negative term “bias” Yancey used the positive term “collegiality,” getting results which easily translate from one to the other.

Focusing initially on his own discipline of sociology, Yancey asked faculty which of a list of factors would make them more, and less, likely to vote for an applicant for a faculty position. Twenty-seven percent said that they would weigh an applicant more favorably if he/she were a member of the Democratic party, and 29 percent said that they would weigh an applicant less favorably if he/she were a member of the Republican party. (There was actually much more disinclination to hire Republicans than Communists; the latter get something close to a neutral score.) These figures are, to be sure, less than 50 percent; but their significance is much greater than might seem to be the case, for two reasons. First, they are self-reported. For every person who will admit to even a partly-disguised bias that they know to be unprofessional, there will be many more who have the same bias but are too self-protective to admit it. And second, a departmental vote can easily be tipped to one candidate against another by just a few votes, sometimes even by just one strong voice. A voting block of the size found by Yancey would be decisive most of the time.

Having begun with his own discipline, Yancey broadened his study to include a number of other disciplines, where he found much the same results. He concluded: “We can no longer hide behind the argument that social bias is merely the unfounded charge of conservative religious and political opportunists. With this research, there is now empirical evidence documenting this bias.”

28 *Until Proven Innocent: Political Correctness and the Shameful Injustices of the Duke Lacrosse Rape Case*. New York: Dunne Books/St Martin's Press, 2007, p.401.

29 *Compromising Scholarship: Religious and Political Bias in American Higher Education*. Baylor University Press: Waco, 2011.

30 *Compromising Scholarship*, p. 54.

Just as compelling as Yancey's research is the frank admission by Cary Nelson, the AAUP's present leader, that political criteria in hiring "are clearly fair when deciding whether or not to hire a faculty member in the first place. You have a right not to hire someone whose views you consider reprehensible." It seems safe to assume that for campus activists, "reprehensible" will be anything to the right of center. Once again, the present AAUP violates the clear sense of its own classic statements of principle. Vince Carroll displays a more realistic awareness of the problem posed by an academy where left-of-center faculty "don't merely dominate the faculty, they essentially *are* the faculty."³¹ Carroll concludes: "One has to wonder, however, about the self-correcting ability of an academic culture so in-bred that it reflects only half of the political spectrum. What arguments will be overlooked? What lines of inquiry ignored?"

This notion of "in-bredness" is a thought-provoking one. It is both justified by the facts, and suggestive of all kinds of resulting deformities.

4.2 What Is Happening in the Classroom?

Printed campus catalogs are an important source of evidence as to what is happening in the classroom because the departmental mission statements and individual course descriptions that they contain have been extensively reviewed by many campus agencies before they can be printed in the catalog. Each course description will have been reviewed and approved by deans, department chairs, and academic senate committees. If we find examples of politicization after such multi-layered review, then that will be a clear indication that using the University for political purposes is widely accepted as part of the business as usual of the campuses.



University of California, Los Angeles

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Departmental Mission Statements

We begin with examples of departmental mission statements. At UC Berkeley, the mission statement of the Social Work department includes a statement that students must be committed to "advancing social justice." This phrase embodies more than a vague admonition to do good: it has a specific place in left politics. The department is therefore insisting not only that a student embrace a particular political ideology, but also commit to activism on behalf of that ideology. This amounts to use of the university for a political purpose, in contravention of state law and university regulations, but with full administrative and faculty senate approval.

³¹ "Republican Professors? Sure, There's One," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 11, 1998.



University of California, Santa Cruz

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On the Santa Cruz campus the mission statement of the Sociology department also includes an explicit political aim and program. UCSC Sociology "considers how society is organized in relationship to a vision of a just, free, and equal society – a vision that may require fundamental social change." Only a certain kind of political thinker will say that we need "fundamental social change" to reach "a vision of a just and equal society." In political contexts the word "equal" may refer either to equality of opportunity or equality of result, but whenever it is paired with "fundamental social change" the meaning is very likely the

latter rather than the former. UCSC Sociology thus has a departmental political ideology. A teaching program in sociology should be concerned with understanding how societies work, but this one is about comparing them to an egalitarian vision and then working to convert them to that vision. Much the same is found in UC Riverside's Labor Studies Program, which also addresses "alternative models for organizing for social justice."

Another example can be seen in the UCLA School of Law, where the stated aim of the Critical Race Studies program is to "transform racial justice advocacy," and to be a "training ground for a new generation of practitioners, scholars and advocates committed to racial justice theory and practice." Knowledge and analysis of the law is not enough; UCLA Law wants to make sure that students are committed to using it to advance a particular social agenda. These departmental mission statements are consistent with and are explained by the UCLA study (mentioned above)³² which found that 58 percent of faculty think it important to teach their students "to become agents of social change."

The mission statements of Women's Studies programs routinely make social change integral to the department's work, but they also go beyond this. Instead of defining their field of study as the investigation of the changing place of women in human society, they include in their mission statements heavily emphasized value judgments that prejudge all kinds of controversial issues. For example, the mission statement at UCLA asserts conclusions before study begins when it says that the department provides its students "the opportunity to study the full range of human experience and arrangements of social organization from the perspectives of those whose participation has been traditionally distorted, omitted, neglected, or denied." The case for these conclusions can easily be imagined, just as it is easy to imagine a quite different one that pointed to those conditions of modern life that have made new opportunities for women more accessible. Activist zeal has prejudged important questions that need to be asked, and that prejudgment as well as the activist program on which it is based is built into the campus catalog.

³² See note 19.

The absence of any institutional pushback against these politicized mission statements is striking, but so is the fact that they are made so openly. This openness suggests a confidence that there is no danger in making them public, because what they advocate is now widely accepted. National Association of Scholars (NAS) founder Stephen Balch comments aptly: "I think that one can therefore be confident that these [printed] endorsements of advocacy and activism are but tips of an academic iceberg, of which by far the greater part remains hidden beneath the exposed surface."³³

Moving on to individual courses, we find a great deal of evidence that confirms the essential correctness of Balch's surmise. Nationally, a study by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni in 2004 found in a survey of 50 selective colleges that 49 percent of students complain of professors frequently injecting political comments into their courses even if they have nothing to do with the subject, while 46 percent say that professors use their classrooms to promote their own political views.³⁴ Further, 48 percent report that campus presentations on political issues "seem totally one-sided."³⁵ When almost half of all students report such things we can be certain that professors feel entitled to use their classrooms so, and are confident that no consequences to themselves will ensue.

Such is the national context within which the University of California works. Are UC classrooms an exception to this pattern of behavior, or do they repeat it? There are tens of thousands of courses taught on UC campuses each year, and monitoring all of them is a practical impossibility. But it is unnecessary to do so. We can assume that most courses are properly conducted. The relevant question for this



University of California, San Diego

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inquiry is a simple one: is the evidence of politicized classrooms in UC so widespread, and so open, that it is now clear that politicization is acceptable both to faculty and administration? If so, a corollary would be that relevant university regulations prohibiting politicization are no longer enforced because there is an institutional consensus that they should not be. That, in turn, would mean that deans who went against that consensus would get a very angry response. The evidence we now present leaves little room for doubt that such is the case on the University of California's campuses.

³³ "Report to the Select Committee of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives," November 9, 2005.

³⁴ American Council of Trustees and Alumni, "Politics in the Classroom," 2004, https://www.goacta.org/publications/downloads/PoliticsintheClassroom_.pdf.

³⁵ Gross and Simmons find that most professors do not do this, but once again they are accepting the protestations of potential culprits, for they are relying on self-reporting. People who know that they are being asked to admit that they are doing something wrong are scarcely likely to do so. The students (the source of the data in the ACTA study) have no such motive and must therefore be considered more reliable.

Course Descriptions

Printed course descriptions in campus catalogs are the most direct evidence of what is happening in the classroom. We can begin at the very heart of the University's teaching program: a basic course in one of the largest and most respected departments at the flagship campus, UC Berkeley. In the two-course sequence History 7AB (one of which is required for the major in history), the first is entitled "The United States from Settlement to the Civil War." In the catalog, there follows a very brief statement of the goals of the course, which include "to understand how democratic political institutions emerged in the United States in this period in the context of an economy that depended on slave labor and violent land acquisition."

Course descriptions traditionally say what the scope and extent of the course is, and they do not (and must not) prejudge the major and often contentious issues that will arise when the course material is considered in class. And yet this description's tonality, and its angry language preemptively embodying moral judgments on America's early history, violates these rules. At the outset, the course has been forced into the shape of an alienated political radical's argument against his country. A genuinely academic inquiry must look carefully at the many different aspects of the context in which the political institutions of the U.S. arose, and those would include, for example, the tradition of English political philosophy as well as English Common Law, the experience of the colonists under colonial rule, and the issues that led to the Revolutionary War. But the department is determined to force into exclusive prominence just two aspects of the contemporary context that reflect badly on the Americans of that time, even though these are probably less relevant than many others to the essential structure of the constitution that they produced. We are seeing a department in the grip of an urgent need to set its students straight, one motivated not by an intent to produce the greatest possible understanding of the subject, but instead by a zeal to preach a jaundiced view of the nation to a captive audience and convert it to its radicalism.

The full extent of the travesty that this course description suggests could be seen in the account posted by a student on the important website www.noindoctrination.org.³⁶ This is a site that was instituted to document political indoctrination in the classroom. Operated by its founder, Luann Wright, it posted reports from students only after investigating their reliability, and after the teachers concerned had been given the opportunity to rebut the student's account, an opportunity that was almost never

³⁶ This site was operated by a non-profit organization that was recently dissolved, and so it ceased operations in 2011. Archived pages from the website can still be found at http://wayback.archive.org/web/*/http://noindoctrination.org/. See http://www.nas.org/images/documents/Noindoctrinationorg_UC_courses.pdf for archived pages from the website specifically relevant to the University of California.

taken.³⁷ After taking the second course in the History 7AB sequence, a student reported that while the course title led students to expect an unbiased account of U.S. history, the course was actually “U.S. history as interpreted by a one-sided man who wishes to overthrow capitalism.” The student goes on: “He focused excessively on negative aspects of American history to portray a country of lies and contradictions, while applauding Socialists and Anarchists....He seemed to be more interested in creating Leftist activists than making sure students had an accurate grasp of U.S. History.” In the student’s view the instructor “politicized every aspect of the course” and made “demonic human beings out of those who did not share his political views,” in particular insisting that those who did not support affirmative action were simply racists. “His total neglect for reasonable arguments was disgusting,” the student concluded.

We should remember that this is a basic, required course in one of Berkeley’s most important departments. Given the central place of the course in the departmental curriculum it is inconceivable that the course description was not familiar to most departmental faculty, and just as inconceivable that nobody in the department knew what was happening in this student’s classroom. We cannot possibly see this as an isolated case, or one that is atypical and insignificant. That being so, the lack of professionalism displayed here should be thoroughly alarming. When a fiercely championed political agenda drives a presentation, the intellectual level of the course suffers. If the emphasis is on the professor’s one-sided political absolutism, it is not on students being asked to analyze and weigh different kinds of evidence in relation to the possible conclusions that can be drawn. When outrage takes center stage, analysis is swept aside.

Many more course descriptions printed in the catalog make it clear that political activism in Berkeley classrooms is now routine. For example, the course description of Social Welfare 233 (“Social Work, Social Change, and Social Justice”) candidly admits that it “incorporates a social change and social justice perspective....change-focused direct practice, community organizing, legislative action, and other activities designed to give expression to the professor’s social justice commitments.” Another example is Sociology 128AC: “Environmental Justice: Race, Class, Equity, and the Environment.” This course, we read, doesn’t just look at and analyze issues; it is about “future strategies for achieving environmental and labor justice.” And the description of Ethnic Studies C170 (“Fanon and the Network Society”) tells us that its aim is “to imagine a more just, democratic, and ‘human’ society.”

Similar printed statements which incorporate political activism into the goals of courses are routinely found on other campuses. At UCLA, the Women’s Studies program, not content to develop

³⁷ The inability or unwillingness of the instructors who are the subjects of these complaints to rebut them (even when invited to do so) is only one of the many reasons to treat this site’s reports as much more than uncorroborated accounts by individual students. There is also the curious fact that even when they are brought to the attention of department chairs, no investigation results, nor is anything denied, which suggests that those chairs already know and accept what is going on. Further, whenever an independent source of information for the same course surfaces (noted above for UCB’s History 7AB, and later in this report for UCD’s Anthropology 2 and for UCSD’s writing courses) that second account in each case corroborates the account on www.noindoctrination.org. But the most compelling reason to take these student reports very seriously is that when we take them all together, they corroborate each other, in that they present a completely consistent account of campus radicalism at work. The issues they raise, the language they use, and the misbehavior they report are remarkably similar from case to case.

understanding and knowledge, wants to promote social activism for its own political aims by giving students the “conceptual tools for social change.” On the Santa Cruz campus, the Community Studies program had several courses that envisioned organizing for social, economic, or environmental justice.

More pervasive than explicit calls to political activism, however, is the imposition of a political ideology through the course description that we have seen in Berkeley’s History 7AB. For example, instead of being content to announce the scope of the course, Berkeley’s Political Science 111AC (“The Politics of Displacement”) preemptively shapes a particular political interpretation: “the revolution against traditional political authority embodied in Jefferson’s and Thomas Paine’s attack on the British crown, the rise of slavery, and the conflict with Native America are seen as coherent parts of a cultural and social development that emerges in the 18th- and 19th-century America.” The decision to focus attention exclusively on these issues (rather than, say, the debate over the constitution and the crucial



University of California, Merced

Photo courtesy of UC Merced

first decades of the unfolding of the new political system) means that a radical political interpretation involving a hostile judgment of the U.S. is frozen into the outline of the course.³⁸

Another example of political prejudice through the printed course description is UC Merced’s History 131 (“Topics in National History”), which proposes to study “the way in which the U.S. has aggressively expanded its role on the world stage.” It is a fact of history that the importance of the U.S. on

the world stage has steadily increased since its founding. It is certainly worth investigating how that happened, and the question of aggressive intent would be one factor to consider and weigh against others. But that cannot happen when the only important question has been preempted in the course description. Much the same restriction of judgment to a radical left perspective can be seen in a UC Merced Literature course entitled “Literature and History,” the description of which announces that it “emphasizes historical contextualization of literature, including theoretical approaches such as Marxism, Post-Colonialism, Intellectual and Social Historicism.” But this illusion of a variety of approaches vanishes as soon as one realizes that all of them are varieties of a particular political perspective. The title may

³⁸ The full course description reads:

Antebellum American political history generally follows a routine script in which the purpose of the Revolution was to liberate Americans for self-government and economic and social development. Slavery is viewed as an anomaly still needing explanation, and Native American relocation as the consequence of natural forces of immigration and pre-modern social values. In this class, the revolution against traditional political authority embodied in Jefferson’s and Thomas Paine’s attack on the British crown, the rise of slavery, and the conflict with Native America are seen as coherent parts of a cultural and social development that emerges in the 18th- and 19th-century America.”

This is not a course description: it is political case-making.

promise the broad “Literature and History,” but the reality is that this is only literature as read from a radical leftist perspective.

Santa Barbara’s Feminist Studies 230 (“Race and Nation”) shuts the door even more firmly on any interpretations other than those already made by the instructor in this almost caricatured description: “experiences of women of color, both within the US and globally, with interlocking systems of racism, classism, sexism, homophobia/transphobia, ableism, and colonialism.” Other UCSB Feminist Studies courses are just as preemptive in their descriptions. The course entitled “Women’s Labors” explores “wage-earning, care-giving, sex work, housework, double days, glass ceilings, and strategies of survival and resistance among American women.” “Survival and resistance” leave us in no doubt as to the value judgments that are built into the course; something that requires strategies for survival and resistance must be oppressive indeed. But conclusions should be the result of an inquiry, not the beginning. Less prejudice might allow other facts to be looked at and other conclusions to be tested along the way – perhaps, for example, with some attention to the explosive growth of college degrees for women, who now account for about six out of ten four-year degrees.



University of California, Santa Barbara

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Berkeley’s Political Science 167 (“Racial and Ethnic Politics in the New American Century”) is yet another example of a catalog course description that freezes a radical political conclusion into place before the course starts: “A repeated theme of this course is the question whether racial order and inequality are essential to, or an exception from, the liberal democracy in the U.S.” Though ostensibly posed as a question, this course description makes sure that a radical belief will have exclusive prominence throughout the course – the belief that racism is deeply rooted in the fabric of American liberal democracy. That belief is the starting point of the course, not, as it should be, something that arises from the course material and is evaluated during the inquiry. In similar fashion Berkeley’s Ethnic Studies 170 asserts that with the end of the Cold War, “racism has taken a new turn” in the U.S. Again, a radical’s conclusion is stated as fact in a course description that should have delineated the scope of the course, not prejudged it.

These cases from printed catalogs demonstrate the degree of politicization that is evidently now considered acceptable by multiple layers of campus review. However, an innocuous printed description is no guarantee that a course will not be politicized. A fuller syllabus posted online or handed out to classes often raises the same kind of problem. For example, UC Santa Cruz’s Politics 72 (“The Politics of the War on Terrorism”) has a bland course description that simply spells out the scope of the course, but the course syllabus soon gets into extreme ideological prejudice with the question: “How did

Bush and Cheney build the fiction that Al Qaeda was a participant in the 9/11 attacks?" Here the instructor has dogmatically assumed a great deal that students will have to swallow to enter into the world of the course and its instructor. He has forgotten that academic discussion ought to begin with neutral formulations that do not beg all the important questions, for example, "what do we know of Al Qaeda's involvement in 9/11 and how do we know it?" Naturally, Al Qaeda's claim of responsibility will be one important fact to be taken into account, but only one. When an instructor makes an eccentric conspiracy theory based in his own political prejudices into a settled fact that serves as a bedrock on which his course is to be built, we recognize the effects of a one-party atmosphere that lacks the ability to self-correct. And we are reminded again of Mill's dictum, that only an opposition "keeps each [party] within the limits of reason and sanity."

Reports from Students

Student responses are another source of evidence of what is happening in the classroom, and they too demonstrate that an appropriately academic course description is no guarantee of what the course will be when a professor is determined to use it to advance a political agenda. A pattern of student complaint seen over and over again is one in which a student decides to take a course that will give him or her a grounding in the basic ideas and methods of a given field, but instead gets something very different.

A case in point is Sociology 1 ("Introduction to Sociology") at UC Santa Barbara.³⁹ The course description tells the student what to expect: "Basic concepts and issues in the study of human society. The structures and processes of human conduct, social organization, and social change." All of this sounds well and good, but a student writes: "When I signed up for this class, I was under the impression that I would be learning the basics of sociology as the course description indicated. I quickly got the impression that I would not be learning such a thing at all." Instead, there followed

...10 weeks of anti-capitalist, anti-globalization rhetoric. We were shown several theories on globalization that portrayed Western civilization as almost demonic, heartless, and ruthless beasts that enslave the world for financial gain. When I asked whether there were other models of globalism...the professor threw an angry glare my way and said there are no other models. She then added that

"One of the questions on the multiple choice final for the class asked: 'What system is based on the division and exploitation of classes?' The answer to the question was capitalism, and in order to receive a good grade on the test I was forced to select that answer although I did not agree."

³⁹ Fuller details of this and several following examples are at www.noindoctrination.org, which was active from 2002 until 2011. See http://www.nas.org/images/documents/Noindoctrinationorg_UC_courses.pdf for archived pages from the website specifically relevant to the University of California.

even if there were, it would be unconscionable to mention them when there was so much oppression and exploitation going on....One of the questions on the multiple choice final for the class asked: "What system is based on the division and exploitation of classes?" The answer to the question was capitalism, and in order to receive a good grade on the test I was forced to select that answer although I did not agree.

When asked for a reply to and rebuttal of what the student had said, the instructor did not respond. The instructor's conduct of the course as reported here suggests a political activist who has no understanding of academic life.

A similar case on the same campus involved Sociology 108f: "Studying People at First Hand." Here too the course description promised instruction in the basics of the field: "A vital aspect of modern sociology is the study of social activities in natural settings. This course explores the different methods a fieldworker can use to discover truths about society." The student wanted a basic course in field methods, and so took this one. But it turned out not to be about field methods at all. The instructor showed a series of videotapes. The first was "Women of the Hezbollah." It showed the hardships suffered by Palestinian revolutionaries fighting for a free Palestine, and their oppression by Israelis. The second showed rebels in El Salvador fighting their oppressive U.S.-backed government. As a result, the student reported, there was virtually no instruction in field methods. This was simply political propaganda masquerading as a methods course.

In another case a student wanted to go to graduate school in sociology and so took what looked like a course that would give a grounding in modern sociological theory. This was UC Riverside's Sociology 169: "Modern Sociological Theory." The description sounded exactly like what the student needed: "Analysis and critical evaluation of sociological theory from 1920 to the present." But once again, the course signed up for was not the course that was given:

I learned very little besides what the professor's personal beliefs were and the transparent ways she attempted to indoctrinate students. I didn't feel that the course in any significant way prepared me for graduate school because the professor's teachings promoted a doctrinaire, dogmatic and ideological perspective, rather than intellectual one....To myself and fellow-students, she resembled an activist far more than an actual educator.

There is a remarkable correspondence between these three cases. Each time, a class promised to equip the student with the ideas, methods, or theories that are basic to all work in that field. Yet in each case, what the student got was an instructor who seized the opportunity provided by a captive audience that has been lured by a promise of essential basic ideas to do something quite different, namely, to proselytize for his or her political obsessions. In each case the intellectual level of the presentation was well below college level instruction, because the ideas were presented without serious analysis or any

consideration of evidence and argument both pro and con. Moreover, even relatively inexperienced undergraduates could easily see that some of these ideas could not withstand serious questioning.

Many observers on the campuses of UC would be prepared to agree that this kind of thing happens in the newer fields—with names ending in “Studies”—that were politicized at their outset, but deny that it happens in older established disciplines. This attitude means that when in UC Santa Barbara’s Black Studies 50 (“Blacks in the Media”) the professor (according to a student’s account) insists that capitalism is a system based on racism, and that the root of all societal evil is oppression and abuse of power by “clowns,” “fools,” and “idiots” (referring to the U.S. President and Congress), many people who know perfectly well how absurd it is to pretend that this is college-level instruction simply look the other way. (In so doing they irresponsibly leave the mainly black students who take these courses to the very poor education that they provide, which some might call racism, though it is probably nothing more than cowardice.) But the consistency of many different students’ accounts of basic courses in mainstream disciplines in different departments and on different campuses makes it clear that this degradation of college education is certainly not confined to the newer fields. A course such as Sociology 1 serves as introduction and gateway to an entire well-established discipline; it is hard to believe that nobody in the department knows what is happening in its most basic courses. Many faculty members must know, tolerate, and even value what is happening, for we hear no accounts of department chairs trying to correct it, and student complaints never result in administrative action.

Writing Courses

Courses that promise intensive instruction in writing are a particularly common example of “bait and switch,” drawing in students on the promise of basic instruction, but delivering instead political monologue. UC San Diego’s colleges have core required courses whose stated purpose is to teach students “to read critically and write appropriately in a variety of academic contexts” (Earl Warren College), or to “fulfill their University of California composition requirement by receiving intensive instruction in university-level writing” (Eleanor Roosevelt College).



University of California, Riverside

Photo by S. R. Morrison, RedCactusSteve@Yahoo.Com

But a student who took one of these courses (John Muir College’s DOC3) said that though the course catalog description states that this class is heavily devoted to writing, “very little writing instruction was provided.” Instead there was a great deal of radical politics: the instructor lectured the class “that the United States is nothing beyond a despicable and hypocritical country that continues to oppress minorities and the disadvantaged. She believed that the Gulf War was a ‘revenge for the loss of Vietnam.’ She said it was just a ploy for ‘more oil.’” She gave no writing advice at all, the student complained. The readings for the course were uniformly radical politics, chosen evidently for their content, and were anything but a model of good writing or effective argumentation.

In Warren College's WCWP10B a student commented: "The class seemed more like a re-education program than a university writing course." In another section of this same course, a student wrote: "This [required] course...is intended to be a course on writing, but the only time the TA taught us anything about writing was when many of the students complained."

It was Warren College's writing course that led to the founding of the website www.noindoctrination.org when a parent (Luann Wright) decided to investigate for herself the course that her son complained about. The astonished parent (herself a teacher) later wrote of what she found: "The course was nothing but a sociopolitical soapbox – mandatory thought reform disguised as a writing program. Students were told what to think, and if their views differed from the correct dogma, they were told they were wrong. Very little time was devoted to the all-important skill of writing." She concluded that

The sociopolitical agenda was so heavy-handed during the class sessions that the phrase 'mandatory indoctrination' would be no exaggeration. My son's roommates had various instructors in this writing program, yet all were disgusted with the proselytizing....A college professor emailed me about his wife's experience in the Warren College Writing Program: "Her essay on abortion called for legal abortion, but with restrictions. The head of the class called her into the office and told her that if she didn't revise her essay to support abortion in all circumstances that she couldn't pass the class."⁴⁰

Ms. Wright also discovered that "Even a long-time lecturer in the program, Dr. William Weeks, a self-described progressive, calls the program a 'form of intellectual tyranny that was contemptuous to honest inquiry and diversity of opinion.'"

In still another of UC San Diego's Colleges (Roosevelt College) the instructor in MMW5

used the class as a forum for his anti-capitalist, pro-Marxist, and anti-American beliefs; didn't provide balance; mocked American values and those who influenced the founding of the U.S....[and charged that] both of our political parties are extreme right-wing, very close to the Nazis....blamed Western imperialism for 9-11 attacks, and trivialized the attacks....He chose to use the class period to go off-topic and make disparaging remarks about contemporary American society, the evils of our "imperialism," and Western "fascism"....he only presented one side of the issue....he uses the course as a platform for propaganda.

It is worth noting that the instructor in this example was not a lowly adjunct professor or lecturer but a tenured professor.

⁴⁰ These statements are taken from Luann Wright's testimony before the California State Senate, April 21, 2004, and her paper "Academic Freedom in the Classroom: When 'Freedom' Becomes 'License,'" presented at the 2004 annual convention of the American Educational Research Association.

Science Courses

In all these cases we see again the pattern: an instructor with a captive audience gained by a promise of basic instruction seizes the chance for a radical political harangue that has nothing to do with the ostensible purpose of the course.

The humanities and social sciences are the most common source of these abuses, but they have created a campus climate that can on occasion influence coursework in the sciences too. A science course like Berkeley's Computer Science 61AC ("Structure and Interpretation of Computer Programs/ Machine Structures") might seem an unlikely place to find a political harangue, but nevertheless, a student wrote:

How does a statement like "Nothing Saddam has done could be any worse than what George Bush has done" find its way into a Computer Science lecture??...In the past, Harvey's students learned that California's current governor (Schwarzenegger) is a NAZI....Five minutes at both ends of the lecture (but other times as well) was plenty of time for Harvey to take swipes at conservative thinkers and ideas. I happened to be taking his class when the war with Iraq began, and he would often announce anti-war rallies, and make silly comments....the day after Arnold Schwarzenegger was elected governor, he was particularly bitter about things, and made a remark to the effect of, "Aren't you embarrassed to tell your friends you live in California. We elected a NAZI actor".... Harvey can't seem to leave his politics out of the CS classroom.

It is as well to remember that in this case, like almost all others, the faculty member did not respond to a request for a rebuttal of the student's account.

Another case of a science class in which time was devoted to radical politics that had no conceivable relation to the course topic was Berkeley's Molecular and Cell Biology 61: "Brain, Mind and Behavior." A student wrote:

the professor dedicated 30 minutes of a 1.5 hour lecture to letting about 10 individuals speak out about the reasons students in this 700+ student class should dissent against the war. The professor did not open up the lecture for discussion to see what other people thought. He moved right into his lecture material. The individuals who spoke out were not even students in the class.... He will make comments for about 5 minutes each class when there is a new development about war, an anti-war rally, etc. At end of each class he'll remind students to 'hope for peace' or to look into a method of dissent as discussed at beginning of class. I think using his position as a professor to preach his viewpoint on the war situation with Iraq is abusing the respect that he receives from the position.

This is another example of theft of taxpayer-financed resources and converting them to personal use. Using a Molecular and Cell Biology classroom to advance a personal political agenda should have provoked strong administrative action against the instructor. There was none.

Science classrooms on other campuses have also been affected by the general climate of permissiveness with respect to political activism. At UC Davis, a student in Geography 10 (“The World’s Regions”) reported: “It seemed like he was using this course to espouse his personal politics that had nothing to do with the subject matter...[the course had] pretty frequent intrusions of off-topic political subjects.” And at UC Santa Barbara, in Psychology 7 (“Introduction to Experimental Psychology”), a student wrote that the instructor constantly injected jibes at political figures that he disagreed with into his classes. He concluded: “This is a class about experiments in the field of psychology. It has NOTHING to do with American politics....In my opinion being indoctrinated in a psychology class, of all things, is no laughing matter.”

Sometimes this unprofessional behavior goes so far as to include use of the classroom for overt calls to political action, and for political organizing to promote the professor’s political passions. At UC Davis, on the day that the final examination for Anthropology 2 (“Cultural Anthropology”) was to be held, students turned up for the exam only to be told that it was cancelled because some students wanted to go to an anti-war rally. A student wrote: “Instead of giving a final, she wrote anti-war and anti-American websites on the board.” This was the climax of a class that had been relentlessly and uncompromisingly one-sided on social and political issues. The instructor used the two hour examination period to hold a discussion about the Iraq war. Refusing to hold a final examination at the time scheduled is a violation of the faculty code of conduct, yet the professor’s department chair supported this irresponsible action.⁴¹

Many of these examples have concerned the intrusion of irrelevant radical politics into a class, but on occasion this can even become the entire class. At UCLA a student thought Communication 165 (“Agitational Communication”) so devoid of any content other than a radical political harangue that it was nothing but a “carefully calculated radical leftist political campaign speech.”

Similarly, at UC San Diego a student began a class expecting knowledge and analysis, but found in Sociology 189 (“Special Topics in Comparative-Historical Sociology”) something else:

September 11 was a major turning point in our nation’s history, and I was hoping to participate in an honest, open-minded inquiry into the event, as well as help postulate how our government should respond. Unfortunately, it was a hostile atmosphere in which we were told what to think, rather than how to think....the class seemed divided into two main sections: why the United States has always been wrong, and why the United States is still wrong in attacking terrorism.

⁴¹ This student’s report is corroborated by another account given at the website <http://www.erinconnor.org/archives/2003/04/>.

The instructor “pondered whether the attack was terrorism or legitimate warfare, since American civilians vote and pay taxes.” He went on to take the position that “we have no moral grounds to condemn the Sept. 11 attacks.” Faced with this claim that we can not have any moral objection to the random killing of 3000 civilians, the student suggested that other views be considered and analyzed beside this one, but the instructor “responded to my request by telling me that he does not feel it’s his duty to go into theories that he feels have no credibility whatsoever.”

This remark betrays a temperament completely unsuited to academic work. An academic instructor’s job is to analyze the events, the evidence, and the major ways in which they can be and are being interpreted. Instead, this instructor reportedly asserted a highly debatable moral equivalence between mass murder and voting, and then insisted that no other view is possible. This is intellectually crude thought and behavior, and far below the level we should expect of academic teachers.

Courses dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict often become occasions for instructors to use the classroom to encourage political activism by students on behalf of the Palestinian cause. At UC Santa Cruz, Community Studies 120 was such a course. A student took it because he thought it “would be an interesting and informative course exploring the two sides of a very complex conflict.” However, it

turned out to be so outrageously one-sided and anti-Israel as to make a mockery of the educational system. The professor used her lectures, classroom discussions and course readings as a vehicle for her own personal vendetta against the state of Israel, against Zionism, against Israelis and against Jews. She even used the class website to distribute information about anti-Israel protests occurring in the Bay Area and to invite her students to attend.

Not infrequently, ideological bias leads to extraordinary distortion of historical facts by, of all people, professors of history. After taking UC Santa Barbara’s History 17C (“The American People”), seemingly a standard historical survey course, a student (who was actually a Green party member) wrote: “I am paying thousands of dollars for a balanced, scholarly education, not doctrinaire ideological programming...[but got only] a typical anti-capitalist, far-left revisionist instructor, one who attempts to focus almost completely upon the faults and injustices of the United States.” The student went on to give a particularly chilling example. When covering the Second World War, the professor said bluntly that “The Soviet Union won the War,” thus trying to “propagandize this crucial moment in world history as a crowning moment for the Soviets only.” This will be news to the American forces who won the entire Pacific war against Japan without any help from the Soviets, or the British who alone kept Hitler from achieving total victory while the Soviets were his allies from 1939 to 1941, or the Allied forces who were beginning to liberate Europe while the Soviets were still fighting in their own country. A genuinely academic analysis of what decided the Second World War would be a highly complex matter involving many different kinds of crucial factors, all of them with a strong bearing on the outcome. The student surely has a point: how can so costly an education have given no more than propagandistic claims that oversimplify and distort historical fact so badly? Where was the department chair, or the dean, who let this student down so badly?

In this case we can see the link between radicalism and academic incompetence. A genuine historian looks at a question from all sides before letting the facts take the shape that they seem best to fit. An activist ideologue has a shape that he wants the facts to fit before he starts, and makes sure that the facts fit it, come what may. These examples have shown how political activism becomes the enemy of serious scholarship.

Course reading lists reinforce the sense that complex issues are now often reduced to a single, radical viewpoint with the result that many of the most fundamental issues raised by the class's subject matter will be avoided. We consider the case of general reading lists below, and so will give here just a single representative example of how reading lists illustrate the politicization of a course. Regarding UC Santa Barbara's History 17C ("The American People: World War I to the Present") a student wrote "Without exception, all the books assigned were essentially written from a pro-labor, anti-corporate, anti-war, liberal to radical perspective." We have only to look at the reading list for ourselves to see that the student's judgment is correct. There are five books, and they include an attack on globalization, a novel on racism in the WWII era, a marine's memoir of his service in Vietnam, and one that focuses on "working people's struggle for social and economic justice," the last embodying the now familiar preemption of moral and political judgment of the material covered.⁴² This is a bizarre list for a general course on American history, one that tells us less about its ostensible subject than it does about the instructor's political interests.

What we have seen in these examples of what is going on in the classroom is much more than a series of individual cases. They show that exactly the same politicized degradation of coursework occurs throughout the many campuses of the UC system, across the different subject areas of the humanities and the social sciences, and even (though to a lesser degree) in the natural sciences. In many cases these examples have been highly visible courses – gateways to disciplines, required courses, or courses on core methods and subjects. Deans, department chairs, and departmental faculty cannot possibly be ignorant of what is happening when it is both so widespread and so central to the curriculum. We are seeing the manifestations of a culture extending throughout the University. Whether this culture represents a majority of the faculty scarcely matters. What is clear from the evidence is that it is large enough and powerful enough to have persuaded administrators that it is pointless to oppose it, or to try to limit its freedom to do as it wishes. Its numerical strength is now sufficient to ensure that the plain language of the university's rules can be ignored, and it is pervasive enough to have caused well-established traditions of university life to have been abandoned. It is entrenched enough not to be held accountable for the disastrous consequences of its actions. And it has managed to turn much of university education inside out.

42 The five books are: *Mollie's Job: A Study of Life and Work in the Global Assembly Line*, by William M Adler; *If He Hollers Let Him Go*, by Chester Himes; *A Rumor of War*, by Phillip Caputo; *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture, and Society*, vol. 2 by Stephen Brier, Nelson Lichtenstein, Roy Rosenzweig and Susan Strasser; and *Reading the American Past*, vol. 2, by Michael P. Johnson.

4.3 Impoverished Education Through Politicized Curricular Choices and Omissions

Introducing a recent study of campus curricular requirements by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), former Harvard Dean Harry Lewis remarked that:

Many studies have shown that our college graduates are ignorant of the basic principles on which our government runs. For starters, most cannot identify the purpose of the First Amendment, what Reconstruction was, or the historical context of the Voting Rights Act. If you peruse this [the ACTA's] website,⁴³ you will see why: the vast majority of our colleges have made a course on the broad themes of U.S. history or government optional.

The California State University system (CSU) is a laudable exception to this generalization. All but three of the more than twenty campuses of the CSU system require American History and Institutions as an essential part of their curricula. But the situation in UC is very different: not a single UC campus has such a requirement. In fact, on four of the nine general campuses, a student can achieve a bachelor's degree without doing any coursework in science, mathematics, a foreign language, economics, literature, or the history and institutions of their country. Those four include the Berkeley campus. By contrast, every single one of the CSU campuses requires coursework in science and mathematics. To be sure, UC requires a year of U.S. history in high school for undergraduate admissions, but University of California level instruction ought to be on a completely different level – why otherwise would students need to go on to a university at all if high school coursework is equivalent?

“on four of the nine UC campuses, a student can achieve a bachelor’s degree without doing any coursework in science, mathematics, a foreign language, economics, literature, or the history and institutions of their country.”

History at the University of California

What is the reason for such a bizarre result, one that produces graduates of prestigious campuses who are so ignorant of the history of their country, and thus so ill prepared for citizenship in their society? A clue as to why this is happening emerges when we look at the courses in U.S. history that are offered on UC campuses. For example, at UC San Diego in the fall of 2010 nine upper division courses in American History were offered, but one looks in vain for any course that provides a connected view of the sweep of

American history, and of how it came to develop so rapidly from an insignificant cluster of colonies to the nation which is economically, militarily, and culturally the most powerful and influential in the world.

⁴³ www.goacta.org

The titles of the nine courses seem to go in a very different direction. For example, History 146 has the title “Race, Riots, and Violence in the U.S.”; 139 is “African American History in the 20th century”; 156 is “American Women/American Womanhood”; 180 is “Immigration and Ethnicity in American Society”; 154 is “Western Environmental History.”

When we take these offerings together, a certain negativity is hard to miss; they dwell on the nation’s faults and failures, on victimology and oppression. The course description of History 146 reads: “Exploring how different groups of Americans have constructed competing notions of race, gender, labor, and national belonging by participating in street violence.” History 139 describes the transformation of African America by “imperialism, migration, urbanization, desegregation, and deindustrialization.” History 156 sets out topics to be addressed in relation to “a dominant ideology of womanhood...witchcraft, evangelicalism, cult of domesticity, sexuality, rise of industrial capitalism.” Naturally, the topics of “Immigration and Ethnicity” and “Environmental History” offer similar opportunities for lament about unfairness and rapacity. History 151 (American Legal History) might seem to offer a respite from the persistent themes of our national failings, but, alas, the course description says that it “examines race relations and law, the rise of big business, the origins of the modern welfare state during the Great Depression, the crisis of civil liberties produced by two world wars and McCarthyism.” A course on “The American West” might sound as if it would be more cheerful, but the course description begins in much the same way: “Topics will include ethnicity, the environment...”

“Why did the U.S. constitution last? How has it become so influential? Why is it a leader in so many fields? These are central questions, but the dominant faculty culture has no interest in them.”

Could this group of courses on one campus in the fall of 2010 be atypical? Let us look at a different campus and a different year: UC Santa Cruz’s American history courses in the fall of 2008. There were six upper division courses. 106B concerned Asian American History, 110D was on the Civil War, 115A was about U.S. Labor History, 121A was about African American History, 123A about U.S. Immigration History, 190 concerned Power and Culture in the U.S., “from a variety of race, class, and gender perspectives.” Here again is the familiar focus on the nation’s shortcomings, as well as on victimology and oppression, and once more there is no sign of a course on the general historical development of the country. We are evidently dealing again with a university-wide faculty culture, one which takes a highly jaundiced view of the U.S. and avoids telling its story in a way that would acknowledge its successes.

Where Is the Debate?

There is clearly more to American history than the narrow focus on view here; what is missing is any sense of the major events in the country’s development, as well as its strengths and achievements. If

we are to judge by the numbers of people who want to come to the U.S., we should have to consider it the most successful society on earth. It has the longest-standing form of democratic government in the world and is the world's leader in science and technology, as in medical care and innovation. Though dwarfed in population size by many other countries, it is the world's leading economy. Its cultural influence throughout the world is formidable: England recently instituted an American-style Supreme Court, and not long ago instituted our kind of bipartisan parliamentary committees. How did all this happen? Why did the U.S. constitution last? How has it become so influential? Why is it a leader in so many fields? These are central questions, but the dominant faculty culture has no interest in them.

Faculty historians who teach these limiting courses will certainly argue that a more positive view of the country would be highly debatable. However, in a similar context our national parent organization (the National Association of Scholars) gave this devastating reply: "But where is the debate?"⁴⁴ An ongoing campus debate would certainly raise the intellectual level of this argument, for that is what the clash of ideas does. But on campus there is little or none, and students are the losers. The source of their ignorance of key events in U.S. history is easy to see. There are no required courses, and those courses that are on the books too often drive away students who are not already alienated radicals, since they are one-sided denunciations that neglect the extraordinary development of the U.S. to cultural, scientific, and economic preeminence.

Worse still is the fact that even students majoring in history can graduate knowing little or nothing about the history of their own country. At UC Davis, a history major can avoid American history entirely, and the same is true of the Santa Cruz, Irvine, and San Diego campuses. Berkeley requires only one lower division course (but that is 7A or B, of which enough has been said above) which means that a history major at the flagship campus could graduate knowing next to nothing about American history.

Where Is the Study of Western Civilization?

If we take the nation's history in a broader sense, that history is a part of the history of Western civilization, the civilization that in large part made it what it is. Yet here too, not one of the UC campuses requires any coursework in the history of Western civilization. Even more disturbing is the fact that there is not a single history department on any of the campuses that requires a survey course in Western civilization of its history majors. And most shocking of all, on almost all campuses (the exceptions being UCLA and UC Davis) Western civilization courses are simply not offered at all.

Until recently, a reasonable knowledge of the history of Western civilization was considered an important attribute of a well-educated person. A powerful case can be made for the wisdom of that attitude. First, we are all children of the Western tradition – it has made us who we are. To understand where we came from, students must certainly understand the political, scientific, and artistic

44 This was in an NAS report: "The Vanishing West, 1964-2010. The Disappearance of Western Civilization from the American Undergraduate Curriculum," issued May 2011, <http://www.nas.org/images/documents/TheVanishingWest.pdf>.

achievements of ancient Greece, and how these have developed and changed over time until they resulted in the way we live now. The National Association of Scholars' recent study puts the matter thus: "In studying the rise of the West, students came to grips with how the arts and sciences encountered in other classes had been shaped." Modernity – that is, the form of life that has spread and is still spreading across the globe – has to a very large extent been shaped by the Western tradition. Again, the NAS study puts the point well:

Western Civilization has transformed the human condition. This remains invisible or at best gropingly understood by students who have had no chance to study systematically the rise of the West, which brings into focus better than anything else the origins and development of a sophisticated worldwide marketplace; an impersonal, rule-based bureaucracy; the scientific outlook; modern medicine, lengthened life-spans, democracy and constitutionalism, and the massive increase in material abundance....Studying the history of the West brings a student to grips, as nothing else can, with the roots, the shaping events, the underlying causes of the process and substance of globalization, indeed, of the creation of modernity itself.

This positive assessment of the Western tradition would also be found debatable by the radical political culture of the campuses, and once again the response must be: where is the debate? But if that debate were to take place, the incoherence of this vehement opposition to the Western tradition would soon emerge. For the cherished ideas of campus radicals are all very Western ideas, and the thinkers who developed them are all solidly part of the Western tradition. Radicals charge the West endlessly with racism, sexism, class oppression, and imperialism. Yet radical egalitarianism is based on the ideas of Rousseau and Marx, the abolition of the world-wide practice of slavery was a European cause and achievement, equal rights for women was fought for and achieved in the West, and it was the European Enlightenment that led to the end of empires. Properly understood, the place in the spectrum of political ideas that campus political radicalism occupies is that of a Western extremist, the exact opposite of an anti-Westerner. Suppose that we ask the question: what is the history of the radical left? There is only one place to go to find its origins. It is part of the history of the Western tradition. A good course in the Western tradition might be of great benefit to these confused Western extremists. They might then realize that they are not attacking the Western tradition from without, but on the contrary pressing for a more extreme version of its ideas from within.

We can recognize the need for debate on all of these issues, but one fact remains. Ignorance of the salient events in the history of the great civilization that has made us who we are is, quite simply, ignorance.

Within particular disciplines there are still more bizarre curricular choices that stunt a student's education, but most of these are only offshoots of the confused and misdirected campus hostility to the Western tradition. On several campuses it is now possible to graduate with a major in English

literature without having read a word of Shakespeare, Chaucer, or Milton. If this were simply the result of a trendy aversion to dictating to students what they must do, that would be bad enough; but it is not. At UC San Diego, for example, while the literature major does not specifically require a course on Shakespeare, it certainly does require that all majors must have done a survey course in either Chicano literature, African-American Literature, or Asian-American literature. This is political correctness taken to the point of caricature. Political choices come first, while great writers can be ignored. A major in English literature should at the very least make sure that students are exposed to the greatest English-speaking writers, because with that they will gain a mastery of the subtleties of their native language as well as an acquaintance with some of the greatest minds in history. But in the current campus culture these considerations are trumped by the familiar theme of ethnicity and victimhood.

Another example of a major program degraded by a bizarre curricular choice can be seen in the case of political science. One might assume that any student majoring in political science would of necessity devote much time, thought, and coursework to the constitution and political history of this nation. First, because of its intrinsic importance as the longest-running essentially unchanged political system in the world; second, because it is at the moment the most influential; third, because it represents the culmination of centuries of European political thought; and fourth, because that is the system that they live with. But on several campuses, a student can graduate as a major in political science and never have taken a course in American politics. Only a quite extraordinary degree of alienation could have produced this absurd result.

If omissions are bizarre and educationally damaging, inclusions can be just as bewildering. Take, for example, the proliferation of courses on Karl Marx at UC Santa Cruz. The politics department has an introductory class on Marx, but so does the sociology department, the community studies department, the legal studies department, and the history of consciousness department. Several of these departments have a number of other courses on Marxism too. No other political thinker has a course devoted exclusively to his thought. It is as if the news that Marxism is now an obsolete system of thought after disastrous results in so many countries had not reached the campus.⁴⁵ Adolescent Marxist nostalgia still evidently reigns on campus and impedes a return to reality – but where are the adults who might be pointing out that it is time to grow up and move on to thinkers who have been able to withstand the test of time and to remain more relevant to modern life? There is little doubt that these bizarre curricular choices and omissions result from a lack of political diversity among the faculty.

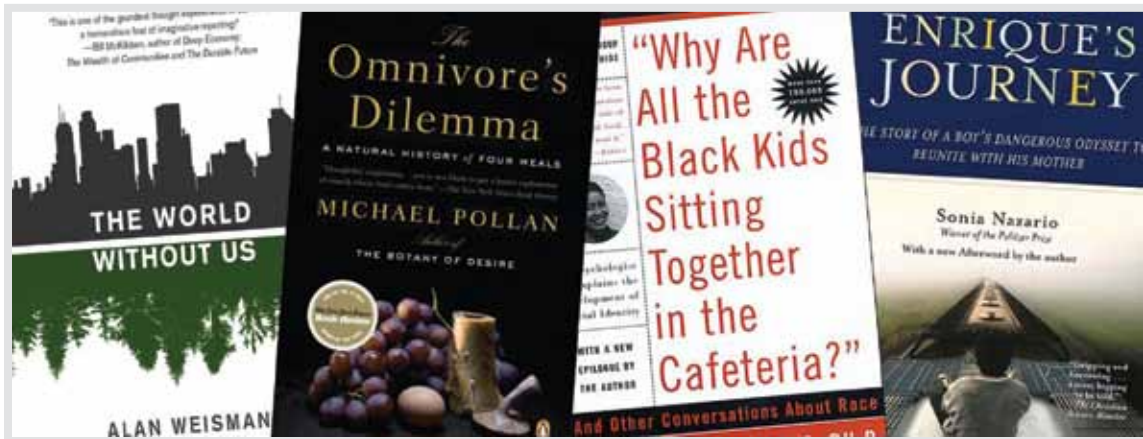
4.4 Required Programs, Core Courses, and General Reading Lists

Students have as a rule considerable freedom to choose their programs and courses, yet some are prescribed for all students of a particular college or campus: for example, core courses, orientation programs, and general reading lists. That makes the choice of content in each case a sensitive matter. Large captive audiences present a great temptation.

⁴⁵ This is not to deny that Marx is an important historical figure worthy of academic study. The proliferation of courses in so many departments, however, suggests something more than this.

Reading Lists

Summer reading lists for incoming freshmen are a case in point. On four UC campuses a book is recommended to all incoming freshmen. This (as another recent NAS study⁴⁶ observed) provides an excellent opportunity to introduce incoming students to college level work by giving them books that are classics of thought or of great writing. But the four UC campuses all prescribed books that merely address hot-button issues in present day politics, all of them with a distinctly one-sided political message. *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan is an attack on industrial agriculture; *The World Without Us* by Alan Weisman is a radical environmentalist's meditation on the harm that human beings do to the earth and to other species; *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario is an account of the trials of life in the U.S. for an illegal immigrant child from Honduras; and *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* by Beverly Tatum is a book on the racism encountered by black students. Without any educational context and taken only by themselves as the single recommendation to large groups of students, these are poor choices. They do not challenge students either in the complexity of their ideas or in the excellence of their writing – on both counts they are rather simple. This is propagandizing, not education. Every one of these books takes up the familiar themes of left radicalism that we have seen over and over again: victimology, anti-capitalism, illegal immigration, radical environmentalism. Students already suffer from endless repetition of these themes throughout their education, while serious educational work is left undone.



UC Santa Cruz's colleges have core courses that all students in a given college must take. Many of these have reading lists that fit the same pattern. In the fall term of 2007, one college core course had just two books: *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* by Mike Davis and *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail* by Ruben Martinez. The first offers what one internet reviewer called "a hardline Marxist view of Los Angeles that, by employing only simple and misguided economic analysis, does not allow for the intricacies of the city's problems." Another reviewer concludes that

46 "Beach Books: What Do Colleges Want Students to Read Outside Class?" June 2010, http://www.nas.org/articles/Beach_Books_What_Do_Colleges_and_Universities_Want_Students_to_Read_Outsid1.

“This is a sad loss of an opportunity to introduce the students to ideas and writing that are complex enough to challenge them, ideas that they will not already find in ordinary, everyday politics.”

“The author uses the city as a soapbox to espouse his political view of the world.” The second of these two books is a journalistic, not a scholarly view of the problem of illegal immigration from Mexico. In the judgment of another reviewer it is: “facile, not intellectually rigorous.”

In another UCSC college, Martinez’s *Crossing Over* was the only book on the list. In still another, the core reading list had three books, all devoted to issues of race and racism: James Baldwin’s *Fire Next Time*; Pati Navalta Poblete’s *The Oracles: My Filipino*

Grandparents in America, a short personal memoir without academic analysis of any kind; and Hector Tobar’s *Translation Nation: Defining a New American Identity in the Spanish-Speaking United States*, which is heavily invested in a radical view of borders and illegal immigration. (“Simplistic and lacking in analysis,” according to one reader.) In a fourth college, the core list had two books: Richard Tucker’s *Insatiable Appetite: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World*, the title of which speaks for itself, and Richard White’s *The Organic Machine: the Remaking of the Columbia River*, which looks at the relationship between people and nature in the Pacific Northwest. The radical political theme here is the familiar one: American capitalism damages world ecology.

UC San Diego, like Santa Cruz, also has colleges that have core courses. Here too, faculty seem unable to resist the temptation that core reading lists provide for them to promote their ideological hobby horses rather than introducing students to books that are at an intellectual level appropriate for academic work. For example, in 2003, Marshall College’s DOC 3 had only two books on its core reading list, the first of which was Barbara Ehrenreich’s *Hearts of Men*, a Marxist polemic, and the second a book of readings all of which promote the familiar radical themes.

We can generalize about all of these choices: they are all political; they are all written from the same radical perspective; they all concern the same small group of endlessly-repeated politically correct themes; no opposing points of view that could spark realistic debate are ever offered; and they have emotional appeal but not the intellectual complexity of an academic treatment. None require of the student what is often called “deep reading” – reading that requires continuous thought and processing of complex ideas, as opposed to the rapid absorption of a single message that continues unchanged throughout the book. This is a sad loss of an opportunity to introduce the students to ideas and writing that are complex enough to challenge them, ideas that they will not already find in ordinary, everyday politics. Once more, ideology crowds out education.

Orientation Programs

Mandatory orientation programs that are intended to introduce students to and prepare them for campus life suffer the same fate: their ostensible purpose can be forgotten, allowing them to become

yet another vehicle for the advancement of radical politics. At UC San Diego, Warren College's freshman orientation program soon degenerated into radical ideology: "The organizer would name a 'victim' group (e.g., those from low-income families, those who had been racially discriminated against, those who were or were good friends with homosexuals, etc.) and the students who fit that category would stand until the next group was called."⁴⁷ At UC Berkeley, an orientation program for resident assistants also quickly became an opportunity for radical ideologues to insist that there is only one way (theirs) to look at race relations. According to an appalled student, "The training session was mostly focused on racism....We were forced to watch films that portrayed whites as racist....[the speaker] silenced questions about whites always being portrayed as the racists by saying that white people do this because they have 'privilege' in society." The student concluded that the session which was supposed to promote sensitivity between different racial groups in fact created a rift between them. This was political indoctrination masquerading as campus orientation. It did not prepare students for an academic environment, but on the contrary kept them trapped in the everyday world of radical politics.

The large captive audiences of campus or college booklists and orientation programs only exist because educators have decided that a particular educational experience is so important that all students must receive it. But if that is so, the institution has a responsibility to make sure that those experiences really are what they were intended to be, because only that specific intent justifies administrative preemption of student choice. It is irresponsible for university faculty to seize control of these important occasions and reduce them to one-dimensional political propagandizing. But yet again, the question that most needs to be asked here concerns the institutional climate that allows this to happen. Anything that involves large campus audiences cannot possibly go unnoticed; far too many people can see what is happening. What does it tell us about the state of administrative oversight that these highly visible abuses go unchecked?

4.5 Campus Events

Campus events such as teach-ins, conferences, or lecture series produce yet more evidence of an alarming level of politicization. As soon as social and political issues are involved we commonly see decidedly one-sided presentations that lack the analytical depth expected of a university.

An illustrative example is a teach-in that took place on April 24, 2006 at UC Santa Cruz. The title of the event was "The War on Terror," but it was largely about the war in Iraq. As the publicity for the event announced, an extraordinary number of campus agencies sponsored the event:

Major funding for the teach-in has been provided by the Offices of the Chancellor, Executive Vice Chancellor, and Student Affairs, with additional contributions from the Anthropology Department, Center for Cultural Studies, Center for Justice, Tolerance and Community (CJTC), College Nine, College

⁴⁷ These cases were documented at the now defunct www.noindoctrination.org. The pages from the website specifically relevant to the University of California are available at http://www.nas.org/images/documents/Noindoctrinationorg_UC_courses.pdf.

Ten, Cowell College, Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office, Feminist Studies Department, History Department, Institute for Advanced Feminist Research (IAFR), Institute for Humanities Research, Literature Department, Women's Center, and others.

That level of institutional funding could only be justified if this were an educational event, rather than an anti-war rally. Any academic teacher knows what an educational event on the war in Iraq would look like. It would start with an exposition of the case for the war, and follow that with an exposition of the case against the war. To ensure a first-rate educational event, the organizer would seek out speakers

"Nobody on the Santa Cruz campus seemed able to tell the difference between an educational event and a political rally."

who could be relied on to make the best possible cases for and against. Following these initial presentations would be a series of speakers commenting on the strengths and weaknesses of the two cases, after which audience questions to the speakers would be invited. Done well, this would make a splendid contribution to a deeper understanding of the subject.

But the UCSC event was as different from this model of a truly educational event as it could possibly be. Every single speaker opposed the war; they differed only in the degree of their vehemence. The absence of any contrary argument meant that the discussion stayed at a low intellectual level, shrill and question-begging. This was clearly not an educational event: it was an anti-war political rally. One of the organizers all but

admitted that it was a political event designed to mobilize opposition to the war: "This event is an effort to spark a national movement similar to the kind of effective teach-ins that were mounted in the 1960s and 1970s about the war in Vietnam," said Feminist Studies professor Bettina Aptheker. The event was initiated by "Faculty Against War" (a group of 25 UCSC faculty members) and a coalition of student organizations including "Students Against War." Speakers included many radical activists but not a single figure who could be considered middle of the road politically, let alone anyone to the right of that. The organizers had certainly aimed for a certain kind of variety in the speakers, since there were professors from UC Berkeley, Pomona College, Georgetown University and Columbia University, and also a congressman, a mayor, a civil rights lawyer, even a representative of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. The problem was that they all took much the same view of the issue.

That political passions should give rise to an event such as this is to be expected. The problem here is that nobody on the Santa Cruz campus seemed able to tell the difference between an educational event and a political rally. This included even the campus Chancellor, Denise Denton, who spoke in support of the event and gave it her blessing. One of the organizers spoke piously of the teach-in as "education" but this appeared to mean simply that the event would set straight anyone who did not understand how evil the war was. The concept of education had morphed into that of political advocacy, so that a great deal of public money was being used to indoctrinate rather than to educate.

Much the same thing occurs on the other campuses. On the Davis campus, a panel on the subject: “Cycles of Violence in the Long Hot Summer of 2006: Israel, Palestine and Lebanon” took place on October 18, 2006. This event too was co-sponsored by numerous departments: the Political Science department, the program in Middle East/South Asia Studies, the program in Jewish Studies, and the Institute for Governmental Affairs. A letter of protest to the Chancellor from three campus faculty members⁴⁸ describes what happened:

Dr. Zeina Zaatari introduced her talk with reference to Israel’s creation as a hostile act and continued with a paean to Hezbollah for 30 minutes. She was followed by Dr. Zeev Maoz, who spent his time criticizing the Israeli government. The concluding speaker was Dr. Beshara Doumani who stated that Israel had committed war crimes in Lebanon and Gaza. There was no effort by either Dr. Zaatari or Dr. Doumani to present scholarly talks backed by meaningful analysis. Although presented as an educational event, the panel was basically political propaganda that presented a single anti-Israel perspective without any context or counterpoint. The event lacked academic integrity and was an alarming example of a cynical use of academic freedom.

At Santa Barbara too, a number of conferences and symposia on the Middle East have displayed this same pattern of a complete uniformity of political outlook of the speakers – always radical, harshly anti-Israel, critical of America, and above all devoid of analysis of issues at a level to be expected of academia. Examples are the February 2, 2002 symposium “The New History and Israeli Public Culture,” and the October 7, 2006 panel “Lebanon, Palestine, Israel and Beyond: Perspectives on Conflict in the Middle East.” Yet again, these were shallow events with one point of view that was unchallenged and unexplored.

On the UC Berkeley campus an even more egregious case occurred. On October 26, 2010, an event entitled “What Can American Academia Do to Realize Justice for Palestinians?” was sponsored by a unit of that campus’s College of Letters and Sciences even though its sole purpose was the blatantly political one of promoting a boycott of Israeli academic institutions. There were no speakers who put the contrary point of view, and there was nothing genuinely educational about the event.

One last example is the panel: “Alternative Histories Within and Beyond Zionism,” which took place on the UC Santa Cruz campus on March 15, 2007. This was again the familiar univocal, radical-extremist-only panel. The Santa Cruz lawyer Gil Stein wrote an article complaining of the event for the local newspaper, the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*,⁴⁹ the title of which puts the problem with this and many other comparable events throughout the system succinctly: “UC Pays for Political Rally against Israel.”

⁴⁸ The three were: Moshe Rosenberg, David Siegel, and Michael J. Singer.

⁴⁹ April 1, 2007.

That University of California faculty can consider these events to be worthy of a college campus should astonish us all. They illustrate the degree to which radical politics has dragged the intellectual level of the University down to that of the political street.

4.6 Disrupted Lectures and Stolen Newspapers: Campus Hostility to the Free Expression of Ideas

Writing in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on December 10, 2010,⁵⁰ Charles Burrell gave a list of eight speakers whose talks on the UC Berkeley campus had been either seriously disrupted or stopped outright by protesters shouting them down: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, General Wesley Clark, Accuracy in America Executive Director Dan Flynn, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, author David Irving, Professor Vincent Sarich, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights chair Clarence Pendleton, and former ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick. This is a shameful record.

Nothing is more basic to a university than the free expression of ideas. A campus is a marketplace of ideas that become clarified and refined by competing with each other in a rigorous and demanding way. Arguments are met by counter-arguments, evidence that points one way is met by evidence that points the other way, and chains of logic are scrutinized for weakness and fallacy. The maxim often attributed to Voltaire expresses well the spirit of academic life: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." When on the campus of a great university, intellectual opponents are shouted down and silenced, not just once, but repeatedly, this can only be the sign of a deep institutional sickness.

The first time that this happened should have been the last. Had the university been functioning normally, the administration would instantly have recognized that something had gone badly wrong, and moved to make sure that it would never happen again. That the same thing happens time after time is a severe indictment of the university's administration, which either did not understand that a principle sacred to academic life was being violated, or, understanding it, was too cowardly to act.

What has made this un-academic behavior possible in the academy? The most likely cause is that the campus political climate has become so uniform that students have become strangers to ideas other than those of their activist teachers, and react to them with surprise and hostility. In this artificial monoculture of ideas students see that their teachers don't simply disagree with those ideas but have contempt for them. From there it is a short step to the conclusion that intellectual analysis of these ideas is pointless, and that the people who express them have no right to do so. One of the shouted-down speakers, Dan Flynn, formed this conclusion: "In the intellectually cloistered world of Berkeley, students who have never encountered conservative ideas don't have the means to intellectually combat

50 "Infringing on Free Speech: Debate Rages on Canceled Talk in Berkeley."



University of California, Irvine

Photograph © 2003 by Alan Nyiri, courtesy of the Atkinson Photographic Archive

Irvine, he was disrupted minutes into the lecture....Pipes could barely be heard over chants of 'anti-Israel,' 'anti-oppression,' 'anti-racism' and 'anti-hate.'"⁵²

A related manifestation of this anti-intellectual refusal to let the other side be heard is the frequent stealing and destroying of student newspapers that carry any challenge to cherished radical ideas. For example, when the student newspaper the *Daily Californian* ran an advertisement by the Ayn Rand Institute calling for a United States attack on Iran, the entire press run was stolen. The same thing happened when that newspaper endorsed Proposition 209, the successful ballot measure that banned racial preferences in public education and employment. And when the *California Patriot* (a monthly magazine), ran an article critical of the separatist Chicano group MEChA, all 4,000 issues were stolen."⁵³ In all these cases, nobody seemed to care that a principle central to academic life was being trampled: the free expression of ideas.

4.7 Administrative Passivity and Complicity

The abuses that we have recorded throughout this section of our report are in themselves a serious indictment of the university's administration. We have looked at politicization in many different areas of campus life: faculty hiring, coursework, curriculum, orientations, teach-ins, lectures. There is one constant in all of these different areas: the failure of administrative officers to act when the need to protect the integrity of the university became obvious. Administrators are essentially the quality control mechanism of the university, yet they have stood by and done nothing while incompetent one-party departments of Politics or Sociology were created; they have done nothing while blatantly politicized departmental mission statements and course descriptions were being printed in campus catalogs; they

those ideas."⁵¹ John Stuart Mill's bedrock principle that you only understand your own position if you thoroughly grasp that of your opposition is now evidently foreign to, of all places, the college campus.

This behavior is by no means limited to the Berkeley campus. Don Feder recorded an example at UC Irvine: "In 2007, when commentator Daniel Pipes tried to speak on 'The Threat to Israel's Existence,' at the University of California-

51 Daniel J. Flynn, "Berzerk at Berkeley," <http://archive.frontpagemag.com/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=22249>, March 2, 2001.

52 "Being Shouted Down," <http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org/news/2687/being-shouted-down>, March 30, 2009.

53 These incidents were noted by Rory Miller in his "UC Berkeley: A Safe Harbor for Hate," www.frontpagemag.com, September 05, 2002, <http://archive.frontpagemag.com/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=22912>.

have done nothing when visiting speakers were being shouted down; they have done nothing while teachers were abusing their classrooms by using class time to promote their own political views; they have done nothing while university funds were being used to support campus events that were un-educational political rallies.

But to say only this would understate the problem of administrative inaction and complicity. Even when concerned faculty members have specifically brought these problems to the attention of administrators or of academic senate watchdog committees, they have seen them routinely shrink from their responsibility. The website www.noindoctrination.org did some of the work that department chairs might have been expected to do – it investigated student complaints about politicized classrooms. But even when their job had been at least half done for them in this way, department chairs seemed to have no interest in what had been made available to them. When documented cases of abuse were brought to their attention, they turned a blind eye. When Luann Wright began to investigate the extraordinary abuse of the classroom in UC San Diego’s Warren College writing courses (documented above), what astonished her most was that “To my dismay, I discovered that parents, students, and UCSD’s own faculty review committee had been complaining about the excessive bias and lack of actual writing instruction for years! Ideological zealots had hijacked this writing program, yet no one at any level of academic responsibility was willing to rein them in.” Her conclusion was that “Only when confronted with public outrage and outside pressure does academia seem motivated enough to address the issues of classroom indoctrination and intolerance.”

Complaints made by individual faculty members to campus administrators have often concerned politicized teach-ins and conferences. These complaints usually made two basic points: first, these events violated state law and campus rules by using state funds for a political purpose, and second, that lacking any analysis of the case pro and con, they were of very low quality from an educational standpoint. But the administrative response has been routinely evasive. Obvious abuses were protected and enabled by the very people whose institutional role was to enforce regulations and maintain quality.

Typical of this evasiveness was the response of the UC Santa Cruz administration to a complaint lodged by two faculty members⁵⁴ about the March 15, 2007 panel at UCSC, described above. The complaint drew the attention of the campus chancellor to the fact that this was a political, not an educational event, and thus a) a misuse of public money intended for educational purposes, b) use of the university for a political purpose, and c) an event that lacked any university-level analysis of issues. The campus chancellor simply referred the matter to a university lawyer – as if the only issues that had been raised were legal ones. With that he abdicated his responsibility to look at the educational issue. When the university’s lawyer wrote a response to the complaint,⁵⁵ she took the narrowest view of the law and of university regulations. Despite clear instruction to the contrary in the directive by President Hitch, she largely reduced the idea of a “political purpose” to advocacy of voting for candidates or ballot

54 Letter dated March 9, 2007 by Ilan Benjamin and Tammi Benjamin to Chancellor George Blumenthal.

55 Carole R. Rossi response to the Benjamins, April 30, 2007.

measures. And she similarly narrowed the notion of “taking a political position” to the campus’s taking a position *qua* campus, managing thereby to make even improper departmental expenditures to support political rallies irrelevant. This willful misreading of university regulations and state law was a desperate attempt to avoid confronting a serious problem, one that if met head-on would certainly have provoked the anger of faculty activists at an administration that had dared to question what they were doing.

Another important issue arises from these complaints. A well-documented complaint of politicization presents not only a particular case to adjudicate: it also confronts the administration with the possibility that one of its academic units has been corrupted and may need to be taken in hand. A major responsibility of campus administrations is to ensure that all departments are functioning at an appropriate level of integrity and excellence. In this case the UCSC chancellor was faced with evidence that something might be badly wrong with one or more of them, and the unambiguously political UC Berkeley event that promoted the boycott of Israeli academics and academic institutions presented the same issue to that campus’s chancellor. Yet both administrators dodged the important question of departmental integrity that these events had presented to them.⁵⁶

All of this leads to the sad conclusion that UC administrators, far from performing their role as the university’s quality control mechanism, now routinely function as the enablers, protectors, and even apologists for the politicized university and its degraded scholarly and educational standards. If

“UC administrators, far from performing their role as the university’s quality control mechanism, now routinely function as the enablers, protectors, and even apologists for the politicized university and its degraded scholarly and educational standards.”

administrators wanted to stop the shouting down of visiting speakers, they could, but choose not to. If they wanted to stop abuse of the classroom, they could, but choose not to. There appears to be only one way to interpret this inactivity: administrators do this because they know that an influential segment of the faculty expects it of them and will make their lives a misery if they ever attempt to do their duty. State law is explicit about one of the most important duties of UC’s administration: “The university shall be entirely independent of all political or sectarian influence and kept free therefrom.” There can be no doubt that the administration has failed in that duty, and that the failure has been comprehensive and catastrophic.

⁵⁶ Letter from Chancellor Birgeneau dated October 26, 2010 to three faculty members from different UC campuses who complained about the event: Leila Beckwith (UCLA), Tammi Benjamin (UCSC), and Roberta Seid (UCI).

A Breakdown of Core Academic Values

If we take all of this evidence gathered from many different aspects of campus life together, it becomes clear that we are dealing with an entire syndrome, one that involves a breakdown of the normal patterns of the academy. Intellectual curiosity has always been at the center of academic life, and analysis has been the central mechanism that furthers advances in understanding. That in turn requires the discipline imposed by a rigorous marketplace of ideas. But in this currently diminished state of the academy, certain ideas are protected from the reach of expert scrutiny and from the discipline of the marketplace of ideas by hiring patterns and curricular decisions that have sharply reduced the range of voices, attitudes, and ideas on campus. Limits have been placed on the reach of analytical reasoning, which means that intellectual quality is greatly diminished. Political one-sidedness is not just about favoritism; more importantly, it is a matter of intellectual laziness and incompetence, and of profoundly un-academic habits of mind.

Alternative viewpoints have always been of surpassing interest to academic minds. Real academics have always known that inconvenient facts and arguments are where the next breakthrough in thought will likely be found, and so they teach their students to give them special attention, not ignore them. It is precisely facts that won't fit into received explanations that are likely to be the pathway to new knowledge. The state of knowledge in a field at any given time always has holes in it, so that there are always questions that are hard to answer. This is the essence of academic life, and of the intellectual curiosity that academics instill in their students. When political activists treat other political stances with contempt instead of carefully analyzing them, and when they use the appointment process to gather ideological soul mates around themselves, they show how unsuited they are to academic life.

In a normally functioning academic community, this pattern of behavior would immediately strike everyone as intolerable, and the leaders of that community would intervene to stop its very first signs. In such a context even one shouted-down talk, or one radical zealot abusing a classroom, would be all that it would take for a loud reassertion of the university's core values to be made. But the silence here is like that of the dog that does not bark, and in not barking tells us everything. A politicized academy is an intellectually trivial one that can not fulfill its obligations to our society. It absorbs large amounts of taxpayer and student money, and wastes much of it.

5. EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF A CORRUPTED ACADEMY

In study after study, we see mounting evidence of the enormous damage done by a politically corrupted academy.

5.1 Evidence of a Sharply Inferior Higher Education

A considerable body of evidence now shows that recent college graduates are poorly educated, and that they have not been prepared for citizenship by their college education. One study after another has found that they write badly, can't reason, can't read any reasonably complex material, have alarming gaps in their knowledge of the history and institutions of the society in which they live, and are in general poorly prepared for the post-college workplace.

Civic Knowledge and Basic Skills

A test conducted by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) revealed astonishing ignorance of U.S. history on the part of seniors at 55 of the most prestigious U.S. colleges and universities when they answered "test" questions in a survey administered by the Roper Organization. The questions were drawn from a basic high school curriculum, with this result: "Four out of five – 81% – of seniors from the top 55 colleges and universities in the United States received a grade of D or F. [Included in the 55 institutions were UC Berkeley and UCLA.] They could not identify Valley Forge, or words from the Gettysburg Address, or even the basic principles of the U.S. Constitution." This is an extraordinary level of ignorance among students whose education should have made them among the most knowledgeable people in the nation. This result is, however, hardly surprising when we also see another finding by ACTA that "by and large, higher education has abandoned a coherent content-rich general education curriculum." College students are not taught the basics of literature, history, math, or science; most schools don't require a foreign language; hardly any require economics. American history and government are especially badly neglected. ACTA's research shows that less than 15 percent of the nation's colleges and universities (and not a single one of the top 20 national universities as ranked by *U.S. News & World Report*) require that their students take a broad survey of American history or government.⁵⁷

It is important to remember that the ACTA study found this sharp deterioration in 55 highly selective institutions – colleges and universities that can recruit the best students and the best faculty in the nation. This is especially significant because we occasionally hear it said that it is the large increase in the numbers of young people going to college that has caused the decline in quality. The ACTA study and others like it prove that this is not so, because the presumed lower average quality of a larger college-going percentage of the population could not be a factor in prestigious institutions that still have

⁵⁷ All of these results are documented on the ACTA website: www.goacta.org, especially "Losing America's Memory: Historical Illiteracy in the 21st Century." See also the commentary by Charles Anderson: "The Soon-to-Burst Education Bubble," September 6, 2010 at <http://objectivistindividualist.blogspot.com/2010/09/soon-to-burst-education-bubble.html>.

their pick of the top students. Nor can it be the case where the University of California is concerned, because UC too still takes the same top layer of students that it has always taken — the top eighth of high school graduates.

Another study of the state of higher education that came to a similarly dismal conclusion was conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics. This one found that most college graduates are below proficiency in verbal and quantitative literacy. Commenting on these results in the *Washington Post*,⁵⁸ Lois Romano said:

Literacy experts and educators say they are stunned by the results of a recent adult literacy assessment, which shows that the reading proficiency of college graduates has declined in the past decade, with no obvious explanation... While more Americans are graduating from college, and more than ever are applying for admission, far fewer are leaving higher education with the skills needed to comprehend routine data, such as reading a table about the relationship between blood pressure and physical activity, according to the federal study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics... The test measures how well adults comprehend basic instructions and tasks through reading — such as computing costs per ounce of food items, comparing viewpoints on two editorials and reading prescription labels. Only 41 percent of graduate students tested in 2003 could be classified as “proficient” in prose — reading and understanding information in short texts — down 10 percentage points since 1992. Of college graduates, only 31 percent were classified as proficient — compared with 40 percent in 1992. “It’s appalling — it’s really astounding,” said Michael Gorman, president of the American Library Association and a librarian at California State University at Fresno. “Only 31 percent of college graduates can read a complex book and extrapolate from it. That’s not saying much for the remainder.”

These are again astounding results, but we must differ with Ms. Romano’s comment that there is no obvious explanation for this.

Yet another study, by Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, tested 2,300 students at 24 different institutions before and after their first two years in college, and came to the sad conclusion that “We

“We observe no statistically significant gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills for at least 45 percent of the students in our study.”

- Arum and Roksa, Academically Adrift

⁵⁸ “Literacy of College Graduates Is on Decline: Survey’s Finding of a Drop in Reading Proficiency Is Inexplicable, Experts Say,” *Washington Post*, December 25, 2005.

observe no statistically significant gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills for at least 45 percent of the students in our study.” Beyond this, their work led them to an overall judgment of the current effectiveness of higher education: “An astounding proportion of students are progressing through higher education today without measurable gains in general skills as assessed by the CLA [Collegiate Learning Assessment].”⁵⁹

Unprepared for the Workplace

Still another study, done jointly in 2006 by The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and The Society for Human Resource Management, came to a similarly dismal conclusion:⁶⁰ “The future U.S. workforce is here – and it is woefully unprepared for the demands of today’s (and tomorrow’s) workplace.” Over 400 employers across the U.S. were surveyed in order to examine their views on the readiness of new entrants to the workforce. The report “reflects employers’ growing frustrations over the lack of skills they see in new workforce entrants.” Deficiency in writing and in written communications is a recurring theme. A professor of English, R.V. Young, puts the point succinctly: “An increasingly common complaint among employers is that college graduates can’t even write a short memo that’s clear.”⁶¹

These studies focus, understandably enough, on the large proportion of graduates who can not read, write, or reason. But what of the best students? Are they as good as ever they were? Not according to a member of the committee to select Rhodes scholars, the cream of the crop of college graduates. Heather Wilson has served on that committee for 20 years. She reports that in recent years even “high-achieving students seem less able to grapple with issues that require them to think across disciplines or reflect on difficult questions about what matters and why.”⁶² She goes on:

We are looking for students who wonder, students who are reading widely....
The undergraduate education they are receiving seems less and less suited to that purpose....An outstanding biochemistry major wants to be a doctor and supports the president’s health-care bill but doesn’t really know why. A student who started a chapter of Global Zero at his university hasn’t really thought about whether a world in which great powers have divested themselves of nuclear weapons would be more stable or less so, or whether nuclear deterrence can ever be moral. A young service academy cadet who is likely to be serving in a war zone within the year believes there are things worth dying for but doesn’t seem to have thought much about what is worth killing for. A student who

59 *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*, p. 36.

60 “Are They Really Ready for Work? Employers’ Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century Workforce.”

61 “Freshman Comp, Then and Now: How the standard freshman writing course went from boot camp to a waste of time,” The Pope Center, September 8, 2010. <http://www.popecenter.org/commentaries/article.html?id=2404>.

62 “Our Superficial Scholars,” *Washington Post*, January 23, 2011.

wants to study comparative government doesn't seem to know much about the important features and limitations of America's Constitution.

These are the brightest of recent students, but Wilson contrasts even these unfavorably with their predecessors of twenty years ago.

Reduced Study Time

Another distressing sign of the low state of higher education came to light in the work of two UC economists, Philip Babcock of UC Santa Barbara and Mindy Marks of UC Riverside.⁶³ Babcock and Marks found that while in 1961 the average student did 24 hours of academic work outside of class every week, that figure had now declined to only 14 hours. And yet, as Patrick Allitt remarks, commenting on this study: "during the same years, average college grades have risen steeply....It's never been easier to get an A, and it's never required so few hours' study!...Why the decline in hours of solo study and the rise in grades? Because professors have become less demanding."⁶⁴

Arum and Roksa's empirical work (set out in their book *Academically Adrift*) confirms the work of Babcock and Marks, as well as Allitt's comment as to why students do less studying. Arum and Roksa find even fewer hours of study outside class: "on average, [students] report spending only 12 hours per week studying....Even more alarming, 37 percent of students report spending less than five hours per week preparing for their courses." These discouraging results have been confirmed in another study that was specific to the University of California,⁶⁵ whose four authors find a mean of 12.8 hours of study outside class, a figure approximately half way between the figures of Babcock/Marks and Arum/Roksa. However, these figures for UC break down to 15.1 for physical sciences/engineering, 13.7 for biological sciences, 11.8 for the humanities, and 11.5 for social sciences. It can readily be seen that these figures by department appear to follow the general direction of those we set out in Section 4 above: that is, the more a departmental faculty approaches political uniformity, the less work its students do.

Arum and Roksa also researched the question of reading and writing requirements. They found reading assignments often so minimal that a third of students reported not having taken a single course in the prior semester that required at least 40 pages of reading. Their general conclusion is that "...students are not being asked by their professors to read and write on a regular basis in their coursework..."⁶⁶

63 "The Falling Time Cost of College: Evidence from Half a Century of Time Use Data," *Review of Economics and Statistics* (forthcoming).

64 Patrick Allitt, "Students Who Don't Study," The Pope Center, July 28, 2010, <http://www.popecenter.org/commentaries/article.html?id=2383>.

65 *Engaged Learning in a Public University: Trends in the Undergraduate Experience. Report of the Results of the 2008 University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey.* By Steven Brint, John Aubrey Douglass, Gregg Thompson, and Steve Chatman. Center for Studies in Higher Education, UC Berkeley, February 2010.

66 *Academically Adrift*, pp. 69 and 71.

The Connection Between Poor Education and Politicization

When Lois Romano says that there is no obvious explanation for the poor results of a college education found in these studies, she seems to ignore the obvious. It is all too easy to see the link between these results and the politicizing that we have seen on the campuses of the University of California. If graduates show a serious ignorance of the history and political institutions of the society they live in, then that is exactly what one might expect when campus requirements in American history and institutions and in Western Civilization have been abolished, and when there is even faculty hostility to such courses. If graduates cannot even write short declarative sentences competently, that is not surprising when writing courses neglect writing and focus instead on radical politics. When graduates cannot read and extrapolate from books of any difficulty, that is what one would expect when reading lists so often give them books written at the superficial level of journalism rather than more complex works that would challenge them.

If graduates are deficient in quantitative skills, why should we be surprised when UC campuses have stopped requiring mathematics or empirical science? If students have not learned to reason and to analyze, what else should we expect when they are so often asked simply to adopt a radical political viewpoint rather than analyze issues in a more complex way? If students were asked to evaluate different political stances, they would have to think, but when they are only pressed to adopt one they are being told to stop thinking. A common defense by radical activists is that students are being challenged when confronted by a system of political beliefs very different to that which they bring to the classroom. But students are no further forward when they are simply pressed to substitute one dogmatic system for another. What a college level education must provide them with is the analytical skill to dissect and evaluate ideas – any ideas – not a transfer from one poorly understood belief to another.

If student hours of study are now half of what they formerly were, in UC as elsewhere, then that must surely be because students see no need to do more. Careful thought about challenging books takes much time, and learning to write well takes time too, but absorbing a relatively simple political narrative does not, for political radicalism is an easily understood and rather predictable thing. Students often report that all they must do to get a good grade in a course is regurgitate what their activist professors believe. If that is so, then to put in more time in order to think more deeply would bring no benefit to the student, and it is even likely to result in a clash with the professor.

By its nature, radical politics is both emphatic and exclusionary. It *demand*s to be accepted as the position that sweeps the board, and intends to *end* the discussion. Careful analysis of issues drawing on differing political and social viewpoints would teach students the art of thinking independently, but that would open up the discussion and make its outcome uncertain. It would make radical activism compete on equal terms, but that is never welcomed, for in a marketplace of ideas marked by close reasoning and care for evidence it usually loses. If we want a higher education that teaches students how to think for themselves, the worst thing we could do would be to let political radicalism drive it. And what these studies of recent graduates show is that that is exactly what we have allowed.

To summarize: there is a clear connection between the nature of the shortcomings of recent graduates shown by many studies, on the one hand, and the particular manifestations of politicization that we have documented on University of California campuses, on the other. The former are what could be predicted as the consequences of the latter. The findings of these studies of recent graduates thus confirm, and are confirmed by, what we have found on the campuses.

5.2 Damage to High School Education

Complaints about the quality of education in the high schools are now extremely widespread, and college faculty complain bitterly about the inadequate preparation for college of incoming freshmen. Arum and Roksa note that “40 percent of college faculty agree with the statement: ‘Most of the students I teach lack the basic skills for college level work.’”⁶⁷ Public anxiety about this problem is at a high level, and there is broad agreement that high school teaching has deteriorated. But something is missing from most discussions of this problem. Where else do high school teachers get trained but at our colleges and universities?

High Schools Failing to Prepare Students

“Achieve” is an independent, bipartisan, non-profit education reform organization created in 1996 by the nation’s governors and corporate leaders. Its website⁶⁸ summarizes the results of several recent studies:

College professors are unhappy with the level of knowledge that high school graduates have when they arrive – and they spend too much of their time reviewing skills that should have been learned and mastered in high school....
College professors do not think students are ready to tackle college-level work:

- 48 percent of college professors are dissatisfied with the job that American public high schools are doing in preparing students for college.
- Only 18 percent of college professors feel that most of their students come to college extremely or well prepared, with just 3 percent saying they are extremely well prepared.
- A quarter of college professors say that students are not well prepared at all.
- 84 percent of professors say that high school graduates are unprepared or only somewhat prepared for college.

Achieve notes a number of findings that relate to specific subject areas. For example, college instructors estimate that 50 percent of the students at their school are not adequately prepared to do college-

⁶⁷ *Academically Adrift*, p. 56. They are citing *The American College Teacher: National Norms for 2007-2008*, Higher Education Research Unit, UCLA, 2009.

⁶⁸ <http://www.achieve.org/WhatPeopleAreSaying>

level math or writing; instructors are dissatisfied with students' writing quality (62 percent), reading comprehension (70 percent), ability to think analytically (66 percent), work and study habits (65 percent), and ability to do research (59 percent). In addition, nearly 70 percent of humanities and social science professors are dissatisfied with the quality of students' writing. These are astonishingly negative findings.

Another measure of this deficiency of high school education is the proportion of students entering higher education who must do remedial work, which means that even on paper they are not prepared for college level work. In the California State University system that proportion is over half.⁶⁹

Education Schools Complete the Cycle of Politicization

In her devastating book *Ed School Follies: The Miseducation of America's Teachers*,⁷⁰ Rita Kramer documents exhaustively how the low quality of the public schools has roots in the political preoccupations that now drive teacher training in the nation's colleges. Kramer traveled across the country, visiting and studying schools of education in all regions. She found complete uniformity:

The goal of schooling is not considered to be instructional, let alone intellectual, but political....The public school, once charged with the task of transmitting the common culture and imparting the skills required to understand it, participate in it, and extend it, has come to be seen instead by those who prepare men and women to teach in it as an agency of social change.

Kramer found a strong association between the politicization of college programs and the low level of skills and knowledge that are produced by the public schools. As to the well-documented ignorance of the nation's history and its institutions, she established that it is due to conscious policy rather than neglect: "our schools of education.... denigrate the history of the institutions that made us the nation that we are....Any knowledge or appreciation of that common culture and the institutions from which it derives, I found conspicuously absent in the places that prepare men and women to teach in our country's public schools today." She concludes that "We will never have better teachers until the quality of education at our colleges and universities improves [and]....until we place knowledge itself at the center of the educational enterprise."

Kramer's general conclusions about the national picture certainly apply to California; she visited and researched more institutions of higher education in California (including UCLA) than in any other state. If Californians hope that things in the public schools might be a little better here than in most states, a very recent report⁷¹ demonstrates that they are actually worse. A sample of its conclusions:

69 See for example the recent article by Victor Davis Hanson: "Now That's a Higher Education Bubble," *National Review Online*, May 25, 2011, <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/268073/now-thats-higher-education-bubble-victor-davis-hanson>.

70 *Ed School Follies*, The Free Press, 1991. The passages cited are all from the final chapter: "Teaching, Knowledge, and the Public Good."

71 "Consequences of Neglect: Performance trends in California Higher Education," Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy, CSU Sacramento, July 2011.

The state ranks no better than 39th in the share of 8th graders who score at the proficient level or better on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.... The high school graduation rate for the state is 68%, ranking 36th among the states....in terms of academic preparation for college, California performs worse than most states....The state ranks 41st on the number of bachelor's degrees awarded per 100 HS grads 6 years earlier.

Taking all of these studies together, the inescapable conclusion is that California's public schools are in poor shape, and showing strong signs of the consequences of a bad college education that leaves potential teachers unable to write, read, and reason, as well as lacking in basic knowledge. The problems of higher education are evidently trickling down to the schools. But, as we shall see, the damage affects some groups much more than others – and those are precisely the groups that were already disadvantaged.

5.3 Cancelling the Leveling Effect of Higher Education

We have argued that higher education cannot have direct social and political goals (such as “social justice,” as that phrase is commonly understood on campus) without becoming corrupted. However, just by being true to itself, excellent higher education has always been a force for social justice in a broader sense. Education is the great leveler. Nothing does more for opportunity in our society than a first-rate education. Historically, it has propelled whole groups of the have-nots of their time to full equality. Not so very long ago large populations of then recent immigrants – Italians, Irish, Jews – began as the downtrodden poor, and through access to first-rate public education reached full equality and integration into American society. Excellence in education was a *genuine* engine of social change for these large immigrant populations who are now well-represented at every stratum and in every walk of American life. It took more than paper academic qualifications to produce those results. They happened only when students were given a thorough grounding in the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of their civilization – its history, institutions, constitutional framework, literature, and science. Exposure to the best of their society's achievements and thought gave them the trained minds of broadly educated people who as a consequence were able to participate fully in that society and enjoy all of its blessings. All of this gave them a confidence in their new land, and in their ability to seize opportunity and gain a decent place within it. Optimism was an essential part of this process of upward mobility.

*“just by being true to itself,
excellent higher education
has always been a force
for social justice”*

While everyone has an interest in first-rate education, one group has a special stake in access to it: those groups of current have-nots who need it for upward social mobility to full equality. If public higher education is seriously deficient in any respect, the groups most harmed will be ethnic minorities, because those are the people who need it most at this moment. Sadly, the situation we have described

on the campuses of the University of California could not be more unfair to ethnic minorities, because the splendid education for citizenship which made their predecessor have-not groups whole is no longer available to them.

Once again, the root of the problem lies in the temperament of radical activists, which is the opposite of what is needed for an education for upward mobility of have-not groups. Radicals don't look at their country's past and see accumulated knowledge and wisdom, and they have no great respect for its institutions and achievements. They tend to denigrate society as it has been in order to make the case for the sweeping social change that will make it what they want it to be. The education that raised have-not groups in the past gave students a thorough grasp of the nature and history of their society, and that presupposed some degree of confidence in it on the part of both teachers and learners. But political radicals are alienated from their own society, and are thus incapable of transmitting the knowledge of its ways that is needed for upward mobility. They even throw doubt on the possibility of social mobility for the groups in whose interest they claim to act, and in so doing undermine the confidence that is needed for upward movement.

We have documented a widespread ignorance on the part of recent graduates of the history and institutions of their own society, and of the civilization of which it is part, and we have shown that this lamentable result is exactly what was likely to happen when, as on UC's campuses, relevant requirements and coursework have been dismantled. Much of this is traceable to a growing control of the curriculum on the part of radical activists. The kind of education that in past generations elevated low-status immigrant groups would stand in the way of a radical social agenda by strengthening the status quo. For minorities, the transformation of the curriculum by radical activists has been nothing short of catastrophic. In effect, control over an education that should be leading to full equality in the mainstream of our society has been placed in the hands of people who loathe that mainstream and do not want their students to join it. Anyone who cares about upward mobility for minorities should be saddened by this result.

When Jesse Jackson led his infamous march at Stanford University chanting "Hey Hey, Ho Ho, Western Culture's got to go" he was in effect destroying a precious chance for the groups that he ostensibly championed to reach full equality. Removing courses in Western civilization, in American History and Institutions, and in classic writers and thinkers put a rigorous, well-rounded education out of their reach just when they needed it most. And the consequent dumbing down of the education of high school teachers simply guaranteed that black students, for example, would arrive at the college level with a handicap every bit as great as it has ever been.

Political radicals claim to support progress for minorities, but everything they do works against that goal. They take impressionable students and persuade them to adopt their own sense of alienation from society, and that has two immediate results. Radicals themselves benefit by having more troops and so more influence on campus, but minorities are robbed of the confidence in their society that they need if they are to be motivated to master its ways and succeed. Persuading minority students to focus

above all on the fact that they have been historically wronged was not hard to do, but in doing so, alienated radicals were preying on those students, not helping them. They were making the education that minorities so badly need inaccessible to them. In this respect, the radical agenda is not idealistic but selfish; nothing could be more destructive for minorities.

Arum and Roksa give us further evidence of the damage that is being done here. We know that African-American students enter higher education with lower Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) scores than their white counterparts. But Arum and Roksa found that “During their first two years of college, white students gained 41 CLA points, while African-American students gained only 7 points.... As a consequence, the gap between African-American and white students increased over time.”⁷² Initial inequalities ought to have moderated but instead have been exacerbated. This is a horrifying result, one that should cause everyone to think hard about how it has happened.

Another dimension to this problem emerges when Arum and Roksa report that while students on average study only 12 hours per week outside of their classes, African-Americans study even less – two hours less. They also take courses with more than minimal writing requirements at a rate one third less than white students. Why should a group that knows it has to catch up put in less, not more effort than others, and take less, not more demanding classes? There may be many factors at work, but one is clear: they are targets of the demoralizing message of politically radical professors.⁷³

5.4 The Decline of Respect for Academic Research

When the academy is what it should be – an unpoliticized arena, and a calm space where complex and controversial issues can be analyzed in an unprejudiced way – it performs an enormously valuable service to society at large. Matters that stir political passions can be analyzed with care and with partisanship minimized. Take the example of the minimum wage: the two major parties differ sharply as to its usefulness, but both claim that their preferred solution benefits the poor. The left thinks that inequality is lessened by raising the minimum wage; the right that this hurts the poor by reducing the supply of entry level jobs that are the first step on the ladder to better things. Though ideology largely determines who takes what position, the issue itself turns on matters of fact that are capable of precise empirical study. Society needs a place where that study can be done without prejudice, and universities have been such a place. But a one-party campus can neither keep partisanship in check, nor maintain public confidence in the objectivity of its work. As a result, academic research no longer has automatic credibility in the wider world.

The 1915 AAUP statement speaks cogently of the conditions that make it possible for academic research to have social value:

To the degree that professional scholars, in the formation and promulgation of their opinions, are, or by the character of their tenure appear to be, subject

⁷² *Academically Adrift*, p. 39.

⁷³ *Academically Adrift*, pp. 70-71

to any motive other than their own scientific conscience and a desire for the respect of their fellow experts, to that degree the university teaching profession is corrupted; its proper influence upon public opinion is diminished and vitiated; and society at large fails to get from its scholars, in an unadulterated form, the peculiar and necessary service which it is the office of the professional scholar to furnish.

Almost 100 years later, that statement describes perfectly what has now happened.

Robert Maranto⁷⁴ cites a number of topics that need the objective academic research which a radical campus orthodoxy makes impossible:

Yet the most serious impacts of the PC university are on knowledge generation and problem solving. Examples abound. Sociology and criminal justice professors have steadfastly avoided studying New York City's success in fighting crime, much less encouraging other cities to adopt like reforms. By the 1970s the mass public had realized that AFDC [Aid to Families with Dependent Children] was not working; yet some academics even now liken welfare reform to the Holocaust. Education schools have refused to study and replicate successful urban schools like the KIPP [Knowledge is Power Program] academies, instead advocating ever more for programs which fail to educate disadvantaged children, but fit PC theories. Many comparative government specialists find it impossible to admit that Marxist regimes murdered more than 80 million people, while market based reforms took Asia from starvation to prosperity.... In short, the ivory tower's ideological fetishes have real world costs.

The ideological inflexibility that stunts academic research must be reckoned yet another cost of the one-party social science departments on the campuses of the University of California.

We get a sense of what society is losing if we contrast what a historian did with respect to Ireland's troubles in 1980 with how academics now treat the Arab-Israeli conflict. In that year Robert Kee produced a television series on Irish history. He covered all the historical facts that are relevant to an understanding of the conflict over Northern Ireland, being careful to give due weight both to those that favored one side and those that favored the other. After the series finished, representatives of the two sides sat down to talk. All of them said that the series had helped them to understand the position of the other side. This was an excellent example of the contribution that academic scholars can make, provided that they behave like academics instead of political partisans. At their best, they can push both sides to a more realistic view.

74 "The Politically Correct University and How to Fix It." Minding the Campus, May 3, 2010, http://www.mindingthecampus.com/originals/2010/05/the_politically_correct_univer.html.

*“the ivory tower’s ideological fetishes
have real world costs.”*

- Robert Maranto, Minding the Campus

Contrast this with what we have seen of UC campus events relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The spirit of Robert Kee is nowhere to be found. These are routinely one-sided events, shrill and extreme, and lacking any pretense of scholarly objectivity. Kee’s scrupulous

review of the full range of facts and arguments could have made these events the scholarly antidote to poisonous partisanship elsewhere. But the sad truth is that these campus events are made more, not less, partisan by the one-sided campus climate. Instead of calming the conflict, they inflame it even further. Who can doubt that this is the direct result of the domination of campus politics by radical activists?

Once again, the wisdom of the 1915 AAUP statement is relevant:

Grave issues in the adjustment of men’s social and economic relations are certain to call for settlement in the years that are to come; and for the right settlement of them mankind will need all the wisdom, all the good will, all the soberness of mind, and all the knowledge drawn from experience, that it can command. Toward this settlement the university has potentially its own very great contribution to make; for if the adjustment reached is to be a wise one, it must...be guided by that breadth of historic vision which it should be one of the functions of a university to cultivate. But if the universities are to render any such service toward the right solution of the social problems of the future...the disinterestedness and impartiality of their inquiries and their conclusions shall be, so far as is humanly possible, beyond the reach of suspicion.

We have very many “grave issues” where the university’s “breadth of historic vision” and “disinterestedness and impartiality” are needed, but a one-sided, partisan campus is not capable of making this unique contribution to society. At its best, academic research brings reason and knowledge to issues that are contentious and divisive, and that makes for a calmer and better informed political and social debate in our society. But when the campus is home to a politics that is for the most part more radical and divisive than it is off campus, what happens is instead the exact opposite. Under the influence of a politicized academy, national political life becomes more bitter and divisive, not less. We all lose when an inbred one-party campus becomes increasingly unrealistic. We still need “all the wisdom, all the good will, all the soberness of mind, and all the knowledge drawn from experience” of academia. But we are not getting it.

5.5 Decreasing Respect for Academia in American Society

The American people have been justly proud of their universities, and have supported public ones through taxation, and private ones through donations. Continued public respect for higher education



is important if that support is to continue, but it is now slipping. The public knows that a university education is nowhere near what it was, and that while quality has gone down, costs have gone up. Glenn Reynolds wrote recently: "After adjusting for financial aid, the amount families pay for college has skyrocketed 439 percent since 1982...Normal supply and demand can't begin to explain cost increases of this magnitude."⁷⁵ George Leef draws the inevitable conclusion: "the cost of college has skyrocketed and academic standards have been plunging. Those facts have many people wondering if higher education is worth it."⁷⁶ Kevin Hassett⁷⁷ may be overdramatizing when he says: "Academe has been so politicized, and so radically disconnected from the population, that ordinary citizens no longer trust anything that it produces." But there is no doubt that the public is aware of campus politicization and of its drastic lowering of the quality of higher education. When a national poll⁷⁸ finds that 58 percent of the public believes that the political bias of professors is a serious problem, public distrust of the academy has evidently become substantial.

"Under the influence of a politicized academy, national political life becomes more bitter and divisive, not less."

The rest of the world is beginning to understand this decline in quality too. It was said recently:

in a single generation, America went from number one to 12th in college completion rates for young adults. We used to be number one, now we're number 12. At the same time, our 8th graders trail...10 other nations in science and math. Meanwhile, when it comes to black students, African American students trail not only almost every other developed nation abroad, but they badly trail their white classmates here at home – an achievement gap that is widening the income gap between black and white, between rich and poor.

This was said by none other than President Barack Obama.⁷⁹ Andrew Romano gives another dimension to our comparing badly to other nations:

In March 2009, the *European Journal of Communication* asked citizens of Britain, Denmark, Finland, and the U.S. to answer questions on international affairs. The Europeans clobbered us. Sixty-eight percent of Danes, 75 percent of Brits, and 76 percent of Finns could, for example, identify the Taliban, but only 58 percent of Americans managed to do the same – even though we've

75 "Higher Education's Bubble is About to Burst," *Washington Examiner*, June 6, 2010.

76 George Leef, The Pope Center, July 15, 2008: "How Much Do College Students Really Learn?" <http://www.popecenter.org/news/article.html?id=2034>.

77 www.bloomberg.com/news/2009-12-20/marxist-professors-are-gift-to-climate-skeptics-kevin-hassett.html

78 See note 4 above.

79 Cited by Donald Devine in his essay "U.S. Education Was Number One" <http://www.conservative.org/acuf/issue-163/issue163news1>.

led the charge in Afghanistan. It was only the latest in a series of polls that have shown us lagging behind our First World peers.⁸⁰

We are now heavily dependent on a flow of foreign students: "In 2006, 35% of all Ph.D.'s went to foreign born researchers. . . . non-citizens earned 43% of the doctorates in science and engineering and 70% of the Ph.D.s in electrical, civil and industrial/mechanical engineering."⁸¹ The 2010 study of University of California undergraduates⁸² to which we have already referred found that "students with immigrant backgrounds tend to gravitate toward the physical sciences/engineering and biological sciences, while third-generation or higher Americans tend to be overrepresented in the humanities/ arts and underrepresented in the physical sciences, engineering, and the biological sciences." This dependence on foreign students for our domestic supply of scientists and engineers is a harsh judgment on the poor job we are doing in our high schools and colleges, and it raises the worrying question: what will happen when the rest of the world understands that higher education in the U.S. has deteriorated? Will this supply of excellent students from abroad begin to dry up?

One observer, Donna Wiesner Keene, finds that this is already beginning to happen:

...foreign students flocked to the higher education institutions of the dominant economy in the world for many years. But now they have stopped coming. . . . Only a decade ago, higher education of foreign students was the ninth largest export of the United States. . . . With poorly educated secondary students making up the bulk of higher education entrants, colleges have dummed down so as not to fail all their students at once. Is it a wonder that the best foreign students are just no longer attracted to American colleges in great numbers?⁸³

This trend parallels the American public's own reduced respect for the academy. A huge gulf has opened up between the public and academia, and this probably has less to do with cost than with the public's growing awareness that what they hear coming from the campuses often seems to bear no resemblance to what they remember of their own education.

People who were educated in the decades immediately after the Second World War remember their professors as people who spoke carefully and precisely, avoiding the wild generalizations, the inflammatory language, the far-fetched conspiracy theories, and the strained analogies and moral equivalences that were characteristic of the poorly educated, and teaching them to do likewise. We can easily imagine their reaction when their children tell them how *their* professors now speak. Parents who get the kinds of reports from their children that we have documented above will naturally be struck by the fact that in many cases professors themselves are now guilty of those same uneducated habits of speech and thought that were (rightly) not tolerated even from freshmen when they were at college.

80 "How Dumb Are We?" *Newsweek*, March 20, 2011.

81 Reported by Robert Weissberg, as cited in Devine, "U.S. Education was Number One."

82 *Engaged Learning in a Public University*, p. 11.

83 "Higher Education Decline," July 14, 2010: <http://www.conservative.org/acuf/issue-159/issue159cul3>

But even when this news does not reach them through their children, an occasional high-profile case reaches them directly through the national media.

The events that led up to the firing of University of Colorado professor Ward Churchill constituted such a case, as did the award of first prize for the most abysmally poor writing of the year to a professor on the Berkeley campus of the University of California.⁸⁴

The public is beginning to understand that radical activism is the major source of this incoherence, and that is why it is increasingly skeptical of what is happening on campus. The University ignores this public sentiment at its peril.

5.6 Damage to the Nation's Cohesion and Sense of Itself

A nation needs its citizens to have some sense of what it is – what its characteristics are, how it works, and what salient events made it what it is. They need to understand something of what they share, and what their nation has always aspired to be. One of the most pernicious effects of the present-day American academy is a weakening of that sense of who we are, what we have in common, and how that came to be.

An educational system must certainly promote independent thinking about matters great and small, and that will include the nation's own history and its institutions. And when careful thought and research lead to a certain amount of revisionism about long-standing ideas and judgments, so be it. But informed rethinking is not the same thing as alienation, hostility and cynicism. Only the latter could have produced results like those, for example, that were recently reported by Andrew Romano:

When *Newsweek* recently asked 1,000 U.S. citizens to take America's official citizenship test, 29 percent couldn't name the vice president. Seventy-three percent couldn't correctly say why we fought the Cold War. Forty-four percent were unable to define the Bill of Rights. And 6 percent couldn't even circle Independence Day on a calendar.⁸⁵

Romano went on to say that 38 percent simply failed the test – and this is the same elementary test that we give to all immigrants when they are naturalized. The title of his article is to the point: "The country's future is imperiled by our ignorance." Indeed it is.

⁸⁴ The journal *Philosophy and Literature* awarded this prize in 1998 to Professor Judith Butler for this sentence: "The move from a structuralist account in which capital is understood to structure social relations in relatively homologous ways to a view of hegemony in which power relations are subject to repetition, convergence, and rearticulation brought the question of tempo-rality into the thinking of structure, and marked a shift from a form of Althusserian theory that takes structural totalities as theoretical objects to one in which the insights into the contingent possibility of structure inaugurate a renewed conception of hegemony as bound up with the contingent sites and strategies of the rearticulation of power." On campus, this kind of writing counts as profound; off campus, it is easily recognizable as confused verbiage.

⁸⁵ "How Dumb Are We?" *Newsweek*, March 20, 2011.

Reports like these about widespread ignorance of U.S. history are persistent, and they come from a variety of different sources. The ACTA study that we have already cited above is among them. "U.S. Students Remain Poor at History, Tests Show," says a headline in the *New York Times* on June 14, 2011, where Sam Dillon writes that the National Assessment of Educational Progress tests find "most fourth graders unable to say why Abraham Lincoln was an important figure." The tests show that only 12 percent of high school 12th graders scored "proficient" in U.S. history. More than half of them scored at the very lowest level, "below basic."

Commentators who report these results are dismayed by them, but rarely pursue the question why this is happening in any serious way. They react as if only accident or neglect could have been responsible. But a major factor in this growing ignorance of basic historical material is perfectly obvious: it is at least in large part the result of the deliberately chosen program of a campus radical faction that is alienated from and hostile to its own country. That faction has been able to remake the campus history curriculum in a way designed to instill in students its own low opinion of the country. Any reasonably thorough survey of American history and institutions would turn up events that do not represent our nation's finest hour, but it would also find much that is admirable and even inspiring. A survey that ignored the negative factors in the nation's history would be unrealistic, but it is just as unrealistic to ignore what is positive. There have been two prongs to the strategy to conceal anything that might be encouraging. First, required survey courses in U.S. history have been largely abolished; and second, the optional courses that remain have concentrated on those aspects of national history that promote the radical activists' negative attitudes. In this way much of the basic knowledge of how U.S. history unfolded is withheld, for the simple reason that it would make the country look better than radical activists want it to look.

Much the same reasoning is at work in the case of the great writers that are no longer a central part of a college education. Shakespeare is part of our common heritage, and another part of what we are. He is part of the language we use, the values that bind us, the stories we tell ourselves. Here too, a sharp reduction in curricular requirements for the great writers of the English language has diminished the common core of knowledge and understanding around which the nation coheres. Anything that might uncover value in older traditions and the social mores of earlier times has been rendered suspect: when the existing order is to be thoroughly remade, anything that suggests continuity with our past might get in the way. The contemporary books that are replacing the great classics of the past in campus literature courses are usually tendentious works obsessed with various kinds of oppression. Students respond predictably; they vote with their feet, and the number of literature majors has dropped sharply. The result, as William Deseriewicz said recently, is that "academic literary criticism today...is, however slowly, dying."⁸⁶

What is happening to Shakespeare is happening to the humanities in general, and that carries still further the process of destroying an awareness of our past, and of who we are. When you are alienated from your own society, you are alienated from everything that made it what it is.

86 "Professing Literature in 2008," *The Nation*, March 24, 2008

It is worth noting again that these effects of radical alienation have an especially harmful effect on minorities. They need a sense of what this nation is and how it works, because that brings with it not just broad knowledge, but also confidence and optimism. Radical ideologues persuade minority students that they are better served by the recently formed and radicalized departments devoted to ethnic issues, but this interferes with everything that those students need to succeed.

We have noted already that a politically uniform campus soon becomes a politically extreme campus. Accordingly, campus radicalism is more antagonistic and less realistic than the broader public's liberalism has always been, which means that campus influence makes the national political climate ever more divisive. The nation is best served when left and right both recognize that the other represents one of the two great historic approaches to government, and a principled position that deserves to be taken seriously. The radicalized campus promotes something that is very different: it demonizes its opposition as an evil and unprincipled group, and a detested enemy.

These are just some of the ways in which the nation's sense of itself and cohesion are damaged by the radical ascendancy on campus. All of which raises an important question: why have we been so foolish as to allow college teaching about our nation's history, culture, and political institutions to be mainly in the hands of people who are alienated from it?

6. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE REGENTS

The Regents' Policy on Course Content firmly establishes Regental responsibility for maintaining the quality of the university:

Students who enroll on the campuses of the University of California are parties to a moral and contractual relationship in which the University, on its side, is obligated to provide quality education, to recognize student achievement with grades and degrees which have an accepted meaning for transfer to other institutions, for graduate work, and for careers. The Regents are responsible to the people, to the faculty, and to the students to see that the University is faithful to this contract. They have the responsibility to see that the value of the diploma is not diluted, that it maintain its meaning to graduates and to future employers. They are responsible to ensure that public confidence in the University is justified. And they are responsible to see that the University remain aloof from politics and never function as an instrument for the advance of partisan interest.

This exemplary statement sets out the common understanding of the function of a governing board that stands between the general public and an institution of higher education. The dangers of direct public intervention in higher education are well recognized; but it is also recognized that a university that is not

in good health may be unable to correct itself. A governing board insulates the university from direct public pressure, but at the same time provides an agency external to the university whose job is to ensure that it is “faithful to this contract.”

Kevin Nestor, a trustee of the Ohio State University at Mansfield wrote⁸⁷ recently of the politicization he had witnessed and elaborated on what he took to be the responsibility of governing boards like his own: they are responsible to “their students, to the parents who are paying for the education of their sons and daughters, to the taxpayers whose taxes help pay for that education, to their states and our nation as a whole, and to all those whose lives will be affected – either positively or negatively – by the education that students in their institution receive.” Nestor went on:

“What I saw and learned during nine years as a trustee has me convinced that the politicization of the curriculum, programming, and scholarship on our nation’s public campuses is indisputably real and systemic.”

- Kevin Nestor, Academic Questions

What I saw and learned during nine years as a trustee has me convinced that the politicization of the curriculum, programming, and scholarship on our nation’s public campuses is indisputably real and systemic – and that it is gravely detrimental to the fundamental purposes for which our public colleges and universities were founded, and to the well-being of our nation and its citizens. I cannot in good conscience stand idly by while this politicization continues to grow and to fester. Can you?

Only the Regents can change the direction of the University of California and return it to its proper path, but this will be an immensely difficult task. However, before any specific courses of action are considered, we think it important to be clear about what the goal must be, as well as why the problem has arisen.

Universities are to be marketplaces of ideas. On a campus, ideas compete with each other, and they should succeed or fail to the extent they can withstand competition with other ideas. As faculty and students become involved in that process they develop the fundamental skill of analysis, and at the same time create new knowledge and new understanding. The goal of any actions taken by the Regents should be to reestablish an open marketplace for serious ideas as the centerpiece of campus life in the University of California. When that marketplace is functioning effectively, ideas progress to the extent they can be supported by evidence and logic; they cannot prevail because of their political value,

87 “A Great Trust Betrayed: the Politicization of America’s Public Campuses,” *Academic Questions*, 24:2 (Summer 2011), pp. 194-208.

because a political faction is able to enforce their dominance through sheer weight of numbers, or because ideas threatening to an orthodoxy are artificially excluded. Yet that is what has now happened in certain important areas of campus life. How has this happened?

It is often said that it is paradoxical, even ironic, that at the same time that the utopian socialist regimes of the Soviet Union and its satellites were beginning to collapse (during the 1980s), the presence of Marxism on the college campuses of the English-speaking world was growing exponentially. But the simultaneity of these two apparently contradictory trends is not hard to understand. In the real world of practical politics, utopian socialism had suffered a defeat so crushing that it now seemed moribund and irrelevant, and so the remnant of die-hard believers – largely in countries that had no direct experience of its practice – retreated from the everyday world that had treated its cherished ideas so cruelly. They found a refuge from that world in the ivory tower of academia. And so an idea whose presence in the general public was now vanishingly small achieved the disproportionately large on-campus presence that we have documented.

“The goal of any actions taken by the Regents should be to reestablish an open marketplace for serious ideas as the centerpiece of campus life in the University of California.”

However, the role of protective haven for a moribund idea is far from a natural one for a university. The marketplace of ideas on a campus should be just as bruising for uncompetitive ideas as the outside world is, though in a different way. If it were to become a sanctuary for an obsolescent idea, the campus would have to be fundamentally changed. If the inherent strength of that idea were not sufficient to ensure its survival in an intellectually demanding marketplace of ideas, the force of numbers would have to make up for that deficiency. But that in turn would mean that the free spirit of inquiry would have to be replaced

by conformism, and the restless search for new knowledge strangled by the hiring of ideological soul mates to create the protective sanctuary. In other words, the university would have to be bent out of its natural shape. This is the condition that requires reform, and that stands in the way of reform.

Reform will be enormously difficult, and we do not doubt that much discussion and study of alternative ways of proceeding will be needed before any practical measures are implemented. Nevertheless, we would like to make a few practical suggestions for a beginning. The Regents can:

1. Make it clear to the university and to campus administrations that **the status quo is untenable** for the reasons that we have set out in this report, and that serious reform is needed.
2. Make a finding that **university regulations which prohibit the use of the university to advance a political purpose have not been enforced for some time**, and insist that university and campus administrations begin to enforce them again.
3. Make a finding that **campus administrations have not been exercising one of their key**

functions: quality control. They can call on those administrations to do again what they should have been doing all along, and to draw up plans to remedy the damage that their inaction has caused.

4. Make a finding that **all those departments whose subject matter involves them in political, social, and cultural matters are incompetent if they fail to include large parts of the spectrum of serious ideas relevant to their mission.** They can instruct campus administrations to ensure that those departments are restored to competence through appointments that abolish the damaging intellectual monopoly of ideas that has been allowed to develop.
5. Proclaim that **the campus ought to be a rigorous marketplace of ideas, and that this essential idea is betrayed when the campus becomes a sanctuary for a narrow ideological segment of the spectrum of political and social ideas.** They can make a finding that the heavy preponderance of faculty who represent this narrow part of the spectrum of ideas has involved faculty hiring procedures that, consciously and unconsciously, have subordinated scholarly criteria to political ones. They can insist that the students' need for a well-rounded education may no longer be sacrificed to the faculty's drive for the comfort of ideological conformity and uniformity.
6. Instruct campus administrations to **look into and report back on the conditions on their campuses** that have given rise to the widespread public dissatisfaction with a deficiency of writing, reading, and reasoning skills on the part of recent graduates, as well as deficiencies in basic knowledge for citizenship, and to take firm steps to remedy this situation.
7. **Consider whether each of the existing campus administrations has the understanding, the will, and the ability to lead the campus back to health.** If not, changes may be needed. When considering the appointment of new campus administrators (from Dean up) the Regents should make it clear that they will be looking for leadership in instituting reforms that will return the marketplace of ideas to the campus.
8. Ask for **annual campus reports of progress in returning the campus to intellectual health,** making it clear that administrations that have not achieved substantial progress will be replaced.

We recognize that these measures will provoke unrest. Those who have slowly built themselves a protective refuge from the marketplace of ideas will not give it up easily. But the main outlines of the protest are easy to predict, and they are all easily dealt with. It will be said that this is political interference in the university;⁸⁸ but coming from people who have made the university a home for their political activism and politicized so much within it, this criticism need hardly be taken seriously. It will

88 This is the approach of the present leadership of the AAUP:

It would blink at reality to fail to acknowledge that recent challenges to 'freedom in the classroom' are being advanced to further a particular political agenda...Calls for the regulation of higher education are almost invariably appeals to the coercive power of the state. In recent attempts to pass legislation to monitor and constrain faculty in the classroom lies a deep menace.

Again, it is absurd for those who have helped to create the politicized academy to warn us about the menace of political interference on campus.

“The left university should not be replaced by the right university. It should be replaced by the real university, dedicated to liberal education and higher learning.”

- James Piereson

be said that the University's critics are asking for preferential hiring for conservatives; to this the simple answer is that what is envisaged is simply an end to preferential hiring of radical activists. If we do indeed need a program of remedial hiring, it would consist in a search for people of a genuinely academic temperament.

The return to a functioning marketplace of ideas will mean only that the focus is again on the merit of ideas, political and other, not on agendas. When ideas are made to compete, those that are unfit will not survive. Only those who have no confidence in the viability of their ideas will be anxious about this. It was said recently: “The left university should not be replaced by the right university. It should be replaced by the real university, dedicated to liberal education and higher learning.”⁸⁹

In the history of the University of California there are well-known turning points, some beneficial, others damaging. The greatest example of the first was probably the appointment in 1930 of Robert Gordon Sproul as president of the University. It was Sproul who during his 28 years as president built a great faculty that brought a young university up to a level of excellence at which it could compete with much older institutions such as Yale and Harvard. A more sinister turning point in the University's history was the year 1964, when the long process of the University's politicization began. And in this, alas, UC Berkeley led the nation in a downhill path.

We urge the Regents to make this moment one of the great turning points for the better in the University's history. If you now meet this crisis by dealing resolutely with the cancer of politicization, you will have written a chapter in the University's history that will rank with Sproul's presidency. You will have exercised historic leadership to meet an enormous challenge. This would be national leadership as consequential as that of 1964, but as glorious as that was ignominious. If you deal successfully with a problem of this magnitude, then as long as the University exists, this will always be spoken of as the Regents' finest hour. But if you shrink from this challenge, you will be remembered in a very different way, because sooner or later, reform must and will come.



Robert Gordon Sproul

Photo courtesy of UCLA, 1942 yearbook

89 James Piereson, “The Left University,” October 3, 2005.

The Regents' Policy on Course Content mentions three factors for which the Regents alone have ultimate responsibility: maintaining the value of the degrees awarded by the university, maintaining public confidence in the university, and maintaining it free from use as an instrument for the advancement of partisan interest. There is no longer any doubt that intervention is required on all three grounds. A great system of higher education has been corrupted. Employers know it when they see the graduates that the university produces, students know it and so greatly reduce their effort, and the public knows it and wonders why nothing is done. Only the Regents are in a position to give the public an answer.

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A report from the California Association of Scholars and
the National Association of Scholars' Center for the Study of the Curriculum