

# Education

*Without question American primary and secondary education is in shambles. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2006, American students ranked 33rd among industrialized countries in math literacy; in science literacy, they ranked 27th. Dramatic evidence of poor-quality high school education is the fact that, at many colleges, more than 50 percent of incoming freshmen require some sort of remedial education, costing billions of dollars. All of this is in the face of rising high school grade point averages that increasingly tell little about the student's academic proficiency.*

*The education that white students receive is nothing to write home about, but that received by black students is nothing short of gross fraud. Washington, D.C., is typical of many cities. At twelve of its nineteen high schools, more than 50 percent of the students test below basic in reading; at some of those schools the percentages approach 80 percent. At fifteen schools, more than 50 percent test below basic in math; in twelve of them 70 to 99 percent did so. (Below basic is the category the National Assessment of Education Progress uses for students unable to display even partial mastery of the knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient work at their grade level.) In the face of these deficiencies, each year more than 80 percent, and up to 96 percent, of high school students are fraudulently promoted to the next grade.*

*Politicians and those in the public education establishment argue that more money is needed to improve education. Minnesota and Iowa rank first and second in terms of student academic achievement; yet their per student education expenditures in 2004 were \$8,000 and \$8,600, respectively, whereas Washington, D.C., spent \$13,000 per student.*

*In 2002, a Zogby poll found that contemporary college seniors scored on average little or no higher in literature, music, science, geography and history than the high school graduates of a half-century ago. A 1990 Gallup survey for the National Endowment of the Humanities, given to a representative sample of seven hundred college seniors, found that 25 percent did not know that Columbus landed in the Western Hemisphere*

*before the year 1500; 42 percent could not place the Civil War in the correct half century; and 31 percent thought Reconstruction came after World War II. A 1993 Department of Education survey found that, among college graduates, 50 percent of whites and more than 80 percent of blacks couldn't state in writing the argument made in a newspaper column, use a bus schedule to get on the right bus, that 56 percent could not calculate the right tip, that 57 percent could not figure out how much change they should get back after putting down \$3.00 to pay for a 60-cent bowl of soup and a \$1.95 sandwich, and that more than 90 percent could not use a calculator to find the cost of carpeting a room. But a 1999 survey taken by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni of seniors at the nation's top 55 liberal arts colleges and universities found that 98 percent could identify rap artist Snoop Doggy Dogg and Beavis and Butt-Head but that only 34 percent knew George Washington was the general at the Battle of Yorktown.*

*Diversity, instead of academics, has become the concern. Our institutions of higher learning not only take diversity seriously but make it a multimillion-dollar operation. Juilliard School has a director of diversity and inclusion; Massachusetts Institute of Technology has a manager of diversity recruitment; Toledo University, an associate dean for diversity; the universities of Harvard, Texas A&M, California at Berkeley, Virginia, and many others boast of officers, deans, vice-presidents, and perhaps ministers of diversity. Diversity wasn't the buzzword back in the 1970s, '80s, and '90s. Diversity is the response by universities, as well as corporations, to various court decisions holding racial quotas, goals, and timetables unconstitutional. Offices of diversity and inclusion are simply substitutes for yesterday's offices of equity or affirmative action. It's simply a matter of old wine in new bottles, but it is racial discrimination just the same. Diversity is based on the proposition, without any evidence whatsoever, that having some sort of statistical racial representation is a necessary ingredient to a good education.*

*Out of the diversity movement has come speech codes. Martin Gross, in his book *The End of Sanity*, reported that up to 383 colleges had some form of speech code. Under the ruse of ending harassment, some universities created speech codes, such as Bowdoin College's ban on jokes and stories "experienced by others as harassing." Brown University has*

banned “verbal behavior” that “produces feelings of impotence, anger or disenfranchisement” whether “unintentional or intentional.” The University of Connecticut has outlawed “inappropriately directed laughter.” Colby College has banned any speech that could lead to a loss of self-esteem. “Suggestive looks” are banned at Bryn Mawr College and “unwelcomed flirtations” at Haverford College. Fortunately for students, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) has waged a successful war against such speech codes.

Then there’s proselytizing of students. An ethnic studies professor at Cal State Northridge and Pasadena City College teaches that “the role of students and teachers in ethnic studies is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.” UC Santa Barbara’s School of Education e-mailed its faculty asking them to consider classroom options concerning the Iraq war, suggesting they excuse students from class to attend antiwar events and give them extra credit to write about it. An English professor at Montclair State University in New Jersey tells his students, “Conservatism champions racism, exploitation, and imperialist war.” A Massachusetts School of Art professor explains that his concern is to do away with whiteness “because whiteness is a form of racial oppression.” He adds, “There cannot be a white race without the phenomenon of white supremacy.” A Bucknell professor agrees saying, “A lot of our students, I think, are unconsciously racist.”

If undergraduate education is not to assume the quality of primary and secondary education, immediate action must be taken. A good start might be for generous donors to withhold funds to colleges and universities who have forsaken their academic mission. The columns in this section focus on these and other education issues.

## A Donor with Backbone

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*Wednesday, March 21, 2007*

James W. McGlothlin, chairman and CEO of The United Company of Bristol, Va., and a former member of The College of William & Mary's Board of Visitors and a longtime donor, withheld his pledge of \$12 million to the college. He made his decision because of the actions taken by Gene Nichol, the college president, who ordered the removal of the cross from Wren Chapel. The cross had been displayed on the chapel altar since around 1940. Nichol's justification was that he wanted to make the chapel welcoming to non-Christians.

That's a lie. President Nichol was a chapter president of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) for North Florida, and an ACLU board member in North Carolina and Colorado. The ACLU has maintained an attack on religious symbols for decades, but usually through the courts. President Nichol's actions simply spared them a costly court battle to remove the religious symbol from William & Mary's Wren Chapel.

Nichol's actions caused a storm of controversy that he probably didn't anticipate. Caving in to the pressure, on March 6th, he agreed to return the cross to Wren Chapel. The ACLU has enjoyed phenomenal success in attacking our religious values. Unless they are stopped, I guarantee you they won't be satisfied until they get some judge to order the removal of crosses from the graves at Arlington and other military cemeteries.

The College of William & Mary's Wren Chapel cross issue is simply the tip of a much larger problem. For decades, college administrators and professors have sanctioned or participated in an attack on traditional American values. They've denied campus access to military recruiters, promoted socialism and attacked capitalism, and instituted race and sex quotas in admissions and in the awarding of scholarships. They've used their positions of trust to indoctrinate students with anti-Americanism. Despite this attack, taxpayers and private donors have been extremely generous, pouring billions upon billions of dollars

into institutions that often hold a generalized contempt for their values.

Mr. McGlothlin is to be congratulated for his courage in taking a stand against this liberal attack on American values. Other wealthy donors ought to emulate Mr. McGlothlin's courage by withholding their donations to colleges that foster or sanction attacks on traditional American values and decency. While it's a bit more difficult, since their money is taken from them, taxpayers ought to rebel as well by pressuring their legislators.

Many college benefactors fondly recall their experiences at their alma maters some 20, 30 or 40 years ago. Often, what they remember bears little or no resemblance to what goes on at campuses today. With relatively little effort, benefactors can become more informed simply by visits to the college's website to discover whether there are activities offensive to their values. If there's an office of diversity, it strongly suggests the college is practicing some form of race or sex discrimination.

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) provides information about colleges that have "politically correct" speech codes that suppress debate. The Young America's Foundation (YAF) publishes information about inane courses at some of our colleges, such as UCLA's "Queer Musicology" or Johns Hopkins' "Mail Order Brides."

Some colleges have brazenly violated donor intent. Princeton University has been taken to court by the Robertson family for misuse of \$207 million of a gift estimated at \$700 million in today's prices. Because they violated donor intent, Boston College, USC, UCLA, Harvard and Yale have been forced to return multimillion-dollar gifts. It's high time that donors large and small summon some of Mr. McGlothlin's courage and hold colleges accountable to standards of decency and honesty.

## The Shame of Higher Education

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*Wednesday, April 4, 2007*

Many of our nation's colleges and universities have become cesspools of indoctrination, intolerance, academic dishonesty and the new racism. In a March 1991 speech, Yale President Benno Schmidt warned, "The most serious problems of freedom of expression in our society today exist on our campuses. . . . The assumption seems to be that the purpose of education is to induce correct opinion rather than to search for wisdom and to liberate the mind."

Writing in the fall 2006 issue of *Academic Questions*, Luann Wright, in her article titled "Pernicious Politicization in Academe," documents academic dishonesty and indoctrination all too common today. Here are some of her findings:

- An ethnic studies professor, at Cal State Northridge and Pasadena City College, teaches that "the role of students and teachers in ethnic studies is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable."
- UC Santa Barbara's School of Education e-mailed its faculty asking them to consider classroom options concerning the Iraq War, suggesting they excuse students from class to attend anti-war events and give them extra credit to write about it.
- An English professor at Montclair State University in New Jersey tells his students, "Conservatism champions racism, exploitation and imperialist war."

Other instances of academic dishonesty include professors having their students write letters to state representatives protesting budget cuts. Students enrolled in cell biology, math and art classes must sit through lectures listening to professorial rants about unrelated topics such as globalism, U.S. exploitation of the Middle East and President Bush.

Wright is also the founder of [NoIndoctrination.org](http://NoIndoctrination.org), a website containing hundreds of reports of similar academic bias and dishonesty.

Anne D. Neal, president of The American Council of Trustees and Alumni, wrote a companion article titled “Advocacy in the College Classroom.” She says that campuses across the nation have cultivated an atmosphere that permits the disinviting of politically incorrect speakers; politicized instruction; reprisals against or intimidation of students who speak their mind; political discrimination in college hiring and retention; and campus speech codes.

On most college campuses, there’s the worship of diversity. The universities of Harvard, Texas A&M, UC Berkeley, Virginia and many others boast of officers, deans and vice presidents of diversity. Many academics make the mindless argument, with absolutely no evidence to back it up, that racial representation is necessary for academic excellence. For them, getting the right racial mix requires racial discrimination.

Diversity wasn’t the buzzword back in the 1970s, ’80s and ’90s. Diversity is the response by universities, as well as corporations, to various court decisions holding racial quotas, goals and timetables unconstitutional. Offices of diversity and inclusion are simply substitutes for yesterday’s offices of equity or affirmative action. It’s simply a matter of old wine in new bottles, but it’s racism just the same.

In an open letter titled “To the President of My University,” Carl Cohen, professor of philosophy at the University of Michigan, summarizes, “Diversity is a good thing—but the claim that the need for diversity is so compelling that it overrides the constitutional guarantee of civic equality is one we swallow only because, by holding our nose and gulping it down, we can go on doing what our feeling of guilt demands.”

Until parents, donors and taxpayers shed their unwillingness to investigate what’s sold to them as higher education, what we see today will continue and get worse. Just as important is the recognition of the fact that boards of trustees at our colleges and universities bear the ultimate responsibility, and it is they who’ve been grossly derelict in their duty.

## Murder at VPI

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*April 25, 2007*

The 32 murders at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI) shocked the nation, but what are some of the steps that can be taken to reduce the probability that such a massacre will happen again? A large portion of the blame can be laid at the feet of the VPI administration and its campus security personnel, who failed to warn students, faculty and staff.

Long before the massacre, VPI administration, security and some faculty knew Cho Seung-Hui, the murderer, had mental problems. According to The New York Times, “Campus authorities were aware 17 months ago of the troubled mental state of the student. . . .” More than one professor reported his bizarre behavior. Campus security tried to have him committed involuntarily to a mental institution. There were complaints that Cho Seung-Hui made unwelcome phone calls and stalked students. Given the university’s experiences with Cho, at the minimum they should have expelled him, and their failure or inability to do so is the direct cause of last week’s massacre.

But there is something else we might want to look at. There’s a federal law known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). As VPI’s registrar reports, “Third Party Disclosures are prohibited by FERPA without the written consent of the student. Any persons other than the student are defined as Third Party, including parents, spouses, and employers.” College officials are required to secure written permission from the student prior to the release of any academic record information.

That means a mother, father or spouse who might have intimate historical knowledge of a student’s mental, physical or academic problems, who might be in a position to render assistance in a crisis, is prohibited from being notified of new information. Alternatively, should the family member wish to initiate an inquiry as to whether there have been any reports of mental, physical or academic problems, they are prohibited from access by FERPA. Of course, the stu-

dent can give his parent written permission to have access to such information, but how likely is it that a highly disturbed student will do so?

FERPA is part of a much broader trend in our society where parental authority is being usurped. Earlier this year, San Francisco Bay Area Assemblywoman Sally Lieber introduced a bill that would prosecute parents for spanking their children. Because of widespread opposition, the assemblywoman withdrew her bill. Schools teach children sex material that many parents would deem offensive. Texas Gov. Rick Perry issued an executive order mandating that every 11- and 12-year-old girl be given Gardasil HPV vaccination as a guard against a sexually transmitted disease that can cause genital warts and even cervical cancer.

Last February, the Commonwealth of Virginia's legislature unanimously passed a law, the first of its kind in the country that bans universities from expelling suicidal students. Such a law suggests that the Commonwealth's legislature is more concerned about the welfare of a suicidal potential murderer than the lives of his innocent victims. As such, those legislators might consider themselves in part culpable for VPI's 32 murder victims.

There is a partial parental remedy for governmental and university usurpation of parental rights through the power of the purse. Prior to writing out a check for a child's college tuition, have a legal document drawn up where the child gives his parents full and complete access to any mental, physical and academic records developed during the child's college career. While such a strategy might not be necessary for every parent, it should at least be considered by parents whose child has an unstable mental or physical history.

## Academic Cesspools

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*Wednesday, October 17, 2007*

The average taxpayer and parents who foot the bill know little about the rot on many college campuses. “Indoctrinate U” is a recently released documentary, written and directed by Evan Coyne Maloney, that captures the tip of a disgusting iceberg. The trailer for “Indoctrinate U” can be seen at [www.onthefencefilms.com/movies.html](http://www.onthefencefilms.com/movies.html).

“Indoctrinate U” starts out with an interview of Professor David Clemens, at Monterey Peninsula College, who reads an administrative directive regarding new course proposals: “Include a description of how course topics are treated to develop a knowledge and understanding of race, class, and gender issues.” Clemens is fighting the directive, which applies not to just sociology classes but math, physics, ornamental horticulture and other classes whose subject material has nothing to do with race, class and gender issues.

Professor Noel Ignatiev, of the Massachusetts School of Art, explains that his concern is to do away with whiteness. Why? “Because whiteness is a form of racial oppression.” Ignatiev adds, “There cannot be a white race without the phenomenon of white supremacy.” What’s blackness? According to Ignatiev, “Blackness is an identity that can be plausibly argued to arise out of a resistance to oppression.” Bucknell professor Geoff Schneider agrees, saying, “A lot of our students, I think, are unconsciously racist.” Both Ignatiev and Schneider are white.

The College of William & Mary and Tufts and Brown universities established racially segregated student orientations. At some universities, students are provided with racially segregated housing, and at others they are treated to racially separate graduation ceremonies.

Under the ruse of ending harassment, a number of universities have established speech codes. Bowdoin College has banned jokes and stories “experienced by others as harassing.” Brown University has banned “verbal behavior” that “produces feelings of impotence, anger or disenfranchisement” whether “unintentional or intentional.” University of Connecticut has outlawed “inappropriately directed laugh-

ter.” Colby College has banned any speech that could lead to a loss of self-esteem. “Suggestive looks” are banned at Bryn Mawr College and “unwelcomed flirtations” at Haverford College. Fortunately for students, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) has waged a successful war against such speech codes.

Central Connecticut State College set up a panel to discuss slavery reparations. All seven speakers, invited by the school, supported the idea. Professor Jay Bergman questioned the lack of diversity on the panel. In response, two members of the African Studies department published a letter criticizing Bergman, saying, “The protests against reparations stand on the same platform that produced apartheid, Hitler and the KKK.” Such a response, as Professor Bergman says, is nothing less than intellectual thuggery.

For universities such as Columbia and Yale, military recruiters are unwelcome, but they welcome terrorists such as Columbia University’s invitation to Colonel Mohammar Quadaffi and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Yale admitted former Taliban spokesman Sayed Rahmatullah Hashemi as a student, despite his fourth-grade education and high school equivalency degree.

On other campuses, such as Lehigh, Central Michigan, Arizona, Holy Cross and California Berkeley universities, administrators banned students, staff and faculty from showing signs of patriotism after the 9/11 attacks. On some campuses, display of the American flag was banned; the pledge of allegiance and singing patriotic songs were banned out of fear of possibly offending foreign students.

Several university officials refused to be interviewed for the documentary. They wanted to keep their campus policies under wraps, not only from reporters but parents as well. When college admissions officials make their recruitment visits, they don’t tell parents that their children will learn “whiteness is a form of racial oppression,” or that they sponsor racially segregated orientations, dorms and graduation ceremonies. Parents and prospective students are kept in the dark.

The Intercollegiate Studies Institute ([isi.org](http://isi.org)) has published “Choosing the Right College,” to which I’ve written the introduction. The guide provides a wealth of information to help parents and students choose the right college.

## Academic Cesspools II

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*Wednesday, November 7, 2007*

In last month's column "Academic Cesspools," I wrote about "Indoctrinate U," a recently released documentary exposing egregious university indoctrination of young people at prestigious and not-so-prestigious universities ([www.onthefencefilms.com/movies.html](http://www.onthefencefilms.com/movies.html)). I said the documentary only captured the tip of a disgusting iceberg.

The Philadelphia-based Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), a frontline organization in the battle against academic suppression of free speech and thought, released information about what's going on at the University of Delaware, and probably at other universities as well, that should send chills up the spines of parents of college-age students. The following excerpts are taken from the University of Delaware's Office of Residence Life Diversity Facilitation Training document. The full document is available at [www.thefire.org](http://www.thefire.org).

Students living in the University's housing, roughly 7,000, are taught: "A racist: A racist is one who is both privileged and socialized on the basis of race by a white supremacist (racist) system. The term applies to all white people (i.e., people of European descent) living in the United States, regardless of class, gender, religion, culture or sexuality. By this definition, people of color cannot be racists, because as peoples within the U.S. system, they do not have the power to back up their prejudices, hostilities or acts of discrimination. (This does not deny the existence of such prejudices, hostilities, acts of rage or discrimination.)" This gem of wisdom suggests that by virtue of birth alone, not conduct, if you're white, you're a racist.

If you're white and disagree with racial quotas, preferences and openly racist statements made by blacks to whites, and you call it reverse racism or reverse discrimination, here's the document's message for you: "Reverse racism: A term created and used by white people to deny their white privilege. Those in denial use the term reverse racism to refer to hostile behavior by people of color toward whites,

and to affirmative action policies, which allegedly give 'preferential treatment' to people of color over whites. In the U.S., there is no such thing as 'reverse racism.'" I agree with the last sentence. Racism is racism irrespective of color.

A white University of Delaware student might not have an ounce of ill will toward any race. According to the university's document, he's a racist anyway. "A non-racist: A non-term. The term was created by whites to deny responsibility for systemic racism, to maintain an aura of innocence in the face of racial oppression, and to shift responsibility for that oppression from whites to people of color (called 'blaming the victim'). Responsibility for perpetuating and legitimizing a racist system rests both on those who actively maintain it, and on those who refuse to challenge it. Silence is consent."

Then the document asks, "Have you ever heard a well-meaning white person say, 'I'm not a member of any race except the human race?' What she usually means by this statement is that she doesn't want to perpetuate racial categories by acknowledging that she is white. This is an evasion of responsibility for her participation in a system based on supremacy for white people."

I doubt whether this racist nonsense is restricted to the university's housing program. Students are probably taught similar nonsense in their sociology, psychology and political science classes. FIRE's outing of the University of Delaware's racist program elicited this official response from Vice President Michael Gilbert, "The central mission of the University, and of the program, is to cultivate both learning and the free exchange of ideas." (According to [thefire.org](http://thefire.org), as a result of public exposure, and without condemning this racist program, on Nov. 2 President Patrick Harker ordered the mandatory re-education halted pending a review.)

It's a safe bet the university did not highlight this kind of learning experience to parents and students in its recruitment efforts. Nor were generous donors and alumni informed that they are racists by birth. I'd also guess that this kind of "education" was kept under wraps from the state legislators who use taxpayer money to fund the university.

## Academic Slums

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*Wednesday, December 19, 2007*

Every three years, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) conducts its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA is a set of tests that measure 15-year-olds' performance in mathematics, science and reading.

The National Center for Education Statistics summarized the findings in "Highlights From PISA 2006" (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008016.pdf>). American students ranked 33rd among industrialized countries in math literacy, and in science literacy, they ranked 27th. Reading literacy was not reported for the U.S. because of an error in the test instruction booklets.

How do we get out of this mess of abysmal student performance? Presidential hopeful Barack Obama has proposed an \$18 billion increase in federal education programs. That's the typical knee-jerk response—more money. Let's delve a bit, asking whether higher educational expenditures explain why secondary school students in 32 industrialized countries are better at math and science than ours. In 2004, the U.S. spent about \$9,938 per secondary school student. More money might explain why Swiss and Norwegian students do better than ours because they, respectively, spent \$12,176 and \$11,109 per student. But what about Finland (\$7,441) and South Korea (\$6,761), which scored first and second in math literacy? What about the Slovak Republic (\$2,744) and Hungary (\$3,692), as well as other nations whose education expenditures are a fraction of ours and whose students have greater math and science literacy than ours?

American education will never be improved until we address one of the problems seen as too delicate to discuss. That problem is the overall quality of people teaching our children. Students who have chosen education as their major have the lowest SAT scores of any other major. Students who have graduated with an education degree earn lower scores than any other major on graduate school admissions tests such as the GRE, MCAT or LSAT. Schools of education, either

graduate or undergraduate, represent the academic slums of most any university. As such, they are home to the least able students and professors with the lowest academic respect. Were we serious about efforts to improve public education, one of the first things we would do is eliminate schools of education.

The inability to think critically makes educationists fall easy prey to harebrained schemes, and what's worse, they don't have the intelligence to recognize that the harebrained scheme isn't working. Just one of many examples is the use of fuzzy math teaching techniques found in "Rethinking Mathematics: Teaching Social Justice by the Numbers." Among its topics: "Sweatshop Accounting," "Chicanos Have Math in Their Blood," "Multicultural Math" and "Home Buying While Brown or Black." The latter contains discussions on racial profiling, the war in Iraq, corporate control of the media and environmental racism.

If you have a fifth-grader, his textbook might be "Everyday Math." Among its study questions are: If math were a color, it would be (blank) because (blank). If it were a food, it would be (blank) because (blank). If it were weather, it would be (blank) because (blank). All of this is sheer nonsense, and what's worse is that the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics sponsors and supports much of this nonsense.

Mathematics, more than any other subject, is culturally neutral. The square root of 16 is 4 whether you're Asian, European or African, or even Plutonian or Martian. While math and science literacy among white 15-year-olds is nothing to write home about, that among black 15-year-olds is nothing less than a disaster.

Few people appreciate the implications of poor math preparation. Mathematics, more than anything else, teaches one how to think logically. As such, it is an important intellectual tool. If one graduates from high school with little or no preparation in algebra, geometry and a bit of trigonometry, he is likely to find whole areas of academic study, as well as the highest paying jobs, hermetically sealed off from him for his entire life.

## Indoctrination of Our Youth

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*Wednesday, February 22, 2006*

Let's start off with a few quotations, then a question. In reference to the president's State of the Union: "Sounds a lot like the things Adolf Hitler used to say." "Bush is threatening the whole planet." "[The] U.S. wants to keep the world divided." Then the speaker asks, "Who is probably the most violent nation on the planet?" and shouts "The United States!"

What's the source of these statements? Were they made in the heat of a political campaign? Was it a yet-to-be captured leader of al Qaeda? Was it French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin? Any "yes" answer would miss the true source by a mile. All of those statements were made by Mr. Jay Bennish, a teacher at Overland High School in Aurora, Colo.

During this class session, Mr. Bennish peppered his 10th-grade geography class with other statements like: The U.S. has engaged in "7,000 terrorist attacks against Cuba." In his discussion of capitalism, he told his students, "Capitalism is at odds with humanity, at odds with caring and compassion and at odds with human rights."

Regardless of whether you're pro-Bush or anti-Bush, pro-American or anti-American, I'd like to know whether there's anyone who believes that the teacher's remarks were appropriate for any classroom setting, much less a high school geography class. It's clear the students aren't being taught geography. They're getting socialist lies and propaganda. According to one of the parents, on the first day of class, the teacher said Karl Marx's "Communist Manifesto" was going to be a part of the curriculum.

This kind of indoctrination is by no means restricted to Overland High School. School teachers, at all grades, often use their classroom for environmental, anti-war, anti-capitalist and anti-parent propaganda. Some get their students to write letters to political figures condemning public policy the teacher doesn't like. Dr. Thomas Sowell's "Inside American Education" documents numerous ways teachers at-

tack parental authority. Teachers have asked third-graders, “How many of you ever wanted to beat up your parents?” In a high school health class, students were asked, “How many of you hate your parents?”

Public education propaganda is often a precursor for what youngsters might encounter in college. UCLA’s Bruin Standard newspaper documents campus propaganda. Mary Corey, UCLA history professor, instructed her class, “Capitalism isn’t a lie on purpose. It’s just a lie,” she continued, “[Capitalists] are swine. . . . They’re bastard people.” Professor Andrew Hewitt, chairman of UCLA’s Department of Germanic Languages, told his class, “Bush is a moron, a simpleton, and an idiot.” His opinion of the rest of us: “American consumerism is a very unique thing; I don’t think anyone else lusts after money in such a greedy fashion.” Rod Swanson, economics professor, told his class, “The United States of America, backed by facts, is the greediest and most selfish country in the world.” Terri Anderson, a sociology professor, assigned her class to go out cross-dressed in a public setting for four hours. Photos or videotape were required as proof of having completed the assignment.

The Bruin Alumni Association caused quite a stir when it offered to pay students for recordings of classroom proselytizing. The UCLA administration, wishing to conceal professorial misconduct, threatened legal action against the group. Some professors labeled the Bruin Alumni Association’s actions as McCarthyism and attacks on academic freedom. These professors simply want a free hand to proselytize students.

Brainwashing and proselytization is by no means unique to UCLA. Taxpayers ought to de-fund, and donors should cut off contributions to colleges where administrators condone or support academic dishonesty. At the K–12 schools, parents should show up at schools, PTAs and board of education meetings demanding that teachers teach reading, writing and arithmetic and leave indoctrination to parents. The most promising tool in the fight against teacher proselytization is the micro-technology available that can expose the academic misconduct.

## What's with GMU?

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*Wednesday, April 5, 2006*

George Mason University's basketball team broke into national prominence, going all the way to the NCAA Final Four matchup but losing to the red hot University of Florida Gators. The Patriots' stellar performance this season is emblematic of the entrepreneurship and risk taking that long has been a feature of the University.

In 1980, when I left Temple University to join George Mason University's Economics Department, it was a little known school in northern Virginia. Dr. George Johnson, also from Temple University, was president. In an early meeting, to settle my dispute with one of the deans, I learned that Dr. Johnson was an entrepreneur with a vision. In 1983, Dr. Jim Buchanan, a former mentor during my doctoral student days at UCLA, was enticed to join our economics department, bringing with him several members of the Center for Study of Public Choice that he founded at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. In 1986, Dr. Buchanan won the Nobel Prize in Economics.

In 1986, Henry Manne was offered the deanship at our law school. At the time, the law school was less than nondescript, with most of the faculty having only a tangential academic relationship with the school. Mr. Manne was given complete control over hiring and firing. He hired legal scholars, established the Law & Economics Center and laid the groundwork for GMU Law School to become a first-rate law school. Today, GMU Law School is in the nation's top tier of law schools. According to the latest U.S. News & World Report's "America's Best Graduate Schools 2007," GMU Law School ranks 37th among 193 law schools. One uniqueness of our law school is that its professors revere and respect the U.S. Constitution.

In 1995, my colleagues asked me to become department chairman, and I reluctantly accepted. Our department was under siege by a hostile administration because we all shared characteristics that don't go over well in today's academy; we are libertarian-leaning free market economists. My confrontational stance as chairman didn't en-

dear me to the administration. I decided that the only way to improve our department was to “privatize” it—go out and raise money. With the help of my colleagues, generous donors and a new dean, we built a first-rate department. In 2001, the last year of my term as chairman, Dr. Vernon Smith and six of his colleagues at the University of Arizona’s Economic Science Laboratory joined our department. A year later, Dr. Smith became GMU’s second Nobel Prize-winner.

You say, “What’s up, Williams? I thought we’re talking about GMU basketball!” For GMU’s basketball team, knocking off several of the nation’s top-ranked teams is in itself a stellar performance. Going from no one’s guess to being in the Final Four is indicative of some of George Mason University’s entrepreneurship. Coach Jim Larranaga and his staff used what my colleagues, Professors Peter Boettke and Alexander Tabarrok, in their Slate.com article “The Secret of George Mason,” called the Moneyball model of recruitment. Larranaga knows that he can’t compete for freshmen players with the likes of UCLA, Duke, Wake Forest and other top-ranked teams. Boettke and Tabarrok say he overcame that obstacle by hunting “for the undervalued players—the ones who everyone else thought were too short, too thin, or too fat—and then building them into a team. In its astonishing defeat of UConn, GMU’s players were giving away 4 inches at nearly every position.”

After this season, it’s just possible that the GMU Patriots will be able to hold its own against top schools, as does the economics department and law school, in recruiting basketball players. Singer Ray Charles pointed to the problem in his hit song, “Them That’s Got,” which says, “That old saying them that’s got is them that gets is something I can’t see. If you got to have something before you can get something, how you get your first is still a mystery to me.” George Mason University basketball, as well as law and economics, has solved Ray Charles’ mystery. We have something.

## Who's to Blame?

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*Wednesday, July 5, 2006*

Let's look at the recent "Nation's Report Card," published annually by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. Nationally, in reading, only 13 percent of black fourth graders, and 11 percent of black eighth graders score as proficient. Twenty-nine percent achieve a score of "basic," which is defined as having a partial knowledge and skills necessary to be proficient in the grade. Fifty-nine percent score below basic, not having any of the necessary knowledge and skills. It's the same story for black eighth graders, with 40 percent scoring basic and 49 percent below basic.

In math, it's roughly the same story. For black fourth graders, 12 percent score proficient, 47 percent score basic and 40 percent below basic. For black eighth graders, 8 percent score proficient, while 33 percent score basic and 59 percent score below basic; however, one percent of black fourth graders and eighth graders achieved an advanced score in math. Teachers and politicians respond to this tragic state of affairs by saying that more money is needed. The Washington, D.C. school budget is about the nation's highest with about \$15,000 per pupil. Its student/teacher ratio, at 15.2 to 1, is lower than the nation's average.

Despite this, black academic achievement in Washington, D.C. is the lowest in the nation. Reading scores for Washington, D.C.'s fourth-grade black students are: 7 percent proficient, 21 percent basic and 71 percent below basic. For eighth-graders, it's 6 percent proficient, 33 percent basic and 58 percent below basic. It's the same sad tale in math. For fourth-graders, it's 5 percent proficient, 35 percent basic and 59 percent below basic. For eighth-graders, it's three percent proficient, 23 percent basic and 73 percent below basic. With these achievement levels, one shouldn't be surprised that the average black high school graduate, depending upon the subject, has the academic achievement level of the average white sixth, seventh or eighth grader.

Racial discrimination has nothing to do with what's no less than an education meltdown within the black community. Where black education is the very worst, often the city mayor is black, city council dominated by blacks, and often the school superintendent is black, as well as most of the principals and teachers, and Democrats have run the cities for decades. I'm not saying there's a causal connection, just that one would be hard put to chalk up the rotten education to racial discrimination.

There's enough blame for this sorry state of affairs for all participants to have their share: students who are hostile and alien to the education process, parents who don't care, teachers who are incompetent or have been beaten down by the system, and administrators who sanction unwarranted promotions and issuance of fraudulent diplomas that attest that a student has mastered 12th-grade material when in fact he hasn't mastered sixth- or seventh-grade material.

No one can solve the educational problems that black people confront except black people themselves. First, it's foolhardy, and black people cannot afford to buy into the idea that no black child should be saved from the education morass until all black children can be saved. That means we must find a way to permit the escape from rotten schools for as many black children who want to be educated and have supportive parents as we can. Educational vouchers or tuition tax credits would provide such a mechanism.

At one time in black history, there was a high value placed on education, so much so that blacks risked punishment to acquire education in areas of our country where black education was prohibited. Being 70 years old, I know there was a time when schools and black parents cooperated with one another to see to it that children behaved in school and did their work. In principle, the solution to black education problems is not rocket science. The problem is summoning the will.

## College Stupidity

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*Wednesday, August 2, 2006*

Colleges and universities will start their fall semester soon. You might be interested in what parents' and taxpayers' money is going for at far too many "institutions of higher learning."

At Occidental College in Los Angeles, a mandatory course for some freshmen is "The Unbearable Whiteness of Barbie." It's a course where Professor Elizabeth J. Chin explores ways in "which scientific racism has been put to use in the making of Barbie [and] to an interpretation of the film 'The Matrix' as a Marxist critique of capitalism." Johns Hopkins University students can enroll in a course called "Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n' Roll in Ancient Egypt." Part of the course includes slide shows of women in ancient Egypt "vomiting on each other," "having intercourse" and "fixing their hair."

Harvard University students can take "Marxist Concepts of Racism," which examines "the role of capitalist development and expansion in creating racial inequality." You can bet there's no mention of the genocide in Africa and former communist regimes like Yugoslavia. Young America's Foundation and Accuracy in Academia publish lists of courses like these, at many other colleges, that are nothing less than student indoctrination through academic dishonesty.

Parents are paying an average tuition of \$21,000, and at some colleges over \$40,000, to have their children exposed to anti-Americanism and academic nonsense. According to a 2000 American Council of Trustees and Alumni study, "Losing America's Memory: Historical Illiteracy in the 21st Century," not one of the top 50 colleges and universities today requires American history of its graduates.

A survey conducted by the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut gave 81 percent of the seniors a D or F in their knowledge of American history. The students could not identify Valley Forge, or words from the Gettysburg Address, or even the basic principles of the U.S. Constitution. A survey released by the McCormick Tribune Freedom Museum found that American

adults could more readily identify Simpson cartoon characters than name freedoms guaranteed in the First Amendment.

The academic dishonesty doesn't end with phony courses and lack of a solid core curriculum; there's grossly fraudulent grading, euphemistically called grade inflation. For example, Harvard's Educational Policy Committee found that some professors award A's for average work. A *Boston Globe* study found that 91 percent of Harvard seniors graduated with honors, that means all A's and a few B's.

I doubt whether these "honor" students could pass a 1950 high school graduation examination. According to the Department of Education's 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy, only 31 percent of college graduates were proficient in prose, only 25 percent proficient in reading documents and 31 percent proficient in math.

Who's to blame for the increasingly sad state of affairs at America's colleges and universities? It's tempting to blame professors and campus administrators, and yes, they share a bit of the blame for shirking their academic duty. But the bulk of the blame rests with trustees, who bear the ultimate responsibility for what goes on at the college.

Unfortunately, trustees know little detail about what goes on at their institutions. Most of them have their time taken up by their non-college obligations. As such, they are simply yes-men who, in making decisions, must rely on information, often incomplete or biased, given to them by the president and the provost.

A good remedy would be for boards of trustees to hire a campus ombudsman and staff that's accountable only to the trustees. During my brief tenure as a trustee of a major East Coast university, I made this suggestion only to be asked by the president whether I trusted him. My response was yes I trusted him, but I wanted verification.

## Are Academic Elites Communists?

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*Wednesday, August 16, 2006*

Grove City College publishes an excellent newsletter titled “Visions and Values.” Its July 2006 edition features an interview with Dr. Richard Pipes, acclaimed Russian historian and Harvard University professor of Sovietology. The interview was conducted by Grove City College professor of political science Dr. Paul Kengor.

Dr. Pipes, who served on the National Security Council during the Reagan administration, explained that there are actually only a few communists among academics. At first glance, that’s a puzzling observation, given the leftist bias at most college campuses. Drs. Pipes and Kengor explain the puzzle in a way that makes perfect sense.

While academic leftists, and I’d include their media allies, are not communists, they are anti-anti-communists. In other words, they have contempt for right-wingers, conservatives or libertarians who are anti-communists. Why? Academic leftists, and their media allies, are in agreement with many of the stated goals of communism, such as equal distribution of wealth, income equality and other goals spelled out in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels’ “Manifesto of the Communist Party.” Leftist elites love the ideas of communism so much that they are either blind to, or tolerant of, its many shortcomings.

In practice, communism is nothing less than sheer barbarism that makes even the horrors of Nazism pale in comparison. Professor Rudolph J. Rummel of the University of Hawaii outlines that barbarism in his book “Death by Government,” a comprehensive detailing of the roughly 170 million people murdered by their own governments during the 20th century. From 1917 to its collapse in 1991, the Soviet Union murdered about 62 million of its own people. During Mao Zedong’s reign, 35,236,000, possibly more, Chinese citizens were murdered. By comparison, Hitler’s Nazis managed to murder 21 million of its citizens and citizens in nations they conquered. Adding these

numbers to the 60 million lives lost in war makes the 20th century mankind's most brutal era.

At home and abroad, leftists have done a thorough and commendable job documenting and condemning the horrors and crimes of Hitler and his fascist Nazi regime, but when have you heard them direct similar condemnation of Joseph Stalin, his successors and Mao Zedong? By and large, they've chosen to overlook the horrors of communism.

The reason for their reluctance to condemn the barbarism of communism is simple. Dr. Pipes says, "Intellectuals, by the very nature of their professions, grant enormous attention to words and ideas. And they are attracted by socialist ideas. They find that the ideas of communism are praiseworthy and attractive; that, to them, is more important than the practice of communism. Now Nazi ideals, on the other hand, were pure barbarism; nothing could be said in favor of them."

Often, when people evaluate capitalism, they evaluate a system that exists on Earth. When they evaluate communism, they are talking about a non-existent Utopia. What exists on Earth, with all of its problems and shortcomings, is always going to fail miserably when compared to a Utopia. The very attempt to achieve the utopian goals of communism requires the ruthless suppression of the individual and an attack on any institution that might compromise the loyalty of the individual to the state. That's why one of the first orders of business for communism, and those who support its ideas, is the attack on religion and the family.

Rank nations according to whether they are closer to the capitalism end or the communism end of the economic spectrum. Then rank nations according to human rights protections. Finally, rank nations according to per capita income. Without question, citizens of those nations closer to capitalism enjoy a higher standard of living and a far greater measure of liberty than those in nations closer to communism.

## Anti-Intellectualism among the Academic Elite

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*Wednesday, February 2, 2005*

Dr. Lawrence Summers, president of Harvard University, has been excoriated for suggesting that innate differences between men and women might be one of the reasons fewer women succeed in the higher reaches of science and math. Adding insult to injury, he also questioned the role of sex discrimination in the small number of female professors in science and engineering at elite universities.

Professor Nancy Hopkins, an MIT biologist, attended the National Bureau of Economic Research conference titled “Diversifying the Science and Engineering Workforce” where Dr. Summers gave his lecture. She had to leave the lecture, explaining to a *Boston Globe* (Jan. 17, 2005) reporter, “I would’ve either blacked out or thrown up.” In today’s campus anti-intellectualism, it’s acceptable to suggest that genetics explains some outcomes, but it’s unacceptable to use it as an explanation for other outcomes. Let’s try a few, and guess whether Professor Hopkins would barf.

Suppose a speaker said that sickle cell anemia is genetically determined and occurs almost exclusively among blacks. Would Professor Hopkins stomp out of the room, charging racism? What if it were said that a person’s chances of being a carrier of the gene for Tay-Sachs disease, a disease without a cure, is significantly higher if he is an Eastern European (Ashkenazi) Jew? Would Professor Hopkins barf and charge the speaker with anti-Semitism?

Jon Entine, in his book “Taboo: Why Black Athletes Dominate Sports And Why We’re Afraid to Talk About It (1999),” says, “All of the 32 finalists in the last four Olympic men’s 100-meter races are of West African descent.” The probability of such an outcome by chance is all but zero. The genetic physiological and biomechanical characteristics that cause blacks to excel in some sports—basketball, football and track—spell disaster for those who have aspirations to be Olympic-class swimmers. Entine says, “No African American has ever

qualified for the U.S. Olympic swim or dive team. Indeed, despite a number of special programs and considerable funding that have attracted thousands of aspiring black Olympians, there were only seven blacks who could even qualify to compete against the 455 swimmers at the 1996 Olympic trials.”

Do you suppose Professor Hopkins would charge Entine with racism? The only behavioral genetic explanation that campus anti-intellectuals unquestioningly accept is that homosexuality has genetic origins.

What about women in the professions? In my colleague Thomas Sowell’s 1984 book “Civil Rights: Rhetoric or Reality,” there’s a chapter titled “The Special Case of Women.” He says, “The economic ramifications of marriage and parenthood are profound, and often directly opposite in their effects on men and women.” Marriage increases male labor-force participation and reduces that of women. Marriage increases career interruption for women but not men. That’s important for career advance and selection. If you’re a good computer technician, engineer or specialist in the higher reaches of science and technology, and you leave your job for a few years, much of your skills and knowledge will be obsolete when you return. The same obsolescence is virtually absent in occupations such as editor, librarian and schoolteacher. This factor, instead of sex discrimination, might explain some of the career choices made by women.

But what about the flap over Dr. Summers’ suggestion that genetics or innate differences might play a role in the paucity of women in science and engineering? It’s not that important whether Dr. Summers is right or wrong. What’s important is the attempt by some of the academic elite to stifle inquiry. Universities are supposed to be places where ideas are pursued and tested, and stand or fall on their merit. Suppression of ideas that are seen as being out of the mainstream has become all too common at universities. The creed of the leftist religion is that any difference between people is a result of evil social forces. That’s a vision that can lead to the return to the Dark Ages.

## Educational Ineptitude

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*March 1, 2004*

What passes for educational enlightenment these days boggles the mind. Matt Gouras, of the Associated Press, writing in the *Seattle Times* (1/5/04) tells a story about Tennessee schools. The success of some students has made other students feel badly about themselves. What're the schools' responses? Public schools in Nashville have stopped posting honor rolls. Some are considering a ban on posting exemplary school work on bulletin boards. Others have canceled academic pep rallies while others might eliminate spelling bees. Nashville's Julia Green Elementary School principal, Steven Baum, agrees thinking that spelling bees, and publicly graded events are leftovers from the days of ranking and sorting students. He says, "I discourage competitive games at school. They just don't fit my world view of what a school should be."

This is a vision all too common among today's educationist but there's a good reason for it: too large a percentage of teachers represent the very bottom of the academic achievement barrel and as such fall easy prey to mindless and destructive fads.

Retired Indiana University (of Pennsylvania) physics professor, Donald E. Simanek has assembled considerable data on just who becomes a teacher ([www.lhup.edu/dsimanek/decline1.htm](http://www.lhup.edu/dsimanek/decline1.htm)). Freshman college students who choose education as a major "are on the average, one of the academically weakest groups." Those choosing non-teaching physics and math are one of the academically strongest groups. Some of the more capable who initially chose teaching will find the teacher-preparation curriculum to be boring and intellectually empty, and shift to curricula that are academically more challenging and rewarding. Professor Simanek adds "that on tests such as the Wessman Personnel Classification Test of verbal analogy and elementary arithmetical computations, the teachers scored, on average, only slightly better than clerical workers. A rather low score was enough to pass. Yet half the teachers failed."

There are other causes for the sorry state of today's primary and secondary education. There's been the politicizing of education. Teachers have recruited students to write letters to the President protesting the war and participate in demonstrations against school budget cuts. Very often good teachers and principal are faced with the impossible having to deal with administrators and school boards who are intellectual inferiors and motivated by political considerations rather than what's best for children.

One of the very best things that can be done for education is to eliminate schools of education. There's little in the curriculum that contributes directly to the development of the mind. Professor Simanek says that "Most teachers have learned 'methods and skills' of teaching, but don't have a solid understanding of the subject they teach. So they end up 'teaching' trivia, misinformation, and intellectual garbage, but doing it with 'professional' polish. Most do not display love of learning, nor the ability to do intense intellectual activity of any kind. Lacking these qualities they cannot possibly inspire and nourish these qualities in their students."

According to a recent study by the North Central Regional Education Laboratory titled, "Effective Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategies in the Midwest," 75% to 100% of the teachers that leave the profession are ranked as either "effective" or "very effective."

To improve teaching we must attract people of higher intellectual ability and we must make teacher salaries related to ability and effectiveness. We must ensure that teachers have more academic freedom, better working conditions, and a suitable environment for teaching. An important component of that environment is the capacity to remove students who are alien and hostile to the education process. Finally, we should consider curriculum changes that eliminate courses that have little, if anything, to do with reading, writing and arithmetic.

The low academic quality of many of our teachers is neither flattering nor comfortable to confront but confront it we must if we're to do anything about our sorry state of education.

## Educational Ineptitude II

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*March 8, 2004*

Several weeks ago my column, “Teacher Ineptitude,” was about the sorry state of teacher quality concluding that while teacher ineptitude is neither flattering nor comfortable to confront but confront it we must if we’re to do anything about our sorry state of education.

The situation is not pretty. Philadelphia schools are typical of poor quality big-city schools. Susan Snyder, *Philadelphia Inquirer* staff writer, in her article, “District to help teachers pass test” (3/24/04), reported “that half of the district’s 690 middle school teachers who took exams in math, English, social studies and science in September and November failed.” Other test results haven’t been released; Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell said he understands “concerns that releasing the data could subject teachers to humiliation. . . .” The unflattering fact that we must own up to is that many, perhaps most, of those who choose teaching as a profession represent the very bottom of the academic barrel. Let’s look at it.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) compiles loads of statistics on education. The NCES “Digest of Education Statistics” Table 136 shows SAT average score by student characteristics for 2001. Students who select education as their major have the lowest SAT scores of any other major (964). Math majors have the highest (1174). It’s the same story when education majors finish college and take tests for admission to graduate schools. In the case of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), education majors have an average score that’s the second lowest (467) of any other major except sociology majors (434). Putting this in perspective, math majors score the highest (720) followed closely by economics in third place (625). It’s roughly the same story for students taking the LSAT for admission to law schools where the possible scores range between 120 and 180. Out of 29 majors, education majors ranked 26th averaging a score of 148. Physics/math majors came in first with a 158 score and econom-

ics majors third with 155. Readers can readily obtain this information by a “Google” search using the words “GRE major” and “LSAT major.”

Though my column criticized teachers, I was pleasantly surprised and encouraged by the responses. Many teachers sent letters saying their experiences mirrored exactly what I reported. Quite a few wrote of horror stories dealing with incompetent colleagues and administrators. There were also some fairly angry letters accusing me of “bashing teachers” and demanding an apology for doing so. The fact of the matter is that there are many excellent, competent and dedicated teachers often working in systems that reward incompetence and slovenliness and penalize excellence and dedication.

Our nation has a serious education problem that easily threatens our future well-being. Corrective action requires that we acknowledge and correct deficiencies no matter how painful and embarrassing they might be. A good start in that direction is to examine successful teacher training programs and if we have the guts imitate them.

Hillsdale College manages Hillsdale Academy, a K–12 primary and secondary school. At Hillsdale no students major in education. Students major and minor in the subjects they will be teaching, specifically art, biology, chemistry, English, French, German, history, Latin, mathematics, music, physical education, physics, science and Spanish. To be admitted to Hillsdale’s Teacher Education Program, a student must have and maintain a GPA of 3.0 and higher.

Needless to say teacher incompetency isn’t the only explanation for our education malaise. Parents who don’t give a damn and students with minds and attitudes alien and hostile to the education process figure in as well. There’s not much politicians and the education establishment can do about these factors; however, it’s entirely within their power to take measures such as those practiced at Hillsdale to ensure teacher competency.

## Believe It or Not

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*May 17, 2004*

Benedict College, Columbia, South Carolina enforces an academic policy that defies belief. Say I'm a freshman taking your class in biology. I learn little from your lectures, assigned readings and homework. I do attend class every day; take notes and manage to average 40 percent on the graded work for the semester. What grade might you give me? I'm betting that all but the academic elite would say, "Sorry, Williams, but no cigar," and I'd earn an F for the course. But, if you're a professor at Benedict College, you'd be fired.

That's exactly what happened to Professors Milwood Motley, Chairman of Benedict's Biological and Physical Sciences Department, and Larry Williams of the same department, both of whom refused to go along with the college's Success Equals Effort (SEE) policy. SEE is a policy where 60 percent of a freshman's grade is based on effort and the rest on academic performance. In their sophomore year, the formula drops to 50-50 and isn't used at all for junior and senior years. In defense of his policy, Benedict's president, Dr. David H. Swinton said that the students "have to get an A in effort to guarantee that if they fail the subject matter, they can get the minimum passing grade. I don't think that's a bad thing."

According to the Associated Press story, carried in TheState.com (8/20/04), Professor Motley said the policy compromises the integrity of Benedict. Students are being passed to increase student retention by falsely boosting academic performance. When Professors Motley and Williams began assigning grades based upon academic performance, Professor Motley said the administration "told us to go back and recalculate the grades, and I just refused to do it." At that point Dr. Swinton fired both for insubordination. Dr. William Gunn, a faculty member for 40 years and president of Benedict College's chapter of the American Association of University Professors, is dead set against the policy and believes most other faculty are as well. Writing in TheState.com (9/22/04), Dr. Gunn says the SEE policy not only

harms today's student but as well Benedict graduates who will see their degrees come under suspicion.

Dr. Winton's policy borders on lunacy. Imagine a freshman gets an A for effort in his algebra class but has virtually no grasp of the material, earning him an F grade. Under the college's SEE policy, the student would be assigned a C for the course. What can we expect when the student takes Algebra II and later takes a course where algebra is a tool? He'll fall further and further behind because he hasn't grasped the material from the earlier courses. He'll graduate only if the fraudulent grading continues and his job prospects will depend upon racial preferences.

Here's my question to you: Can you think of a more effective way to discredit and cast doubt on the degrees of all students who graduate from Benedict? How would you like people to be certified in any activity that way—your doctor, your tax accountant, your mechanic or anybody upon whom you depend for reliable proficient service?

Whatever academic handicaps Benedict's students have when they enter—their median SAT score is 803—are disguised and exacerbated by the school's SEE policy. Harvard-educated Dr. Swinton acknowledged he would not implement such a policy at a more selective institution and does not know of a similar policy at any other college.

The blame for this academic madness cannot wholly be placed at its president's feet. Benedict's Board of Trustees bear the blame for either enacting or tolerating this policy. Also culpable are those as taxpayers and donors whose funds make it possible for this madness to continue. While I know it's probably not the case, I wouldn't be surprised if it turned out that the South Carolina Ku Klux Klan were Benedict's largest contributors.

## School Violence Toleration

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*October 4, 2004*

I'm wondering just when parents, especially poor minorities, will refuse to tolerate day-to-day school conditions that most parents wouldn't dream of tolerating. Lisa Snell, director of the Education and Child Welfare Program at the Los Angeles-based Reason Foundation, has a recent article about school violence titled, "No Way Out," in the October 2004 edition of Reason On Line ([www.reason.com](http://www.reason.com)).

Ashley Fernandez, a 12-year-old, attends Morgan Village Middle School, in Camden, New Jersey, a predominantly black and Hispanic school that has been designated as failing under state and federal standards for more than three years. Rotten education is not Ashley's only problem. When her gym teacher, exasperated by his unruly class, put all the girls in the boys locker room, Ashley was assaulted. Two boys dragged her into the shower, held her down and fondled her for 10 minutes. The school principal refused to even acknowledge the assault and denied her mother's transfer request to another school. Since the assault, Ashley has received numerous threats and boys frequently grope her and run away. Put yourself in the place of Ashley's mother. The school won't protect her daughter from threats and assault. The school won't permit a transfer. What would you do? Ashley's mother began to keep her home. The response from officials: she received a court summons for allowing truancy.

Then there's Carmen Santana's grandson Abraham who attended Camden High School. After two boys hit him in the face, broke his nose and chipped his teeth, Abraham was afraid to go to school. Guess what. His grandmother was charged with allowing truancy when she kept him home while she sought permission for him to complete his senior year studies at home. Lisa Snell reports that "more than 100 parents have removed their children from Camden schools because of safety concerns. The school district's response: a truancy crackdown."

Nationwide there were approximately 1,466,000 violent incidents

that occurred in public schools in 1999–2000. Violent incidents, according to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, include rape, sexual battery other than rape, physical attack or fight with a weapon, threat of physical attack with a weapon, and robbery with or without a weapon. Most school violence occurs in inner city schools. During the 1999–2000 school year, 7 percent of all public schools accounted for 50 percent of the total violent incidents and 2 percent of public schools accounted for 50 percent of the serious violent incidents.

Students aren't the only victims of school violence. Between 1996 and 2000, teachers were the victims of approximately 1,603,000 non-fatal crimes at school. There were 1,004,000 thefts from teachers and 599,000 incidents of rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault.

I'm sorry if I'm out of touch with modern times but this kind of student behavior is completely intolerable. Moreover, there are no signs on the horizon that things are going to get any better. Psychobabblers try to lay the violence at the feet of poverty, single-parent-hood and discrimination. That's nonsense. Years ago, when I attended predominantly black schools (1942–1954), there were single-parent households, gross poverty and societal discrimination. During those times, today's school violence would have been unimaginable. Even to curse a teacher was unthinkable.

Today's school violence occurs because it's tolerated. I'm betting that a punishment like caning or six months incarceration at hard labor would bring it to a screeching halt. You say, "Williams, that's cruel and unreasonable!" I say it's cruel and unreasonable to permit school thugs to make schools unsafe and education impossible for everyone else. Short of measures to immediately end school violence, at the minimum parents should be able to transfer their children out of unsafe failing public schools. Or, do you believe, as the education establishment does, that parents and children should be held hostage until they come up with a solution?

## Higher Education in Decline

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*October 11, 2004*

College costs have risen dramatically over the last several decades. In many cases, it's difficult to find a college where per-student costs are under \$20,000. Most often tuition doesn't measure the true cost because taxpayer and donor subsidies pay part of the expenses. While costs are rising, education quality is in precipitous decline, particularly at the undergraduate level. Part of the reason is the political climate on college campuses where professors use their classrooms for proselytization and indoctrination and teach classes that have little or no academic content. Let's look at some of it.

In a study, to be published in *Academic Questions*, sociologist Charlotta Stern and economist Daniel Klein found in a random national sample of 1,678 university professors that Democrat professors outnumber Republican professors 3 to 1 in economics, 28 to 1 in sociology and 30 to 1 in anthropology. As George Will said in his *Washington Post* column, "Academia, Stuck to the Left," (11/29/04): "Many campuses are intellectual versions of one-party nations."

That strong campus leftist bias goes a long way to explain mindless university courses like: "Canine Cultural Studies" (UNC, Chapel Hill), "I like Ike, but I Love Lucy" (Harvard), "History of Electronic Dance Music" (UCLA), "Rock and Roll" (University of Massachusetts), "Hip-Hop: Beats, Rhyme and Culture" (George Mason University). There are many other examples documented by Accuracy in Academia ([academia.org](http://academia.org)).

A Zogby survey was commissioned by the National Association of Scholars (NAS) to compare the general cultural knowledge of today's college seniors to yesteryear's high school graduates. The questions for the survey were drawn from those asked by Gallup in 1955 covering literature, music, science, geography, and history. The results were reported in a NAS publication "Today's College Students and Yesteryear's High School Grads." It concludes that "Contemporary college seniors scored on average little or no higher than the high-

school graduates of a half-century ago on a battery of 15 questions assessing general cultural knowledge.”

A 1990 Gallup survey for the National Endowment of the Humanities, given to a representative sample of 700 college seniors, found that 25 percent did not know that Columbus landed in the Western Hemisphere before the year 1500; 42 percent could not place the Civil War in the correct half-century; and 31 percent thought Reconstruction came after World War II.

In 1993, a Department of Education survey found that among college graduates 50 percent of whites and more than 80 percent of blacks couldn't state in writing the argument made in a newspaper column, use a bus schedule to get on the right bus, 56 percent could not calculate the right tip, 57 percent could not figure out how much change they should get back after putting down \$3.00 to pay for a 60-cent bowl of soup and a \$1.95 sandwich, and over 90 percent could not use a calculator to find the cost of carpeting a room. But not to worry. A 1999 survey taken by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni of seniors at the nation's top 55 liberal-arts colleges and universities found that 98 percent could identify rap artist Snoop Doggy Dogg and Beavis and Butt-Head, but only 34 percent knew George Washington was the general at the battle of Yorktown.

Americans as donors and taxpayers have been exceedingly generous to our universities. Given our universities' gross betrayal of trust, Americans should rethink their generosity as well as rethink who serves on boards of trustees who in dereliction of duty permit universities to become hotbeds of political activism and academic fraud. There are a few universities where there's still integrity and academic honesty, plus they don't cost an arm and a leg. Among them are: Grove City College, Hillsdale College, Franciscan University and others listed at the web page of Young America's Foundation ([www.yaf.org](http://www.yaf.org)).

## Higher Education in Decline II

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*December 6, 2004*

Last week's column discussed the sad and tragic state of affairs in higher education. According to loads of letters received in response to that column, it's worse than I thought. Let me share just a few of them.

One person wrote that he knows an elementary school teacher and said, "She believed, until just this past summer, that the state of Alaska was an island because it is so often shown as an inset on many U.S. maps, appearing somewhat like an island."

A professor said that while he was trying to help a student with a problem, he asked her, "What is 20,000 minus 600?" He went on to say, "She literally could not answer without the calculator." He rhetorically questioned, "Should a person receive a college degree that cannot answer that in their head?"

An English professor wrote, "One of the items that I assigned was a two-page essay that described a favorite vacation or holiday. One student turned in two pictures drawn with crayon depicting the beach. When I gave her a failing grade, she was indignant and said that she put a great deal of work into the pictures. When I told her that she did not do the assignment and that she was supposed to write an essay, she said, 'But I don't know what an essay is!'"

Such students are academic cripples and don't belong in college in the first place. Recently released findings of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranked U.S. high school students 24th out of 29 countries. American 15-year-olds demonstrate less math proficiency than their counterparts in Hungary and the Slovak Republic. With those findings, we shouldn't be surprised by a recent U.S. Department of Education study finding that nearly half of all college students must take remedial courses in math and reading. According to National Center for Education Statistics, in 2000 close to 80 percent of colleges offered remedial services. Several devastating consequences result when colleges admit unprepared stu-

dents. First, it lets high schools off the hook by allowing them to continue to confer fraudulent diplomas. Second, it leads to a dumbing down of the academic curricula and the creation of Mickey Mouse courses for students who can't make it in more challenging courses. Academic departments, or professors, who don't dumb down their classes and participate in grade inflation risk declining enrollment and administrative threats to their budgets. Finally, hiring faculty to staff remedial courses inflates college costs to parents and taxpayers.

The nation's primary and secondary education is a national disgrace; will we allow our undergraduate education to become so as well? If we continue down our present course, the answer is an unambiguous yes. To change course, we need to start examining the incentive structure that college administrators face.

To a large extent, college budgets are determined by enrollment size. More students mean higher budgets and therefore incentive to admit students unprepared for college. Colleges should not admit students requiring remedial education. That's not to say youngsters shouldn't receive remedial education, but let them get it elsewhere—maybe at the high school that awarded them a fraudulent diploma.

We might rethink the financing of higher education, particularly at government-owned colleges, so as to introduce competition that might improve quality and drive down costs. High school graduates meeting academic criteria for college admission should be awarded a voucher in the amount of the per capita college cost paid by state taxpayers. The voucher could be used at any college, an idea similar to the GI Bill. There was a time when we could have prevented the K–12 slide to mediocrity, but we didn't seize the moment. Now's our chance with higher education. Will we let the moment pass us by again?

## What's Wrong with Education?

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October 14, 2001

Here are some test questions. Question 1: Which of the following is equal to a quarter of a million? (a)40,000 (b)250,000 (c)2,500,000 (d)1/4,000,000 or (e)4/1,000,000? Question 2: Martin Luther King, Jr. [insert the correct choice] for the poor of all races. (a) spoke out passionately (b) spoke out passionate (c) did spoke out passionately (d) has spoke out passionately or (e) had spoken out passionate. Question 3: What would you do if your student sprained an ankle? (a) Put a Band-Aid on it, (b) Ice it, (c) Rinse it with water.

Having reviewed the questions, guess which school grade gets these kind of test questions: sixth grade, ninth grade, or twelfth grade. I'm betting that the average reader guesses: sixth grade. You'd be wrong. How about ninth grade? You'd still be wrong. You say, "Okay, Williams, I can't believe they're twelfth grade test questions!" Wrong again. According to a *School Reform News* (9/01) article "Who Tells Teachers They Can Teach?," those test questions came from tests for prospective teachers. The first two questions are samples from Praxis I test for teachers and the third is from the 1999 teacher certification test in Illinois. And guess what. Thirty-one percent of New York City public school teachers fail teacher certification tests. According to the *Chicago Sun-Times* (9/6/01), 5,243 Illinois teachers failed their teacher certification tests.

The *Chicago Sun-Times* also reported that, "One teacher failed 24 of 25 teacher tests—including 11 of 12 Basic Skills tests and all 12 tests on teaching learning-disabled children." Yet, that teacher was assigned to teach learning-disabled children in Chicago. That's classic the blind leading the blind.

Most of these inept teachers are graduates of the nation's schools of education. Unfortunately, for the most part, schools of education, either graduate or undergraduate, are home to students who have the lowest academic achievement test scores when they enter college and they score the lowest among college graduates taking tests, such as

GRE, MCAT, or LSAT, to enter professional schools. If we're really serious about improving public education, we'd shut down schools of education. There is absolutely no relationship between teacher quality and having graduated from a teacher's college and being teacher certified. There may even be a negative relationship as suggested by the fact that students who are home-schooled by parents who've had no teacher training have achievement scores higher than 85 percent of all other students.

Another serious education problem is the fact that many teachers have little or no training in the subjects they teach. According to the U.S. Department of Education, 36 percent of public school teachers—972,000 teachers out of 2.7 million nationwide—didn't major or minor in the core subjects they teach. In other words, there are teachers teaching math and science who might not have taken a single class in those subjects.

The long-term solution to our education problem is to break the education monopoly by introducing the kind of competition that can come from school vouchers, tuition tax credits, and other school choice programs. Of course the powerful education establishment fights tooth and nail against anything that even smacks of competition. There are some shorter term measures that can help stem the decline in education quality. State legislators and school boards have it in their power to eliminate standard certification requirements. As it stands now, a Nobel Laureate in physics wouldn't meet teacher qualifications in most school districts.

Finally, my education question to the NAACP, Urban League, the Black Congressional Caucus, black mayors and city councilmen who walk lockstep with the teaching establishment and do their bidding: In which schools do you think you find the absolutely worst teacher quality?

## Fiddling Whilst Rome Burns

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*December 23, 2002*

Casey Lartigue, policy analyst for the Washington, D.C.-based Cato Institute, has written a report that constitutes a devastating indictment of public education. The title is, “The Need for Education Freedom in the Nation’s Capitol,” Policy Analysis (12/10/02). The title suggests the solution, namely, education reform must be more than simply spending more money to prop up schools that are little more than holding pens. Washington politicians must create a climate where education entrepreneurs can flourish and thereby produce education competition. Parents must have control over the education of their children. Tuition tax credits or education vouchers would facilitate both objectives.

“That’s not the answer, Williams, you say. More money and smaller class sizes are what’s needed.” That’s what the education establishment would have us believe; however, if money were the answer, Washington public schools would be the best in the nation if not the world. Per student expenditures are \$10,500 a year, second highest in the nation. With a student/teacher ratio of 15.8, they have smaller than average class size. What is the result?

In only one of the city’s nineteen high schools do as many as fifty percent of its students test as proficient in reading and at no school are 50 percent of the students proficient in math. At nine high schools, only five percent or fewer of its students test proficient in reading and in eleven high schools only five percent or less are proficient in math. The story gets worse when we look at the percentages for “below basic” performance which means that the student has little or no mastery of subject skills.

At 12 of 19 high schools more than 50 percent of the students test below basic in reading and at some of those schools the percentage approaches 80 percent. At 15 of these schools over 50 percent test below basic in math and in 12 of them 70 to 99 percent do so. But that’s not the worst of the story: Each year more than 80

percent, and up to 96 percent, of high school students are promoted to the next grade. That is nothing but fraud, dishonesty and deception, plain and simple. While the education establishment can rightfully point to education problems beyond their control, irresponsible parents, students with alien and hostile minds and rotten teaching conditions, they bear the sole responsibility for fraudulent promotions and fraudulent diplomas.

The bottom line is that if one didn't know better he'd think that Washington's predominantly black public school system was being run by the Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan hell-bent on a mission to sabotage black academic excellence. Instead, it's a system being run by blacks for blacks. As such it means generation after generation of blacks will not be able to measure up academically. Calls for racial quotas and preferences will exist in perpetuity. And, in a world of increasing technology many blacks are condemned to near uselessness in the job market.

But what about Senator Trent Lott? You say, "What in the world does Trent Lott have to do with rotten education received by blacks in D.C.?" I'd say nothing but judging by the time and political capital spent by black politicians and civil rights groups attacking Trent Lott you'd think that he was the number one black problem, followed closely by the Confederate Battle Flag.

The attachment of black politicians and civil rights groups to spending resources on symbolism rather than substance is equivalent to Nero's fiddling while Rome burns. I'm sure that if the outrage directed toward Lott's indiscreet remarks were instead directed at fraudulent education delivered to black youngsters across the nation solutions might be found.