



CALLING TO ACCOUNT

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI **2016**



Committed to **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**,
ACADEMIC FREEDOM, and **ACCOUNTABILITY**
at America's colleges and universities.

The **American Council of Trustees and Alumni** is an independent, nonprofit organization committed to academic excellence, academic freedom, and accountability at America's colleges and universities. Founded in 1995, ACTA is the only national organization dedicated to working with alumni, donors, trustees, and education leaders across the United States to support liberal arts education, uphold high academic standards, safeguard the free exchange of ideas on campus, and ensure that the next generation receives an intellectually rich, high-quality education at an affordable price. Our network consists of alumni and trustees from nearly 1,300 colleges and universities, including over 22,000 current board members. Our quarterly newsletter, *Inside Academe*, reaches over 13,000 readers.

from the President

ACTA friends know well the passion we bring to strengthening our nation's colleges and universities. Thanks to your support, ACTA is turning the tide and calling colleges and universities to account. Our goal is for America to be again able to say our nation's higher education is the envy of the world.

ACTA turned 21 in 2016, and our message reverberates louder and louder in the media, in governors' offices, and, most importantly, at the meetings of higher education governing boards.

In July, I began my first year as president of this dynamic organization, taking up the responsibility of building upon the strong foundation that Anne Neal and Jerry Martin laid. ACTA continues to grow in every way. And we are seeing positive changes in higher education as a direct result of our work.

As you will read in this report, not only was our footprint in media bigger than ever this past year, but we are making significant progress in our campaign to make higher education accountable, affordable, and effective.

Keeping higher education affordable is an imperative. Any parent with a child in college will tell you: College costs are out of control. ACTA agrees. We analyzed spending patterns this year and called out colleges and universities that increased their budgets for administration faster than they did their spending on instruction. Boards took our messages to heart—and we even got some thank you notes for sounding that warning bell.

ACTA continues to lead the charge toward creating a new system of quality control in higher education, completely overhauling the obsolete, over-regulated system of accreditation. We have brought together a robust, bipartisan coalition committed to this crucial reform, and Anne

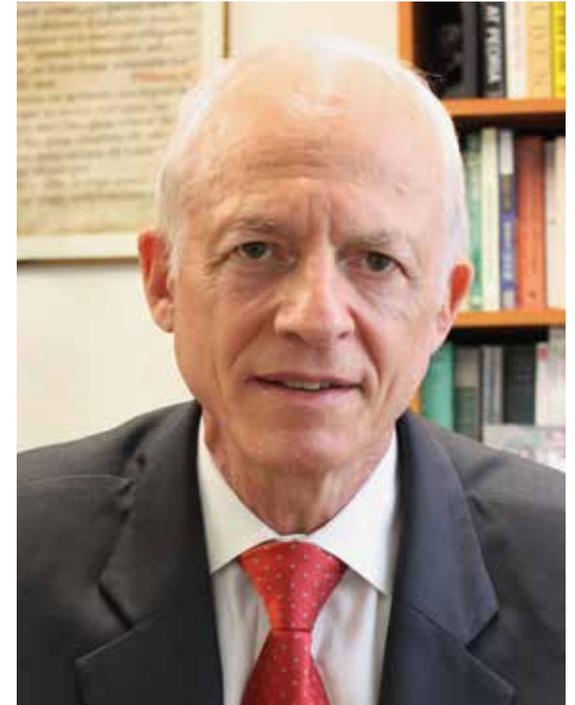
Neal, now our senior fellow, continues to be on the front lines of this campaign.

In 2010, we released an expanded edition of our signature study of core curriculum requirements: *What Will They Learn?* It grades schools on how many of the essential undergraduate subjects they require. Initially, ACTA received a flurry of letters from college leaders

protesting the low grades they received. We weren't dismayed: It showed us that schools were paying attention. Now, as we prepare our ninth edition, we mostly receive requests for help in strengthening curricula, assistance we are always thrilled to provide. Every time we see a college add a core requirement, we know that many more students will get a better, more comprehensive education.

In particular, we have raised the alarm through our surveys and our two 2016 reports that higher education is failing to educate students for informed, engaged citizenship. No free society, America included, can afford civic ignorance.

Like you, we also have no patience for the silencing of speakers who challenge campus orthodoxies. Nor can we countenance the degradation of teaching and learning through the cataloging of "microaggressions" and the proliferation of "safe spaces." We campaign steadily for free speech on



campus, and slowly but surely, many schools are adopting strong policies to protect academic freedom and free expression.

It is not enough to point out the problems: ACTA shares solutions with the hundreds of trustees who seek our advice, individually and in groups. We profile and support the campus programs that have become “Oases of Excellence,” havens for robust debate and free inquiry. And this year, we dramatically expanded our Fund for Academic Renewal, providing to donors the opportunity and guidance to direct their funds to the college programs that advance the values in which they believe and for which ACTA works every day.

We could not do this work, so important for the future of our nation, without you. Your support sustains us, and we are inspired and encouraged by your commitment to ACTA's mission. Please read on to see the progress that you have made possible.



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CALLING trustees and administrators TO ACCOUNT: Ensure

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Launching the Project on Administrative Costs

Students and taxpayers are struggling. Between 1982 and 2011, the cost of college tuition rose by 570%—growing at nearly four times the pace of the median family income. That’s why ACTA launched the **Project on Administrative Costs**. We are investigating just where this money is going. Already, our initial findings have gotten the attention of colleges, universities, and state officials.

ACTA reviewed financial data of over 1,150 colleges and universities, in partnership with Jerry Malitz, an architect of the U.S. Department of Education’s IPEDS and College Navigator databases, which are the primary repositories of higher education statistics. ACTA compared institutions’ spending patterns on administration with their spending on instructional expenditures. We identified schools that had particularly high administrative expense growth relative to their peers, and we sent customized letters and charts to boards of trustees highlighting the worst offenders—nearly 60 in total.

Quickly, our phones began to ring. Trustees, chief financial officers, and collegiate institutional research staffs took notice of our findings and wanted

to talk. Thanks to the Project on Administrative Costs, more than a dozen universities have started investigating their administrative costs, and one large public university discovered that it had misreported data to the Department of Education during a recent fiscal year.

Across the country, state-level higher education leaders have taken action. The chair of a large Midwestern state university system asked the leadership of the campus with the highest administrative growth in the system to account for ACTA's findings. And the president of another major state university system wrote to ACTA thanking us for our work with trustees, acknowledging that the system's "attention must always be on continuous improvement in this area" of administrative cost controls.

In Wyoming, the Project found its way into state newspapers! *The Wyoming Tribune Eagle*, the *Laramie Boomerang*, and the *Northern Wyoming Daily News* each ran stories on our findings regarding the University of Wyoming. One trustee commented on the university's spending practices: "Over the last few years, we've issued more golden parachutes than on D-Day." And

By: JOEL FUNK | November 27, 2016
UW administration Spending Higher Than Peers

Many undergraduates, their favor-like administrative spending growth at the University of Wyoming appears to be among the highest of its peer institutions, and greater than all but one other institution in the Mountain West Conference.

That's according to a report and an internal examination of trends in administrative spending at UW. Though some of the computers used in the report prepared by a national higher education nonprofit might be inappropriate for UW and internal accounting fumbles could account for skewing the perspective, President Laurie Nichols said her administration would be committed to keeping those costs in check. "As we've been working on budget reductions, one of the things I've said and that our campus is committed to really working on is reducing administrative overhead," Nichols said during the Board of Trustees meeting Friday. "I'm not saying we're out of line here, but I just observed that over this time period of 2007-2016 that the personnel costs have gone up ... While I understand there may be a few pay adjustments in there, I hope so, and that as we hire people, you have to be in the market, so there's all kinds of explanations for that, but I just want to point out that we have gone up and I think that, to some extent, illustrates why we're committed to looking at administrative overhead and seeing if we can bring that down as well while we're working on the budget."

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) put together the report using publicly available data published through the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Looking at trends in administrative spending and instructional spending through a five-year period, the study found UW's administrative expenses grew by more than 33 percent, compared to just less than 10 percent growth in instructional spending.

Only the University of Hawaii-Manoa saw greater increases in administrative spending and a lower rate of instruction spending growth when compared to the nine colleges in the Mountain West Conference.

"Essentially, our administrative growth has been about three times the instructional growth, and therein lies the concern," Nichols said.

However, UW does not typically consider colleges in the Mountain West Conference its peer institutions, Nichols said. Of the nine, Nichols said only the University of Nevada-Reno is considered a peer institution — such as the University of Idaho and Utah State University — with Colorado State University and the University of New Mexico as stretch peers.

To demonstrate a more apples-to-apples approach, Nichols and Board of Trustees President John MacPheon talked the Office of Institutional Analysis with comparing UW's administrative spending to its 10 actual peer institutions, as well as another six stretch peers.

But when compared to the list of institutions UW considers its true peers, the ACTA's findings appeared to hold true.

"There's no question when you look at our peers, we are very high in terms of institutional support dollars," she said. "Looking at us with our close peers, we'd be right up near the top. Then if you look at it as a percentage of institutional support to instruction cost, we're not at the very top, but I think we were second, still very close to the top. And with analysis with our stretch peers, even then, we're very close to the top."

See Koller, manager at the office of institutional analysis, said they found personnel expenses in compensation and benefits increased 3 percent between fiscal years 2009-2014 when adjusted for inflation. Non-personnel expenses — consisting of supplies and services — increased just less than 350 percent.

"When you first look at this information, you probably think there was a huge increase in personnel dollars," Koller said. "But what we're finding — is that non-personnel dollars actually fluctuate quite a bit over time — they really do change pretty dramatically. It just so happens when they close those five years to report on, those were some of the biggest changes, as well."

Though large increases in non-personnel spending was relatively constant among UW's peers, Koller said it was worth investigating what made spending at UW go up.

Further analysis of the spending trends found errors in UW's accounting and financial systems could have skewed the numbers, said Janet Lowe, vice president of fiscal administration. With UW's current financial system, Lowe said some of the expenditures considered institutional support as part of administrative spending — such as a one-time \$1.5 million endowment to pay for maintenance in the Michael B. Enzi STEM Building — don't really fall into that category. Variability in non-personnel expenditures could be created by one-time expenditures while some years showed no increases, she said. As UW works toward implementing a new financial system, Lowe said it would be important to pay "extra attention" to how financial functions are captured.

"In our new configuration, we're working very hard to make sure we have a better system of integrity when these functions are attached to expenditures," she said. "My apologies, half of this increase is accounting related and some things we need to fix."

In terms of personnel costs, Lowe said the increase in spending would also include benefits, including the rising cost of health insurance. She said her division could continue its analysis by breaking out benefits versus compensation to present a more detailed picture if the trustees desired.

Trustee Mike Masie said there were also several other costs related to administrative personnel spending, such as severance packages and UW's policy of paying administrators who go to faculty positions a portion of their administrative compensation rate, known as the 50th rule.

"Over the last few years, we've issued more golden parachutes than on D-Day," Masie said.

Masie said there were several top administrators — including but not limited to former President Bob Stenberg — whose departures resulted in expensive severance packages that UW paid in a lump sum or is still paying.

When it came to Nichols' commitment to transparency and goal of keeping administrative overhead in check, Masie said he thought she's on the level.

Within days of releasing the Project on Administrative Costs, ACTA began receiving phone calls from institutional research staffs after trustees had urged their administrators to investigate ACTA's findings. Letters from governors arrived thanking us for the information. In Wyoming, newspapers across the state reported on the Project.

THE PROJECT ON ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS BY THE NUMBERS

➤ **57** the number of boards of trustees to which ACTA presented its Project on Administrative Costs.

➤ **17** institutions and **4** governors and their appointees contacted ACTA to discuss the findings.

➤ **700,000+**, the number of undergraduate students whose leaders reached out to ACTA.

Resources for Trustees



The Cost of Chaos in the Curriculum highlights how universities can streamline curricula to save up to almost 10% of educational costs.



ACTA updated two trustee guides in 2016. *Accreditation: A Call to Action for College Trustees* and *The Basics of Responsible Trusteeship* are essential primers for engaged trustees.

the university’s president declared that the University of Wyoming is “committed . . . [to] reducing administrative overhead.”

We also sent letters to governors and legislative leaders from coast to coast regarding spending and tuition trends at their states’ institutions. Governor’s offices in several states responded, commending the value of ACTA’s work. The office of Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin indicated that our findings will be useful in helping craft the state’s next higher education budget.

And we’re not done yet: In 2017, ACTA will release the Project on Administrative Costs’ next phase of findings, made possible by the generous support of the Arthur N. Rupe Foundation.

Urging College Sports Oversight

ACTA also called attention to another area where costs have skyrocketed. College athletics has become a multi-billion dollar industry, where, too often, anything goes. Instances of questionable spending and academic misconduct abound. But ACTA is working to change that: We continue to remind trustees of

their responsibility to exercise oversight of their schools’ athletics programs.

We spoke out in a *USA Today* feature story on expensive collegiate coaching buyouts at schools like the University of Iowa. The article highlighted original ACTA research and quotes from ACTA President Michael Poliakoff and Vice President of Trustee & Legislative Affairs Armand Alacbay. Mr. Alacbay explained: “Even if the board delegates its [athletic oversight] authority, it can’t delegate its responsibilities. It does so at its own peril.”

And, on the eve of the college football playoffs, ACTA published an op-ed in *U.S. News & World Report* on “The Cost of Gridiron Glory.” The totals are staggering: Only 12 universities can operate athletics programs without the subsidies of student fees and other school operating funds—costing students and taxpayers \$10.3 billion between 2010 and 2015.

Trustees and other higher education leaders can turn to “**Best Practices in Athletic Oversight**,” an episode of ACTA’s Higher Ed Now series, for more on how to get their athletics programs in order. In this video, former University System

of Maryland (USM) regent Tom McMillen and former USM chancellor and Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics chair Brit Kirwan discuss the importance of trustee oversight and how to ensure that student-athletes remain students first.

Shining a Light on the Cost of Chaos

ACTA's 2015 report ***The Cost of Chaos in the Curriculum*** continued to make waves in

2016. The numbers make clear: Curricular bloat is expensive, and program review and innovation are vital.

ACTA President Michael Poliakoff took this message to the national airwaves, appearing on WGBH's *Morning Edition*, in a segment syndicated by NPR. He described the "multiplication of course options, often without rhyme or reason or any real respect for the kind of intellectual nutrition that

students need." The title of the segment says it all: "Zombies, Garbage and Vampires? It's Not a Nightmare, It's Your College Course Catalog."

And trustees are increasingly paying attention. This year, we received nearly 100 requests for the *Cost of Chaos* report from individual trustees. At one liberal arts college in the Midwest, the president's office even called to request 56 copies of the report for



By: MICHAEL POLIAKOFF & ALEXIS ZHANG | December 31, 2016
The Cost of Gridiron Glory

Bowl season reminds us what colleges lose by spending wildly in pursuit of a win.

College football bowl season is finally here: The three-week extravaganza features 41 games, culminating in a national championship match—but also a hefty price tag that raises serious questions about the multi-billion dollar industry of college sports. Twenty-five years have passed since the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics first took up this issue, but the challenge of reforming college sports seems as serious—and perhaps as remote—as ever.

Division I athletic spending over the past 11 years totaled an estimated and jaw-dropping \$17.3 billion, a fortune larger than the GDP of over 130 countries. College sports are big business, especially for revenue-generating sports like college football. In 39 states, the highest-paid public employee is a college football or basketball coach. At many universities—including the top 10 ranked programs of Michigan, Washington and Wisconsin—coaches received seven-figure contracts with no explicit approval from trustees or regents.

This flood of money over the past quarter century has opened college sports. In 1990, the Southeastern Conference split \$16 million in revenue among its member schools; by 2014–15, these schools were divvying up \$436.8 million. Today, the top programs in the conference and other Power Five conferences cash in and spend freely, while others jockey for position in hopes of making it big. In the resulting arms race, less prominent teams pony up millions to chase success on the field and earnings at the bank, incite to recruit star players, extend coach contracts and build lavish new facilities.

But not unlike the lottery, for every Cinderella story, there are many more losers. Athletics departments rely on a few revenue-producing sports, like football and men's basketball, to fund the cost of the many more non-revenue-producing ones—but at most schools, these revenue generators are not up to the task. Even the National Collegiate Athletic Association's own data show only 24 of the 128 programs in the Football Bowl Subdivision turn a profit. Not a single program outside that subdivision is profitable. Only 12 universities can operate athletics programs without dipping into general revenue from student fees and other school funds. Others have been forced to subsidize their athletic programs by as much as 80 percent, costing students and the public \$10.3 billion between 2010 and 2015 alone.

And even in football, profit can be elusive. For many teams, making a bowl game is the highlight of the season, giving student-athletes a unique experience and schools opportunities for exposure, but between 10 and 20 schools each year actually lose money by doing so. Most of the profits go to a few top bowls, while lesser-known bowls make do with smaller payouts, suboptimal time slots and less-than-full stadiums. But even if fan interest is low, participating schools must either sell or cover the cost of thousands of tickets. In all, between 2009 and 2014, schools and conferences were left on the hook for more than \$92 million in unsold tickets, not to mention the litany of other expenses required to go bowling.

At the same time, colleges are falling far short of their core mission of preparing students for success. In 2012, the University of Florida attempted to shatter its computer science department

to save money, while increasing its athletic budget by an equivalent amount. Episodes at North Carolina, Ohio State and Southern California have exposed underground cultures of under-the-table incentives, grade inflation and special dispensations for star athletes.

The drive for gridiron glory is even more alarming when contrasted with the general state of stagnation and mediocrity across higher education today. Whereas universities are quick to overhaul underperforming football programs, they have not taken on academic shortcomings with any similar gusto. More than 90 percent of public colleges in the U.S. have four-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time students of under 50 percent. And students continue to graduate underprepared and underemployed, with more than 70 percent of employers deeming their skills and competencies lacking.

Now more than ever, alumni, boards of trustees and policymakers should take action to ensure that athletic ambition does not become a stand-in for academic quality. Some schools have stepped up to the task of reform. The University System of Maryland, for example, and coaches' compensation in part to the academic performance of players, at the urging of then-regent and former Olympian Tom McMillen.

So, sit back and watch the bowl games. Cheer for your alma mater. But recognize—when the scores are final—the unfortunate downside to the excesses of college sports. While athletics can create balance, joy, character and community pride for student athletes and fans, these benefits should not give colleges carte blanche to run roughshod in pursuit of the win.

In December, *U.S. News & World Report* ran ACTA's op-ed on the price of big-time college sports and the imperative of reform. "Now more than ever, alumni, boards of trustees, and policymakers should take action to ensure that athletic ambition does not become a stand-in for academic quality."



Jackie Ferentino for NPR



npr ed

Zombies, Garbage And Vampires? It's Not A Nightmare, It's Your College Course Catalog CLASSICAL NEW

ENGLAND



listen

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President Michael Poliakoff appeared on WGBH's *Morning Edition*, in a segment syndicated by NPR to discuss the academic as well as financial costs of curricular chaos at colleges and universities.



In October, ACTA Vice President Armand Alacbay spoke before a crowd of 500, including many college trustees, on the importance of accreditation reform.

the entire board, as did the president's office of a western state flagship university.

Most recently, one trustee of a private university in the Midwest placed the university CFO in contact with ACTA and instructed the institution to investigate potential solutions for curricular disarray, including shared course initiatives, using our ***Bold Leadership, Real Reform*** guide as a model.

Arming Trustees with Resources

ACTA's publications remain must-reads for college trustees. Many start with ***The Basics of Responsible Trusteeship***, an essential primer for new trustees. In 2016, ACTA released a revised edition of the booklet. Drawing on our Project on Governance for a New Era, the Chicago Principles on free expression, and other recent developments in higher education, we brought important new material to the attention of trustees.

Many trustees have shared the publication with other board members and incorporated them into board meetings. And in one southern state,

the state senate's education chair asked ACTA to send copies of our materials to every new public university trustee, 54 in all.

Advising Stakeholders

ACTA also provides specialized advice and counsel to higher education stakeholders. This year, ACTA fielded more than 400 inquiries from trustees on a variety of topics. We advised trustees on how to advocate for board policies defending academic freedom; on how to select institutional peers for comparison; and on how to improve governance and metrics. And we continued to serve as a resource for schools embarking on presidential searches.

ACTA's voice is being heard in statehouses across the country as well. In 2016, ACTA counseled legislators in three states. ACTA President Michael Poliakoff testified before the Alaska House Education Committee on the importance of civic education. Another state's auditor general continues to consult with ACTA on implementing governance best practices. And a Hawaii state senator introduced a cost-saving bill to increase classroom utilization

at the University of Hawaii, based on ACTA's model legislation.

Fighting for Accreditation Reform

ACTA remains on the front lines of the fight to reform higher education's broken accreditation system. Anne Neal, now ACTA's senior fellow, has led our work on the issue. She serves with distinction on the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI), which advises the Department of Education on accreditation-related topics.

Last year, we convened a bipartisan group of stakeholders, including congressional staff, current and former college presidents, senior college administrators, trustees, and partner organizations, to coordinate strategies. We reissued our trustee guide on

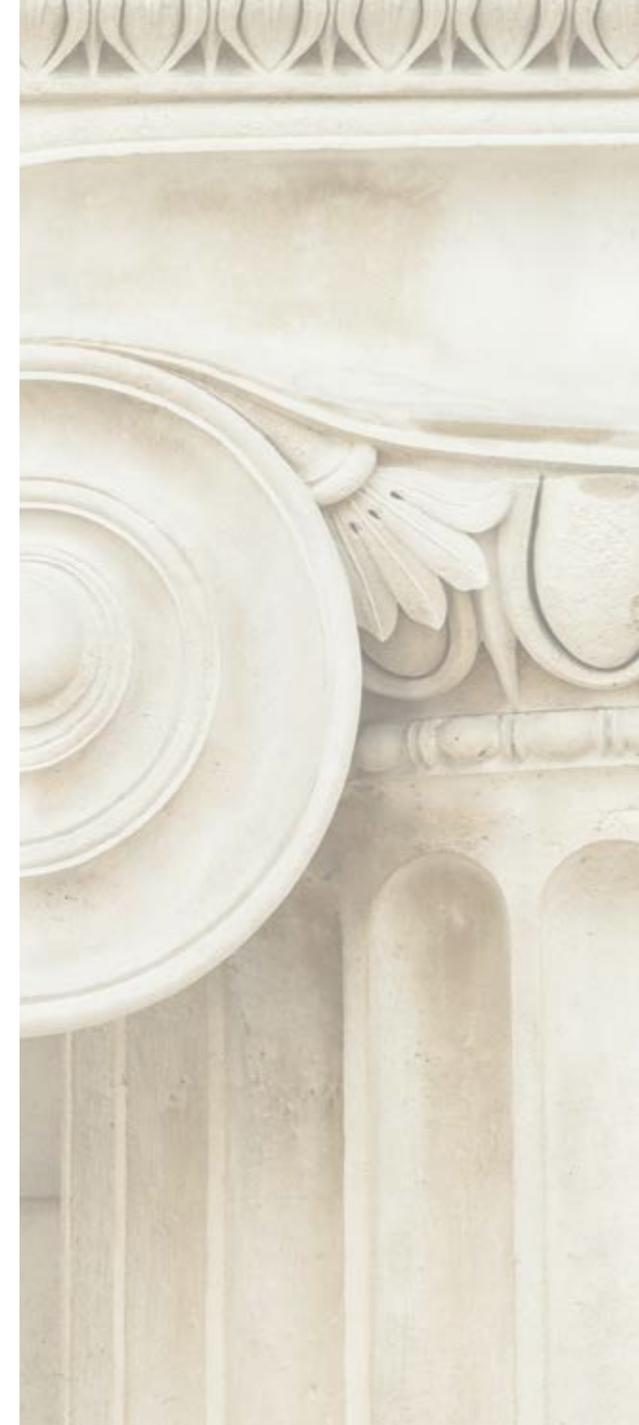
this topic, ***Accreditation: A Call to Action for College Trustees***. In response, one western state's board of regents sought our advice on merging campuses into a single, more efficient accreditation system.

In October, ACTA Vice President Armand Alacbay spoke on accreditation issues before the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The crowd of 500 attendees included many college and university trustees and was highly receptive to ACTA's ideas for reform. And we continue to defend governors from the intrusion of accreditors into state policy and prerogatives, most recently in Kentucky and Alabama.

As Congress considers reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 2017, ACTA's decades-long expertise on the topic of accreditation reform will be more important than ever.

“[ACTA’s] resources are very informative for my staff as we work to solve issues in higher education. I have instructed my staff to review the analysis . . . and I commend the hard work of ACTA.”

—The Honorable Larry Hogan, Governor, State of Maryland



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Championing Historical Literacy

ACTA sounded the alarm: Civic illiteracy is sweeping America's colleges and universities. In 2016, we released two blockbuster reports and a survey—***A Crisis in Civic Education, No U.S. History? How College History Departments Leave the United States out of the Major***, and the **Electoral & Economic Literacy Survey**—showing just how widespread a problem this is.

Our findings in *A Crisis in Civic Education* went viral: When surveyed, nearly 10% of college graduates thought that Judith Sheindlin—TV's Judge Judy—sits on the Supreme Court! Outlets such as *TIME*, *Forbes*, *CNN Politics*, *The Today Show*, and even *US Weekly* called attention to this troubling statistic. Judge Judy herself shared the finding on Facebook, while Chief Justice John Roberts cited it in a C-SPAN broadcast.

And the discoveries of *No U.S. History?* were so incredible that the fact-checking website PolitiFact researched the issue independently and confirmed our findings. **Less than one-third of top-ranked colleges and universities require even their history majors to take a course in U.S. history.** And many schools that list a requirement allow “microhistories,”

such as “History of Sexualities,” to substitute for meaningful, broad-based study of U.S. history.

Just days before Americans cast their ballots, civic ignorance was clearly in evidence: ACTA’s Electoral & Economic Literacy survey found that when recent college graduates, aged 18–34, were given a set of multiple choice questions, 34% could not identify when Election Day is held, 25% could not identify Tim Kaine as a candidate for vice president of the United States, and fully 50% could not name Franklin Roosevelt as the last president to win more than two elections to the presidency.

ACTA’s work on this issue is capturing the public’s attention and, appropriately, raising concern. Our findings on historical and civic ignorance have been covered by the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Fortune*, the *Houston Chronicle*, and many other news outlets. Most recently, our findings on civic education were featured in *The Atlantic*, in the lengthy article “Ignorance Does Not Lead to Election Bliss,” written by Columbia

POLITIFACT confirmed our findings on civic literacy and major news outlets reported on them.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By: Melissa Korn | June 29, 2016
Few Top Schools Require History Majors to Broadly Study U.S.’s Past
Group says niche classes, like “Baseball in U.S. History,” don’t cut it

Forbes

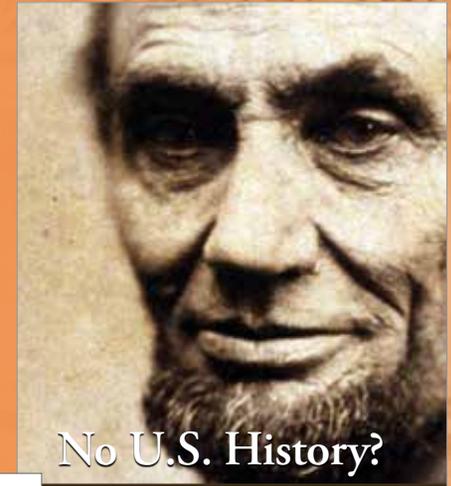
By: DAVID DAVENPORT | January 29, 2016
Hamilton Is a Hit On Broadway, But Not In The Classroom

The Atlantic

By: JONATHAN R. COLE | November 8, 2016
Ignorance Does Not Lead to Election Bliss

The Washington Post

By: NICK ANDERSON | June 7, 2016
A history degree without studying U.S. history? It’s possible at Harvard, Yale and Stanford



How College History Departments Leave the United States out of the Major



ELECTORAL & ECONOMIC LITERACY SURVEY



34% of recent college graduates, aged 18–34, could not identify when Election Day is held.



25% could not identify Tim Kaine as a candidate for vice president of the United States.



50% could not name Franklin Roosevelt as the last president to win more than two presidential elections.



ACTA hosted students from one Oasis of Excellence, the Alexander Hamilton Institute, led by charter fellow Robert Paquette, for a presentation on civic engagement. Our Oases of Excellence directory now includes **60 programs**.

University professor and former provost Jonathan R. Cole.

Supporting Oases of Excellence

Fortunately, there is now light shining through the darkness of civic illiteracy. Our directory of **Oases of Excellence** now includes 60 programs, each committed to educating students for informed citizenship in a free society. The Oases emphasize vital but too often overlooked areas of study, including American history, Western Civilization, economics, the Great Books, and more.

ACTA connects and supports these initiatives. Our monthly Oases newsletter highlights upcoming events and opportunities, such as the McConnell Center's spring lecture series, "Promises and Perils of the American Presidency." And ACTA regularly features the Oases of Excellence on social media, in the *Inside Academe* newsletter, and on the Higher Ed Now podcast.

In the summer, ACTA welcomed students from one Oasis—the Alexander Hamilton Institute for the Study of Western Civilization—to our

offices, where we cohosted a presentation for its Washington Program on National Security. ACTA President Michael Poliakoff underscored the importance of civic engagement, in a talk entitled "Students, Citizens, and Leaders: Our Nation's Future."

Sparking Curricular Improvements

What Will They Learn?TM is more important and effective than ever. Now entering its ninth edition, it is the only college rating system centered exclusively on academic substance. Poring through the same materials that students and their families do, ACTA's team reviews and rates the curricula of over 1,100 schools each year.

In all, only 25 schools currently earn an "A" for requiring at least six of the seven core subjects: Composition, Literature, Intermediate-level Foreign Language, U.S. History or Government, Economics, Mathematics, and Natural Science. But colleges and universities are taking notice.

In December, we sent trustees their respective 2016-17 grades and comparisons to peer schools. Already, over 100 trustees, whose

schools represent collectively more than 500,000 students, have reached out, seeking more information.

ACTA is steadily succeeding in our effort to revitalize undergraduate general education. In 2016, we added two new “A” schools, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and Saint Katherine College. Saint Katherine opened in 2011 and turned to ACTA when it was

designing its core curriculum for advice on how to ensure a robust liberal arts education for all its students.

We received a host of follow-up inquiries, a few angry at their low ratings, but most interested in doing better. More than two dozen colleges and universities reached out to us in 2016 for guidance regarding curricular reforms. And following their

consultations with ACTA, several schools have already implemented curriculum-strengthening reforms.

One private college in the Southeast added requirements in mathematics and composition, raising its grade from an “F” to a “C.” A public university in the Midwest added a mathematics requirement, to raise its rating to a high “B.” And another private university



By: Christy Osler | October 22, 2016
Report: Most liberal arts requirements are average or below average

“A report released by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni found that **two-thirds of the 1,100 colleges surveyed** earned a ‘C’ grade or lower for their general education requirements.”



63% of employers say too many recent college graduates are not prepared to participate successfully in today's economy.
—USA Today

what will they learn.com

Find out what the college rankings don't tell you.

Visit this free college-guide website to find out which universities make sure their students learn what they need to know.

Prospective college students and their parents are increasingly looking for institutions that provide real academic value in return for the dollars received. Since WhatWillTheyLearn.com was launched, students and parents—more than 400,000 of them—have thronged to our website to see for themselves what different institutions require.

In What Will They Learn?™ our premise is simple: The core purpose of attending college is learning, and we examine what institutions actually require students to study.

What have we found? That hundreds of colleges and universities, public and private, famous and not-so-famous, require very little of their students.

In this age of globalization, a staggering 87.3% do not require intermediate-level foreign language of their students. A full 81.9% do not require a basic course

in American history or government. At 40.6% of the institutions we examined, students can graduate without taking a college-level mathematics course, and at 38.3%, students can leave without that most essential career preparation—a basic course in English composition.

Students pay a price when their institutions fail to set meaningful academic standards. Recently, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) surveyed its member nations to determine the levels of quantitative and verbal literacy that adults demonstrate. While America spends substantially more per student on higher education than any other OECD nation, we are far from the top when it comes to performance. The literacy level of recent four-year college graduates is below the average of our international peers.

The original idea of a liberal arts education was one that would equip students with the knowledge needed by a free citizen. Centuries later, the importance of a broad-based general education has never been greater.

See what people are saying about whatwilltheylearn.com.

ACTA
American Council of Trustees and Alumni

1710 M Street NW, Suite 602 | Washington, DC 20036
P 202-462-0787 | 888-ALL-AM-8 | F 202-462-0784
whatwilltheylearn.com

ACTA's eighth edition of **What Will They Learn?™**, the only college rating system centered exclusively on academic substance, reached nearly **21,000** trustees nationwide. And trustees representing over **500,000** students responded.

ACTA took What Will They Learn?™ to those who would benefit the most: prospective students and parents. We reached out to over **5,000** guidance counselors across the country, and many requested copies of the report. We are in the process of reaching over **36,000** guidance counselors nationwide.



Fund For Academic Renewal

Intelligent College Giving

in the Southeast just created an endowed chair in U.S. history, and the new senior professor will design a course on the American founding that will be required for all students!

Even schools that fall short of an “A” take pride in doing better than their peers. Misericordia University touted its “B” grade, proud that it achieved the highest grade among schools in northeastern Pennsylvania. Higher education leaders are paying attention.

Engaging Students and Families

ACTA is taking What Will They Learn?[™] to those who would benefit from it most: prospective college students and their parents. In August, we conducted a successful pilot program reaching out to these audiences. We surveyed a sample of high school guidance counselors to promote academic excellence in the search process of prospective students (and parents). Nearly 150 guidance counselors requested copies of the *What Will They Learn?* report, and many expressed interest in learning more.

ACTA’s policy team will now bring its expertise to over 36,000 high school guidance

counselors nationwide, making a strong core curriculum a key factor in the process of finding the right college to attend.

Expanding the Fund for Academic Renewal

In December, ACTA announced a major expansion of the Fund for Academic Renewal (FAR). FAR is the indispensable program for college donors interested in making meaningful gifts focused on addressing the most urgent weaknesses of higher education today: civic illiteracy, deficient core curricula, and the decline of traditional fields of study such as Western Civilization.

Already, FAR’s importance has been recognized by the press. *Inside Philanthropy* highlighted how we will help donors get “the most bang for their buck.”

FAR works with donors at every step of the philanthropic process to create well-crafted gift agreements that protect donor intent and maximize impact. We have developed pathways for donors at all financial levels to make targeted higher education gifts. Through

FAR, donors can direct or pool gifts to specific schools; to programs and initiatives in vital topics such as U.S. history, economic literacy, and the Western tradition; or to a general account that is broadly devoted to promoting academic excellence and academic freedom.

Additionally, FAR identifies outstanding faculty to spearhead programming made possible by donors, and we assist in the monitoring of gift implementation and success. Thanks to a generous grant from the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation, we offer these services free of charge to donors.

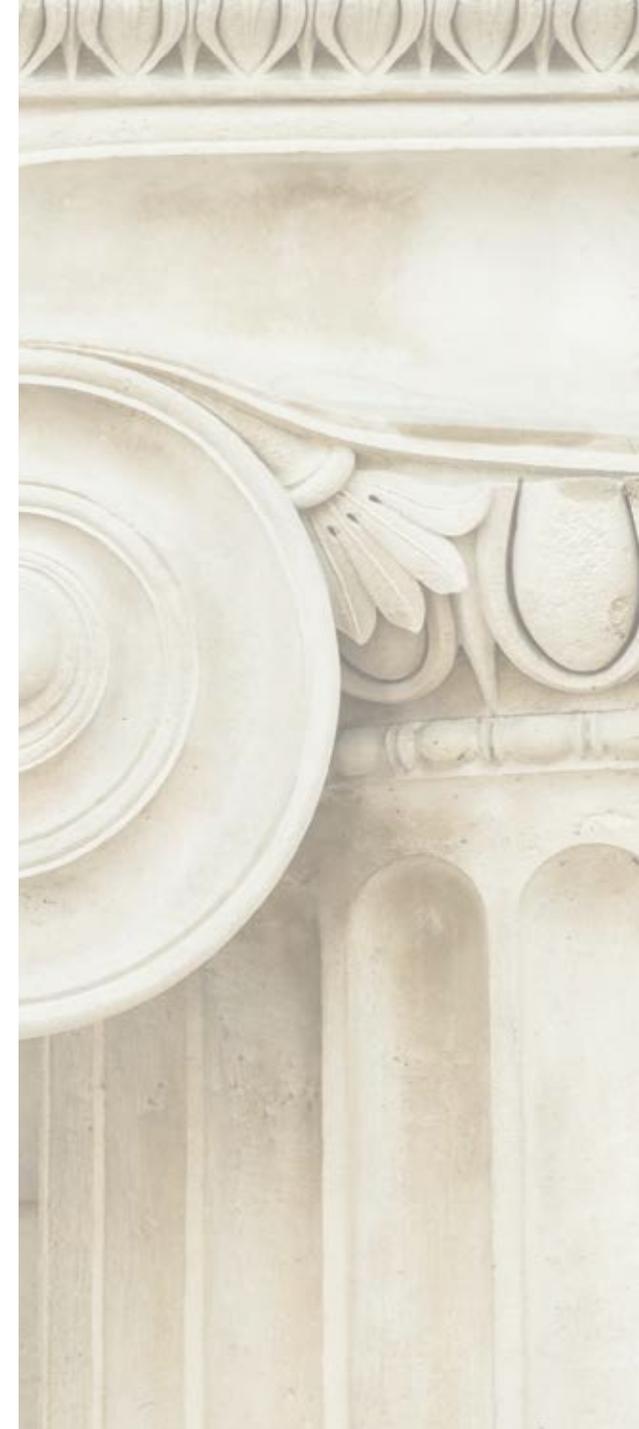
FAR's newly unveiled leadership team has deep experience and expertise in higher education

and philanthropy. We were pleased to appoint Dr. Jacqueline Pfeffer Merrill, formerly ACTA's vice president of development, as executive director. Under her direction, along with the guidance of our distinguished Donor Advisory Board and FAR's legal advisor, leading law firm Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP, the Fund for Academic Renewal is poised to have a major impact in the years to come.

To learn more about FAR or to begin a conversation about planning your next gift to a college or university, call 202/467-6787, visit **AcademicRenewal.org**, or email info@AcademicRenewal.org.

“During my years as a university president and philanthropic leader, I found that the Fund for Academic Renewal was a resource for sound advice and creative ideas to ensure that undergraduates receive a high-quality education that prepares them for career and citizenship. This is a vital initiative for donors who wish to find new ways to support a renewal of academic life in this country.”

—The Honorable Hank Brown, former U.S. Senator, Colorado; President Emeritus, University of Colorado; former President and CEO, Daniels Fund



CALLING colleges and universities TO ACCOUNT: Protect

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Promoting the Chicago Principles

ACTA's position is clear: "The American system of higher education is premised on the right of faculty and students to explore ideas, wherever the evidence may lead. Intellectual freedom is vital to the life of the mind."

That's why ACTA energetically promoted the Chicago Principles in 2016. We urged all colleges and universities to follow the example set by the University of Chicago through its adoption of the landmark Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression. And we joined the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and other outlets in praising the University of Chicago's dean of undergraduate students for his letter to incoming students. Dean John Ellison explained to the Class of 2020:

Our commitment to academic freedom means that we do not support so-called "trigger warnings," we do not cancel invited speakers because their topics might prove controversial, and we do not condone the creation of intellectual "safe spaces" where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own.

Twice, ACTA wrote to our entire network of college and university trustees, urging them to take up the Chicago Principles at their own institutions. "It is important," we reminded them, "for trustees nationwide to recognize that the University of Chicago's letter is the product of a culture enabled by board policy that explicitly recognizes the value of the free exchange of ideas."

At least 17 schools have heeded that call, adopting the Chicago Principles or a similar statement as their own, and trustees at other institutions have expressed interest in doing the same.

Colleges and universities nationwide are paying attention. Some schools, while not yet adopting the Chicago Principles, have enhanced their protection of free speech. With ACTA's encouragement, Syracuse University recently revised its policies on speech and expression, and Chancellor Kent Syverud has asked the University Senate to consider additional reforms, after a professor at Syracuse disinvited an Israeli filmmaker for fear of making matters



ACTA President Michael Poliakoff took to *Opinion Journal* to commend the University of Chicago's leadership on free speech:

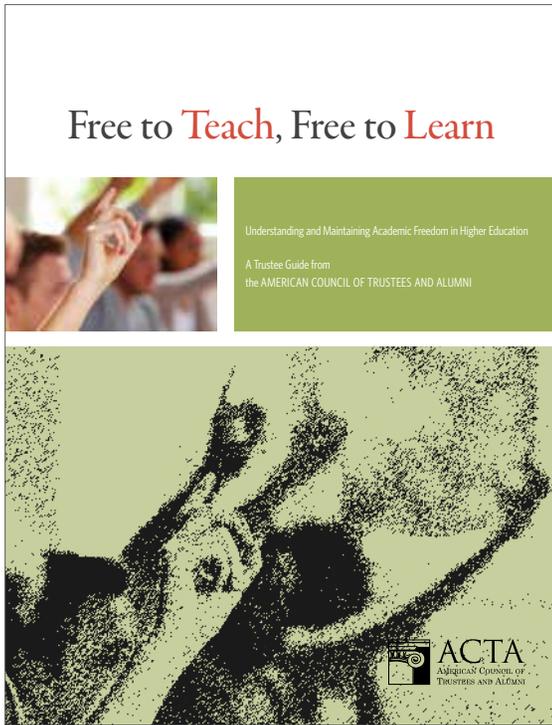
"I only hope that boards all across the nation are paying attention, to create on their campuses spaces where education is paramount."



SCHOOLS THAT HAVE ADOPTED CHICAGO PRINCIPLES OR SIMILAR MODELS TO PROTECT FREE SPEECH

American University
Chapman University
City University of New York
Columbia University
Eckerd College
Franklin & Marshall College
Johns Hopkins University
Louisiana State University
Princeton University

Purdue University
University of Minnesota
University of Southern Indiana
University of Virginia College-Wise
University of Wisconsin System
Vanderbilt University
Washington University in St. Louis
Winston-Salem State University



ACTA’s seminal guide for trustees on academic freedom features key documents that shaped the modern concept of academic freedom, coupled with commentary from a wide and bipartisan roster of distinguished educators, attorneys, and policymakers.

“unpleasant” with her colleagues. Step by step, ACTA’s dogged efforts are helping our nation’s schools safeguard academic freedom.

Indeed, in 2016, we answered requests from dozens of trustees at schools of every size and type for copies of our definitive guide on this subject, ***Free to Teach, Free to Learn: Understanding and Maintaining Academic Freedom in Higher Education***. Writing back, these trustees have declared our work “well-researched and written” and “quite helpful.”

Taking on Disinvitations and Disruptions

ACTA unstintingly has called to task schools that subvert academic freedom by disinviting speakers or condoning the disruption of their events. In 2016, we sent targeted letters to the boards of trustees of over a dozen schools, to inform them about troubling incidents on their campuses and to urge them to formulate and enforce clear institutional policies upholding free expression.

We wrote to the trustees of DePaul University after DePaul’s administration banned two previously invited speakers. We asked the board of Williams College to review its policies when the president disinvited a speaker from the ironically named “Uncomfortable Learning” series. We called for the University of Kansas’s trustees to investigate the suspension and termination of a professor for introducing controversial ideas in class.

And when university leaders stood up for free expression, we wrote to their boards to offer praise and suggest next steps. ACTA congratulated the University of Texas–Austin for rejecting efforts to prosecute a professor for hosting an Israeli speaker and refusing to allow interference with the event. We urged them instead to enforce policies prohibiting disruption of speech, and we commended the University of Minnesota’s Faculty Consultative Committee for drafting an eloquent statement of principles of academic freedom.

We are pleased to report that our message is changing behavior.

In January, ACTA called attention to the fact that Professor Melissa Click, who had infamously sought “muscle” in her effort to eject a student journalist from a public space, was under consideration for tenure and that her behavior in this episode was deeply relevant to her review. The next month, the University of Missouri Board of Curators fired Professor Click, after the Mizzou faculty

failed to take action themselves. The board’s decision put colleges and universities on notice nationwide: Boards of trustees have a responsibility to rise to the defense of free expression.

A core value of American higher education is at stake. Even the White House has weighed in. Speaking last year at Howard University’s

spring commencement, President Barack Obama implored students always to engage offending speakers on the “battlefield of ideas,” rather than disinviting or shouting them down—“no matter how ridiculous or offensive” they may seem. ACTA agrees and continues to defend the free exchange of ideas in American higher education.



ACTA brought together distinguished scholars and thought leaders at its 2016 ATHENA Roundtable conference to discuss academic freedom and free speech on campus (see pg. 22-24).

Jonathan Haidt, Thomas Cooley Professor of Ethical Leadership at the NYU Stern School of Business, cofounded the Heterodox Academy and spoke at ACTA’s colloquy on academic freedom entitled “Free to Teach, Free to Learn.”

The Heterodox Academy is rooted in one core principle: “That university life requires that people with diverse viewpoints and perspectives encounter each other in an environment where they feel free to speak up and challenge each other.”



Princeton professor Robert P. George joined ACTA's Higher Ed Now podcast series to discuss the deterioration of discourse and intellectual engagement on college campuses. Downloads of Higher Ed Now presentations exceeded **1,200** in 2016.

Broadcasting from the Front Lines

We continue to expand the reach of our **Higher Ed Now** podcast. Higher Ed Now is now a fortnightly production, and it has featured some of the most distinguished voices in higher education. The podcast brings together higher education experts to tackle the key issues of the field, with academic freedom and free expression at the top of the list. Recent podcasts include "The Antidote to Illiberalism," and "The State of Free Speech on Campus."

We were in particular delighted to welcome Robert P. George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence of Princeton University, and Greg Lukianoff, president and CEO of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education. Drawing from their experiences on the front lines of higher education, both Professor George and Mr. Lukianoff discussed the creeping illiberalism of campuses today, its effect on free expression and civil discourse, and the remedies we need. ACTA looks forward to continuing this wide outreach to the public, building awareness of urgent issues in higher education.

Hosting Models of Debate and Dialogue

Too many colleges continue to condone infringements upon intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas. Through the Oases of Excellence initiative, ACTA recognizes and supports exceptional campus centers and programs that challenge this tide.

Many incorporate explicitly the building of intellectual diversity and dialogue into their missions. The charter of one Oasis, the Alexander Hamilton Institute (AHI), explains its purpose this way: "The AHI aspires to create an educational environment of the highest standards in which evidence and argument prevail over ideology and cant."

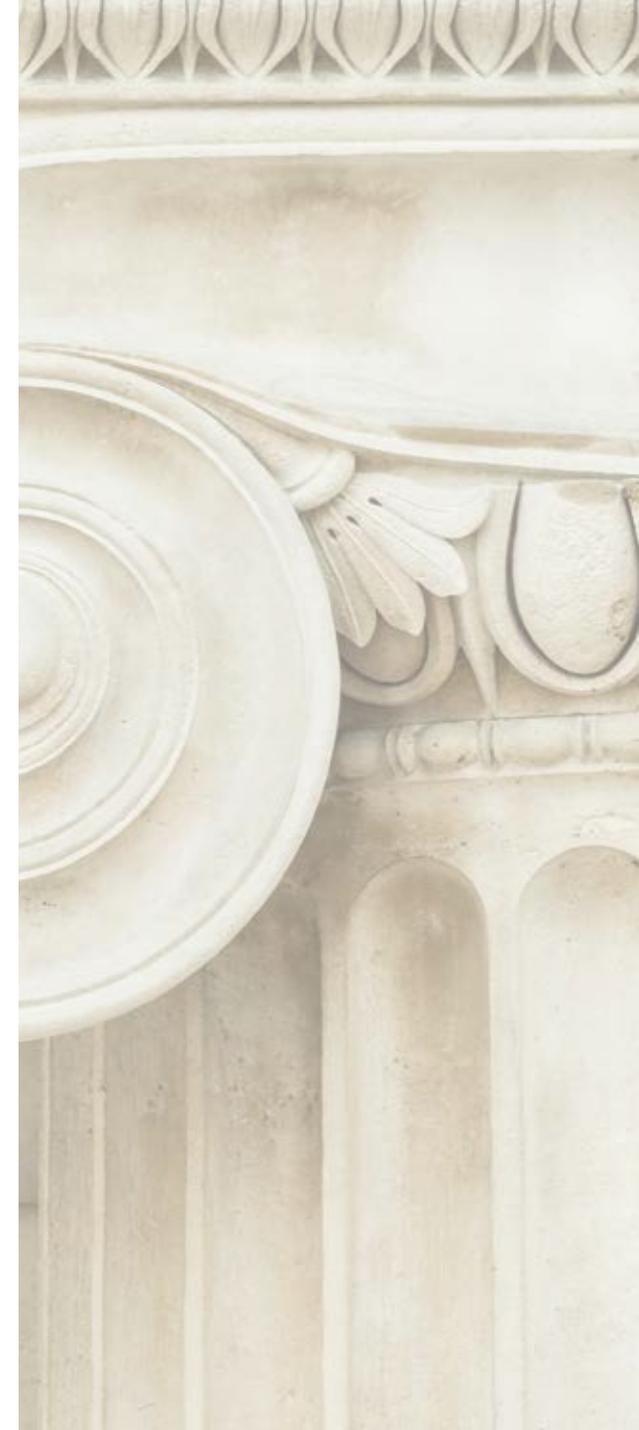
Among the newest additions to the Oases of Excellence directory is St. Olaf College's Institute for Freedom and Community, added in August. The institute aims to "challenge presuppositions, question easy answers, and foster constructive dialogue" in order to cultivate "free inquiry and spirited expression."

This year, we also invited courageous student leaders from three outstanding programs—the William F. Buckley, Jr. Program at Yale, AHI, and the Princeton Open Campus Coalition—to our ATHENA Roundtable conference. At the Merrill Award presentation, we recognized them for their willingness to stand up in

defense of free expression. And Solveig Gold, a Princeton senior and co-founder of the Open Campus Coalition, was one of the panelists at the conference, where she participated in a colloquy on academic freedom, available to the public on our website.

“So much of the academy is occupied with ideology. Propaganda is replacing scholarship. Indoctrination is replacing teaching, and it seems to be getting worse rather than better. But we have to fight against it with all our might. . . . We need to restore liberal arts learning ideals, and that’s why I’m so pleased that ACTA exists and is doing such heroic work to fight for those ideals.”

—**Robert P. George**, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence, Princeton University



SPREADING THE WORD

Making Headlines

When the subject turns to higher education, the media turn to ACTA.

In 2016, ACTA's appearances in the media generated **1.9 billion** impressions. We were covered in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *USA Today*, *POLITICO*, *Fortune*, and many other publications. We were also featured in television and radio programs, including *Fox News*, *WGBH*, and *NPR*. ACTA President Michael Poliakoff made several appearances on the *Wall Street Journal's* show, *Opinion Journal*.

In April, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* highlighted ACTA's impact in a cover story titled "A Higher-Ed Needler Finds Its Moment." The article profiled then-President and now-Senior Fellow Anne Neal's leadership. It recounted some of our successes in encouraging trustees to take a more engaged role in shaping the direction of their colleges. University of Texas regent and longtime ACTA friend Wallace Hall explained to the *Chronicle*: "ACTA is a singular oddity in the world of higher ed in that they focus on the issues that matter."

We also continued to expand our social media presence. ACTA's Facebook page reached more than 185,000 people in 2016. Our website was visited over 50,000 times. And our Twitter feed created more than 127,000 impressions over the course of the year.

Respected and influential voices are responding to ACTA's message: Our work has been cited by some of the foremost leaders on the public stage, including Pulitzer Prize-winning syndicated columnist George Will, Texas Supreme Court Justice Don Willett, and even Chief Justice John Roberts!

Reaching the Higher Ed Community

Trustees. Our trustee network includes fiduciaries at almost every four-year institution in the United States that offers a liberal arts degree. It has grown in size to include more than 22,000 trustees at nearly 1,300 institutions.

Alumni. Our quarterly newsletter *Inside Academe* reaches more than 13,000 alumni from a range of higher education institutions. And over 3,000 alumni receive our monthly eNewsletters as

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

A Higher-Ed Needler Finds Its Moment

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni, still a polarizing force, has achieved growing relevance in core debates

By Jack Strippling

APRIL 10, 2016



"Shared governance is not an excuse for inaction," argues Anne Neal, who for two decades at the American Council of Trustees and Alumni has insisted that deep-pocketed trustees are not just "ATM machines" and must take a far greater role in setting policy for their colleges. She is about to step down as the group's president.

In April, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* highlighted ACTA's impact in a cover story titled "A Higher-Ed Needler Finds Its Moment," which reported on how ACTA has achieved growing relevance in core debates.

2016 MEDIA BY THE NUMBERS: ACTA appeared . . .

» **166** times in print media
» **836** times in online news media
» **81** times in broadcast media

» ACTA media appearances generated **1.9 billion** impressions.

» Our Facebook page reached **185,000+**, our website was visited **50,000+** times, and our Twitter feed created **127,000+** impressions.



At the 2016 ATHENA Roundtable conference, Princeton Open Campus Coalition co-founder Solveig Gold explained: The right to free speech is not abstract. It “protects a concrete intellectual good—the accumulation of knowledge in pursuit of truth.”

well as email updates announcing new projects, exciting events, and major accomplishments.

Governors and State Policymakers. ACTA regularly reaches out to all 50 governors and their education policy staffs, as well as to many state policymakers and legislators.

ACTA “On the Road”

Highlights from 2016 include:

- Michael Poliakoff testifies before Alaska’s House Education Committee on the importance of civic education.
- Anne Neal presents “A Student’s Guide to Working with Trustees to Protect Academic Freedom” at the International Students for Liberty Conference.
- Michael Poliakoff presents to Dr. James Applegate, the executive director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, on strategies that raise academic standards and reduce costs.
- Anne Neal discusses accreditation reform with government relations officers of the Association of American Universities.
- Michael Poliakoff and Eric Bledsoe discuss “Students, Citizens, and Leaders: The Nation’s

Future” with students from the Alexander Hamilton Institute’s Washington Program on National Security.

- Kara Brounstein, ACTA’s program officer for trustee affairs, meets with senior administrators, including President Mitch Daniels, at Purdue University.
- Michael Poliakoff presents “Looking at American Higher Education” at the City Commons Club of Berkeley.
- Armand Alacbay presents to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at its 2016 LEAD Conference, “Educating for Eternity.”
- Eric Bledsoe represents ACTA at the 2016 Jefferson Symposium on Free Speech on Campus.
- Anne Neal serves on and attends meetings of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity.

ATHENA Roundtable

What is the current state of academic freedom and civic knowledge in higher education? Where did campuses go wrong? And how can they correct course? ACTA brought

from the ATHENA ROUNDTABLE and MERRILL AWARD GALA



Eva Brann



KC Johnson



Gail Heriot and Ruth Wisse



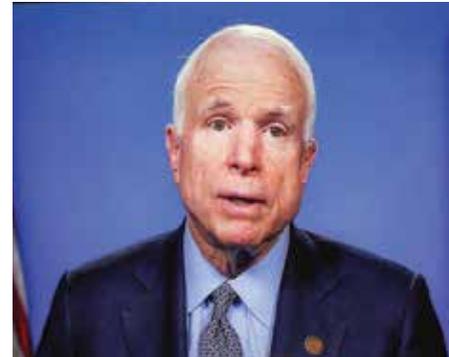
Wilfred McClay



Ayaan Hirsi Ali (by video)



Niall Ferguson



Senator John McCain (by video)



Christina Hoff Sommers



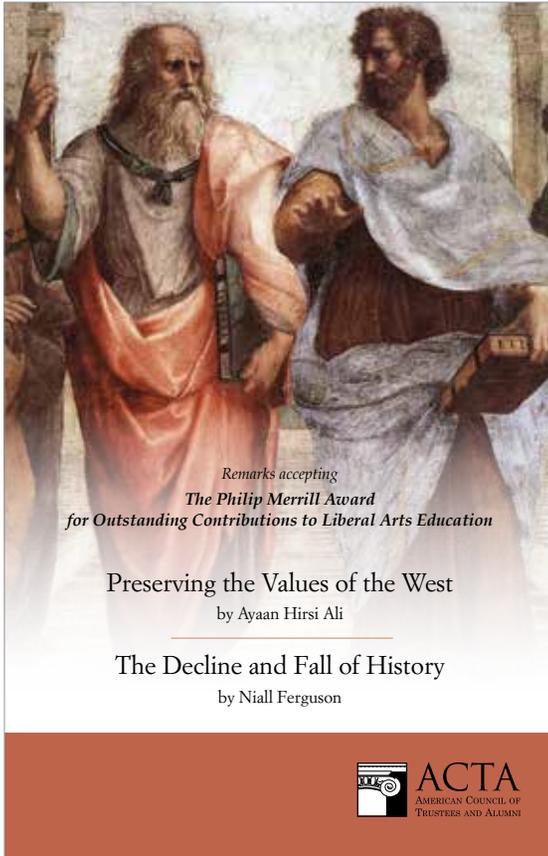
Robert Zoellick



Louise Mirrer



Abby Moffat



ACTA shared the Merrill Award acceptance speeches given by Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Niall Ferguson with over **22,000** trustees. To date, Professor Ferguson's remarks have been viewed nearly **17,000** times online on [youtube.com/goacta](https://www.youtube.com/goacta).

together over 130 expert trustees, scholars, policymakers, and alumni leaders to tackle these topics at the 2016 ATHENA Roundtable, held at the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The Roundtable began with the "Educating for Citizenship" panel, featuring KC Johnson, professor of history at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York; Eva Brann, longtime tutor and former dean of St. John's College; and Wilfred McClay, G.T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty at the University of Oklahoma.

The Roundtable then presented a colloquy, "Free to Teach, Free to Learn." We heard from Jonathan Haidt, Thomas Cooley Professor of Ethical Leadership at the NYU Stern School of Business and co-founder of the Heterodox Academy; Ruth Wisse, Martin Peretz Professor of Yiddish Literature and Comparative Literature Emerita at Harvard University; Gail Heriot, professor of law at the University of San Diego School of Law and member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission; and Solveig Gold, co-founder of Princeton's Open Campus Coalition.

The discussions at ATHENA were lively and thought-provoking, culminating in the best of ACTA traditions, a spirited question-and-answer period. ATHENA participants continue to embrace and engage the most challenging questions about higher education.

2016 Philip Merrill Award

For the first time, ACTA presented the Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education to a married couple, Niall Ferguson and Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

Dr. Ferguson is a senior fellow of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and a senior fellow of the Center for European Studies at Harvard University. He was previously the Tisch Professor of History at Harvard. He is also the award-winning author of more than a dozen books, including *Civilization: The West and the Rest*, where he presciently warned: "The biggest threat to Western Civilization is posed not by other civilizations, but by our own pusillanimity—and by the historical ignorance that feeds it."

Ayaan Hirsi Ali is a fellow of the Future of Democracy Project at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and former member of the Dutch Parliament. Drawing from the experience of her own daring escape from repression, she has steadfastly fought for the rights of Muslim women—through her short film, *Submission*, her books, and the AHA Foundation she launched—even in the face of fatwas calling for her death. Her story and her activism offer an urgent reminder of Western Civilization and what it means to live without it.

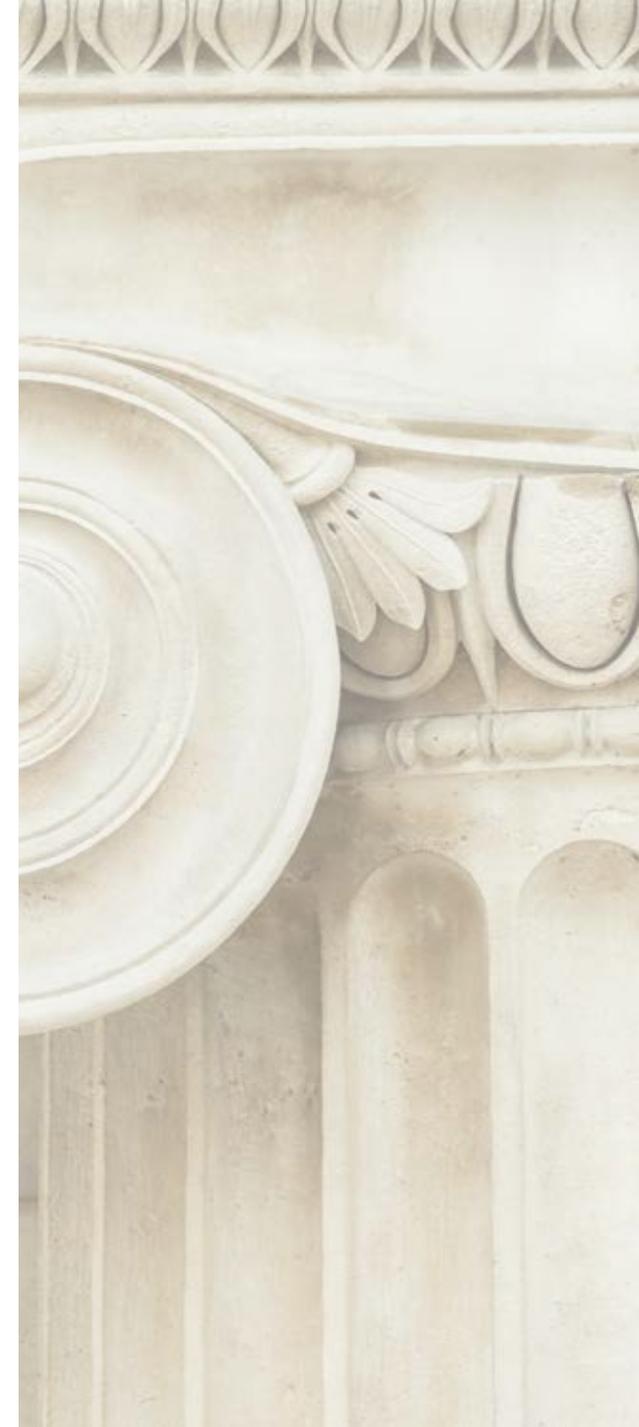
Several of the pair's friends and colleagues joined ACTA at the Folger Shakespeare Library to pay tribute to their innumerable

accomplishments. American Enterprise Institute Resident Scholar Christina Hoff Sommers, former World Bank President Robert Zoellick, and New-York Historical Society President and CEO Louise Mirrer spoke in person, while U.S. Senator John McCain appeared by video.

Now in its 12th year, the Merrill Award honors those who advance the teaching of a robust liberal arts education. Particularly in its core components of Western Civilization and academic freedom, this cause has no stronger advocates than Dr. Ferguson and Ms. Hirsi Ali. ACTA offers them a hearty thank you and congratulations for their efforts.

“What a tribute to you—an audience that was so very appreciative of what you have accomplished. . . . With every passing day your work becomes more important.”

—Abigail Thernstrom, Adjunct Scholar, American Enterprise Institute
(referring to the Merrill Award Gala)



ABOUT US

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Lauri Kempson
Senior Vice President

Kenneth Kolson, Ph.D.
Vice President of Policy & Programs

Jacqueline Pfeffer Merrill, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Fund for Academic Renewal

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Vice President of Trustee & Legislative Affairs

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Christine Ravold
Communications Officer & Digital Media Producer

Alexis Zhang
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Danielle Jack
Program Associate for Trustee Affairs

Dominique Ornelas
Program Associate for Development

Scholar-in-Residence

Elizabeth D. "Betty" Capaldi Phillips
Provost Emerita, University Professor, and Professor of Psychology, Arizona State University

Senior Fellow, Anne D. Neal

ACTA congratulates Anne Neal, who now serves as our senior fellow. A cofounder of ACTA, Ms. Neal served as our president from 2003 to 2016. Under her distinguished



ACTA's new staff members in 2016: Nicholas Barden, Danielle Jack, Dominique Ornelas, Ted Eismeier, Alexis Zhang, Kenneth Kolson, and Sherrill Berk (not shown).

ACTA's co-founder and former president now serves as a senior fellow for ACTA and as a member of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity.





As part of the summer speaker series, ACTA interns discussed the fight to protect freedom of expression on campuses with Greg Lukianoff, president and CEO of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education.

leadership, ACTA grew into an indisputable leader in the higher education reform movement. She spearheaded seminal initiatives such as the Project on Governance for a New Era and What Will They Learn?™, for which ACTA received the 2015 Salvatori Prize for American Citizenship. She continues to serve as a member of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity, and she has testified before the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and the U.S. House and Senate education committees on the imperative of reforming America's broken accreditation system.

Fellows and Interns

ACTA's internship program offers a unique educational experience to talented college students and recent graduates. Our spring and summer interns perform critical research on the What Will They Learn?™ project as well as other key research, outreach, and writing tasks. They also experience the joys of vigorous dialogue through our summer speaker series, which invites eminent scholars to lead discussions with our interns

on important topics in higher education. This year's interns met with Greg Lukianoff, president and CEO of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, and Jerry Malitz, former chief information technology officer of the Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences.

Donors and Donor Societies

ACTA maintains its independence because we receive no money from the government; the generous support of our hundreds of donors sustains our ability to keep up the fight for higher education reform. Together, these supporters contributed a remarkable \$3.5 million in 2016. We are especially grateful for the support of our 110 new donors and the many new members of our President's Society, which grew by 20% in 2016.

Meeting Education and Civic Leaders

ACTA's donor society members are invited to exclusive events where they meet important scholars and education reform leaders in an intimate setting. We appreciate these

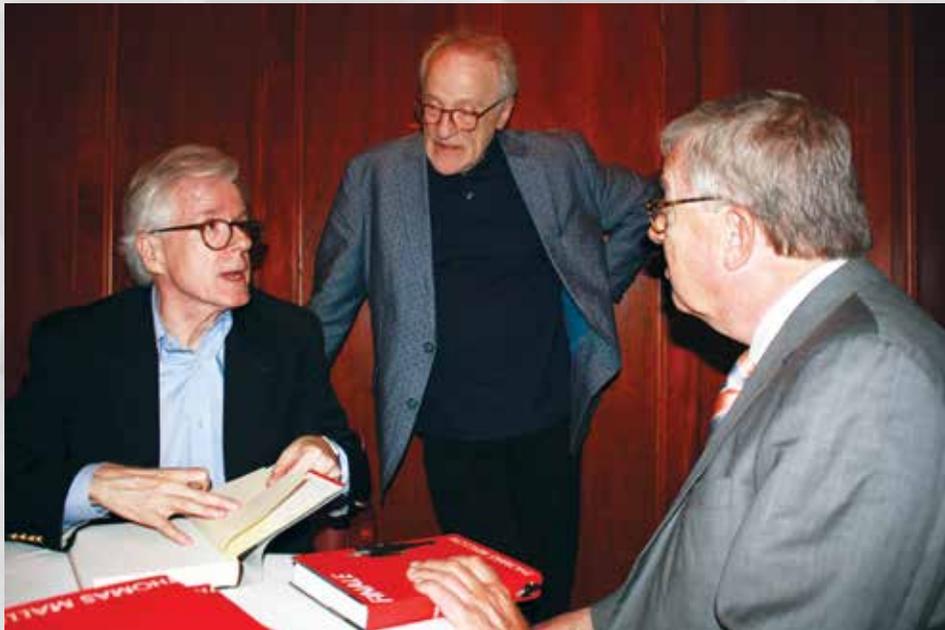
opportunities to get to know our donor society members better and hear their concerns about American higher education. Dinners and gatherings are but a small way to acknowledge those who have done so much not only for ACTA but also for American higher education.

In 2016, ACTA hosted events from coast to coast. We made appearances in Washington, DC; Berkeley, CA; and New York, NY. These gatherings featured some of the foremost

thinkers and innovators of higher education, including Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Daniel de Visé, *National Review* senior editor Richard Brookhiser, and George Washington University professor and acclaimed author Thomas Mallon, who spoke about his novel *Finale: A Novel of the Reagan Years* and about the state of American higher education. Our New York supporters also had the opportunity to tour William Meyers's impressive photography exhibit, "Civics,"

which examines the ways that we, as individual citizens, involve ourselves in civic processes, understand the symbols of a free society, and participate in the ceremonies that define American democracy.

If you would like to learn more about joining one of ACTA's donor societies, please give us a call.



George Washington University professor and acclaimed novelist, essayist, and critic Thomas Mallon is just one of the prominent higher education leaders our donors were able to meet and converse with in 2016. Mallon's books include *Henry and Clara*, *Watergate: A Novel*, and *Finale: A Novel of the Reagan Years*.

Thomas Mallon with Bill Bodenschatz and Michael Barone at an ACTA donor salon.

2016 Financial Statements

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as of December 31, 2016

Assets

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$4,468,887
Cash (Restricted):	
<i>Fund for Academic Renewal</i>	1,483,712
<i>Other</i>	60,000
Prepayments & Other Assets	55,752
Property & Equipment (Net)	<u>103,774</u>
Total Assets	<u>6,172,125</u>

Liabilities & Net Assets

Accounts Payable	29,170
Deferred Income	25,000
Deferred Rent	<u>221,837</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>276,007</u>

Unrestricted Net Assets	4,352,406
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	<u>1,543,712</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>5,896,118</u>

Total Liabilities & Net Assets **\$6,172,125**

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES as of December 31, 2016

Revenue & Support

Contributions & Grants (Unrestricted)	\$2,447,607
Grants (Restricted):	
<i>Fund for Academic Renewal</i>	917,994
<i>Other</i>	129,675
Interest & Dividends	40,063
Miscellaneous Income	19,034
Realized/Unrealized Gains	<u>22,011</u>
Total Revenue & Support	<u>3,576,384</u>

Expenses

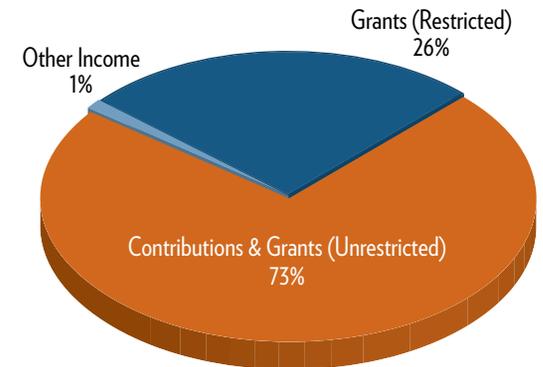
Programs	2,159,463
Fundraising	21,353
Management & General	<u>106,069</u>
Total Expenses	<u>2,286,885</u>

Change in Net Assets **1,289,499**

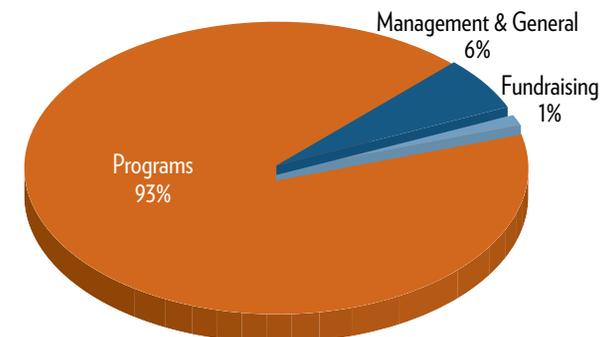
Net Assets, beginning of year **4,606,619**

Net Assets, end of year **\$5,896,118**

2016 OPERATING REVENUE



2016 OPERATING EXPENSES





In Memoriam

The Hon. William L. Armstrong

Earl and Ruth Hyde

Terry Kohler

Edith Kurzweil

Eleanor Merrill

William Craig Rice



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