



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on December 1, 2015

A Resurgence of Intolerance

Storm trooper tactics by bands of college students making ideological demands across the country, and immediate preemptive surrender by college administrators — such as at the University of Missouri recently — bring back memories of the 1960s, for those of us old enough to remember what it was like being there, and seeing first-hand how painful events unfolded.

At Harvard, back in 1969, students seized control of the administration building and began releasing to the media information from confidential personnel files of professors. But, when university president Nathan Pusey called in the police to evict the students, the faculty turned against him, and he resigned.

At least equally disgraceful things happened at Cornell, at Columbia, and on other campuses across the country. But there was one major university that stood up to the campus storm troopers — the University of Chicago.

After student mobs seized control of a campus building, the University of Chicago expelled 42 students and suspended 81 other students. Seizing buildings was not nearly as much fun there, nor were outrageous demands met.

Clearly it was not inevitable that academic institutions would follow the path of least resistance. Most of the leading academic institutions have multiple applications for every place available in the student body. Students who are expelled for campus disruptions can easily be replaced by others on the waiting lists.

Why then do so many colleges and universities not only tolerate storm trooper tactics on campus but surrender immediately to them? That is just one of a number of questions that are hard to answer.

Why do parents pay big money, often at a considerable sacrifice, to send their children to places where small groups of other students can disrupt their education and poison the whole atmosphere with obligatory conformity to political correctness?

Why do donors continue to contribute millions of dollars to institutions that have become indoctrination centers, tearing down America, stifling dissent and turning group against group?

There is no compelling reason for either parents or donors to keep shelling out money to colleges and universities where intolerant professors and student activists impose their ideology on academic institutions. Too often these are campuses with virtually no diversity of viewpoints, despite however much they may be obsessed with demographic diversity.

It is not hard to tell which campuses are strongholds of ideological intolerance, where individual





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students dare not express an opinion different from the opinion of their professors or different from the opinions of student activists. There are sources of information about such places, systematically collected and evaluated.

One outstanding source of such information is a college guide which rates colleges and universities on their ideological intolerance, giving a red light rating to institutions where such abuses are rampant, a green light where there is freedom of speech and a yellow light for places in between.

That college guide is "Choosing the Right College," which is by far the best of the college guides for other reasons as well. It gave the University of Missouri a red light rating, and spelled out its problems, two years before Mizzou made headlines this year as a symbol of academic cowardice and moral bankruptcy.

The University of Chicago gets a green light rating as a place where both conservative and liberal students are allowed free rein. Some engineering schools like M.I.T. get green light ratings because their students are too engrossed in their studies to have much time for politics, though Georgia Tech gets a red light rating.

Other red light ratings go to Duke, Vassar, Vanderbilt, Rutgers, Wesleyan and many others. More important, the reasons are spelled out. There is also another source of information and ratings of colleges and universities on their degree of freedom of speech. This is a watchdog organization called the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE).

If parents and donors start checking out intolerant colleges and universities before deciding where to send their money, the caving in to indoctrinating professors and storm trooper students will no longer be the path of least resistance for academic administrators.

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