



Academic Cesspools

Over the past 10 years, I have written columns variously titled “Academic Cesspools,” “Academic Dishonesty,” “The Shame of Higher Education,” “Academic Rot” and “Indoctrination of Our Youth.” Therefore, I was not surprised by David Feith’s April 5th *Wall Street Journal* article, “The Golf Shot Heard Round the Academic World.” In it, Feith tells of a golf course conversation between Barry Mills, the president of Bowdoin College, in Brunswick, Maine, and philanthropist Thomas Klingenstein. Klingenstein voiced disapproval of campus celebration of diversity and ethnic differences while there’s “not enough celebration of our common American identity.”



Because Klingenstein wouldn’t help finance the college’s diversity craze, Mills insinuated, in remarks to the student body, that Klingenstein is a racist. Mills also told students: “We must be willing to entertain diverse perspectives throughout our community.... Diversity of ideas at all levels of the college is crucial for our credibility and for our educational mission.”

Klingenstein decided to check out Mills’ commitment to diverse perspectives by commissioning the National Association of Scholars to examine Bowdoin’s intellectual diversity, rigorous academics and civic identity. Its report — “What Does Bowdoin Teach?” — isn’t pretty. There are “no curricular requirements that center on the American founding or the history of the nation.” Even history majors aren’t required to take a single course in American history. In the history department, no course is devoted to American political, military, diplomatic or intellectual history; the only ones available are organized around some aspect of race, class, gender or sexuality.

Some of the 37 seminars designated for freshmen are “Affirmative Action and U.S. Society,” “Fictions of Freedom,” “Racism,” “Queer Gardens,” “Sexual Life of Colonialism” and “Modern Western Prostitutes.” As for political diversity, the report estimates that “four or five out of approximately 182 full-time faculty members might be described as politically conservative.” During the 2012 presidential campaign, 100 percent of faculty donations went to President Barack Obama. Despite political bias and mediocrity, in 2012, Bowdoin was ranked sixth among the nation’s liberal arts colleges in *U.S. News & World Report* and was ranked 14th on *Forbes* magazine’s list of America’s top colleges. That ought to tell us how much faith should be put in college rankings.

I applaud Klingenstein for not making a contribution to a college agenda that is so common today. Wealthy donors are generous but tend to be lazy and uninformed in their giving. They give large sums of money that winds up supporting college agendas that are contemptuous of donors’ values, such as enlightened racism, anti-capitalism and Marxism. A rough rule of thumb to discover modern-day racism is to search a college’s website to see whether it has vice presidents or deans of diversity and diversity



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programs. If so, keep your money.

Recent evidence has emerged that some colleges have become bold enough to hire former terrorists to teach and possibly indoctrinate our young people. That's the case with Columbia University in the hiring of convicted Weather Underground terrorist Kathy Boudin, who spent 22 years in prison for the murder of two policemen and a Brink's guard. She now holds a professorship at Columbia's School of Social Work. Her Weather Underground comrade William Ayers is a professor of education on the faculty of the University of Illinois at Chicago. Unrepentant, in the wake of 9/11, Ayers told us: "I don't regret setting bombs. I feel we didn't do enough." Bernardine Dohrn, his wife, is a professor at Northwestern University School of Law. Her stated mission is to overthrow capitalism. Ayers and Dohrn, as well as the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, are people who hate our nation and are longtime associates of President Obama's. That might help in explaining our president's vision.

What we see on college campuses represents a dereliction of duty by boards of trustees, which bear the ultimate responsibility. Wealthy donors who care about the fraud of higher education should recognize that there's nothing like the sound of pocketbooks snapping shut to open the closed minds of college administrators.

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