



Promoting
Academic
Freedom and
Excellence

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ATHENA 2024: The Challenge of a Free Society



Joshua Dunn, Pano Kanelos, Jeffrey Flier, and Diana Schaub discuss educating for freedom.

What is educating for freedom? Over 100 college leaders, trustees, alumni, and ACTA supporters gathered at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, DC, on October 18 to address this urgent question.

Joshua Dunn, executive director of the Institute of American Civics at the University of Tennessee–Knoxville and moderator of our first panel, opened the discussion by offering George Washington's perspective, who said there is no duty more precious than educating young people in the rights, duties, and responsibilities of government, for they are the "future guardians of the liberties of the country." Yet, Dr. Dunn observed, today we see little evidence that colleges and universities are fulfilling this responsibility.

Instead, remarked Harvard University Professor **Jeffrey Flier**, many universities, departments, and programs have replaced

educating for freedom with educating for activism. As the former dean of Harvard Medical School, he has seen political correctness infect even the hard sciences, with students and faculty too fearful to speak out against it.

Panelist **Diana Schaub**, professor emerita of political science at Loyola University Maryland, said that education for freedom is really education for self-government, which must take place at the individual level "through the interaction of human souls." Many students hold themselves aloof from deep learning until their moral qualms are addressed. Professors should present primary texts so students can assess for themselves what the Founders truly believed and then grapple with the historical complexities they faced in achieving those goals. In this process, liberal education and civic education merge

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Addressing Campus Unrest



ACTA will soon publish the excellent remarks delivered by Vanderbilt University Chancellor **Daniel Diermeier** at our recent National Press Club event. See page 3 for more details.

**Arthur Goldberg, Former Director
Jewish Institute for Global Awareness**

“Several groups have successfully pressured colleges and universities ‘to embrace freedom of thought and expression, unseat pernicious ideologies [such as DEI and antisemitism], and put a premium on academic excellence.’ Those include the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, the Alumni Free Speech Alliance, major university benefactors, and even some members of Congress.”

Note: This quote is from an article published in the Daily Signal on July 26, 2024, entitled, “DEI Is Wreaking Havoc on America, But Here Are Some Signs for Hope.”

**Paul Carrese, Professor
School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership
Arizona State University**

“The American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) has been a national leader in documenting the state of civic illiteracy in higher education. ACTA unwaveringly focuses on the basic educational and civic duty that academia mostly has neglected over the past half-century.”

**Lindsey Cormack, Associate Professor of Political Science
Stevens Institute of Technology
Hoboken, New Jersey**

“I wanted to take a moment to thank you for the work you’re doing with the American Council of Trustees and Alumni.

I recently came across an article discussing your efforts to promote civic education, particularly through initiatives like the REACH Act, and I found it inspiring. . . . It’s a great thing to see initiatives aimed at creating deeper understanding of American government and citizenship across the country, and I look forward to following the continued impact of your efforts.”

**Dennis N. Bunker, III
Chair, University of North Carolina–Charlotte Board
of Trustees**

“When considering trustee orientation and education options, we wanted our trustees to engage with deeply substantive content relative not only to the general higher education landscape, but more specifically relative to our institution. That’s when we discovered the board workshops that the American Council of Trustees and Alumni offers. Their work in assisting governing boards with advancing their university’s mission is unparalleled. Their attention to crafting a board workshop based on our needs is exactly what my board needed.”

**Jon D. Levenson, Albert A. List Professor of Jewish Studies
Harvard Divinity School
Member, ACTA Council of Scholars**

“Michael, congrats on another fine piece in this morning’s *WSJ*! I suspect the public is starting to wake up—thanks to people like you.”

Note: Read excerpts from the essay Drs. Michael Poliakoff and Steven McGuire co-authored in the Wall Street Journal on page 9.

ACTA’s Counsel Read into Congressional Record

On September 19, Congress debated H.R. 3724, the “End Woke Higher Education Act.” This legislation, which has since passed in the House, would ensure that accreditors cannot require institutions to express specific partisan or political beliefs in order to receive federal financial aid funding. It would also require all schools to disclose their First Amendment policies to students.

During the debate, **Representative Virginia Foxx** (R-NC) referenced several higher education organizations that submitted support for the bill but read only ACTA’s statement aloud on the floor. We submitted this statement on an earlier version of the legislation back in March. Representative Foxx repeated our message to Congress: “The [legislation] is a step in the right direction toward protecting freedom of speech, association, and religion on college and university campuses across the country. The bill’s introduction is a positive sign that Congress is listening to major public concerns as the battle for the soul of American higher education continues to play out in the form of hegemonic diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, the heckler’s veto, and deplatforming.”

ACTA supports the efforts of lawmakers from across the political spectrum who seek to ensure that American universities uphold the First Amendment and provide an excellent, affordable education. ●



ACTA Program at National Press Club Addresses Campus Unrest

Higher education leaders, alumni, and journalists joined ACTA on October 22 at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, for a special program on leading a university in a time of turmoil. The event featured an address by **Vanderbilt University Chancellor Daniel Diermeier** and a conversation between Chancellor Diermeier and **Stephen Joel Trachtenberg**, president emeritus of George Washington University and a member of ACTA's Board of Directors.

In his remarks, Chancellor Diermeier identified institutional neutrality, as outlined in the University of Chicago's 1967 Kalven Report, as the key solution to pressure from activist groups and calls for divestment. He said that university leaders should speak on behalf of the institution on issues related to the core functioning of the university, such as academic freedom. However, when it comes to political and social issues, "[their] duty is to be silent." Why? To create maximum possible space for students and faculty to explore ideas on their own. Taking a position on a controversial issue, such as conflict in the Middle East or climate policy, signals to the community that the president's opinion is the right one. This undermines the free exchange of ideas because students and faculty become concerned about violating the party line. "The purpose of a university," he said, "is to encourage debate, not settle it."



Vanderbilt University Chancellor Daniel Diermeier

(continued on 5)

ACTA Establishes National Commission to Restore Civic Education

ACTA has launched a National Commission on American History and Civic Education to address the long-standing failure of colleges and universities to require a foundational course in U.S. history and government for all undergraduates. By the time of the 250th anniversary of our nation in 2026, the commission will issue a white paper analyzing the crisis and providing crucial guidance on the essential elements of a U.S. history and government course. ACTA will partner with university leaders and policymakers to encourage implementation of these recommendations.

We recently released the full list of our National Commission members, which includes 22 distinguished historians, political scientists, and education leaders. Several of them will be contributing chapters to an anthology titled, *American History and Government: What Every*

College Student Should Know, which will be jointly edited by Joshua Dunn, executive director of the Institute of American Civics at the University of Tennessee–Knoxville, and ACTA President Michael Poliakoff.

For almost three decades, ACTA has documented the erosion of core requirements in American history and the corresponding decline in civic knowledge among college students. Our latest survey found that majorities of students cannot name term lengths for members of Congress or the chief justice of the Supreme Court. President Poliakoff commented, "It is long past time for our colleges and universities, which, we must not forget, prepare America's school teachers, to do their part in addressing this dangerous deficit."

The National Commission is gaining nationwide attention. Writing in *Law & Liberty*, Paul Carrese, professor in

the School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership at Arizona State University, remarked, "With their new National Commission on American History and Civic Education, bringing together bipartisan and non-partisan experts ranging from eminent scholars of American history and constitutionalism to civic leaders who also have served as educational leaders, ACTA is performing [a great] civic and educational service." 🗳️

For more information about the National Commission on American History and Civic Education, scan the QR code below.





ACTA Issues Urgent Guide for Trustees: *Danger in Divestment*

On August 15, ACTA released *Danger in Divestment: The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Movement: What College Trustees Need to Know*. The new guide is a companion to *An Equal Space for All: A Trustee Guide to Preventing Encampments and Occupations on Campus*, released earlier in the summer. It provides clear recommendations for how to address the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, a group of Palestinian organizations pushing universities across the country to divest from whatever holdings they have in Israel and in companies that do business with Israel.

The guide explains that the best response to demands for divestment—which have been accompanied by anti-Israel protests, illegal occupation of university buildings, and harassment of students and faculty—is to adopt a position of strict institutional neutrality. Such a policy “empowers colleges and universities to pursue their true mission of teaching and research, rather than serving as a largely ineffective and marginal political platform.” While the BDS movement, along with associated matters such as the two-state solution, Zionism, and the history of the Middle East, is an entirely appropriate topic for classroom debates and discussion, it is “not even remotely a topic that should come before the governing board of a college or university.”

As fiduciaries of their institutions, trustees are obligated to ensure that the university invests its funds “subject only to the financial professionals whose duty it is to look after the strength of its portfolio.” Armand Alacbay, ACTA’s chief of staff and senior vice president of strategy, remarked, “Trustees need to be aware of the dire costs of allowing a college or university’s investment decisions to be influenced by political or ideological motives. The sole purpose of an institution’s endowment is to generate financial returns to provide resources that support the institution’s educational mission. Boards must be able to look beyond the narrow interests of any singular community.”

ACTA stands ready to offer our assistance to trustees as they respond to ongoing anti-Israel protests. Only by maintaining neutrality can institutions provide a forum for the free exchange of ideas and safeguard students’ precious opportunity to learn and grow. ●

***Danger in* DIVESTMENT**
The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Movement:
What College Trustees Need to Know

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI
Institute for Effective Governance



Since ACTA launched its institutional neutrality campaign at the beginning of the year, urging schools to adopt the principles of the University of Chicago’s Kalven Report, **21** universities or university systems have adopted a policy or statement of institutional neutrality.

An additional **20** institutions have affirmed or partially adopted the principles of neutrality.

ACTA's College Debates Program Introduces New Workshop



Sadie Webb from ACTA, with Manu Meel and Ross Irwin from BridgeUSA, held an intercollegiate debate at George Washington University, engaging students in a discussion of how the U.S. should approach the Israel-Palestine conflict.

In the months leading up to the 2024 presidential election, college campuses have experienced heightened tensions and anxieties. Students, faculty, and staff are seeking avenues for productive dialogue across diverse perspectives.

Throughout the fall semester, ACTA's **College Debates and Discourse Alliance** (CD&D Alliance) has provided these opportunities, facilitating civil dialogue at colleges and universities nationwide. To date, the CD&D Alliance has engaged over 14,000 students across more than 100 institutions.

On October 24, we partnered with **BridgeUSA** to hold an intercollegiate debate at George Washington University. Over 72 participants from colleges around the area gathered to consider the question,

“Should the U.S. cease aid to Israel?” Students expressed a range of viewpoints on the question, demonstrating that this divisive issue can be discussed civilly, without shout-downs or harassment. One student remarked, “This debate showed that we can discuss difficult topics respectfully and find common ground.”

The CD&D Alliance has also introduced a new form of dialogue programming this semester. The new workshop, A Braver Campus Dialogue (ABCD), was developed in response to students' desire for solution-oriented conversations—an alternative to the traditional debate format that typically frames disagreement in affirmative/negative terms. In this format, the traditional debate proposition cited

above—“Should the U.S. cease aid to Israel?”—would be recast to provoke more open-ended dialogue, for example, “How should the U.S. engage with the Israel-Palestine conflict?”

The ABCD workshop invites students to exchange ideas and insights related to the guiding question and gives them an opportunity to pose questions or express concerns. Guided by an experienced moderator, participants navigate the intricate complexities of the issue, gain a deeper understanding of its underlying causes, and weigh out possible solutions. We have held this workshop at several different institutions so far as we continue to help build cultures of free expression and civil engagement on America's college campuses. ●

National Press Club, *continued from 3*

Further, institutional neutrality must apply not only to speech, but also to actions, including how the endowment is managed. Vanderbilt's policy of institutional neutrality means that the endowment shall not be used for political purposes. Calls for divestment are inconsistent with neutrality, no matter the cause. And this ethic of neutrality must also extend down to the academic units, where faculty, especially junior faculty, often feel pressured by their departments to sign statements or signal their solidarity with particular political positions.

Adding to Chancellor Diermeier's perspective, Dr. Trachtenberg commented that university presidents must exercise firm leadership, refusing to be relegated to a merely clerical role. They should be clear about what the purpose of the university is, restrict comments to areas in which they have expertise, and consistently and appropriately discipline students who violate campus rules. However, this should not restrict them from showing compassion and sharing grief with affected members of the campus community, such as by attending a vigil for the victims of the October 7 attack on Israel.

A recording of their full remarks is available on ACTA's YouTube channel. We thank Chancellor Diermeier and Dr. Trachtenberg for their principled leadership, and we also thank all who joined us. ●

The Challenge of a Free Society (cont'd)



Professors Amna Khalid, Nadine Strossen, Keith Whittington, and JoAnn Koob examine how to balance free speech and civility on campus.

to open minds and encourage students to ask, “What else am I wrong about?”

Pano Kanelos, president of the newly formed University of Austin, commented that students cannot properly exercise freedom if they cannot exercise their intelligence. What makes higher education “higher” is that it co-opts students in the process of creating knowledge, rather than merely consuming it. A liberal education teaches students that they have the capacity to know themselves and access truth but also instructs them how to do so with intellectual humility.

Against the backdrop of the encampments, occupations, and protests that have engulfed campuses this past year, our second panel, moderated by Carleton College Associate Professor of History **Amna Khalid**, examined how to balance free speech and civility as we seek to educate students to become responsible citizens. Yale Law School Professor **Keith Whittington** remarked that the primary purpose of the university is its educational mission—all other activities, including protest, must be compatible with this

core commitment. Protesters can march outside the president’s office, criticizing him for any number of reasons, but they cannot be allowed to occupy the president’s office, bar other students from entering the library, or disrupt sleeping hours.

JoAnn Koob, director of the Liberty and Law Center at George Mason University, emphasized that universities must treat protesters of different viewpoints the same. If they shut down pro-Palestine protests, they must also shut down pro-Israel protests. Any time, place, and manner restrictions that universities adopt must be neutrally enforced and must be designed to maximize free speech, even speech that is hateful, which is protected under the First Amendment.

Nadine Strossen, former president of the American Civil Liberties Union, warned that even if universities have legal authority to call in police to break up encampments, doing so may be counterproductive. She said that Columbia University’s crack down on protests encouraged other encampments across the country. It would be much

wiser for universities to adopt the Chicago Principles on Freedom of Expression and institutional neutrality.

In closing, Professor Koob reminded us why it is vital for universities to protect freedom of expression: “We don’t honor free speech because it’s in the First Amendment but because it is important to all of us . . . if universities ignore that value, we cannot get to the truth.” ●

See ACTA’s trustee guide on campus encampments and occupations.



Scan the QR code below.



Honoring Nadine Strossen's Lifetime of Advocacy for Free Expression

Following our ATHENA Roundtable, ACTA honored **Nadine Strossen**, John Marshall Harlan II Professor of Law Emerita at New York Law School and past president of the American Civil Liberties Union, with the 19th annual Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education. **Louise Mirrer**, the 14th annual winner of the Philip Merrill Award, opened the ceremony, highlighting Professor Strossen's open mind, candor, and intellectual integrity as well as her devotion to her students, some of whom were in attendance.

Tributes to Professor Strossen were delivered by **Randall Kennedy**, Michael R. Klein Professor of Law at Harvard Law School;

Monica Harris, executive director of the Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism; former Indiana governor **Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.**; and Carleton College Professor **Amna Khalid**. Professor Randall characterized our award winner as a "great evangelist for human rights," who has traveled around the nation and the world "preaching the gospel of freedom."

In reflection of Professor Strossen's commitment to dialogue and vigorous debate, she elected to engage in a colloquy with President Poliakoff in lieu of an acceptance speech, making this year's gala a unique and memorable occasion. Their compelling discussion focused on civil disagreement—both as a skill and

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Presentation of Philip Merrill Award



Professor Randall Kennedy



Monica Harris



President Michael Poliakoff and Professor Nadine Strossen engage in a colloquy.



Former Merrill Award winner Louise Mirrer with Nadine Strossen and Michael Poliakoff



The Honorable Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.



Professor Amna Khalid

Roland Fryer Recognized as Hero of Intellectual Freedom



Following the roundtable panels, ACTA presented our 2024 Hero of Intellectual Freedom award to **Roland G. Fryer, Jr.**, professor of economics at Harvard University. **Steven McGuire**, ACTA's Paul & Karen Levy Fellow in Campus Freedom, opened the ceremony by capturing Professor Fryer's straightforward commitment to truth and courage: When told by colleagues not to publish the results of his study on police brutality, for fear that its findings would crumble the dominant racial narrative, his reaction was, "Now I'm definitely going to publish it."

In his tribute to Dr. Fryer, **Ian Rowe**—senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and founder of Vertex Partnership

Academies, a network of character-based high schools in the Bronx—lauded his commitment to being “absolutely tied to the data,” even when they point to unpopular truths. Dr. Rowe observed how Professor Fryer found there was a deep professional and personal cost to telling the truth, but he did not doubt for a moment that the price was worth bearing, not only for the sake of research integrity, but also for the well-being of others. Dr. Rowe said it is the calling of his own life to help disadvantaged children assert agency over their own lives, a conviction he proudly shares with Professor Fryer, whose research on the academic achievement gap has challenged the view that black children fall behind solely because of racial inequity.

In his moving acceptance speech, Professor Fryer spoke of the legacy left by his grandmother, who taught him how to “disagree with affection” instead of with resentment, prejudice, or anger. Today's college students and faculty have lost this skill, preferring to self-censor rather than voice any opinion that might even gently rock the boat. He remarked, “Since 2016, I can't think of a paper published that had center or right conclusions. Did the data get more liberal?” It is the disadvantaged who lose out when students, professors, and researchers cannot speak openly, he said. For it is unfettered inquiry that leads to inventive solutions to inequality, like Vertex Partnership Academies.

ACTA presented Professor Fryer with an eighteenth-century portrait of Sir Thomas Gresham, known for Gresham's law, the economic theory that bad currency drives out the good. In contrast, Professor Fryer is the good currency that will drive out the bad. His courageous example calls on all of us to have the intellectual humility to evaluate rigorously all ideas, even our most deeply held beliefs, upon the basis of data and merit. ●



Former Heroes of Intellectual Freedom, Joshua Katz and Carole Hooven, join ACTA President Michael Poliakkoff, Professor Roland Fryer, and ACTA Board Chairman Mark Ridenour.

ACTA Censures AAUP in the *Wall Street Journal* for Shameful Reversal

On August 25, 2024, ACTA President Michael Poliakoff and ACTA Fellow Steven McGuire published an article in the *Wall Street Journal* on the American Association of University Professors’ (AAUP) recent decision to reverse its 2006 position against academic boycotts. Below are excerpts from the article, entitled, “AAUP Throws In With Campus Antisemites.”

The American Association of University Professors on Aug. 9 threw gasoline on the still-smoldering embers of this past spring’s campus encampments. The organization withdrew its nearly two-decades-old opposition to academic boycotts, in which faculty, academic institutions and scholarly organizations refuse to work with certain institutions and scholars.

The AAUP in 2006 declared that academic boycotts of targeted nations

are “prima facie violations of academic freedom.” Its new statement “supersedes” that policy. The association now maintains that academic boycotts “can be considered legitimate tactical responses to conditions that are fundamentally incompatible with the mission of higher education.”

The AAUP statement omits any mention of Israel, but what other nation is boycotted today? Academic boycotts of Israel are a pillar of the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement (BDS). They’re also what motivated the AAUP’s 2006 statement.

The flip-flop is so egregious that Cary Nelson, a former AAUP president, denounced the organization this month in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. “We must no longer use AAUP policy as the gold standard for academic freedom,” he wrote.

The policy shift erodes academic freedom. It legitimizes institutions and academics who rebuff faculty or cultural exchanges, cancel study-abroad programs, refuse to fund joint research projects, and withhold recommendations from students who want to study in Israel. It also emboldens anti-Israel protesters who plan to disrupt campuses again this fall. Now they can hide behind the AAUP when demanding boycotts of Israel. . . .

The AAUP’s new position damages higher education’s credibility. It excuses faculty who allow ideological biases to cloud their judgment on matters of principle. It caters to left-wing antisemitism. In 2006 then-Harvard president Larry Summers called a British academic boycott of Israel “anti-Semitic in effect, if not in intent.” That was the boycott that led to the AAUP’s statement opposing academic boycotts. The AAUP has now betrayed its own noble legacy. ●

Philip Merrill Award, *continued from 7*



Nancy Merrill

a virtue—and why it is so essential for both liberal education and our democratic republic. Referencing her time on the lecture circuit with former U.S. attorney general Edwin Meese, Professor Strossen stressed the importance of being open to talk with anyone, whether on the extreme right or extreme left. She remarked, “We lose so much by putting people in an oversimplified box, then rejecting them or refusing to socialize with them.” She shared that, without exception, she has always been able to find at least one place of agreement with each of her interlocutors—a shared goal of liberty and justice for all.

Evaluating the situation on American campuses, which are becoming, in Dr. Poliakoff’s words, “graveyards of compelled opinion,” Professor Strossen said the best way to combat the repression of free speech is with more speech. She referenced John Stuart Mill, who wrote in *On Liberty* that we cannot fully understand and therefore really consider adopting another viewpoint unless we hear from someone who truly believes in it. Universities cannot facilitate this type of fruitful discussion through mandatory hate speech codes or civility codes, but only by teaching students the skills and habits of fruitful dialogue—namely, encouragement, persuasion, and most importantly, being willing to listen attentively to the perspectives of those with whom we disagree.

Nancy Merrill, daughter of the late Philip Merrill, presented Professor Strossen with a reproduction of an eighteenth-century fire bucket that belonged to George Washington, embossed with a Doric column inscribed with a reference to the First Amendment, which she has so zealously upheld. We are deeply grateful to Professor Strossen for her relentless advocacy for civil liberties and for enabling us all to respect and enjoy the rights bequeathed to us by the Founders. ●



H E A R D C A M P U S ON

Wave of Universities Adopt Institutional Neutrality

ACTA's campaign to urge universities to adopt a policy of institutional neutrality is bearing fruit, as Steven McGuire, ACTA's Paul & Karen Levy Fellow in Campus Freedom, recounted in a September 16 article for *The Hill* entitled, "It took years, but elite colleges are learning the value of institutional neutrality."

Dr. McGuire wrote, "Having found a topic they do not want to talk about—the war between Israel and Hamas—the presidents of elite institutions, including Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania and Cornell, have announced they will no longer issue statements on social and political events." He commented that though the reasons motivating universities to change course—fear of donors cutting off funding, lawmakers opening investigations, and a general outcry from the public—may not be the most honorable, institutional neutrality "is the correct policy."

Other schools that have recently

seen the light on institutional neutrality include Johns Hopkins University, Stanford University, the University of Southern California, the University of Virginia, the University of Texas, the University of California—Los Angeles, Tulane University, and Emerson College.

Stanford President Defends Viewpoint Diversity

On October 4, Stanford University's Department of Health Policy held a conference on pandemic policy, "bringing together esteemed academics, public health practitioners, journalists, and policymakers from all sides of the COVID-19 policy debate in conversation with one another."

Upon learning that invited speakers included some who cautioned against lockdowns and mandated vaccinations, such as Dr. Jay Bhattacharya of the Stanford School of Medicine and Dr. Marty Makary of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, some invitees refused to participate. Others criticized Stanford

President Jonathan Levin for agreeing to give the opening speech at the conference.

President Levin gave his speech as planned and took the opportunity to address the controversy. He remarked, "We have many issues today at Stanford, and on other campuses, where views are divided . . . Yet I believe we need to make every effort to get people who disagree, even sharply, in dialogue with one another. I believe it's essential for us to do that as members of the faculty and university leaders—not just because it's a way to advance knowledge, but because we need to model that behavior if we want to expect it from our students."

He continued, "So I hope today's conference will come off in a way that involves just that—thoughtful and robust discussion across different perspectives. . . . Perhaps it . . . even bridge[s] a few divides." ACTA commends President Levin for firmly defending intellectual diversity and calling upon faculty to do the same. ●

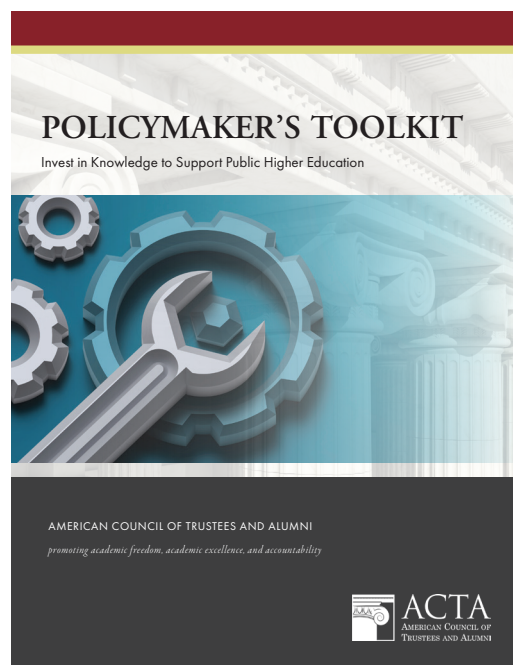
ACTA Releases Policymaker's Toolkit

State policymakers play a crucial role in reforming higher education. Working with college trustees and local stakeholders, lawmakers can spearhead important measures to strengthen fiscal accountability, support trustees, and generate better outcomes for students, taxpayers, and the nation.

To help policymakers in this task, ACTA recently published a new resource, entitled *Policymaker's Toolkit: Invest in Knowledge to Support Public Higher Education*. The toolkit provides bulleted recommendations for addressing the major challenges facing colleges and universities today, including controlling runaway spending, protecting free expression on campus, and fixing the accreditation system.

It also provides at-a-glance overviews of measures that legislatures across the country have passed to improve higher education in their states, such as South Carolina's REACH Act, which requires students to take a minimum of three credit hours in American history; Virginia's recent update to its state code mandating that college trustees design and attend training programs on their role and responsibilities; and South Dakota House Bill 1087, passed in 2019 to codify protections for First Amendment rights of students and faculty.

Download the toolkit today on GoACTA.org.

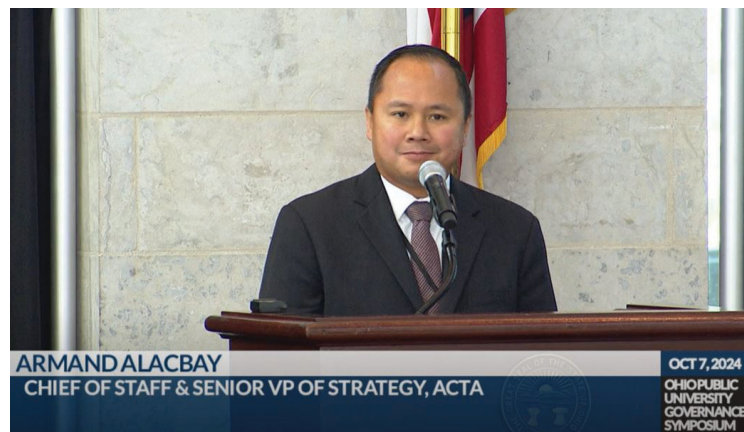


ACTA Presents at 2nd Annual Ohio Trustee Governance Symposium

On October 7, ACTA returned to the Ohio Statehouse to present at the second annual Ohio Public University Trustee Governance Symposium. The symposium brought together lawmakers and over 75 trustees from Ohio's 14 public universities to ensure that tax dollars are supporting high-quality, affordable education.

Armand Alacbay, ACTA's senior vice president of strategy, led a presentation on ACTA's two most recent guides for trustees, which offer practical advice on how to respond to campus protests and calls for divestment from companies that do business with Israel. ACTA Policy Research Fellow **Kyle Beltramini** and Data Analyst Fellow **Anna Sillers** gave presentations on board governance and controlling college spending.

This year's keynote address was provided by **Jed W. Atkins**, the inaugural dean of the School of Civic Life and Leadership at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill. Dr. Atkins also moderated a panel that included **Lee Strang**, the inaugural director of the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society; State Senator **Rob McColley**; and ACTA President **Michael Poliakoff**. They discussed Ohio's historic achievement in establishing five new centers dedicated to promoting American history and civic education. Dr. Poliakoff moderated a second panel entitled, "Securing Institutional Neutrality in the Aftermath of October 7, 2023," which featured University of Michigan Regent **Sarah Hubbard**, University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill Trustee **Marty Kotis**, ACTA's Paul &



Karen Levy Fellow in Campus Freedom **Steven McGuire**, and Ohio State University President **Ted Carter**.

During the symposium, ACTA presented **Richard Vedder**, Distinguished Professor of Economics Emeritus at Ohio University, with our inaugural Pathfinder Award for his visionary and courageous leadership and his unwavering dedication to the improvement of higher education and to the betterment of our nation. Senator **Jerry Cirino** presented Dr. Vedder with a commendation from the Ohio Senate.

ACTA was pleased to participate in this second annual symposium. With this event, the Ohio Legislature demonstrates a strong commitment to providing an excellent, affordable college education in service to the citizens of Ohio and to the nation at large. ●

FOR OUR DONORS: Two Smart Strategies for Charitable Giving with an IRA

ACTA's efforts to restore the promise of American higher education are only possible through the generous support of our donors. We thank you for your investment in our work!

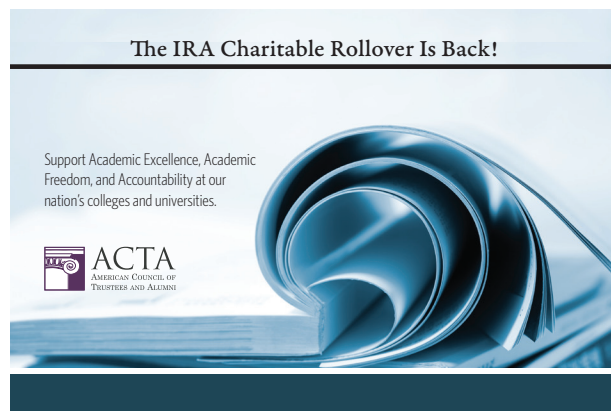
For our donors with an individual retirement account (IRA), you may be able to support ACTA's mission while also reducing your tax burden. Here are two strategies:

Annual distribution: Up to \$105,000 per individual account owner per year can be contributed tax free from your IRA to a qualified charitable institution such as ACTA. This withdrawal may satisfy part or all of your required minimum distribution. Note: This does not apply to 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, or donor-advised funds.

IRA beneficiary designation: You may choose to designate ACTA as a beneficiary of any of your retirement accounts (401(k), 403(b), IRA, etc.) This simple step—usually involving one form—is flexible if your needs change. It can also reduce your family's tax burden and will carry forward ACTA's mission far into the future.

If you have any further questions, please contact Nancy Phillips at (202) 467-6787 or nphillips@GoACTA.org.

Please consult with your attorney, accountant, and/or tax advisor for advice concerning your particular circumstances.





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2024 has been a year of challenges. We have a deep feeling of fulfillment from the breakthroughs and victories that we have achieved with your help and encouragement. Much remains before us to accomplish and to fulfill our purpose and mission. Winston Churchill's words will remain our guide: "Never give in . . . never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense." We greet the coming year with the confidence that we can and will make American higher education again the envy of the world. ACTA's staff and board of directors thank you for being our faithful friends and allies and wish you holidays filled with blessings and joy.

