



ENQUIRY

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Free thought and discourse

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Coddled Students Demand End to Free Speech

RYAN GLENN AND MIKE ADAMO
STAFF WRITER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Students and faculty at Yale University and the University of Missouri have spent the past few days demanding resignations and strong-arming student reporters, all in the name of justice, equality, and sensitivity.

Their concerns are familiar, but their tactics reveal a new understanding of speech rights that, if the students had it their way, would put many of us in handcuffs.

Where the freedom to offend depends on a poorly defined context of power relations, free speech does not exist.

At Yale University, associate master at Silliman College Erika Christakis caused controversy by responding to an email from the Intercultural Affairs Committee about Halloween costumes. "Is there no room anymore for a child or young person to be a little bit obnoxious... a little bit inappropriate or provocative or, yes, offensive?" she asked.

She offered up the opinion of her husband, the master at Silliman College. "Nicholas says, if you don't like a costume someone is wearing, look away, or tell them you are offended. Talk to each other. Free speech and the ability to tolerate offence are the hallmarks of a free and open society."

The idea that students should deal with a problem on their own proved too terrifying for Yale's totalitarian toddlers, who promptly lost it at Erika's husband.

Surrounding Nicholas in the middle of a quad, students demanded that he apologize for causing "pain" and failing to make the college their "home" and "safe space." In the words of one student, Yale "is not about creating an intellectual space."

Following the public attack on Christakis, students began protesting alleged systematic racism at Yale, one of the most liberal and inclusive campuses in America.

Students at the University of Missouri protested alleged incidents, racial and otherwise, at their own school. A graduate student went on a hunger strike and the football team threatened not to play until the university president resigned.

Why? Because the president didn't validate the Ferguson lie quickly enough and failed to instigate the necessary witch hunt after incidents of racism on campus. The president resigned last week.

Forever aggrieved and unappeased, the Missouri protests continued, with students and faculty attempting to physically block the media from covering them. The rights of the free press, in the logic of social justice, end where they might hurt someone's feelings or question the narrative.

A professor of media studies, Melissa Click (whose expertise includes *Fifty Shades of Grey*, the *Twilight* series, and Lady Gaga), demanded that a student reporter leave the protest. "I need some muscle over here!" she shouted hysterically when the student informed her that he had as much a right as anyone to be there.

The student body president, the same person who claimed to have

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College Scorecard: Lessons and Limitations

By **ELIZABETH BARRY**
STAFF WRITER

In an attempt to reduce uncertainty over the cost and value of a college education, President Obama released a barrage of data on U.S. colleges in the form of the Education Department's College Scorecard. While Obama hoped that publicizing information on higher education would help prospective students make informed college choices, he did not take into account the negative effects it would have on some of the country's top institutions.

The Education Department's information on the salaries of young graduates has caused many elite liberal arts colleges to come under fire. Administrators are forced to answer difficult questions about the payoffs of their expensive institutions.

For the first time ever, government data indicates that students who attend elite liberal arts colleges do not earn as much money early in their careers as those who attend highly selective research universities. At nearly half of top liberal arts colleges the reported median salary ten years after graduation is below \$50,000. Nearly all the best research universities have median salaries of more than \$50,000,

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This Week's News in 140 Characters

EDITORIAL REPORT



Ayaan Hirsi Ali @Ayaan · 19h

As long as Muslims say IS has nothing to with Islam or talk of Islamophobia they are not ready to reform their faith.

3.4K 3.3K



jon gabriel @exjon · Nov 13

Sorry whiny college protesters, but real news is happening. Good luck with your tantrums. #mizzou #yale #AmherstUprising

460 638



David Burge @iowahawkblog · Nov 13

.@piersmorgan ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has a PhD in Islamic theology from Islamic U of Baghdad. What are your credentials?

2K 1.8K

[View conversation](#)



Will Antonin @Will_Antonin · Nov 14

One thing is certain: An intelligentsia increasingly keen on divorcing words from their meanings is poorly suited for addressing this crisis

333 307



Jay Nordlinger @jaynordlinger · Nov 13

The French like being French. They are proud of their (great) civilization. I feel sure they won't let envious barbarians bring them down.

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COLLEGE SCORECARD *cont.*

with roughly a third earning median salaries above \$70,000.

According to the College Scorecard, MIT has the highest median salary of all top U.S. educational institutions, including both research universities and liberal arts colleges. The median for MIT graduates stands at roughly \$91,600 per year. Research universities similar to MIT claim the next five spots on the list, each with graduates who make over \$80,000 per year. Recent graduates from Harvey Mudd, the first liberal arts school on the list, make \$78,600 annually.

The median salary of recent Hamilton graduates is just \$57,300. Of the institutions studied for the College Scorecard, Hamilton is in the bottom 50% in terms of post-graduate earnings. Nonetheless, Hamilton students tend to make more than most of their NESCAC counterparts within the first 10 years of graduation. Only Tufts and Williams students have higher median salaries, at \$67,800 and \$58,100 respectively.

At first glance the Education Department's statistics are worrisome. Not only do recent graduates of elite liberal arts schools appear to be making far less than their

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In Defense of the Liberal Arts: An Open Letter to Jeb Bush

By **CONOR O'SHEA**
GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

Dear Mr. Bush,

Your recent comments at a town-hall meeting in South Carolina really rubbed me the wrong way, and have dangerous implications for the future of American progress and innovation.

You argued that "Universities ought to have skin in the game," because, "when a student shows up, they ought to say 'Hey, that psych major deal, that philosophy major thing, that's great, it's important to have liberal arts...but realize you're going to be working a Chick-fil-A.'"

I want to make clear that I am in no way objecting to your comments on any "I was offended" grounds. In the interest of full disclosure, I should note that I am pursuing a double major in Philosophy and Government at a small liberal arts college, and am a registered Independent from New Hampshire.

If you really struggle to see the value of a liberal arts degree, try looking a little closer. As the Huffington Post noted in March of

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had a racial slur thrown at him, wrote that the KKK was “confirmed to be sighted on campus,” then admitted that, no, that was a lie.

To be sure, students have reason to voice their concerns about racism at the University of Missouri. Police arrested two white students who threatened to kill any black students they came across. But when the protestors’ goals spill over into preventing not just violence, and threats of violence, but disagreeable language in general, they undermine their own credibility.

In the end, University of Missouri administrators caved to students’ demands that free speech be suspended. An email urged students to report any hurtful speech to university police.

Students at other institutions, observing how spineless the average college administration is, are following suit. Ithaca College protestors are calling for a vote of no confidence against their president and organizing a “die-in” to protest all the apparent fatalities that occurred because their school isn’t “safe” enough.

It’s unclear how colleges will function if undergraduates can exercise veto power over all policies and personnel.

A common thread to the protests is the way students understand free speech. Where free speech exists, students complain about people abusing it. Fine. But students shouldn’t be so quick to give up their freedoms for a little “safety” from bad words. Those who do, as Ben Franklin wrote, “deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

Students have come down firmly on the side of safety, demanding infantile treatment and condemning those who advocate for civil liberties. Amherst College students recently demanded that the college president denounce people who post “free speech” posters.

A few members of the Hamilton Diversity Council recently issued a petition calling on the school to block access to YikYak through WiFi and to request that the app developer prevent access entirely at Hamilton College. We at Enquiry, having also felt the wrath of anonymous meanies on the internet, still can’t quite throw our hat in with crude censorship.

Nor can we agree to an understanding of free speech based on power. The idea that free speech is unjust because certain people are more often the targets of vitriol than others amounts to a double standard. A UConn professor recently published a piece in the New Yorker arguing the nonsensical line that “the freedom to offend the powerful is not equivalent to the freedom to bully the disempowered.”

The asymmetry of the words “offend” and “bully” notwithstanding,

his argument leads to the conclusion that freedom of speech protections must be applied unequally to fix existing inequalities. Any understanding of speech based on power leads without fail to the idea that laws protecting free speech should be applied only to the supposedly disempowered. In this view, free speech is not a principle, but a tool of power to be granted and withheld at will.

A term exists for the unequal application of the law, and it’s called arbitrary government.

If we want to live in a place where the law applies equally to all, free speech is part of the bargain. Where the freedom to offend depends on a poorly defined context of power relations, free speech does not exist.

If, on the other hand, we want to live in a place where inequalities in one area find resolution, ad hoc, through unequal laws in another, we’re on the road to a very dim future.

COLLEGE SCORECARD *cont.*

counterparts at research universities, but the annual median salaries of liberal arts graduates tends to be less than the annual cost of tuition at these institutions. It will take liberal arts students longer to pay back their loans than it will for graduates of top research universities.

Before attacking liberal arts schools on the basis of the scorecard results, it is important to recognize the College Scorecard’s major flaws.

First, the study does not use information about every student at each institution. In order to calculate the median earnings figures for each school, the Education Department paired information on student aid receipts with federal tax records. In other words, the College Scorecard only accounts for students who received federal loans or grants.

While the number of students who receive federal aid varies from school to school, there are many institutions at which the majority of students do not receive any. For example, only 15 percent of Harvard students received federal aid in 2013. In Harvard’s case, the College Scorecard was measuring the salaries of less than 15 percent of the students who graduated that year.

The College Scorecard is also limited to students working and not enrolled in graduate school. As a result, it does not account for the increase in salary level that usually accompanies advanced degrees.

Finally, the scorecard is especially unhelpful in evaluating schools that offer many different majors, as liberal arts schools do. Liberal arts schools send graduates into a wide variety of both high-paying and low-paying fields. Median earnings figures are skewed in favor of colleges that offer degrees in high paying fields like engineering, business and healthcare.

As the president of the

Association of American Colleges and Universities said, the government’s scorecard performs a “huge disservice” for prospective students because it causes them to focus solely on salary instead of on the other benefits of education.

AN OPEN LETTER TO JEB BUSH *cont.*

last year, liberal arts majors help students develop skills that are crucial to success in a plethora of career paths. Philosophy majors score highest on the GRE’s verbal reasoning and analytical writing sections, and, more often than not, boast better law school acceptance rates than their non-Philosophy major peers.

This should be unsurprising, as liberal arts majors spend four years honing skills like critical thinking and oral and written communication. They craft, defend, and analyze complex arguments on a wide variety of topics and go on to make waves in a variety of different fields.

Carly Fiorina, who trails you by just a few points in the most recent polls, holds a B.A. in Philosophy and Medieval History. CEOs, Nobel Laureates in medicine, Secretaries of Defense, governors, and countless other successful individuals hold degrees in Classics, English, History, Philosophy, Psychology, and Theatre.

Canada’s new prime minister, Justin Trudeau—who, by the way, would become something of a colleague of yours if you become president—holds a B.A. in English Literature. So does Mitt Romney.

During the first Bush administration a particularly reticent U.S. Supreme Court Justice received his nomination, even though he holds a degree in English from a small liberal arts college like mine. Perhaps your father felt differently about the value of a liberal arts education back in 1991 than you do in 2015.

You’re not totally wrong, though. It’s true that people aren’t as interested in vocational training these days as my parents’ and grandparents’ generations were.

Of course we still need

electricians, plumbers, and carpenters. America’s rise to global dominance, and any hope it has of staying there, rests on the backs of hardworking, blue-collar individuals. Though I never had the chance to get to know him, my maternal grandfather, an important idol of mine, was one of those types of people. He served in Korea, worked for the Post Office, and in his free time was a skilled carpenter with an eye for elegance.

Even as a liberal arts junky, I recognize that we need people to enter vocational fields. As the son of two physicians and the younger brother of a current med-school student, I see the importance and relevance of STEM fields in creating a better America, too.

That is not to say, though, that any field—STEM, vocational, business, government, or otherwise—could function effectively if the individuals that comprise it lack a solid understanding of what it means to be human, and of how humans act both as individuals and in groups.

What doctor can genuinely swear by the Hippocratic oath without an understanding of ethics? What CEO can lead a corporate resurgence without effective “soft skills”? What public servant can run for office without a knack for rhetoric? As a presidential candidate, as an American citizen, and as a father, it’s crucial for you to understand this.

Can you honestly say that our Commander in Chief, the protector of the Constitution, can effectively serve our country without making use of any classic liberal arts skills? Without critical thinking and effective oral or written communication? The reality, Mr. Bush, is that your candidacy, and the United States, needs the liberal arts.

I’d love to hear your thoughts on this when you visit the Granite State. Perhaps we can grab lunch at Chick-fil-A? My treat.

Sincerely,
Conor O’Shea

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