



Why Are Universities So Left-Wing?

Our readers are well aware that since the 1960s the left has gradually taken over most U.S. institutions: media, entertainment, large corporations, philanthropic foundations, government agencies and, most importantly, our educational system. We have witnessed a quiet revolution that has become increasingly authoritarian as the federal government issues new mandates for businesses and individual citizens, while unleashing a politicized FBI and Department of Justice to investigate parents protesting at school board meetings. Across the country, average Americans ask, “How did this happen? Where did we go wrong?”

At the vanguard of this revolution are American universities. Why are so many professors and instructors so left-wing—and intolerant of opinions contrary to their own? Professors are among the most privileged people in our society. Many enjoy lifetime jobs through tenure. Many are highly paid for working nine months a year. They have good benefits and pensions. Why would so many of them be the most vociferous in denouncing the United States as systematically racist and the U.S. Constitution as a “white privilege” intended to protect slavery? One might think these instructors would be the greatest defenders of the nation that created such wealth that it can afford tens of thousands of scholars, researchers and postsecondary teachers.

Political Conformity

A few apologists claim there is no left-wing bias in higher education. These defenders of universities as bastions of free speech ignore survey after survey showing that the overwhelming majority of professors identify as progressives. The argument that this bias is not brought into the classroom belies other studies that show American universities today are obsessed with racial, gender and sexual identity. The teaching of critical race theory (CRT) is widespread in American universities and colleges. If in doubt, look at <https://criticalrace.org/schools>, which lists hundreds of institutions that teach CRT.

Moreover, racial, gender and sexual identity fads are imposed through higher education’s employment practices. Human resources offices in virtually every university dictate that priority be given to hiring on identity theory. After the Black Lives Matter riots in the summer of 2020, universities across the country created “anti-racism” committees and policies to combat so-called systemic racism in their institutions. In their drive to combat racism, universities directed their academic units to recruit minority candidates (“opportunity hires”) to ensure racial diversity.¹

“Opportunity hires” bring with them a political agenda, especially in humanities and the social sciences. Successful candidates tend to focus on narrow subjects of racial, gender and sexual identity—and their take is not going to be that the nation has made great racial progress or that there exists a larger world of scholarship beyond race or gender history.

“Opportunity hires” are recruited through targeted searches conducted by already left-wing professors and administrators. This is especially the case at so-called elite universities, but it extends downward to large state universities, branch campuses and smaller colleges. In 2018 the National Association of Scholars conducted a survey of 8,000-plus Ph.D.-holding professors at 51 of the top-ranked liberal arts colleges in the United States. The survey revealed that close to *80 percent of the academic departments have zero Republicans—or so few as to make no difference.*²

The lack of ideological diversity found across the disciplines is striking. STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) have a few more identified Republicans, but not many. Engineering has nearly 2 Democrats per one Republican, but in economics and math departments, for every 5 Democrats there is only one Republican faculty member. Biology has a ratio of nearly 21 Democrats for every one Republican.

As might be expected, the humanities are far worse. In classics departments, there is only one Republican for

every 27 Democrats. In English the proportion is 48 Democrats for every one Republican. One of the worst ratios is in religious studies, where Democrats outnumber Republicans by 70 to 1. This is still better than communications departments, where there are zero—yes, zero—Republicans for every 108 Democrats. So much for diverse opinions in the classroom.³

The argument that there is self-selection by progressives entering academia overlooks why many young conservatives do not enter academia: because they understand that there is a bias against them from the outset.

University Travesties

Travesties in higher education fill the internet. Take the recent example of Gordon Klein, a University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) accounting professor at the Anderson School of Management, who was suspended for refusing to grade black students more leniently.⁴ Following the black lawbreaker George Floyd's death in police custody in 2020, Klein endured an online campaign against him for refusing to grade black students more leniently. He found himself at a university that had become totally woke.

Klein cites jaw-dropping examples in his lawsuit against UCLA, filed in September: In the life sciences, black students received perfect scores on their final exams which they never took. An instructor in a history course informed his black students that “you will not be required to write the final assignment because your [teaching assistants] have volunteered to write this final assignment for you. . . . As a practical matter, you all will receive full points.”⁵

Klein reports in his lawsuit that agitators “resorted to intimidating UCLA faculty members into canceling final exams and giving all students generous, unearned grades. If a particular professor did not accede to these demands, these activists then coordinated email complaints to the UCLA administrators who oversaw the recalcitrant professor's career advancement and job security.”⁶ In response to the intimidating emails, he asked how he could possibly identify black students when his courses were online. He asked also, “Are there any students of mixed parentage, such as half black-half Asian? What do you suggest I do with respect to them? A full concession or just half?”

While refusing to give in to the outrageous demands of the online mob, Klein became a target of a petition signed by 20,000 people demanding that he be fired. UCLA administrators placed him on mandatory leave. UCLA claimed that Klein was placed on leave because of the “tone” of his emails. He was later denied a merit-pay raise. Klein charged that the context of this campaign was set by the university's

“Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion” agenda, which directed professors to grant preferential “equity” to students belonging to “underrepresented groups.”⁷ UCLA eventually reinstated Klein, but the lawsuit seeks damages for his ordeal.

Also in September, Peter Boghossian resigned his position in the philosophy department at Portland State University in protest over the foul campus atmosphere. In a letter of resignation that went viral, he called Portland State University a “Social Justice factory” where students are “not being taught to think.” He wrote that the university had become an illiberal bastion whose only “inputs were race, gender, and victimhood and whose only outputs were grievances and division.”⁸ The more he spoke out against these issues, the more retaliation he faced. He accused the university of refusing to protect him, even when swastikas appeared in the bathroom with his name and a bag of feces was delivered to his office door.

Instead of protecting him, the university administration launched a Title IX investigation against him in 2016-17, after a white male student “made a slew of baseless accusations.” In the end Boghossian felt compelled to quit. “For ten years,” he wrote, “I have taught my students the importance of living by your principles. One of mine is to defend our system of liberal education from those who seek to destroy it. Who would I be if I did not?”⁹

Neo-Segregation Policies

The problems within our universities are not limited to overwhelmingly left-wing professors. College administrations are pursuing what can only be described as “neo-racism” in which safe spaces are designated for “students of color” to the exclusion of whites. At Arizona State University (ASU) in late September two black activist students, one of whom identified herself as a leader of Black Lives Matter, approached two white male students studying in the Memorial Union and told them to leave because they were in a “multicultural space.”¹⁰

One of the white male students had a “Support Your Police” sticker on his computer; the other white male student wore a “Did Not Vote for Biden” t-shirt. In the 40-minute encounter in which the students initially refused to move, one of the students said that he was in a “multicultural space” open to all students. One of the openly hostile black students replied that there was no such thing as a white culture, so the space was not open to white students. Eventually the two white male students left, but the video of the confrontation was posted on Twitter by one of the black students and drew 5.5 million viewers. The confrontation became national news, forcing the university administration to respond by declaring that the university was committed to a vibrant exchange of ideas.¹¹

ASU created this “multicultural space” after summer protests by black students demanding their own space in the Memorial Union. Under pressure, the administration agreed, after initial resistance, to set aside a safe space for “students of color;” black and Hispanic students. At the same time, the administration launched an “anti-racist” campaign in which every administrative and academic unit formed “anti-racist” committees to promote “diversity, equity, and inclusion.” Inclusion meant creating exclusive spaces.

ASU is not the only university creating exclusionary spaces. This fall Western Washington University announced it was designating housing reserved exclusively for black students under a program called “Black Affinity Housing.”¹² Under public pressure, the university subsequently announced the program was open to all students. This did not stop American University in Washington, DC from offering a Black Affinity Housing Program.

A search of other segregated housing programs found more than 80 other colleges with similar programs, including large state schools such as Rutgers University, University of California, Los Angeles and Berkeley, University of Colorado, and many private universities.¹³ This “separate but equal” policy appears to be little more than neo-segregation.

A Party Invitation at Yale Law

Nearly every week brings fresh examples of campus outrages, often fueled by small social-media mobs and co-dependent identity-obsessed administrators whose *raison d'être* seems to be to foment racial or gender grievance. At Yale Law School this fall, a friendly invitation to a Constitution Day “trap house” party co-sponsored by the school’s Native American student group and the Federalist Society chapter led to an intimidating confrontation by the director of diversity and inclusion (who formerly worked in the White House during the Obama administration) with the Native American student who issued the invitation. The black law student association had objected to the phrase “trap house” (a term that reportedly sometimes refers to a drug den, but at other times refers to a party when the parents are away) used lightheartedly in the invitation, as well as the stated plans to serve fried chicken.

The diversity director complained that the invitation contained racial overtones (however unintended) and that the conservative Federalist Society itself is “triggering” to black students. He further insinuated that unless the student issued an apology to the black student association (which the diversity director helpfully drafted), Yale Law School might give the student a negative character report in connection with his future application for admission to a state bar. The law school’s associate dean of student affairs also weighed in with her own pressure on the student to publicly apologize.

The student refused to apologize and instead clarified the party invitation and offered to meet with any student who felt aggrieved. After the incident went viral, the Yale Law School administration felt compelled to reaffirm its commitment to free speech and to deny that any discipline was planned against the student.¹⁴

Bright Sheng, a distinguished Asian-American music composition professor at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, was removed from teaching two courses in October after showing his undergraduate class the 1965 film *Othello* starring the eminent British actor Laurence Olivier as William Shakespeare’s Moorish anti-hero, wearing dark makeup. A survivor of China’s Cultural Revolution, Sheng was attempting to illustrate to his class how the 19th-century composer Giuseppe Verdi adapted the Shakespeare play for his opera *Otello*. A student was “triggered” by seeing “blackface” and complained to the administration. Sheng’s profuse apologies were deemed insufficient to allow him to continue teaching the undergraduate course as well as a course for graduate students.¹⁵

Evidently, American universities have gone mad with left-wing hysteria.

The explanation sometimes offered that professors and administrators, not necessarily radical themselves, have caved to radical agitators should not be dismissed out of hand. Professors and administrators, for all their talk about campus as place where ideas are explored, want above else to avoid trouble. But the full story is not just one of weak-kneed faculty or administrators. Like many within America’s elite, a large number of professors and administrators actually believe that the U.S. suffers from systemic racism and our founding principles were about white privilege and racial oppression. That most of these professors and administrators are privileged whites seems only to accentuate their sense of guilt.

Schumpeter’s Explanation

So the larger question remains: Why are so many of them at heart anti-capitalist, anti-American, and socialists? After all, they are beneficiaries of a prosperous capitalist system. Here is exactly the rub, as Harvard economist Joseph Schumpeter observed in his book *Can Capitalism Survive?* (1947). Unlike Karl Marx, who believed that capitalism would collapse because of an oppressed proletariat, Schumpeter held that *capitalism’s biggest enemies include those who benefit most from the system*. He warned that capitalism spawns a large intellectual class that makes its living by attacking the very bourgeois system of private property and freedom that is so necessary for the intellectual class’s existence. He saw already in the 1940s that a hostile intelligentsia was emerging.

Schumpeter warned that in the later stages of capitalism, a “vigorous expansion of the educational apparatus, and particularly of the facilities for high education” occurs as government expands and corporations grow in size. As higher education expands, more and more Ph.D.s are turned out without good job prospects. Those who do find jobs enter with a discontented frame of mind and, as Schumpeter observed, “Discontentment breeds resentment.” Schumpeter argued that modern rationality does not do away with sub- or super-rational impulses. Instead, “modern rationality merely removes the restraint of sacred or semi-sacred tradition.” Schumpeter concluded, “*In a civilization that lacks the means or even the will to discipline or guide them [the intellectual class], they will revolt.*”¹⁶

What we are experiencing in America today is an intellectual class of professors unrestrained by “sacred or semi-sacred tradition.” Although supposedly trained to be rationalists, they often reject rationality in their discontent. We should take to heart Schumpeter’s warning that leaving the professoriate class unrestrained or unguided entails the destruction of our society. Be very careful where you send your child to college.

1 Christopher Caldwell in *The Age of Entitlement: America Since the 1960s* (2020) details how corporations, government agencies, universities and law firms are dictated to by human resources officers imposing de facto hiring quotas.

2 https://www.nas.org/academic-questions/31/2/homogenous_the_political_affiliations_of_elite_liberal_arts_college_faculty. Also, Bradford Richardson, “Democratic Professors Outnumber Republicans 10 to 1,” *Washington Times*, April 26, 2018.

3 Yet there are those who dare argue that there really is not a bias in university classrooms. Taylor Carr, a left-wing blogger, defends the academy by pointing out that while professors on average are about three times more liberal than the general population, only 8 to 9 percent of the faculty are “made up of those on the far left.” <https://taylor-carr.medium.com/is-there-a-liberal-bias-in-higher-education-733da679bda2>. Another proponent of the view that progressive bias is not found in the university classroom is John A. Tures, a *Huffington Post* contributor who maintains that self-selection of those entering academy is the explanation. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-myth-of-the-liberal-biased-college-campus_b_7016480.

4 Christian Schneider, “Professor Who Was Suspended After Refusing to Grade Black Students More Leniently Sues UCLA,” *The College Fix*, September 29, 2021; and <https://nypost.com/2020/06/10/ucla-suspends-professor-for-refusing-leniently-for-black-students/>.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Gordon Klein, “Why I am Suing UCLA,” <https://bariweiss.substack.com/p/why-i-am-suing-ucla>.

8 <https://nypost.com/2021/09/08/portland-professor-slams-university-as-social-justice-factory/>.

9 Ibid.

10 <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona-education/2021/09/29/video-argument-asu-multicultural-space-goes-viral/5902769001/>; <https://www.news.com.au/technology/online/social/white-students-kicked-out-of-multicultural-space-at-arizona-state-university/news-story/696b1e32fcf-009200607cae900650442>.

11 <https://www.abc15.com/news/region-southeast-valley/tempe/asu-investigating-after-viral-video-clash-over-multicultural-space>.

12 Houston Keene, “Washington University Creates Segregated Housing Specifically for Black Students,” *Fox News*, September 24, 2021.

13 Dion J. Pierre, “Demands for Segregated Housing at Williams College Are Not News,” *National Review*, May 8, 2019.

14 <https://www.thefire.org/how-yale-law-school-pressured-a-law-student-to-apologize-for-a-constitution-day-trap-house-invitation/>.

15 <https://www.michigandaily.com/news/academics/following-blackface-incident-professor-bright-sheng-takes-step-back-from-teaching-smtd-composition-course/>.

16 Joseph Schumpeter, *Can Capitalism Survive?* (1947), pp. 144, 152, 153.

A Book Recommendation: As an antidote to the toxic ideologies circulating in the U.S. educational system, the *Mindszenty Report* recommends a new book, *Revolutionary Monsters: Five Men Who Turned Liberation into Tyranny* by Donald T. Critchlow. Americans are being seduced by socialist and communist charlatans who are crying out for “revolution” in the name of “liberation.” This 206-page book offers short, accessible biographies of five of the most popular modern-day revolutionaries, whose ideologies killed millions—Lenin (Russia), Mao (China), Castro (Cuba), Mugabe (Zimbabwe) and Khomeini (Iran)—and explores basic questions about the revolutionary personality. Available in multiple formats at amazon.com, or order by phone from Regnery Publishing, 202-216-0600. Donald T. Critchlow is the author of *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism* and numerous other books of modern political history.

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