

Let's Defund Our Universities

We hear much these days about defunding the police force, about cutting budgets or taking chunks of the public money allotted to our men and women in blue and giving it to social workers and inner-city projects.

Here's a better idea.

Let's defund our colleges and universities. Let's cut their funding to the bone.

I don't mean in all academic departments, of course. American universities still lead the world in scientific research. We still produce fine mathematicians and excellent engineers, though not enough of the latter. Our colleges and universities still graduate skilled nurses and doctors, business professionals, and computer scientists.

But many other departments, particularly in the humanities, yearly churn out political radicals, graduates wishing to transform the laws, politics, and economy of the United States. They leave their ivory towers with degrees in gender studies, political science, history, and literature, thoroughly indoctrinated in such concepts as Marxism, socialism, and deconstructionist thought. Some of them join our government and our corporations. Taught to despise traditional American values – the family is evil, the culture abhorrent, the country racist and sexist, its history one of oppression and bloodshed – these young people act as a virus in the body politic.

The professors and administrators who inculcate such ideas in their students claim the right to do so because of academic freedom, yet again and again they have cold-shouldered colleagues who refused to march in lockstep with their views, suppressed them, and in some cases, forced them to leave their profession and the campus. On some campuses, teachers,

administrators, and like-minded students pounce on any who deviate from the party line, leaving others silenced, fearful of similar reprisals.

What's worse, our state and federal governments keep pouring money into these intellectual gulags. Alumni of both public and private universities follow suit, giving their dollars to people who regard most of these donors with utter contempt.

Meanwhile, these same institutions pump out students who, having paid tens of thousands of dollars for tuition, boarding, and various fees, have never read the Constitution of the United States or the plays of Shakespeare, who studied history without reading a single book about their own country, and who often seem dumb as posts about the workings of capitalism.

The language they use, the Marxist slogans and demands for "social justice," can reasonably assure us that many of this summer's rioters are graduates of such programs.

Let's step back and look at a different way we might educate our young.

For sixteen years in Asheville, North Carolina, I taught seminars in literature, history, and Latin to hundreds of home-educated students. We read historians like Paul Johnson, novelists like Faulkner and Fitzgerald, Charlotte Bronte and Betty Smith, poets like Chaucer, Donne, Eliot, and Frost. My Latin students translated passages from the Vulgate Bible and Caesar, with the advanced ones tackling Virgil's *Aeneid*. The students who stayed with me through high school wrote scores of essays, and several of them were hired at the colleges they attended as tutors in the school's writing center.

Because I had many students – I taught 12 two-hour seminars a week, with an average class size of 11 students – I could charge low rates and still earn a living. The cost for my students for a year of instruction was less than \$500 per year

per class.

Why can't our universities do the same? Why must someone pay \$50,000 a year to read English literature or study Russian history? Why do we support institutions where full professors teach so few students, where administrators, some of them highly paid, outnumber professors, where diversity is preached unless you're a white male or a conservative, where so many students seem more bent on partying and entertainment than on enlightenment and education?

Above all, why are Americans paying taxes to support institutions which advocate radical changes to the country they love? Why are we paying teachers to undermine the system that has brought freedom and prosperity to so many?

In his online [article](#) "Can the Integrity of Our Colleges Be Restored?" Philip Salzman offers an in-depth examination of some of the issues raised here and advocates specific changes such as a reduction in the number of administrators, enforcement of free speech laws on campus, and more inclusive hiring practices. He writes that our illiberal colleges and universities have become "cults manned by leftist and identity fanatics," which, if necessary, must be reformed by the force of law.

To his list I add this proposal: Let's defund the universities.

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