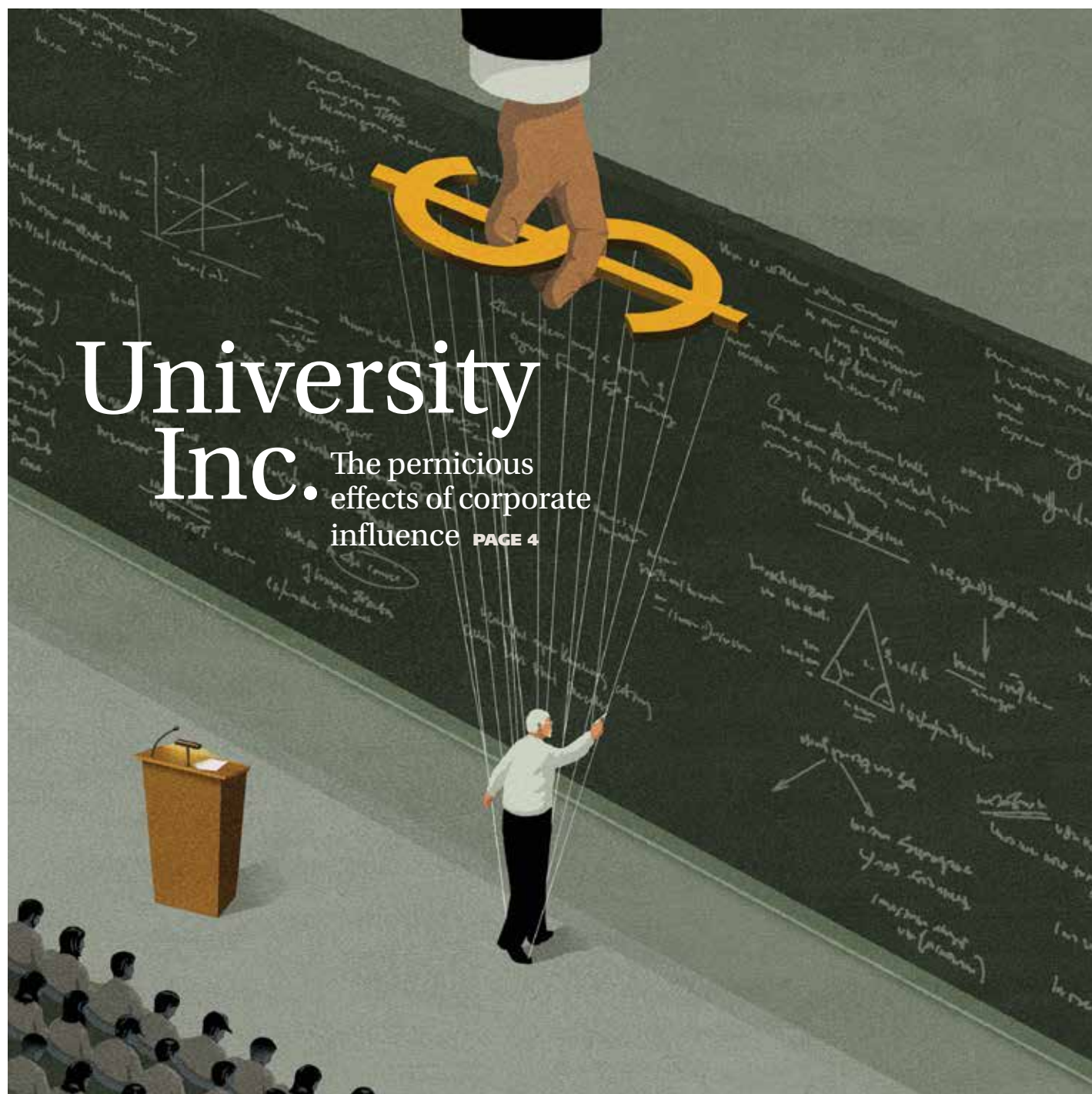




# On Campus

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF AFT HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF

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## OUR MISSION

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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Cover illustration:  
MICHAEL GLENWOOD

# Pushing forward to fight rising student debt

APRIL MARKS THREE YEARS since U.S. student debt hit \$1 trillion. Now \$1.3 trillion and climbing, unpaid student loans are a burden for more than 40 million American families.

It's time to turn it around.

That's why the AFT has joined a broad coalition of organizations, from its sister unions to Student Veterans of America, from the National Young Farmers Coalition to Jobs with Justice and the Center for American Progress, to demand that elected officials take action and address college affordability within the next six months. They are expected to sign a pledge "to act before debt strikes back," suggesting that if the burden does not ease, students may "strike" and refuse to pay back their loans.

In fact, some Corinthian Colleges students already went on strike, refusing to pay their loans because the college failed to educate them as promised (see page 18 for story).

"Students shouldn't face a double whammy of skyrocketing higher education costs and high interest rates that will lock them into debt even longer," says AFT President Randi Weingarten. "We need to ensure that young people aren't crushed by unfairly high interest rates on their student debt."

Latechia Mitchell, a second-grade teacher saddled with \$60,000 in student loans, couldn't agree more.

She and her husband, who carries an additional \$25,000 in student debt, are raising two children and living paycheck to paycheck, unable to save or trade up to a larger home for their growing family. While she loves her job, Mitchell is not sure she'd have chosen it had she understood how deeply she'd be affected by long-term debt.

Sharon Williams is also struggling: An army veteran, widow and mother of two, she enrolled in the University of Phoenix to advance her career and support her family. Despite the for-profit college's assurances, she got less financial aid than she was promised, a federal employee discount she expected never materialized, and she had no access to instructors and was unable to transfer credits.

"I spent my money on a bogus education," says Williams, and she is still paying for it.

The pledge against student debt promises to change the situation by:

- Restoring public funding to higher education, and passing policies such as free community college so college is accessible to all;
- Providing support to borrowers with policies such as student loan refinancing; and
- Stopping Wall Street's privatization of higher education by holding those who profit off the higher education system accountable.

A week of action April 27-May 1 included letters to the editor and Twitter feeds with



#DebtStrikesBack, plus a new Student Borrowers Hotline and meetings with legislators, challenging them with a six-month countdown during which they can work to bring down tuition and college debt.

Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.) launched the PRO Students (Protections and Regulations for Our Students) Act designed to protect students from predatory, deceptive and fraudulent practices. And Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (D-Md.) held a forum to hear stories from borrowers struggling to pay off their loans. In spite of the enormity of the student debt challenge, "We're going to keep on pushing," said Cummings. "If we don't push, it can only get worse. We want to make sure it gets better."



## Stronger together: Labor fights threats from all sides

RANDI WEINGARTEN, AFT President

CONTINGENT FACULTY members in Oregon, administrative workers in New Jersey, clinical professors in Florida—our members are proud of what they do. Across the country, AFT Higher Education's members are building on that pride to strengthen our union from the inside out, while fighting for the services their students and communities need—and beating back the latest round of attacks from those who want nothing more than to eviscerate us.

Why is there this drumbeat of attacks? Because those who want to destroy us know that their claims about things like trickle-down economics and the evils of big government don't hold much water with the rest of us. They realize the 99 percent understand that the attackers' sole aim is to further build the 1 percent's astronomical wealth. So instead, their strategy is to dismantle our infrastructure, piece by piece.

The attacks have been sweeping through state legislatures—Wisconsin recently became the 25th state with a so-called right-to-work law. Gov. Scott Walker reversed a campaign promise by signing this legislation that aims to silence workers by destroying their link with their unions. Unfortunately, the impacts of these efforts extend well beyond our members; workers in right-to-work states make about \$1,500 less per year than workers in states with collective bargaining.

On the national stage, the U.S. Supreme Court could change the way public sector unions function in this country. *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* is the latest in a series of court cases that could upset the balance of power.

As in *Harris v. Quinn*, the plaintiffs in the *Friedrichs* case are pushing to put an end to agency fee, which reflects the cost to the union of representing all workers in a bargaining unit. Agency fee is also known as fair share because it's only fair if everyone who benefits from the services a union provides—such as collective bargaining for

things like better wages, healthcare, a secure retirement and protections against wrongful firing—also chips in to cover the cost of those benefits.

Under the current system, if a majority of workers vote to join a union, all the workers—even those who voted no—get the benefits. If the Supreme Court were to follow the plaintiffs' reasoning, it would be

Those who want to destroy us know that their **claims about trickle-down economics** and the evils of big government **don't hold much water** with the rest of us.

setting aside thousands of public employee contracts as well as precedent reaffirmed by the court at least four times over the past 30 years. Workers in a bargaining unit wouldn't have to pay their fair share even though the union would continue to work on their behalf, and even though all workers would continue to benefit from the union's work. The intention of the *Friedrichs* case is strictly to starve unions.

Right now, we're dealing with the equivalent of tectonic plates across America. On one side, we have those who stack the deck against working families, attack the rights of workers, and push for breaks for corporations and the wealthy few. On the other side, we have working families whose wages have been stagnant for decades; they don't just want to get by, they want to get ahead. These families are clamoring for change, and even unlikely allies are looking to the American labor movement to help spur that change.

The labor movement was instrumental in building a middle class. When unions were at their peak, more workers—upward of 50 percent—were in the middle class. Even those who were historically marginalized and disenfranchised—women, African-Americans and Latinos—had a clearer path to the middle class. Private sector unions helped drive up all workers' wages.

Public sector unions ensured better government services for the poor and middle class. And the income gap between the wealthy few and the rest of us was about half of what we see today.

Take it from the International Monetary Fund: Rising inequality on the global level is due, in part, to a decline in unionization. Or as Hillary Clinton said: "The American

middle class was built, in part, by the right for people to organize and bargain."

I would add: The American middle class can be rebuilt by our collective right to organize and bargain. That's why what our members in Oregon, New Jersey, Florida and other locals across the country are doing is so important. They are fortifying and building our power by reminding each other that the way we fight back is to stand together, willfully defiant.

They are doing it by sitting down, member to member, co-worker to co-worker, friend to friend, and reminding each other that our power comes from one another. As we stand up against relentless attacks from those who want to wipe unions off the map and take away workers' voice, that strength gives us the power to fight back and move forward.

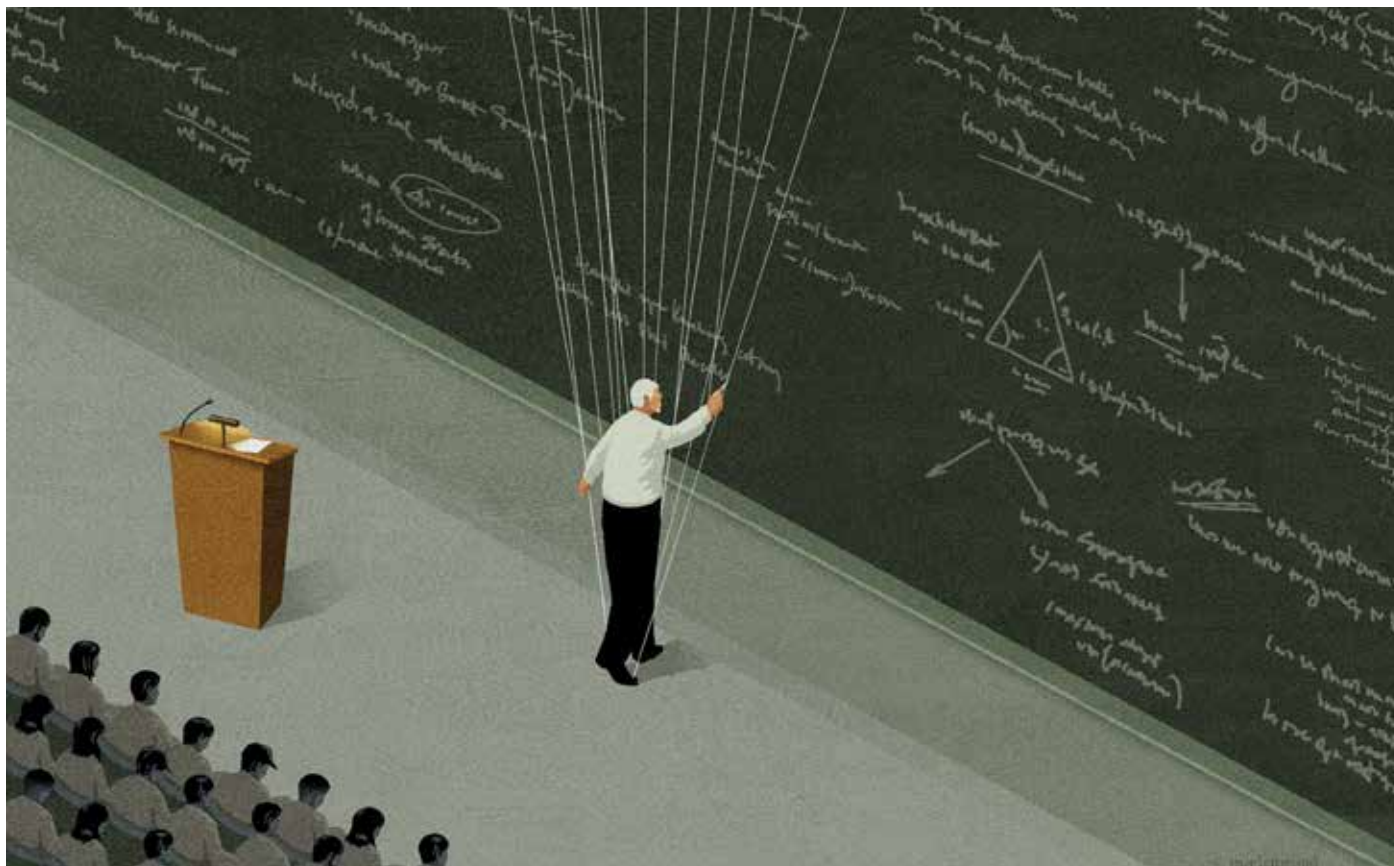
Remember, we are stronger together; we can leverage that power to improve the lives of the kids, families and communities we serve. And that's why we're here. We take pride in our work. We take pride in improving the lives of others. We can build on that power if we do it together.

The first thing you can do to join this effort is to call your local union and make sure your information is up to date. To find out more, email [highered@aft.org](mailto:highered@aft.org).



# University Inc.

The pernicious effects of corporate influence



BY VIRGINIA MYERS

THE PRESIDENT IS A CEO. The strategic plan bristles with marketing schemes and business partnerships. Corporations are installing offices and think tanks on campus, staffing them with administrators who have never heard of John Milton, that icon of academe, but are enthralled with that other Milton, free market economist Milton Friedman.

Welcome to University Inc. On campuses originally designed as havens for learning, the pursuit of knowledge and the exploration of higher truth, the air is now thick with corporate influence and its companion, a thirst for profit. It's not just an integration of practical job skills and headier concepts from Philosophy 101—it's a corporate takeover.

This is not new: It was 2005 when Jennifer Washburn published her book *University Inc.*, an overview of cozy university-business relationships that reached back to the 1990s, when the University of California, San Francisco and Boots Pharmaceuticals delayed the

publication of research on thyroid medication, and Novartis-Syngenta tried to bury research at the University of California, Berkeley on the herbicide atrazine and sexual abnormality in frogs. Washburn highlighted pro-Enron studies produced by Enron-funded professors at the Harvard Business School, and the patenting of a human gene discovered at a public university so that a private company could profit.

But the trend has accelerated, with privatization of K-12 schools and the pernicious influence of big money—like Charles and David Koch—an increasingly common and ubiquitous presence on campus. Where university faculty and staff once stumbled over words like branding and marketing, we now accept them as part of the educational landscape. Professors market their courses with online videos meant to charm potential students into enrolling—because in some places, professors get paid more if they fill more seats in class. Some people call that bean counting.

Why does it matter? Well, you try teaching an overenrolled classroom, stuffed to the gills because the university can make more money per class if you just put a few more chairs in the back. Or try to publish research that could harm the company for which that new student center is named. Want to sit on the hiring committee for the next biology professor? Sorry, that seat's taken by the folks who are funding the chair.

Ka-ching! Education has become a \$1 trillion business, according to the Education Industry Association, the aptly named “professional” organization that helps “education entrepreneurs” find “potential customers” and “form strategic business partnerships, gain business skills, acquire industry data and understand/influence public policies.” The description is from EIA’s website, which is heavy on business jargon and notably short on equity and access to education.

## Start it up

At the State University of New York, businesses

are literally moving in. The SUNY Tax-Free Areas to Revitalize and Transform Upstate New York (START-UP NY) invites businesses to relocate onto state-funded public university grounds, and gives them a free pass on taxes for 10 years if they do. The idea is to increase industry-sponsored research and enrich student experience, but it could come at great cost: The private enterprises are not necessarily aligned with the academic mission of the university and may compete with existing programs. They could siphon off already limited campus resources, including maintenance and support services. There is no guarantee that once the tax break disappears, the companies will stick around to fulfill whatever programming they've begun.

The United University Professions, which represents faculty and staff at SUNY, is also concerned that criteria for participation is vague and that the impact on curriculum and academic workload is unpredictable. As the program rolls out, some businesses are planning to participate in curriculum development and expansion; others look forward to using existing support services, an incentive offered by some schools. "We have examples of business proposals that do not bode well for students or our members," says UUP Secretary Eileen Landy. At SUNY Cobleskill, for example, Landy says the business plan states businesses and faculty will "design and implement student research and/or class projects."

"We're not sure if faculty are guaranteed a real say in any of this, or if services typically provided by SUNY employees will shift to private businesses," she says. "We want answers."

UUP is using the Freedom of Information Act to request copies of every business application submitted to campuses, and is urging members to question campus leadership on issues such as the role academic and professional employees will play before and after plans are finalized; whether businesses are required to conduct impact studies to measure potential strain on campus resources; how work performed by businesses similar in scope compares with work done by public employees; and the number and types of jobs created.

"UUP isn't going to blindly follow the governor or chancellor down a path that jeopardizes the public university, our members, or the patients and students we serve," says Frederick Kowal, president of UUP, who has spoken passionately and frequently about the issue. "We're going to do our research to ensure

START-UP NY is a true benefit to the public."

### All Koched up

Of course, not all business-education partnerships are bad. Universities can benefit from philanthropy, and corporations, with all their resources, are a logical source. But the degree to which universities have turned

bers and fertilizers. Also, their involvement with the American Legislative Exchange Council (known as ALEC), a corporate advocacy group wielding vast influence over state legislation, has been widely reported.

These two are also infamous for their stance on the environment. They give millions to organizations that fight environmen-



A new SUNY program has some **businesses** planning to participate in **curriculum development** and expansion.

to the corporate world is turning our public campuses into privately funded endeavors.

Of particular note are Charles and David Koch, billionaire brothers known for their right-wing politics, aggressive stance on privatization and corporate interests. Koch companies are involved in a vast array of industries, including fuel, building and consumer products, electronic connectors, fi-

tal regulation and want to limit taxes on industry. The Justice Department nailed Koch Industries in a suit claiming it was responsible for more than 300 oil spills and 3 million gallons of oil spilled into lakes and rivers; Koch paid a \$30 million civil fine. Koch Industries was also found guilty of negligence and malice in the deaths of two teens after an explosion from a leaky butane pipeline. And Koch Petroleum Group pled guilty

GREGG MATTHEWS



### VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Political parties, anti-public intellectual pundits, and mainstream news sources view the purpose of higher education largely as a workstation for training a global workforce and generating capital for the financial elite. ... Under such circumstances, it becomes more difficult to reclaim a history in which the culture of business is not the culture of higher education. Higher education ... once functioned as a crucial reminder of ... the potential role it might play in attacking social problems and deepening the promise of a democracy to come. ... Today, it is fair to say that Dewey's once vaunted claim that "democracy needs to be reborn in each generation, and education is its midwife" has been either willfully ignored, forgotten or has become an object of scorn.

**HENRY GIROUX**, professor of English and cultural studies, McMaster University, and keynote speaker, 2015 AFT/NEA Higher Education Conference

# Koch case study

## Holding sway at Florida State University

BY LAKEY

ON MAY 23, 2014, I WATCHED Florida State University's Presidential Search Advisory Committee pass a motion to fast-track John Thrasher as president of FSU without so much as an official application.

Thrasher has no academic credentials, but check his political profile: This Florida state senator's career has been shaped by campaign donations from corporate darlings Charles and David Koch. And, he was named Legislator of the Year by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which lobbies for laws that would protect business interests at great cost to the environment and the public good.

Thrasher also chaired Florida Gov. Rick Scott's 2014 re-election campaign. Rick Scott: a governor with deep ties to the uber-conservative tea party; a governor who was caught red-handed in 2011 at the Charles and David Koch corporate secret donor conferences.

This is a story of one the most egregious cases of corporate influence in American higher education—the Koch brothers' ubiquitous presence on the campus of FSU, from the president's office to content in the classroom. It's a story that makes me despair for the decaying integrity of an institution I hold dear, while also inspiring me to fight hard to save it.

That the Charles Koch Foundation has long been a significant presence at FSU is undisputed. It funds the Florida-based nonprofit James Madison Institute and FSU's DeVoe Moore Center, two think tanks that claim expertise in "limited government, economic freedom, federalism, and individual liberty," key concepts of the profit-first approach for which the Kochs are known. The Koch brothers also crafted a memorandum of understanding with FSU's department of economics that essentially promised to help fund two of the department's programs—the Study of Political Economy and Free Enterprise program and the Excellence in Economic Education program—but only if the Charles Koch Foundation were allowed to influence faculty hires and curriculum.

The Kochs' overwhelming presence in the institutional infrastructure means their conser-



vative, market-driven philosophy is omnipresent. Private donor relationships with public universities in the United States have a long tradition that I support and encourage, but the Kochs' involvement on campus oversteps those traditions not only by its sheer magnitude—the Charles Koch Foundation has contributed more than \$4 million to FSU's economics department already—but also by disregarding academic freedom and the mission of the university.

The James Madison Institute is notorious for climate change denial and its past alliance with the corporate-supported ALEC. Everything that the institute and the DeVoe Moore Center produce supports "free market enterprise"—in other words, unregulated capitalism. This approach operates without regard for long-standing intellectual principles such as academic freedom and shared governance, even when set at an institution of higher learning like FSU.

Intellectual inquiry and academic freedom are put in place to guard our ability as academics to seek the truth and speak the truth. Everywhere Koch influence has infiltrated FSU, the "truth" has been reduced to the narrow confines dictated by the ideology of "economic freedom" and "individual liberty." Social welfare and equity, on the other hand, lose out.

At FSU, the Kochs have demonstrated that Koch money comes with strings attached or it is yanked. Those strings poison the very mission of academia. The more we swallow the poison, the sicker we become.

But the mission of FSU is not dead yet. When Thrasher was appointed president of FSU, a new collective notion of academic freedom was born out of despair among faculty, staff and students that corporate money, power and ideology had entered our university at all levels and taken hold. We are fighting back, working hard to expose corporate influence, and insisting on transparency and scrutiny of donor intent.

to covering up environmental violations involving 91 tons of carcinogenic benzene discharged from one of its refineries.

Their attention to higher education is troubling, at the very least. Charles Koch, in describing how to advance the cause of free market capitalism (understood to be an unfettered, profit-first endeavor), once suggested four avenues: education, media, legal challenge and political action. "I do maintain that the educational route is the most vital and most neglected," he said.

That was in 1974, and the age of neglect is over. In just five years, between 2005 and 2013, the Koch brothers spent at least \$68 million on college and university campuses, paying for faculty, research and publications. The non-profit activists at UnKoch My Campus currently list 398 institutions that have accepted Koch money, and their online database continues to reveal Koch influence on campuses across the country. George Mason University, a public university in Virginia, leads the list: It has accepted \$34.6 million from Koch. At a preconference workshop preceding the AFT/NEA National Higher Education Conference this March, AFT and NEA members used the online database to look up their own universities and discover their own Koch money. Among some of the larger donations: \$1.7 million at West Virginia University, \$187,900 at San Jose State University and \$92,230 at Michigan State University.

Florida State University has one of the most compelling stories. When a faculty member heard—through bridge game conversation—about Koch investment on campus, the effort to uncover any possible influence began. Emails and other public records (described in the *Tampa Bay Times* and by Dave Levinthal at the Center for Public Integrity) revealed an agreement between FSU and the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation that stipulated that, in return for a sizeable donation to the school's economics department, Koch would appoint the advisory committee that would select professors. Koch also wanted to conduct annual evaluations.

"There is no free lunch," noted faculty member Bob Benson in an email to other faculty. If the department was not willing to restrict hiring to Koch-approved faculty, Benson said, Koch would not fund them. According to UnKoch My Campus, Koch offered to pay Benson an additional \$100,000 to stay on as chair of the department of economics so that he could secure the Koch contract and presumably represent their interests. Koch also paid

*Lahey is a doctoral candidate in English literature and former public relations chair and political action chair for Graduate Assistants United at Florida State University. She founded the Foundation Against the Corporatization of Education and is the research and writing chair for FSU Progress Coalition, a student organization working closely with UnKochMyCampus.org.*



a graduate assistant, Matthew Brown, \$500,000; Brown was instrumental in crafting the Memorandum of Understanding that outlined Koch's agreement (see "Koch Case Study" on page 6 for more).

Samantha Parsons, a student at George Mason University, was surprised to find so much Koch money at her school. But it wasn't just money: Charles Koch is on the board of directors for the school's Mercatus Center, which receives \$10 million, and he is the chair at GMU's Institute for Humane Studies, funded at \$18 million.

Alerted by faculty, GMU students mobilized and began looking into the influence Koch might be exercising, but they got nowhere. "When we were denied access to our contracts with the Charles Koch Foundation, we became outraged," says Parsons. "Although GMU is a public university, we have a private 501(c)(3) established called the GMU Foundation that accepts all private donations. This makes all records, contracts, grant agreements, etc. private; no one affiliated with the university can access it." The students thought this was "absurd" and started to campaign for transparency—thus far, unsuccessfully.

"We cannot say what exactly the Kochs want in return for the funding because our administration refuses to disclose grant agreements/MOUs," says Parsons. But she and other students have put two and two together. "Considering GMU continues to get a great deal of funding year after year, and the faculty in our economics department are often affiliated with other Koch-funded think tanks, curriculum focuses on free market economics, and much of the research produced by the Mercatus Center is focused on deregulation and supports industry interests, we can assume (and connect the dots) that GMU is obviously giving Koch something they appreciate," says Parsons. "It is as if our university's name and prestige is being used to push forth ideology and research that benefits the corporations that are funding it, which I believe is a significant conflict of interest."

Transparency has heated up the fight at the University of Kansas as well, where students filed a Kansas Open Records Act request to find out whether there are strings attached to the \$1.4 million the Kochs have donated to their school. The money helped establish the KU Center for Applied Economics. Its founding executive director, Art Hall, was chief economist for the Koch Companies Public

Sector, a lobbying subsidiary of Koch Industries. Critics contend that Hall continues to lobby, but now under the guise of academia.

KU charged the students \$1,800 to obtain the records they wanted, and now they are stalled, because Hall has sued the university to prevent it from releasing the information. He says the effort represents a violation of his academic freedom.

Staff at UnKoch My Campus say this lack of transparency is part of the Kochs' modus operandi: The organization cloaks its strategy in the respect usually reserved for academics and think tanks, "helping" them publish re-

**"It is as if our university's name and prestige is being used to push forth ideology that benefits the corporations that are funding it."**

—SAMANTHA PARSONS, George Mason University student

search that supports pro-corporate, free market ideology. At the same time, it hides behind a screen of privacy.

"When Charles Koch finances the very idea of 'economic freedom' and then bankrolls university departments to teach the concept to its students, he is doing so at the expense of another crucial freedom: academic freedom," states UnKoch My Campus on its website.

### **Job factories or institutions of higher learning?**

Performance-based funding is another

threat to academia, and it is especially evident in the governor of New York's proposed budget. In that proposal, 10 percent of campus funding would be withheld until campuses create performance improvement plans that include experiential learning as a graduation requirement and a bonus for campus presidents who participate in START-UP NY, among other undisclosed goals. It could make universities dependent on pleasing budget-making state policymakers who favor graduation rates and job readiness over academic rigor, the liberal arts and critical-thinking skills. Such an approach could threaten free-thinking academic inquiry, close down programs that don't "perform" by meeting "targeted occupations lists," and even soften graduation requirements to artificially elevate graduation numbers.

"This is an attack on our academic independence," says UUP's Kowal. "We are the ones who create the courses and set requirements for graduation. The governor offers no resources or guidance as to how this would work, especially with most liberal arts degrees."

In Florida, performance-based funding has already punished New College of Florida, a small public liberal arts college in Sarasota. Its graduates include students who went abroad to study on scholarships at places like the University of Oxford; others joined the Peace Corps, and some took jobs outside the state. "Some people would consider studying at Oxford or joining the Peace Corps a success," says Kowal.

But according to the performance metrics, which are based on how quickly graduates are employed and how much money they make, these students were failures, and the school lost about \$1 million in state funding as a result.



### **VOICES FROM THE FIELD**

The real issue is the corporatization of higher education. It's not that the Kochs are pushing a specific ideology, it's that this ideology—the idea of capital growth and profit—has taken the label of truth. Colleges are expected not to produce truth but to produce profit. We cannot hold [colleges] accountable to truth and look to them for truth if we're going to require them to be accountable to anything else. Academic freedom is freedom from obligations to anything other than truth.

SCHUYLER KRAUS, president of Students for a Sustainable Future at Kansas University

In part because many liberal arts graduates experience a lag time of about 10 years before their salaries jump ahead of their peers, performance-based programs typically favor technical education. Departments that teach literature, philosophy and the arts lose faculty and funding while science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs thrive. When Florida Gov. Rick Scott famously framed anthropology as useless and suggested shifting state funding to fields more directly associated with the job market, he was just demonstrating the tip of the iceberg in the business of higher ed: If there is no return on the investment, why bother?

Scott's remarks prove why faculty members, not government policymakers, should decide academic direction and content. "There are entire worlds he needs to learn

### How much do you make?

Tracking graduates to see which degrees earn the highest salaries has become a popular state sport. The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce has used census information to do this, but the new reports come from state-generated data. In Tennessee, a report produced jointly by College Measures and American Institutes for Research showed health professions graduates from the University of Memphis earned the most (nearly \$60,000) and those with degrees in philosophy and religious studies from Austin Peay State University earned the least (\$20,500).

But the concept is seriously flawed. By tracking only the first year after graduation, the university misses the delayed monetary success common among liberal arts graduates. It also leaves out students who move out

programs that put the public good before profit are suffering. Last year, three centers in the University of North Carolina system were shut down: They studied the environment, voting rights and poverty. Critics charge that East Carolina University's Center for Biodiversity, North Carolina Central University's Institute for Civic Engagement and Social Change, and particularly the UNC School of Law's Center on Poverty, Work and Opportunity in Chapel Hill, which was led by an outspoken critic of North Carolina's Republican-controlled Legislature, were targeted by the conservative state government for closure. Not enough economic oomph in the concept of social justice?

"Maybe the goal is not to get a technical job the minute you get out of college," argues Auxter, in Florida. Instead, he suggests, "the goal is for you to see the big picture, globally, to understand something about the world."

The concept that a college education is solely designed for the benefit of the individual graduate is flawed. But so, too, is the notion that it must build the state's economy, or enhance the opportunities that economy affords to profit-driven corporations. The academic Terry Eagleton, in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, suggests universities should maintain the traditionally established distance between themselves and society at large, "allowing them to reflect on the values, goals and interests of a social order too frenetically bound up in its own short-term practical pursuits to be capable of much self-criticism." Regrettably, he notes, "institutions that produced Erasmus and John Milton, Einstein and Monty Python, capitulate to the hard-faced priorities of global capitalism."

Eagleton is also dismayed at the co-opting of serious academic pursuit for more popular studies: "vampires rather than Victorians, sexuality rather than Shelley, fanzines rather than Foucault." That notion extends to the grandiose attractions universities build to attract tuition dollars: luxurious dormitories, opulent athletic centers and food courts where toque-headed chefs carefully plate dishes of halibut with saffron beurre blanc.

And when students are treated like customers in the classroom, professors are confronted with the demand for a return on tuition: good grades that may or may not have been earned.

### Faculty for sale: the exploitation of cheap labor

In a world of cost-benefit analyses, contingent



Some union contracts  
preserve **faculty rights**  
to **define course content**  
and engage "frankly  
and forthrightly"  
in scholarship.

about before making these comments," said Tom Auxter, president of United Faculty of Florida, in an article in *Inside Higher Ed*. "It's not for the governor to say."

The governor of Wisconsin has also tried to hijack the direction of higher education. Earlier this year, Gov. Scott Walker slipped language into his budget that would have stripped the University of Wisconsin's core mission of the "search for truth" and the intent to "improve the human condition," and changed it to a new goal: "to meet the state's workforce needs." Walker later claimed the effort was a drafting error, but his intent to prioritize job fulfillment is undeniable.

of state, those who are entrepreneurs or self-employed, and federal employees. And it does not consider choices like graduate school or public service, such as a stint in AmeriCorps, a "success."

Noting that students care about whether their tuition money—and student debt—is buying them a place in the job market, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* quotes Mark Schneider, vice president of College Measures, which was responsible for the report: "This is consumer-driven. This is perfectly consistent with the needs of students." Talk about business-speak.

All this focus on monetary success means



faculty—those who are paid per course, with no contract beyond the current semester—have risen to the top—that is, the top of the list for cheap labor, with no benefits, few resources (like office space) and salaries at a fraction of what full-time faculty are paid. This is all great for the bottom line, but disastrous for academic freedom. Hired on a semester-to-semester contract, contingent faculty are often so fearful that their contracts will not be renewed that they avoid ruffling feathers among administrators, thus quashing the intellectual risk-taking that makes academia so rewarding for faculty as well as students.

Contingent labor is changing the very nature of higher education, from a stimulating, well-supported venue for healthy inquiry and exploration to a grinding and predictable training program, a “factory that mass produces college graduates,” as James Castiglione, former president of the Kean Federation of Teachers in New Jersey, describes it. Castiglione was commenting on a policy at Kean University that required professors to keep time sheets, which is anathema in a world that was once so far from that of the hourly worker. “The time sheets are effectively treating faculty not as ... scholars, but as 19th-century factory workers,” he says.

### Let's get back to the books— and we don't mean accounting

There are so many pieces to the fight against corporatization that the effort can seem fragmented. But the point is unified: Remember, at its core, the mission of a university is to maintain academic integrity. Jobs are important, but if we lose our integrity, we might as well be a corporate training center—designed for profit, not for knowledge.

The fact remains, however, that running a university costs money, and much of the businesslike evolution in academia has been driven by want. Not enough money to hire a full-time tenure-track professor? Grab someone from the pool of contingents. Can't pull from the endowment to pay for your research? Seek out a corporate donor.

With state budgets shafting public universities, it's no wonder colleges are turning to other sources for money. Half of the nation's public colleges now receive less than half their revenue from state budgets. Rising tuition reflects the trend: In the last 15 years, tuition went from covering just 24.5 percent of the costs of public higher education, to covering 47.1 percent in 2014, according to the State Higher Education Executive Offi-

cers Association. Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal proposed cutting \$141.3 million from his higher ed budget next year; Wisconsin's Walker wants to slash \$300 million over the next two years. One of the most effective things we can do to preserve academic integrity is to insist on public funding for public institutions. Unions must mobilize and convince legislators that this is a priority.

Union contracts can also be influential. The United Faculty of Florida's current contract is very specific about protecting aca-

demic freedom for “a community of scholars engaged in the pursuit of truth and the communication of knowledge in an atmosphere of tolerance and freedom,” and also preserves faculty rights to define course content and engage “frankly and forthrightly” in scholarship and discussion. And at schools like Johns Hopkins University, faculty are creating statements of academic freedom with their administrators and students.

It is just one way that we bring back into focus our mission: to educate, not to profit.

## UnKoch your campus

1

### Check if your school is receiving Koch funding.

See the UnKoch My Campus database, <http://bit.ly/13rAj1s>, or Koch's self-published list, <http://bit.ly/1HVofDs>.

2

### Conduct research.

Look at your school's website for information about what Koch money is funding and if there are any strings attached to those donations. UnKoch's toolkit (<http://bit.ly/1PojHv2>) and research guide can help.

3

### Request transparency.

Before launching a campaign to pressure the school for change, it's important to ask directly for the information you want instead of assuming the school won't provide it. If it doesn't provide the information, you resort to other measures.

4

### File a public records request.

If your university is public, then you may be able to file an open records request for memorandums of understanding, contracts and communication around any Koch donor agreements. Laws vary by state, so check UnKoch's Student Press Law Center (<http://bit.ly/1ygtl8t>) for help submitting a records request.

5

### Raise your concerns in the media.

Share your story. Based on your research and what you've seen on other campuses, express your concern and make your case for transparency by getting coverage in your campus or local paper, or submitting opinion pieces or letters to the editor. Don't forget to start your own social media account (see @UnKochCampus for guidance).

6

### Start a petition.

Make it specific to your university and the problems or influences you've researched. Put in specific benchmarks and goals to be met.

7

### Build a coalition.

Pull together students, faculty, alumni, unions, community organizations, student government and the faculty senate.

8

### Meet with your university president and/or board of trustees.

Present your case for greater transparency regarding private donations and the influences they may have, and offer to work with the administration to find solutions.

9

### Ensure that your campus has policies to prevent undue influence.

Propose specific additions or changes that protect academic freedom and safeguard the integrity of your university.

10

### Escalate.

Build people power and increase pressure on your target. Sign-on letters, call-in days, rallies, days of action and sit-ins are just a few examples. Be creative to get your message out there and push for the change needed on campus.

## Beware the thunder lizards

MOOCs are on their way to a campus near you



BY CYNTHIA EATON

THE THUNDER LIZARDS are coming to higher education, like Godzilla obliterating the old to plant the “seeds of a new world to come,” sowing the demise of college as we know it to make space for “The University of Everywhere.”

While some might shudder at the destructiveness of this vision, Kevin Carey, in his recently released book *The End of College*, hails the venture capitalists who are these self-styled “thunder lizards,” bringing their game-changing, disruptive technologies like

to maximize their revenue; what they’re trying to do is maximize how important they are so that people who work there seem important and like special people.”

Really? Colleges are expensive, actually, because it costs money to educate students with appropriate resources, including fairly compensated faculty and staff—who are, in fact, “important.”

While the “Year of the MOOC” is past, books like *The End of College* and Ryan Craig’s *College Disrupted* just keep coming, pressing for more allegiance to this tech-heavy model. Craig asserts that the “great unbundling” of higher education will actually make college

nity college students in Virginia and Washington state public schools—and particularly men, students of color and those beginning with low GPAs—fared significantly worse in online courses. But last June, researchers Temi Bidjerano and Peter Shea claimed that community college students who took an online course in their first year completed their degrees at significantly higher rates. They suggested the two states examined by CCRC must be outliers.

So where are we now? Udacity is offering nanodegrees to adult workers in technical fields, and Coursera recently added professionally aimed microdegrees to its lengthy list of liberal arts courses.

There have been other useful suggestions about the long-term potential for MOOCs, from serving as interactive textbooks and resources for flipped classroom innovations to offering noncredit MOOCs to students preparing for remedial placement exams. Faculty continue to experiment with MOOCs in interesting ways. There is certainly potential here, but more faculty-driven, careful research is sorely needed.

Meanwhile, the thunder lizards continue to breathe fire. Clearly, our current system is not without issues and concerns, but having honest conversations might just be a smarter solution than dressing up as Godzilla and destroying the entire enterprise.

While the “Year of the MOOC” is past, the forces of privatization are not only alive and well but actively emulating Godzilla in their approach toward public higher education.

MOOCs—massive open online courses—to academia because they view “every inconvenience, inefficiency, and injustice as a problem technology can solve.”

MOOCs certainly look shiny and bright at first glance, offering free education to millions. But many MOOCs transfer curriculum planning from faculty to corporations driven by profit. Their one-size-fits-all approach fails to meet diverse student needs. They exploit contingent faculty, threaten intellectual property rights, and stratify students into those taking free classes and those paying tuition for a bricks-and-mortar experience.

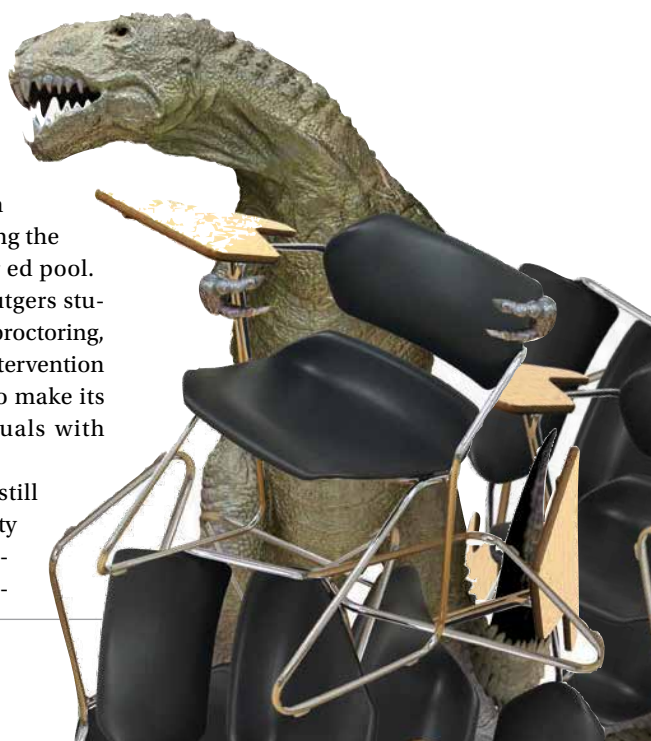
In an interview with National Public Radio, Carey expresses disgust at colleges’ near monopoly on the higher education market. “Colleges are expensive because they can be,” he asserts, although he concedes that because most colleges are nonprofit, “they’re not trying

more valuable, so traditional, on-campus colleges will simply need to do a better job of communicating why students who can afford it should pay for the whole package—a stunningly casual endorsement of “bricks for the rich, clicks for the poor.”

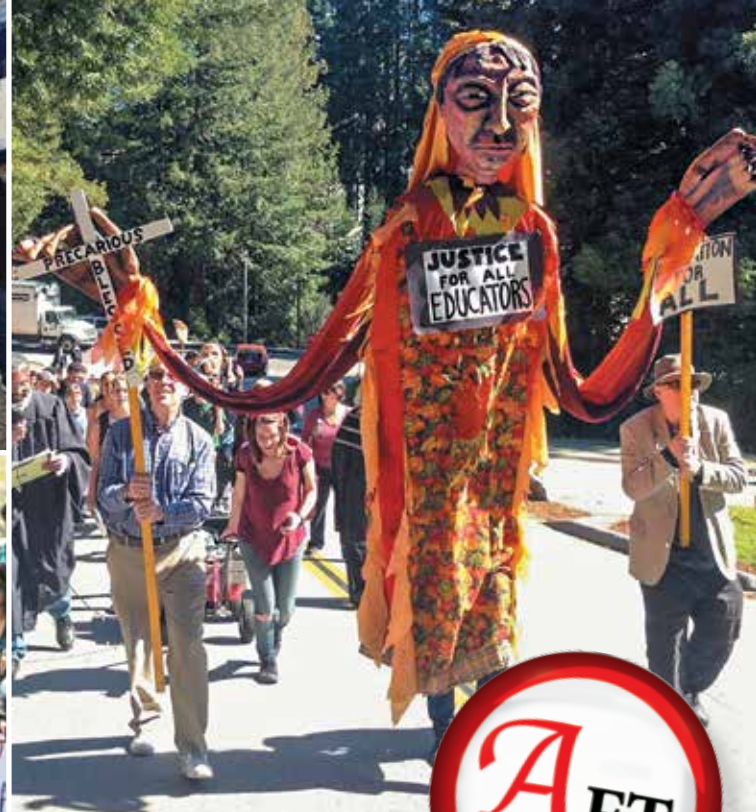
MOOC mania continues to thrive despite the fact that the system doesn’t work as well as we thought it would. An edX study of MOOCs, released on April 1, notes that low completion rates persist, participants continue to be older and already possess a college degree, and almost half are uninterested in certification. That’s hardly pulling the disenfranchised into the higher ed pool. Other MOOC issues include Rutgers students’ protest of invasive online proctoring, and the Department of Justice intervention that was necessary to get edX to make its MOOCs accessible to individuals with disabilities.

The research on MOOCs is still mixed. A survey by the Community College Research Center at Columbia University shows that commu-

Cynthia Eaton, professor of English at Suffolk County Community College, taught online courses before they were all the rage and values their potential—cautiously. She is the adjunct coordinator at the Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College.







## National Adjunct Action Week brings attention to exploited faculty

Clockwise from top left: Adjuncts at Temple University in Philadelphia make a stand; “Saint Precaria” illustrates the precarious nature of the contingent workforce for University Council-AFT members at the University of California, Santa Cruz; and AFT Guild members from the San Diego Community College District demonstrate for equal pay.

CONTINGENT FACULTY have been grabbing headlines as more and more people realize the extent to which these part-time, temporary workers are exploited at colleges and universities across the nation. The attention crested during National Adjunct Action Week, Feb. 23-27, when AFT-represented adjuncts joined their brothers and sisters in everything from creative picketing to teach-ins to in-class explanations of adjunct exploitation. Our favorite: “Scarlet A” t-shirts and buttons signifying the stigma of being an adjunct and the commitment to changing adjuncts’ status from second-class workers to well-respected, well-trained, well-paid workers with benefits and supportive working conditions. For the 80,000 adjuncts represented by the AFT, actions like these raise awareness and begin to make a difference.

## Education Department cuts ties with student debt agencies

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT of Education has canceled contracts with five debt collection agencies accused of exploiting people who have defaulted on their student loans. The move comes after years of complaints and investigations showing that profit-driven collection agencies withhold information about flexible debt relief programs that could help debtors. They inflate payments, then garnish paychecks and even withhold Social Security checks from those unable to pay. In some cases, they continue to hound people even after they have paid off their loans.

The Department of Education has cut ties with Pioneer Credit Recovery (a subsidiary of Navient Corp.), Coast Professional, Enterprise

Recovery Systems, National Recoveries and West Asset Management.

“These student debt collection agencies are known predatory actors,” AFT President Randi Weingarten says. “Until higher education is free, collection of student debt should not be handled by for-profit firms. It should be brought back into the Department of Education, where it was for many years.” The AFT joined with coalitions and partners like the Higher Ed, Not Debt campaign and Jobs with Justice’s Debt-Free Future campaign to work for this change.

Student loans are big business: The Department of Education manages \$744.3 billion in direct student loans, and it pays out more than

\$1 billion each year to collectors who track down borrowers who have defaulted. In some cases, for-profit collectors charge borrowers higher rates than the department requires.

Student advocates are encouraged that the five worst debt collecting offenders have been stopped. “This is a victory for every student who wants to climb the ladder of opportunity,” says Weingarten. “Let’s face it: Most of us aren’t pole vaulters; we climb this ladder one rung at a time. These student debt collection agencies are pulling the rungs out from under our nation’s students and graduates. We’re glad the Department of Education has finally taken a first step to protect those with student debt.”



# The power of Pearson threatens academic integrity



PEARSON IS everywhere.

Those textbooks you order every year—the ones with the astronomical price tags your students complain about? Pearson published them. The Miller Analogies Test (MAT) that landed your graduate assistant her position in the department? Pearson wrote it. The online program your university just launched? Pearson. Even the Penguin paperback you brought to the beach this year is from a publisher partially owned by Pearson.

Pearson also owns the *Financial Times*, Prentice Hall, Adobe Press and part of Nook. It follows students from recruiting software through online courses, lectures, PowerPoints, discussion questions, study programs and grading rubrics.

Most important for colleges and universi-

ties, Pearson has monopolized the online learning industry. Riding its reputation as a decades-old source of educational materials, from grade school geography to graduate-level texts, it has become the go-to company when an institution wants to expand online learning programs but may not have the resources to do it with in-house staff. In fact, some institutions are so anxious to jump into bed with a familiar name, they forgo the usual bidding process.

That was the case at the University of Florida, according to an exposé *Politico* published in February: Administrators awarded Pearson a \$186 million, decadelong, no-bid contract—claiming it was an extension of a much smaller contract for an entirely different service—and now Pearson is building an

online college there. Two colleges in Texas acted similarly, hiring Pearson to create online coursework for \$9 million. And Northern Arizona University signed on for more than 100 online Pearson-designed courses, for about \$8.7 million.

All of this doesn't begin to touch the preK-12 market, where Pearson is best known for assessments such as the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (known as PARCC), but it also provides test prep, tutoring, teacher evaluation and curriculum.

Pearson is so ubiquitous that it "has become almost like a shadow national Department of Education unto itself," says Michael Apple, an education professor at the Univer-

Pearson is so ubiquitous that it "has become almost like a **shadow Department of Education** unto itself."

—MICHAEL APPLE, United Faculty and Academic Staff,  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

sity of Wisconsin-Madison and a member of United Faculty and Academic Staff. Pearson "has also become even more powerful in teacher education," he says, citing Pearson's role operating edTPA (formerly the Teacher Performance Assessment), a popular assessment tool sometimes required of new graduates looking for a teaching job. According to Apple, edTPA gives short shrift to critical social and cultural knowledge, "thereby making it even more unlikely that ... important foundational courses in education (history, philosophy, sociology) will be seen as necessary at institutions of higher education."

"Many of us are more than a little worried that education will be transformed into simply preparation for an unequal economy rather than a place for learning about civic responsibility and critical citizenship," he warns. "Yet these are among the most important aims of any education."

Pearson's aim, however, is profit. The British-based company reported £4.9 billion in sales in 2013, or approximately \$6.86 billion, 60 percent of which is earned in the

United States. The company receives up to 60 percent of student tuition dollars collected for its online courses. And get this: If it doesn't meet enrollment goals—and frequently, it does not—Pearson still gets paid. In other words, if it promises 100 students, it gets paid tuition for 100 students, even if only 50 show up. That leaves the university holding the bag.

Much of this goes on behind a screen of corporate privacy, since Pearson is not, despite its multiple contracts at public institutions, a public entity itself. The screen does not extend to test takers, however: Pearson has been found monitoring the social media accounts of students taking the PARCC test, and has declined to join other education-technology firms that have signed the Student Privacy Pledge designed to limit the collection, maintenance and use of student personal information.

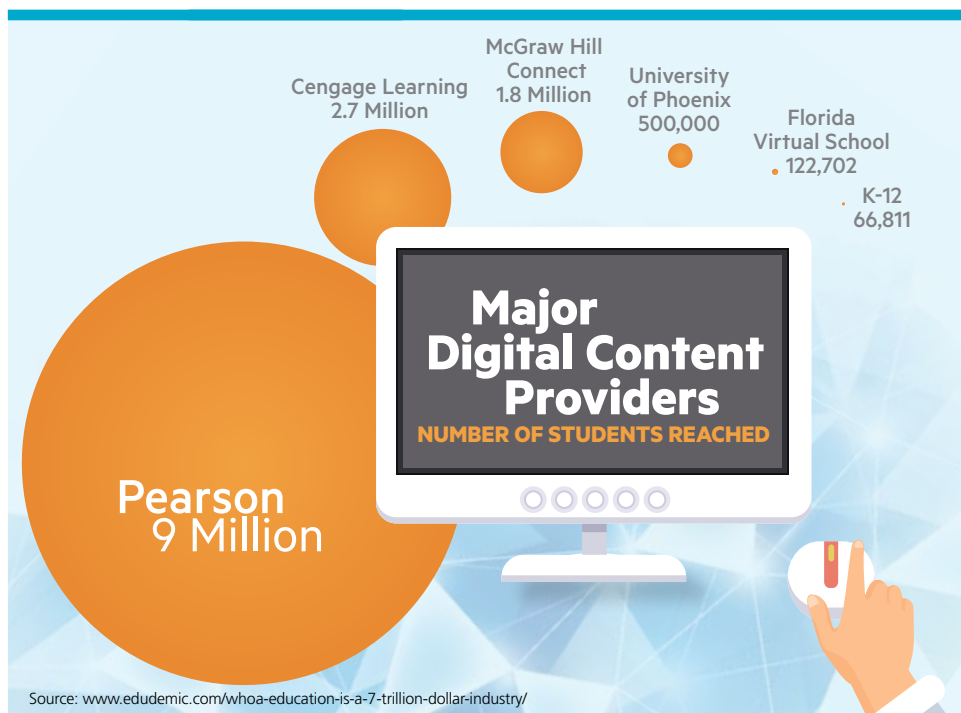
A backlash has begun to take hold. According to *Politico*, California State University scrapped a 2012 contract for \$25 million after online recruiting flopped. Howard University canceled Pearson plans for online program development, for undisclosed reasons. And in Texas, a \$90 million contract for standardized testing was “too vague” to renew.

Unionized faculty at Rutgers were able to

stop further involvement with Pearson this spring, with their resolution to reject any new online degree programs managed by the company (see article below). The move was not designed to limit online teaching, but rather to preserve the faculty's essential role in directing it themselves.

Pearson may not be a bad corporation. It

makes lots of money—that's what corporations do. But Pearson is not set up to value academics over profit. That is what faculty do. We must ensure that we continue to shape the heart of higher learning, not just filling classrooms but reaching students with inspiring pathways to knowledge and innovation driven by scholarship, not profit.



## Rutgers faculty detail case against Pearson

WHEN MEMBERS OF the Rutgers AAUP-AFT learned about their school's contract with Pearson's eCollege division to develop and manage online degree programs for 22,000 new students, they did more than raise their eyebrows. They organized, and they passed a resolution to block any further contracts from moving forward.

Their concerns over the contract were outlined by Rutgers AAUP-AFT President Lisa Klein in a letter to members:

- Pearson would pocket 50 percent of initial tuition revenue, taking away much-needed revenue from departments and units.
- Intellectual property rights would be compromised if Pearson chose to outsource courses without the consent of the faculty members who created them.
- Academic freedom would be diminished, as Pearson would determine how to define “obscene, threatening, indecent, libelous, slanderous, [or] defamatory content” or “material that is harmful to children.” In essence,

Pearson could “arbitrarily censor course materials,” said Klein.

- Expanding online programming would increase the number of poorly paid, poorly supported contingent faculty: Courses developed by Rutgers professors could be taught by part-time employees anywhere in the world, for a fraction of the pay a Rutgers professor would get.

- Students could migrate from bricks-and-mortar classes to online courses perceived to be easier, resulting in lower enrollment for existing classes.

The bottom line is that growing enrollment should not be about profit. It should be about the educational mission, which should be driven by faculty.

The Rutgers resolution does not cancel the college's existing contract with Pearson, but addresses any new agreements. And Rutgers AAUP-AFT has also suggested that faculty boycott teaching any of Pearson's online



Rutgers AAUP-AFT uses its collective voice, with AFT President Randi Weingarten.

courses themselves.

“We haven't entirely closed the barn door, but we've made it a lot narrower,” said David Hughes, a member of the Rutgers AAUP-AFT executive council and an anthropology professor, quoted in an *Inside Higher Ed* article. “Symbolically what this signifies is that it's a movement among faculty to boycott this Pearson agreement. None of it will work if faculty don't teach under the limitations of the contract.”





A Union of Professionals





# ELECTION 2016: YOU DECIDE.

As we approach the 2016 presidential election, working families want to know about the issues at stake and where the candidates stand.

We've put together information\* on leading declared and potential candidates and their positions on issues critical to AFT members and the communities they serve.† Read and consider carefully. Then let us know who you think deserves the AFT's endorsement and support. Visit [aft.org/election2016](http://aft.org/election2016).

**It's your union. It's your voice. You decide.**



	K-12 Education	Higher Education	Affordable Care Act	Labor/Jobs/Economy	Retirement Security	Immigration
 <b>BIDEN</b>	<p>Longtime supporter of increased federal funding for critical preK-12 education programs.</p> <p>A firm opponent of private school vouchers.</p>	<p>Led the Obama administration's \$500 million initiative to create and expand innovative partnerships between community colleges and businesses to train workers with the skills employers need.</p>	<p>Strongly supported and advocated for the ACA: The ACA gives "the American people more freedom and control over their healthcare choices, improving the quality of the care that they receive and reducing cost, all by building on the best of our private insurance system."</p>	<p>Supports raising the minimum wage and is sharply critical of rising income inequality.</p>	<p>Opposes privatizing Social Security, cutting benefits and raising the retirement age.</p>	<p>Supports comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship.</p> <p>Supports the DREAM Act.</p>
 <b>CLINTON</b>	<p>Leader of "Too Small to Fail," an effort to improve the health and well-being of children from birth to age 5. Supports increased Title I funding for schools in need. Opposes private school vouchers.</p>	<p>Has fought to expand financial aid for low-income college students.</p>	<p>Is committed to preserving and improving the ACA.</p>	<p>Favors raising the minimum wage and is an avowed union supporter. "When I'm president, we're going to stand up for unions. We're going to make sure they can organize for fair wages and good working conditions."</p>	<p>Opposes cutting Social Security benefits, privatizing the program and raising the retirement age.</p>	<p>Supports comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship.</p> <p>Supports the DREAM Act.</p>
 <b>O'MALLEY</b>	<p>As governor, invested record amounts in Maryland's public schools. Under O'Malley, funding increased by 37 percent.</p> <p>Opposes private school vouchers.</p>	<p>Increased state funding to allow Maryland colleges and universities to freeze tuition from 2007-2011.</p>	<p>Supports the ACA. Maryland was one of the first states to set up a health insurance exchange.</p>	<p>Supports increasing the minimum wage.</p> <p>Supports strengthening collective bargaining rights. In 2007, signed an executive order to grant collective bargaining rights to healthcare aides and child care workers.</p>	<p>Opposes privatizing Social Security and instead supports expanding the benefit.</p>	<p>Supports comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship.</p> <p>Championed a version of the DREAM Act for Maryland's public colleges and universities.</p>
 <b>SANDERS</b>	<p>Signed the Fix America's Schools Today (FAST) Act of 2011.</p> <p>Co-sponsored an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for increased funding.</p>	<p>Co-sponsored the Student Loan Affordability Act, which extended the reduced interest rate for Stafford student loans.</p>	<p>Introduced the American Health Security Act, which would guarantee healthcare as a human right and provide every U.S. citizen and permanent resident with healthcare coverage and services through a state-administered, single-payer program.</p>	<p>Supports raising the minimum wage. Is also a strong supporter of expanded collective bargaining rights for public employees.</p>	<p>Promotes strengthening the social safety net by expanding Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and nutrition programs.</p>	<p>Supports comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship.</p> <p>Supports the DREAM Act.</p>

\* Sources and citations are available in the online version at [aft.org/election2016](http://aft.org/election2016).

† This chart reflects a brief snapshot of the candidates' positions.



	K-12 Education	Higher Education	Affordable Care Act	Labor/Jobs/Economy	Retirement Security	Immigration
 <b>BUSH</b>	As governor of Florida, signed legislation to evaluate students and teachers based on high-stakes tests, create for-profit charter and virtual schools, and provide vouchers for private and religious schools. Launched the nation's first statewide voucher program.	Ended affirmative action in Florida's colleges and universities, leading to a sharp drop in minority higher education enrollment.	Does not support the ACA and calls it "flawed to the core."	Has voiced opposition to minimum wage increases. Wants to weaken collective bargaining rights for teachers and other public employees, and supports laws that undermine the strength of public and private sector unions.	Advocates for privatization of Social Security and raising the retirement age for Social Security.	Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).  Supports the DREAM Act.
 <b>CHRISTIE</b>	As governor of New Jersey, cut funding in 2011 budget, which the state Supreme Court ruled violated the state constitution.	Cut state funding to New Jersey colleges and universities.	Opposed the ACA, calling it a "failed federal program."	Opposed raising the minimum wage.  Was a vocal supporter of Scott Walker's attacks in Wisconsin on public employee rights.	Signed legislation that slashed pensions by \$1.5 billion, which the courts ruled was in violation of state law.	Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).
 <b>CRUZ</b>	Supports turning federal education dollars into vouchers that can be used to fund private schools.	Voted to cut Pell Grants that help low-income students attend college.	Opposed the ACA.	Opposed attempts to raise the minimum wage.	Supports raising the retirement age for Social Security, reducing the growth rate of Social Security benefits and privatizing Social Security.	Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).
 <b>JINDAL</b>	As governor of Louisiana, proposed budget for 2015 that keeps state funding with no increase in six years.  Implemented a private school tuition voucher program, which was ruled unconstitutional by a Louisiana judge.	Proposed hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts to higher education, even though public colleges and universities in Louisiana already receive less money on a per-pupil basis than in any other state.	Opposed the ACA.	Opposes recent attempts to raise the minimum wage.  Supports legislation that would wipe out payroll deductions for union members and silence the voice of teachers and other public employees.	Tried to eliminate defined benefit pensions for public employees.	Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).
 <b>KASICH</b>	As governor of Ohio, proposed a massive expansion of the state's voucher program that would have drained funds from public schools and used tax dollars to fund private schools.	Cut state support to higher education by 6 percent.	Opposed the ACA.	Through state Senate Bill 5, attempted to wipe out workplace rights for teachers, firefighters and other public employees. His efforts were defeated by popular referendum.	Supported legislation that cut state funding for employee pensions.	Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).
 <b>PAUL</b>	Supports private school vouchers. Would abolish the U.S. Department of Education.  Sponsored federal voucher legislation.	Voted to cut Pell Grants that help low-income students attend college.	Opposes the ACA and has voted to repeal it.	Says we should abolish the minimum wage. Opposes collective bargaining rights, and supports legislation intended to hinder the effectiveness of unions.	Would raise the retirement age for Social Security, and supports what would be the largest cuts to Social Security in U.S. history.	Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).
 <b>RUBIO</b>	Presided over a \$2.3 billion cut to Florida education as speaker of the Florida House.  Supports federal voucher legislation.	Voted to cut Pell Grants that help low-income students attend college.	Opposed the ACA.	Opposes increasing the minimum wage and doesn't think that the minimum wage law works.  As speaker of the Florida House, sponsored a bill attacking union rights.	Supports raising the retirement age for Social Security.	Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).
 <b>WALKER</b>	Supports the expansion of voucher programs that drain funds from public schools and use taxpayer dollars to fund private schools.	In 2015, slashed \$300 million from Wisconsin's higher education budgets.	Opposed the ACA.	In 2011, pushed legislation that stripped public employees of collective bargaining rights; in 2015, supported and signed a so-called right-to-work bill in Wisconsin designed to hinder and harass private sector unions.	As governor, slashed state contributions to employee pensions.	Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).

## AFT members step up to save their college

City College of San Francisco faculty fight to restore enrollment after accreditation battle

MEMBERS OF the City College of San Francisco Faculty Union, known as AFT 2121, are fighting hard to rescue their school.

First, as reported in this publication, CCSF's accreditation was threatened. Then, predictably, enrollment dropped.

Although the court ruled in January that the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges acted illegally when it tried to shut down CCSF, the fight against the agency continues. But AFT 2121 members are also turning toward pre-bargaining sessions and focusing on building enrollment to save their school.

CCSF faculty and staff were appalled when the ACCJC denied accreditation to the 85,000-student school in 2013. None of the accreditor's concerns was about quality of education, and the ACCJC refused to budge on record-keeping and finance issues. Even when 95 percent of the 350 tasks required for accreditation were completed, the ACCJC would not relent.

Powerful community members rallied to

support the college. U.S. Reps. Nancy Pelosi, Jackie Speier and Anna Eshoo called the ACCJC's actions "outrageous," and the U.S. Department of Education found the agency out of compliance on a number of federal requirements itself.

Finally, the San Francisco Superior Court ruled on Jan. 16 that the ACCJC had committed "significant unlawful practices" in its accreditation review. The agency is now under court order to revisit the decision revoking accreditation and provide the college with further opportunity to respond.

"The commission broke the law, and City College of San Francisco must be given a new opportunity to keep its accreditation," says California Federation of Teachers President and AFT Vice President Joshua Pechthalt.

"The court's decision confirms what educators, students and the entire San Francisco community have known for years—City College is part of the fabric of San Francisco because of the higher education opportunities it has provided for decades," says AFT President



AFT 2121 PHOTO

Randi Weingarten. "Its name has been illegally and arbitrarily sullied by a rogue accreditation agency, harming the very people an accrediting body is supposed to help."

Meanwhile, union members take the long view on maintaining a high-quality experience for their students. "Administration needs to work with faculty to immediately find ways to boost enrollment," union leaders wrote on the local's website. "The alternative—a dramatically reduced college—is not an option."

## AFT marks 50th anniversary of 'Bloody Sunday'

AFT PRESIDENT Randi Weingarten and Secretary-Treasurer Loretta Johnson, along with AFT vice presidents and members from across the country, were among the thousands who gathered in Alabama in March to commemorate the 50th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday,"

the Selma to Montgomery march and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. At more than 40 different events, they praised racial progress and addressed the remaining challenges and inequities facing the nation. And they joined civil rights leaders, elected officials and community members in a commemorative crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

"As I look out at this crowd, I see people of

all races, colors, creeds and sexual orientations," Weingarten said. "Here we are, united together, committed to change, and ready to strengthen our democracy for this generation and generations to come." She urged the crowd at the Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church to take action against the egregious attacks on civil rights and worker rights taking place today, 50 years after Martin Luther King Jr. and John Lewis linked arms with more than 500 civil rights activists, teachers, community members, faith leaders and union leaders for the historic march.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, passed just weeks after Bloody Sunday, became one of the most successful civil rights laws in American history. But a recent resurgence of policies to limit early voting, increase barriers to voting and dilute the strength of minority voters through redistricting threatens those gains. The AFT continues to fight for federal legislation that would restore the Voting Rights Act and fully protect voters from discrimination.

Thousands of people gathered in Selma, Ala., to continue the fight for civil rights.



AFT PHOTO

# Higher ed conference advances equality on and off campus

**IF NOT US, WHO?** This was the resounding question at the AFT/NEA National Higher Education Conference March 13-15 in Orlando, Fla., where nearly 600 members from the two unions united to find ways they could advance equality in public education and beyond.

Through speakers, panel discussions and workshops, conference attendees explored a broad spectrum of strategies designed to advance equality and make higher education more accessible and more sustainable in the face of increasing corporatization, privatization, and exclusion of middle- and lower-income and minority people from the very resources they need to excel.

AFT President Randi Weingarten rallied the group with a call to action, noting that “there’s no more challenging time than right now.” Listing wage stagnation, an increase in the number of contingent workers, disinvestment in education and threats to academic freedom as among the challenges we face, she urged members to work together toward solutions. “Things like high-quality, affordable higher education and a robust labor movement are so essential because they are a road out of poverty, they are a road to the middle class,” Weingarten said. “They are the pillars of our fight for economic justice for all.”

Keynote speaker R. L’Heureux Lewis-McCoy, an AFT member and professor at the City College of New York, inspired attendees with his call to eradicate racism and other forms of exclusion that still plague our institutions and our nation. “We’ve spoken about equality over and over and over again,” he said, but equal treatment does not take into account the disadvantages that some people carry—and those people need more. Opportunity should be given according to need, Lewis-McCoy said, in a way that serves justice, not just equality.

“We have to be intentional about inclusion,” he added, and listen to all stakeholders. “Sometimes we’re so busy organizing we fail to listen,” he said. “As activists, as laborers, ... we must make sure that every time we come to the table, we fight for the folks who are in the room and fight for those who haven’t had an opportunity yet to make it to the table.”

Noted scholar Henry Giroux roused the group with his detailed description of the corporatization of higher education. Decrying the adoption of a business model for university campuses, he said higher education has become “increasingly commercialized or replaced by private spaces whose ultimate fidelity is to increase profit making.”

“As the role of higher education as a center of critical thought and civic engagement is devalued, society is being transformed into ... a spectacular space of consumption and financial ruin,” he said. “All of civil society is at stake.”

“Resistance is no longer an option,” he concluded. “It is a necessity.”

In conference panels and workshops, members considered how best to resist, sharing strategies that covered everything from inspiring apathetic colleagues to advocating for education-friendly state legislation, diversifying our unions and workplaces, helping students navigate debt relief, and leveraging federal and state legislation to create more fair and just higher education policies. Other sessions focused on contingent faculty working conditions, tips for bargaining effective contracts and other crucial issues. An especially popular set of workshops dealt with organizing-related issues.

Closing out the conference on Sunday, a panel including student activists as well as union leaders considered higher education in the wake of the Ferguson movement, examining the resurgence of the civil rights movement. The panelists stressed the importance of seizing this moment to knit together a united movement for justice on our campuses. They urged attendees to think hard about how faculty and students can work together to commit to advancing equality—not only in higher education but in our lives as Americans.

**Members heard panel discussions as well as featured speakers, including AFT President Randi Weingarten and R. L’Heureux Lewis-McCoy, AFT member and City College of New York professor.**



PHOTOS BY GREGG MATTHEWS





**Former Corinthian student Michael Adorno-Miranda is refusing to pay his student debt.**

named for the school's milestone anniversary, will pay the balance on tuition for Pell Grant-eligible

students, once federal and state aid is applied. Students must also be spring 2015 graduates, Philadelphia residents, and U.S. citizens or permanent residents. The program will cost the school from \$450 to \$500 per student per year. The college estimates 440 students will qualify the first year, according to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

### NO LOAN PAYMENT, NO LICENSE

Twenty-one states have laws that could strip borrowers of their professional licenses if they default on their student loans, Jobs with Justice recently reported. The laws essentially strip attorneys, teachers, nurses and others who require licenses of their ability to work in their fields of expertise. Even barbers are affected in some cases. The idea is to emphasize that missing loan payments has very real consequences, but the result is to prevent the borrower from earning the money it takes to pay them back at all. In three states—Montana, Iowa and Oklahoma—debtors may also have their driver's licenses revoked. And Jobs with Justice reports that in Tennessee, more than 40 nurses were forced to leave work, leaving their hospital seriously understaffed.

When nearly 70 percent of all students take out loans to pay for college, this trend affects thousands. States that currently punish borrowers are Alaska, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois,

Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Washington, where nurses and healthcare professionals can lose their licenses if they default on student loans. And in Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oklahoma and Tennessee, K-12 teachers cannot work until they begin paying back their loans.

### CONCEALED CARRY ON CAMPUS

A bill to allow students to carry concealed weapons on campus has passed through committees in the Florida House of Representatives and is ready for discussion on the floor; an identical state Senate bill is still in committee. The idea has legs despite opposition from campus security: Police chiefs on all 12 of Florida's public university campuses have agreed having weapons on campus is a bad idea.

"The Florida Board of Governors, University Police Chiefs and all 12 of Florida's public universities are united in the belief that removing that long-standing protection is contrary to the values we embrace and could create new challenges in our ability to provide a safe and secure learning environment," said Brittany A. Davis, communications director for the State University System of Florida's Board of Governors, in statement, according to *USA Today*.

Seven other states already allow concealed weapons on university campuses: Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, Oregon, Utah and Wisconsin. Other state legislatures are considering the issue.

**FIGHTING FOR-PROFITS** When students took out loans to attend Corinthian Colleges, they believed the for-profit school's claim that its postgraduation job placement rates were high. Expecting a great education and rewarding careers, what they got instead were substandard classes, no jobs and crippling debt. To protest, 100 Corinthian students launched a debt strike in February, refusing to pay back their student loans.

Among them was Michael Adorno-Miranda, the first in his family to go to college. "It was a good game they talked," he says of recruiters at Everest College, a Corinthian affiliate. "That turned out to be false." Computer training was obsolete, and now Adorno-Miranda has no job prospects to pay off his student loans.

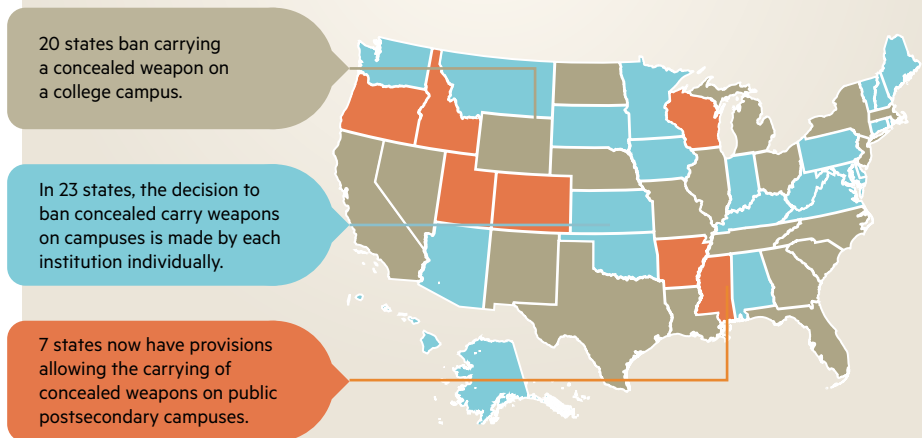
Adorno-Miranda and the Corinthian 100 have requested loan forgiveness from the Department of Education, using a provision triggered when a school defrauds its students. At press time, that possibility was still on the table. Meanwhile, the department fined Corinthian \$30 million.

Shortly after the fine was announced, Corinthian ceased operation, and all its remaining campuses are closing. "While we may rejoice that a bad actor can no longer hurt students, the victory is Pyrrhic for the thousands of students who were scammed by a false promise of higher education," says AFT President Randi Weingarten. "The AFT lauds the organizers of the student debtor movement—most notably the 'Corinthian 100' debt strikers—for bringing this extreme abuse of students into the public view, and we urge Secretary Duncan to use his maximum authority to relieve Corinthian students' crippling debt."

### FREE TUITION DREAM COMES TRUE

The Community College of Philadelphia has taken the free community college conversation out of the realm of "good idea" and into the realm of reality this year, offering qualified high school graduates a free ride. The 50th Anniversary Scholars Program,

### Concealed Carry Weapon Laws and College Campuses



Source: [www.ncsl.org/research/education/guns-on-campus-overview.aspx](http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/guns-on-campus-overview.aspx)



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