

THE AMERICAN MIND

Memo 02.13.2023 12 minutes

Combating the Woke Education Revolution

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Training policy personnel is crucial in mounting a counter-offensive.

A new revolution has co-opted the training grounds of America's students, teachers, and future leaders. Our formative institutions have moved from operating with an informal left-wing bias in their admissions and hiring policies to effectively snuffing out conservative

ideas and would-be dissenters. Ideological filtering mechanisms such as diversity statements at colleges and universities now require applicants to endorse progressive creeds of race and gender. These have been accompanied by similar exclusionary moves by professional associations, above all the American Bar Association and the American Medical Association. These mechanisms embody a larger attitudinal shift within higher education, which now regards traditional American beliefs as morally and intellectually illegitimate and mandates their exclusion from every sphere of society.

The American education crisis is a political crisis. The higher education revolution will virtually eliminate all political opposition to the woke establishment from every leading position in American civil society—and, above all, from all programs that train their graduates to draft policy, fight in the courts, and operate the administrative and regulatory machinery of government. The looming higher education embargo threatens to reduce catastrophically the supply of personnel who can put anti-woke policies into practice. Woke functionaries throughout the republic are working to revolutionize America, discarding its norms of liberty with the same bland indifference as their academic counterparts have discarded the tolerant norms of higher education.

This isn't a conspiracy by a small group of woke dissenters. This rapidly accelerating revolution proceeds from a change in sensibility among thousands of administrators, professors, and professionals. Some are clear-eyed about the exclusionary consequences of the changes they impose, but most simply have embraced the substance of woke ideology as a fundamental belief, deciding to bring their formal admissions standards into conformity with it and silently abandoning the norms of procedural liberalism and tolerance without entirely realizing what they have done. Each committee that imposes a new ideological filter does so not necessarily from malice but with a bland, profound indifference that functionally bars any dissenter to woke ideology.

Americans must understand the formidable nature of the woke challenge and work together to defeat it. The woke movement has already suffered political setbacks, and it will suffer more. Nevertheless, Americans should take the revolution's consequences seriously, especially in our institutions of higher education, where the mass of woke functionaries are at their strongest.

The Present Landscape

Currently, traditionally minded Americans possess a limited educational network. Stellar graduates continue to emerge from mainstream institutions: within the last generation, Senators Tom Cotton graduated from Harvard Law School and J. D. Vance graduated from Yale Law School. Political dissenters also have created their own network of dedicated institutions. Hillsdale College is almost entirely independent of the woke framework. Other institutions that are either traditional or open to traditionally minded Americans operate more within the mainstream education system; these include the University of Dallas, Pepperdine University's School of Public Policy, the University of Arkansas' Department of Education Reform, the Claremont Institute's Fellowship programs, the American Enterprise Institute's Education Policy Academy, and all the programs funded by the Jack Miller Center. These institutions have had appreciable effect, not least in supplying a skeleton of potential recruits for government service, and they will not disappear swiftly or entirely.

Yet traditionally minded Americans would be foolish to continue to rely on mainstream institutions of higher education. Bright spots like Cotton and Vance remain the exception, and at prestigious public policy programs such as Princeton's recently renamed School of Public and International Affairs, entire cohorts have graduated with hardly a single conservative student.

Traditionally minded Americans certainly should use the educational institutions and programs they still control or to which they have access. They must recognize, however, that in every mainstream educational institution they will face a tough campaign to maintain even a toehold. Faced with the woke functionaries' bureaucratic revolution, dissenters can no longer rely on being tolerated.

Nor would traditionally minded Americans face extinction from higher education if their current education network were sufficient. Their current travails are in good measure the consequence of an extraordinary shortage of potential governmental personnel. In higher education policy, for example, there are perhaps two dozen traditionally minded specialists *in the entire country* who can formulate policy and serve in government. Similar shortages cripple traditional governance in every policy arena.

America should have intellectually diverse historians and English professors and politically varied doctors and physicists—but these are luxuries. What Americans must recognize as a *necessity* is having a depoliticized education system. We must have colleges and universities that neither silence nor compel political opinions, that neither abrogate institutional neutrality nor redefine political activism as a professional goal, and that adopt an ethos and an institutional practice that counter the myriad petty mechanisms that have ousted traditionally minded Americans from higher education.

The priority for education reform must be to supply personnel for the classroom, the courtroom, and, above all, the halls of government. Traditionally minded Americans have striven valiantly to work within the existing education system, and with significant effect. But what they have achieved is not enough. The prospect that a new woke revolution will finish cleansing the academy of dissenters underscores the fact that education reformers need new tactics—like creating an entire new system of Harvards, flagship state universities, and community colleges.

What Is to Be Done

American education reform should focus on five strategic goals:

Educate personnel to staff government administrations, as well as the mass of quasi-governmental organizations that loom large in the modern American regime.

Educate lawyers to fight for traditional policy in the courts and serve as judges.

Educate teachers to reclaim the classroom, principals and university presidents to manage schools, and state board members and superintendents to oversee our education system.

Educate personnel who can speak the language of statistics and have scientific subject matter expertise, which now inform a large amount of government policy.

Educate enough professors to make possible these first four goals and create a pool of personnel with the experience and credentials to serve as education administrators.

To achieve these goals, education reformers should focus on the required *outputs*—what personnel they need to achieve their aims. They should work backward to find out what *inputs* are needed. This will allow institution building to proceed on a granular, realistic basis. Reformers therefore should assemble a comprehensive list of positions they wish to staff, along with the formal and informal education credentials needed to fill them. Within the world of higher education policy, for example, this would include:

Every policymaking and regulatory position in the federal and state departments of education.

State commissioners of education, members of Boards of Regents, university presidents and deans.

Key policymaking and regulatory positions in the 100 most important non-governmental organizations that control education governance, including institutions such as regional accreditors, the College Board, and the National Assessment Governing Board.

At least 50 higher education positions in federal-focused policy institutes and, in each of the 50 states, at least one higher education position focused on state policy.

Reformers should assemble similar lists for all areas of government policy, not least to guide their priorities for funding new educational institutions.

Rules for Philanthropists

Yet America cannot wait for such lists to be assembled. Philanthropists should begin immediately to fund small independent programs dedicated to graduating cohorts of professionals capable of engaging in policy formulation at policy institutes, as well as staffing the executive and judicial branches at the federal level. These programs should be scaled to produce 100 graduates per annum, including 5 PhDs and 95 MAs. Each program should employ 15 full-time faculty, including one dean and a range of senior and junior faculty, teaching classes with 20 students apiece.

The School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership (SCETL) at Arizona State University provides a useful budget for comparison purposes. SCETL's \$6 million annual budget supports 23.3 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions. SCETL's remit includes considerable K-12 civics programming, so a focused Masters program probably would reduce its expenses considerably. Total annual expenses for each of these new programs, including administrative support, therefore should be a minimum of \$4 million. Philanthropists should do the following:

Provide sufficient resources so that each program and its students can survive independent of federal and state support. Academic programs frequently regard Masters degree programs as cash cows that bring in revenue to support undergraduate and doctoral education, but philanthropists should provide as much tuition and stipend support as possible for these Masters students.

Provide the equivalent of an endowment of \$60 million to support \$4 million in annual expenses—but these programs should be created with the expectation that donors will provide financial support in triennial disbursements or conditional endowments if they are carefully prepared rather than donations to a permanent institution. Time-limited support will preclude the possibility of woke capture.

Accelerate PhD production to produce enough professors to teach these programs and to provide a pipeline of personnel qualified to serve in higher education administration. Education reformers should make sure they appoint enough of these personnel to positions in higher education administration to employ all PhDs produced by these programs.

Provide summer programs, online courses, and weekend programs at new or existing programs. These programs should also focus on educating adult citizens who assume public policy roles, such as newly elected members of school boards and state boards of education.

Ensure that professors (at first) do not have undergraduate teaching responsibilities, since that would at least double the number of required faculty and therefore the expense. These programs should be designed to align with undergraduate majors in reformed programs of public policy, history, political theory, education, Western Civilization, and American civilization, which are themselves designed to provide a large pool of recruits for government service and the classroom. Follow-up initiatives should create these undergraduate majors—but undergraduate initiatives should wait until these Masters programs are firmly established.

Prepare graduates, when employed in policy institutes and government, to serve as visiting professors in these institutions. These programs thereby will economize on needed personnel and reduce costs.

Building a Parallel Polis

A series of linked programs might be housed in a sort of Hillsdale Government School, an equivalent of the Harvard Kennedy School that is entirely independent of all government aid and accreditation requirements. Regardless of the administrative structure, reformers should focus on the following tracks:

Education School. Reformers must reclaim the classroom by training teachers, professors of education, and education administrators, including members of Boards of Regents and university presidents, principals, school board members, and policy advocates, who are capable of formulating policy and serving in federal and state administrations.

Law School. Reformers must reclaim the courtroom by training lawyers who are capable of arguing their policy positions, breaking the woke functionaries' boycott on legal representation of traditionally minded Americans and their causes, serving in the executive and judicial branches, and teaching in law schools.

Statistics and Public Policy. Reformers must reclaim the realms of scientific and medical expertise by training capable public policy professionals in statistics and a variety of scientific and medical subject matter disciplines.

General Public Policy. Reformers must reclaim government by training capable public policy experts in domestic policy fields such as policing, labor, transportation, and city planning.

Reformers need to provide the entire range of education and professional development for career tracks such as medicine, engineering, public health, scientific research, the foreign service, and the military. Every existing professional discipline needs at least one independent educational institution to educate a bare minimum of personnel capable of government service. But the Hillsdale Government Schools should make these four tracks a priority.

Such programs by themselves will not serve to create a career body of personnel. Reformers should create organizations to promote professional development within each category of government personnel. Each area of government administration needs its own Federalist Society to provide professional contacts and career guidance as well as professional development classes and programs. In general, reformers need to provide career tracks for the graduates of these new education institutions. They should supply a sufficient number of positions in policy institutes and other non-governmental careers to employ these personnel in formulating new policy during the times they are in opposition and to keep them available for government service when their party returns to power.

Rounding Out a Reformer's Agenda

Supportive policymakers also should enact a series of legal and regulatory changes to increase the production of these policy personnel, not least by removing the tools woke functionaries use to remove traditionally minded Americans from higher education and the professions.

Reformers must change laws and regulations to facilitate the creation of these new education institutions and their swift recognition by federal and state governments as legal equals of existing education institutions.

Reformers must depoliticize accreditation requirements for universities, as well as licensure and other entry and promotion requirements for professions such as law and medicine. They also must remove the power of institutions such as regional accreditors, the American Bar Association and the American Medical Association, to impose politicized entry and promotion requirements, not least by creating sufficient minimum requirements for government recognition of academic degrees and professional licenses.

Reformers must depoliticize entry and promotion requirements for all government employees, including legislative draftsmen, legislative staff, police, judiciary personnel, education administrators, teachers, counselors, and social workers. They should base state and federal recognition of education program providers on their depoliticization.

Supportive state policymakers should enact legislation that facilitates outside entities to bid to manage politicized and failing public education institutions. Bid rules should preclude institutions committed to woke politicization from bidding and facilitating management bids by education institutions such as Hillsdale College. Conditions might include limiting bid participants to

institutions primarily dedicated to academic freedom and which have prohibited policies that discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or other group identities.

Reformers should redirect public education support at all levels from institutions to students and provide portable education support that students may use in the institution of their choice.

Reform educators, finally, will need to instill a *vocation* for government work among graduates of these programs—neither to facilitate ambition nor to revolutionize the country but to save the nation.

Reformist government personnel must use government to protect and expand the sphere of liberty and reduce the authority delegated to woke private sector monopolists, whether in business, the professions, or any other aspect of civil society. They must dedicate themselves to using the levers of government to depoliticize those gatekeepers—and to remove their powers to control entry and promotion within civil society.

The creation of these linked programs and regulatory changes also, and not incidentally, will create the core of personnel needed to reclaim or replace the mainstream institutions of higher education. The graduates of a Hillsdale Government School will be able to take command of the Harvard Kennedy School. An established Hillsdale Government School, moreover, will make a Harvard Kennedy School *dispensable* once it has lost its monopoly on producing government personnel. Traditionally minded Americans can eliminate the influence of the woke institutions upon our republic—but first they must establish this network of independent institutions, both to mount a proper assault on the radical bastions and to serve as a sufficient substitute for them. *Harvard delenda est*, and every radical university; but traditionally minded Americans must have institutions ready to take their place.

Traditionally minded Americans must take up this challenge. Even absent the new revolution that will eliminate political dissenters from higher education, they would be imprudent to continue to rely on their existing education networks. The woke challenge makes it imperative to create new institutions to educate a core of policymaking personnel.

We must have undersecretaries and superintendents as well as presidents and governors. No victory at the ballot box will be enough unless we also have the personnel to govern our republic. We must train a body of traditionally minded public servants if we wish to restore the American nation and its liberties.

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