Often we find that what is most revealing in covering the higher education beat is what academics reveal about themselves. What follows are vignettes and observations from the Ivory Tower in 2012:

**Agents of Inaccuracy**  
*November 27, 2012*  
“Despite the fact that more than half of faculty members say on surveys that an important goal for undergraduate instruction is to ‘encourage students to become agents of social change,’ colleges don’t have much of an effect on student political participation.” —Canadian sociologist Neil Gross

**The Road to Self-Esteem…**  
*November 14, 2012*  
“It’s healthy to make God look like you. It’s a good self-esteem move.”—Monica A. Coleman, associate professor at the Claremont School of Theology, as quoted in Faith & Freedom magazine

**That’s Kind of Huge**  
*November 2, 2012*  
“One of the lone drawbacks of affirmative action is that mediocrity can become an expectation.”— Khadijah Davis is a sophomore in the School of Nursing and Health Studies at Georgetown University.

**Not Ready for College**  
*October 16, 2012*  
“Given the choice between losing their jobs or keeping the full 4 hours on instruction for students who enter the college with English as their second language and with significant lack of preparation for college level work.  

*continued on page 3*
January, 2013

Dear Reader,

Happy New Year! We cover more than 100 professors, colleges and universities a year and, as you can see by the excerpts on the following pages, it is usually an interesting experience. You probably also noticed that our current wisdom section is shorter than the lead story on campus shenanigans.

We selected highlights but there are still off campus observations we have featured online that space did not permit us to include. For example, we did find a trio of academics who go against the grain:

- On June 25, 2012, Jacksonville State University economist Christopher Westley, a former intern of mine, noted that “Thwarting banditry is a positive good.” Would that other academic economists felt the same way.

- Similarly, on June 19, 2012 at The Heritage Foundation, British economist Deepak Lal observed that “In reality, the state does nothing else but redistribute and serve its own purposes.” Would that other pedagogues were as observant as he.

- On May 25, 2012, Luigi Zingales, a professor of entrepreneurship and finance at the University of Chicago, stated that “Unfortunately, the idea that a small, enlightened elite should guide the ignorant people to what is good for them, even at the cost of misleading them, has become more prevalent in America.” It is indeed unfortunate.

We will continue to seek out such genuine scholars wherever we can find them for the sake of accuracy in academia and, in order to keep you up to date on what is happening in higher education. We never forget that we work for you, whose help we could not do without.

All the best,

Mal Kline,
Executive Director
English faculty chose to act on behalf of their students and their colleagues have supported them.”—the Academic Senate of Queensborough Community College in Bayside, N.Y.

**Elementary Role Play Pitfalls**  
*October 9, 2012*  
“There are so many ways a role play about racism can go wrong in a room full of 6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds.”—Elementary school teacher Katharine Johnson

**Ersatz Promise Keepers**  
*September 6, 2012*  
“Educational establishments have been making promises to students they cannot keep.” –Aaron Barlow, New York City College of Technology (CUNY).

**Rotten Science?**  
*August 23, 2012*  
“With the exception of a few areas — specifically, climate and the environment, certain fields within biology and medicine, history of science and the interaction between science and public policy — the rot that infects the rest of academia has been averted in science and engineering schools.”—Ron Lipsman, Professor Emeritus of mathematics and former senior associate dean of the College of Computer, Math & Physical Sciences, University of Maryland.

**LA Story**  
*August 9, 2012*  
Unified School District is being sued by 14 mothers whose children were allegedly sexually abused by a former district elementary school teacher, who is being held on a $23-milion-bond and has been charged with 23 counts of lewd acts on children.”—CNN by way of the American School Board Journal

**Not A Doctor Joke**  
*August 3, 2012*  
In a jaw-dropping story in the *New York Times*, the Association of American Medical Colleges warns that ObamaCare is squeezing doctors out of practice—just in time for the swell in Baby Boomer patients.—the Family Research Council

**Suspending Tolerance**  
*July 24, 2012*  
Georgetown suspends student who would not attend sensitivity training.

**Ethnic Studies 2.0**  
*July 6, 2012*  
“In the surreal world of student loans, the brilliant student completing an electrical engineering degree at M.I.T. pays the same interest rate as the student majoring in ethnic studies at a state university who has a GPA below 2.0.”—Ohio University economist Richard Vedder

**Air Force & Just War**  
*June 25, 2012*  
“The Air Force suspended a 20-year-old class on ‘Just War Theory’ because it included scriptural references”—Tony Perkins, Family Research Council.

**Message in a Bottle**  
*May 25, 2012*  
“So the question is, Can the ideas stand on their own merit regardless of who said them? It could be Kaczynski, it could be Mother Teresa, it could be Mr. Anonymous—the ideas are what they are, and the arguments are what they are. So I think from a rational standpoint we should say we can treat the ideas in
abstraction from the circumstances in which they appear”—David F. Skrbina, Lecturer in philosophy at the University of Michigan

Wrong Side of Charles
May 2, 2012
Mitt Romney also went to Harvard, though he spent most of his time on what the intellectuals consider to be the wrong side of the Charles, where the business school is found—UVA historian James Ceaser

Professors in Real Time
April 5, 2012
“It is becoming nearly impossible for professors to teach enough to satisfy the demands of career administrators … Unless we’re in the classroom for thirty-five or forty hours per week—the equivalent of a full-time job in the corporate world.”—Michael DeCesare, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Merrimack College.

Level Playing Field
April 30, 2012
Student cell phones and cars are indistinguishable from those of the faculty—Victor Davis Hansen

Harvard Hates Substance
April 12, 2012
Based on my experience as a graduate of Harvard Law School, much of what law schools teach their students is useless drivel, as some law professors themselves have conceded—Hans Bader of the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Back to Downhill Slide
March 12, 2012
“Welcome back from spring break students. Can’t believe we’re on the downhill slide to graduation!”—Tweet from the UVA School of Education.
Federal Subsidies=High Tuition
March 6, 2012

“By the way, government subsidies have impacted upon rising tuition costs,” Vice President Joe Biden admitted last month at Florida State University.

Montgomery College (MD) Offers Summer Course on Occupy Wall Street. February 21, 2012

Rethinking Occupation
February 3, 2012

“In New Mexico, student and other activists in Albuquerque decided to alter the ‘occupy’ name out of respect for the area’s indigenous communities, which have been forcibly occupied for centuries”—Rethinking Schools magazine, Winter 2011-2012

Great Academic Gender Dilemma
January 10, 2012

“Though we consider ourselves to have made progress about gender and sexuality, there are still only two public categories to which one can belong”.—Jeffrey J. Williams, Professor of English and Literary and Cultural Studies at Carnegie Mellon University.

Moving Off Campus
January 10, 2012

“I did not understand—and failed to do the necessary research on—how the nonacademic work force operated, what its expectations were, and most important, how I could persuade nonacademic employers to hire me, a historian of 18th-century Britain with an expertise in early modern medical theories about menstruation (not, I will admit, the most useful background to have)”—Historian Alexandra M. Lord on making the jump from academia.

Malcolm A. Kline is the Executive Director of Accuracy in Academia.

If you would like to comment on this article, e-mail mal.kline@academia.org.

Best Current Wisdom 2012
People are still saying wise things, although usually off campus:

Elites Become More So
November 27, 2012

“Over the last thirty years, America’s test-prep companies have grown from almost nothing into a $5 billion annual industry, allowing the affluent to provide an admissions edge to their less able children”—Ron Unz, The American Conservative, December 2012

Childhood Memories
August 30, 2012

“College graduates should not have to live out their 20s in their childhood bedrooms, staring up at fading Obama posters and wondering when they can move out and get going with life”—U. S. Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wisc.

Out-of-Closet Traditionalists
August 27, 2012

“I’ve spent most of my life in academia, and can say with some conviction that most professors have no friends or colleagues who are out-of-the-closet traditionalists”—Robert Maranto, University of Arkansas.

Imagine, No Imagination
August 23, 2012

“You know that a lot of people don’t have a big imagination, even with sixth-graders, their imagination is slowly dying, so you have to continue to dream big and you can do great things in life”—Imaginative sixth-grader Gabrielle Williams

Summer School
July 24, 2012

“It may be summer time, but some college campuses never take a break from P.C. indoctrination”—Michelle Malkin
electronic gaming area with four flat-screen televisions, a workout area and an arcade complete with skee-ball, pinball machines, and air hockey tables. Any student, not just those living there, can drop by to take a nap in one of the nap pods, which—according to Inside Higher Ed—feature an ergonomic design, a shield to block light, soothing sounds, and a gradual wake-up system so nappers can awaken as gently as possible.”

However, this resort-like structure that is “home away from home” for more than 150 students may have some serious competition when another residence hall opens next year, complete with “a multipurpose room that can be used as a theater or a classroom, and a 2,100-gallon saltwater aquarium that is home to 25 lion fish, chosen because of the university’s mascot, the Saint Leo Lion.”

All this opulence on a college campus prompted some response on the Inside Higher Ed site, including, “Meanwhile numerous adjunct instructors have not a single room available in which to meet their students.” Another respondent said that while students may enjoy their nap pods, after graduation, the nappers could be back in their parents’ home, sleeping on the sofa.

**SHHHH...GENIUS AT REST**

Over the years, some of America’s priciest elite colleges started a trend by “converting their campuses into luxurious spa-like retreats,” and now the trend has spread to smaller, lesser-known schools.

For example, “The newest student residence at Saint Leo University in Florida houses nap pods, an electronic gaming area with four flat-screen televisions, a workout area and an arcade complete with skee-ball, pinball machines, and air hockey tables. Any student, not just those living there, can drop by to take a nap in one of the nap pods, which—according to Inside Higher Ed—feature an ergonomic design, a shield to block light, soothing sounds, and a gradual wake-up system so nappers can awaken as gently as possible.”

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**RACE AND GENDER REIGN SUPREME**

While the possibility of not having enough diversity on college campuses appears to be a constant worry, Columbia University may have put that problem to rest, thanks to its president Lee Bollinger.

Several years ago amid the Harvard brouhaha that resulted in getting its president Larry Summers fired, Bollinger announced that he planned to launch his own diversity hiring initiative to add more women and minorities to the teaching staff – and committed $15 million to the search procedure, according to Brooklyn College history professor K.C. Johnson.

Heading up this project was Columbia’s first diversity vice provost Jean Howard, a Shakespeare scholar “committed to the race/class/gender trinity,” who has edited or co-edited books that include: *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare’s English Histories* and *Marxist Shakespeares*. While Howard claimed that her plan was not to create a racial or gender quota, she allowed that the only male applicants who...
would be considered were those who would “in some way promote the diversity goals of the university.”

Despite her promise to hold the project’s budget to $15 million, it was announced early in 2012 that another $15 million had been allocated to this endeavor. Bollinger defended this $30 million decision, explaining that the extra funds were necessary in order to foster “the uninhibited exploration of competing ideas and beliefs on which the academy thrives.”

To which K.C. Johnson responded that “It looks as if white males whose scholarship might ‘promote the diversity goals of the university’ are out of luck.”

POLITICALLY INCORRECT CAMPUS WARRIOR

In an era when political correctness has nearly drowned out free speech on our nation’s campuses, it’s refreshing to find someone who still prefers to stand on principle. Especially when that person is a college professor whose politically incorrect blog openly states that his site “has no official connection with Marquette University. Indeed, when university officials find out about it, they will doubtless want it shut down.”

Meet John McAdams, a Marquette University political science professor, whose comments about the inaccuracy of a widely quoted date rape statistic last year caused a student in his class to claim that his opinions “constituted ‘harassment based on gender’ and were ‘demeaning to rape victims.’”

At issue was the professor’s claim in his Intro to American Politics class that biased media reports had been pushing out an inaccurate figure that “25% of all college women are victims of date rape.” Although he cited factual contradictions to buttress his point, a student feminist filed a complaint, which led to some unpleasant disagreements, but in the end, McAdams’ department chair agreed that the professor had a right to express his opinion.

McAdams not only won the war, but had the last word on his lively blog where he summed up the story as follows: “In a properly run university, some administrator would sit this prissy little feminist down and explain to her ‘this is a university, you are going to hear things you disagree with. Live with it.’ But a timid administration, used to genuflecting to all the demands of political correctness, will never do that.”

In closing, he added triumphantly that he planned to say the same things about rape when he taught the class the following year.

DETROIT’S SEVEN PERCENT RULE?

As if Michigan’s problems weren’t bad enough these days, the Department of Education (DOE) reports that only 7 percent of Detroit’s eighth graders are proficient readers. And that’s just for openers.

The DOE says that math scores are even worse. In fact, the department’s National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test showed that in 2011 only 4% scored in the proficient range or better in math, according to Terrence Jeffrey at cns.com.

Statewide scores are nothing to write home about either, since only 32 percent of public-school eighth graders scored at grade-level proficiency or better in reading, and 31 percent scored at grade-level proficiency or better in math.”

Unfortunately, the past decade has seen no improvement in the ability of Michigan’s public schools to teach reading and math. A comparison of scores shows that “in 2002 just as in 2011, according to the U.S. Department of Education, only 32 percent of Michigan public-school eighth graders scored proficient or better in reading.

The question is, will the recent passage of Michigan’s right to work laws improve the quality of the state’s public school teachers and provide a much-needed boost to student proficiency levels? Writing in Forbes magazine, James Marshall Crotty suggests that while lower union membership will make it easier to fire underperforming teachers, it is difficult to predict how their replacements will fare.

However, since the latest Census report shows that the population of right-to-work states has increased by more than 11 percent over the past decade, it is a good bet that if this holds true in Michigan, it will foster some much-needed competition that will result in higher quality teachers.
To show what college and university English Departments are really teaching, Accuracy in Academia compiled *The REAL MLA Stylebook*, filled with quotes from a recent convention of the Modern Language Association (MLA) where thousands of English professors gather to push their politically correct, radical agenda. Outsiders who attend this event expecting to learn more about Chaucer, Milton and Shakespeare are in for a rude awakening when they discover that panels are more likely to focus on topics such as “Marxism and Globalization;” “What’s the Matter with Whiteness;” and “Queering Faulkner.”

This book is must-reading for anyone interested in learning more about the mindset of faculty members who are tasked with teaching the great works of the English language to our nation’s students.