Tenure is a foreign concept for most Americans—especially the ones who pay for it. Most students and parents know that teachers and professors can be tenured, but they may not be sure what it entails or whether it is worth the cost.

But in the world of academia, tenure has its staunch supporters. According to twenty-two scholarly organizations, “Tenure is a linchpin of independent rigorous scholarship.” Rebecca M. Blank, chancellor of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, complains that “critics dismiss tenure as ‘a job for life,’” when “it is about academic freedom.”

Too often, however, the benefits of tenure are limited, only protecting those who don’t need protection.

Despite the prevalence of tenure, a survey of the academic landscape today reveals “intellectual rigor” to be in short supply. Academic freedom, meanwhile, is in the eye of the beholder—or, rather, in the hands of those who enjoy it and at the expense of those who don’t. You don’t have to take my word for it: the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education’s First Amendment case log shows how limited this “freedom” can be.

But the “jobs for life” part is accurate. Despite Blank’s protestations that tenure does not provide unconditional employment, that is essentially what most tenured professors enjoy—if they have the right political viewpoints.

On American campuses, the intellectually rigorous are an endangered species. As David D. Perlmutter, a dean at Texas Tech, notes, “Retractions of papers are on the rise, with misconduct the leading cause.”

A much more compelling argument for tenure rests on the assertion that the rare conservatives in academe are protected by it. One of these conservatives, University of Tennessee law professor Glenn Reynolds, made this case.
August 2015

Dear Reader,

We hope that your summer is going well. My former boss, the great writer M. Stanton Evans, noted in an AIA seminar 11 years ago that college students on campus face such biases that they “need to develop alternative sources of information.” We endeavor to provide just that through our web site, the newsletter you are holding in your hands, or reading on your computer, and our Conservative University authors’ nights.

The authors’ nights are part of The Frank A. Fusco Conservative University Lecture Series this year, made possible by a generous grant from The Frank A. Fusco and Nelly Goletti Fusco Foundation. Thus far, this year, at our author’s nights, held at the Heritage Foundation, Capitol Hill interns got to hear from:

- Author and activist Star Parker, author of the book *Blind Conceit*; and
- Grove City College historian Paul Kengor, author of *Takedown: From Communists to Progressives, How the Left Has Sabotaged Family and Marriage*.

Additionally, in the fall, at AIA’s author’s nights, the next crop of Capitol Hill interns can expect to hear from:

- Lee Edwards, discussing his recently reissued biography of Barry Goldwater, *Goldwater: Man Who Made A Revolution*, in a special Constitution Day meeting;
- Former Atlanta talk show host Demetrius Minor, who will discuss his eventful and inspiring autobiography, *Preservation and Purpose: The Making of a Young Millennial*; and

If you are in Washington, D.C., we’d love to see you at one of these meetings.

All the best,

Mal Kline,
Executive Director

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on the blog Instapundit. This should not only concern conservatives, but all of those in academia who claim to value diverse viewpoints, since conservatism adds to intellectual diversity.

Moreover, it is hard to think of a justifiable reason why conservatives with impeccable scholarly credentials and no record of inappropriate behavior should be denied the same benefits that their more liberal and numerous peers enjoy. Still, from what we’ve seen, for conservative professors, tenure isn’t a fig leaf. It isn’t even a fig.

Just this year Marquette indefinitely suspended John McAdams, a tenured political science professor who took a more traditional outlook. McAdams even had the support of the pro-tenure—and not very traditional—American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

At Oklahoma University, geology and geophysics professor David Deming had all of his courses taken away from him and the school moved him to a basement office after he wrote a letter in the school newspaper advocating gun rights. Ultimately, tenure did not save him from unemployment: a federal judge and an out-of-court settlement did when he sued his employers.

Jean Cobbs, a sociology professor at Virginia State University who repeatedly won accreditation for her department, was stripped of her chairmanship after riding on a Republican float in the homecoming parade. Fired by VSU in 2005, she received a settlement of $600,000 two years later.

It is worth noting that, where these stories had a happy ending, the beleaguered scholars received redress not from tenure but from the legal system. So who does benefit from tenure? In her book, The Faculty Lounges and Other Reasons Why You Won’t Get the College Education You Paid For, Naomi Schaefer Riley notes that “If you count faculty in vocationally oriented departments, those who teach area, ethnic, cultural, and gender studies, as well as a significant chunk of the country’s research scientists, you will arrive at a number that is more than half the tenured faculty in the United States.”

And although tenured faculty may make up an increasingly smaller proportion of the professoriate than in days gone by, they are hanging onto their jobs with both fists. Nearly half of them “would like to and expect to work past normal retirement,” economist Paul Yakoboski found. Some professors know a good deal when they see it—and they don’t want to let go.

Anecdotes may abound on both sides of the tenure question, but even those in favor will go to great lengths to acknowledge the problems with tenure.
Some examples include:

- Jesus Christ was a progressive because he advocated income redistribution to help the poor.
- The minimum wage helps the poor.
- Income inequality arises from market forces and requires government intervention.
- Profit is evidence of suspicious behavior.

“It is important to understand how to persuade and how to advocate, because you can be a massive treasury of knowledge, but you might be completely ineffective in convincing other people if you are arrogant, or rough, or if you don’t exude empathy for their position,” Reed said.

An economics prof before he became president of the Foundation for Economic Freedom, Reed advised students to use their time in college to “read as profusely as you can, because you will never have the kind of time to do that later in life.”
GRAD STUDENT UNION CONTRACT HAS MICROAGGRESSION PROTECTIONS

Sooner or later, it had to happen.

In the spirit of unionization that has afflicted numerous campuses around the country, the latest grad student contract at the U. of Washington contains a section that includes protection against microaggressions, according to Kaitlyn Grimes, U. of North Carolina contributor to The College Fix.

The union contract at the U. of Washington covers both undergraduate and graduate students, who have teaching and research functions.

The section concerning microaggressions in the new contract states that: “[T]he University agreed to a definition of micro-aggressions (“everyday exchanges – including words and actions – that denigrate or exclude individuals based on their membership in a group or class”) and that such workplace behavior is grievable under the contract. Moreover the University agreed to meet three (3) times per year to discuss the joint goal of eliminating micro-aggressions and developing trainings for ASEs, faculty, and departments”.

The UW union isn’t the only group fighting microaggressions lately; the University of California - Berkeley recently came under fire for its new training program for faculty which warned against using microaggressions, such as the phrase, “America is the land of opportunity” and has even forbidden the use of “male” and “female” check boxes, since filling those slots would of course appear to be racist.

WHO NEEDS THE DREAM ACT?

UCLA campus correspondent Pardes Seleh reports that the “UCLA Labor Center’s Dream Resource Center is allowing illegal immigrants to apply for Dream Summer, a 10-week program, providing paid internship opportunities. The internships focus on social justice work and healthcare access.”

Apparently, this program isn’t that unusual. UCLA is just one of an increasing number of California schools that already provides academic scholarships and other academic opportunities, exclusively for illegal immigrants.

It all started after the Dream Act failed to become law in 2011. By 2014, the Census Bureau reported that Hispanics had become the predominant ethnic population of California’s roughly 14.99 million residents, and that an estimated 68 percent of the state’s undocumented population is Mexican-born.

DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS

In what might become a future trend, Robert Morris University in Chicago is now offering video gaming scholarships for students. The program is part of the school’s athletic department, and “students are required to attend practices and competitions just like any other student athlete,” according to Minding the Campus. “The team plays League of Legends, a popular computer game in which players work in teams of five to destroy
the opposing side’s home base. School officials say that rather than distracting from the academic curriculum, students’ involvement with the e-gaming team helps them build teamwork and communication skills.”

SUSTAIN WE MUST

The sustainability movement, which began in 2006, has increasingly become a cause celebre on American campuses. However, a new report by the National Association of Scholars suggests that this movement poses a real threat to the classic liberal education, starting with its definition as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Since this definition is vague enough to travel in many different directions, it explains why some “sustainability activists” can admire totalitarian dictatorships such as China and North Korea for their efficiency in getting things done, without a lot of interference from the “unwashed masses.”

In fact, these autocratic concepts fit in nicely with the growth of federal agencies “staffed by presumably selfless scientific experts to manage the economy – agencies beholden neither to the market’s pursuit of profits nor the political sphere’s requirement of elective majorities.”

As the NAS report notes, “Sustainability’s alternative to economic liberty is a regime of far-reaching regulation that controls virtually every aspect of energy, industry, personal consumption, waste, food, and transportation. Sustainability’s alternative to political liberty is control vested in agencies and panels run by experts insulated from elections or other expressions of popular will.”

Believe it or not, there are close to 1,500 degree programs in Sustainability Studies these days, and even students who aren’t the least bit interested in the issue are unable to avoid it, since it has been integrated into every academic curriculum and discipline.

Despite the quantum leap in higher education costs these days, schools are seeking even more sustainability experts, some of whom make $70,000 to $80,000 a year.

WHAT AMERICA IS NOT

“The cornerstone of the political correctness that dominates campus culture is radical feminism.” Phyllis Schlafly

AIA’s next author’s night will feature Lee Edwards on his reissued biography of Barry Goldwater
In a way, Rachel Dolezal is a living embodiment of racial progress.

In the 1961 book, *Black Like Me*, white journalist John Howard Griffin pretended to be black in order to show the indignities blacks endure. This year, we learned that Rachel Dolezal pretended to be black in order to obtain affirmative action benefits. Writer Dan Flynn, my predecessor at Accuracy in Academia, summarizes the Dolezal story nicely: “Before re-emerging as an Africana studies adjunct professor, NAACP chapter leader, Historically Black College graduate, and all-around Nubian princess, Dolezal grew up as a blue-eyed blonde on the mean streets of Troy, Montana (pop. 938), home to two black people and so out of the way that it served as a zombie-free “New Community” for a “New America” in the book *World War Z.*”

Meanwhile, on the pages of The Chronicle Review, Carla Kaplan, a professor of American literature at Northeastern University, is still grappling with Dolezal’s biography and trying to determine its meaning: “What does it mean to identify across race lines and to claim a racial identity disconnected from background or biology? Why does so-called reverse passing (white to black) generate such extraordinary attention and controversy? The Rachel Dolezal case reveals a conundrum in race debates that remains unresolved.”

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
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.