

# EDUCATION REPORTER

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## UNESCO Promotes Explicit Sex Ed Curriculum Worldwide

At the beginning of September in Birmingham, U.K., the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) presented a draft of its official recommendations for sex education worldwide. A few weeks before the conference, some conservative critics called national attention to the online working draft of UNESCO's recommendations. UNESCO's guidelines, supposedly intended to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, betray an underlying radical agenda that would have children around the world learning far more about sex at younger ages, and far more debatable information about sex, than is necessary or helpful in order to arm them against disease.

In the guidelines, UNESCO tells teachers around the world to present abstinence until marriage as "only one of a range of choices available to young people" in order to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. The guidelines have children ages five to eight learning about masturbation in school, with a more detailed discussion for children ages nine to 15. Children ages five to eight would also learn about same-sex couples and "tolerance" of different sexual orientations. New topics on the list for nine-year-olds include orgasm and abortion.

"I'm really concerned about what they want to teach five- to eight-year-olds," said Michelle Turner of Citizens for a Responsible Curriculum, "and I have concerns about their position on abortion and the way they want to present it to youth. Where are parents' rights? It's not up to the government to teach these things."

UNESCO does not pretend to be neutral on the subject of abortion; a 2002 report, for example, opined that "governments should make abortion legal, safe, and affordable." The new sex ed

guidelines reflect UNESCO's position, asserting that teachers should discuss "advocacy to promote the right to and access to safe abortion" with students ages 12-15 and older. According to UNESCO, students need to know that "legal abortion performed under sterile conditions by medically trained personnel is safe," and need to discuss both "the use and misuse of emergency contraception" and "access to safe abortion and post-abortion care" in health or science classes. This particular recommendation seems to translate into teachers in government-funded schools informing their students about how and where they can obtain both chemical and surgical abortions.

(See UNESCO, page 4)



## House Approves Bill to Exclude Private Lenders from Student Loans

Congress may soon pass a bill that could replace most privately administered student loans with loans from the Federal Direct Loan Program. On September 17, the U.S. House passed the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, authored by Rep. George Miller (D-CA). The bill, if it passes the Senate, will make major changes to the student loan industry and dole out tens of billions of new dollars to a variety of grant and loan programs.

The editors of the *Wall Street Journal* took the lead in drawing parallels between this potential government takeover of the student loan industry and Democrats' efforts to create a single-payer, publicly funded health care system. "Simply put, we are watching in student loans exactly what ObamaCare's harshest critics have forecast



for health care: a 'public option' that ultimately destroys all competition," the editors wrote. Through Medi-

care and Medicaid, government already spends 41 cents of every dollar spent on health care in the United States. The federal government also either guarantees or issues about 80% of student



loans through interest-free or low-interest subsidies and grant programs. "Not by coincidence, higher education costs have risen much faster even than in the health-care market," *Journal* editors report. "From 1982 through 2007, college tuition and fees increased 439% in nominal dollars, almost triple the rise in median family income."

The *Wall Street Journal* is just one of many critics who have asserted that infusions of federal money have created a huge disincentive for universities to keep costs down to a level that students and

(See Loans, page 4)

## Schools Teach Students to Serve Barack Obama

On September 8, the first day of school for many students, President Barack Obama gave a speech intended for viewing by all American schoolchildren. The speech aired live on the White House's website, and the Department of Education contacted all schools to ask that they tune in. Critics of this attempt to get all students to watch the speech charged that Obama is attempting to situate himself as "superintendent in chief." The \$128 billion allocated to education in the stimulus fund certainly has the potential to expand the federal government's

authority over what states and school districts do in the classroom.

Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher's I Pledge Video



Not content merely to urge every classroom in America to tune in to Obama's speech, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan also instructed all school principals to encourage the use of his department's prepared lesson plans for classroom activities associated with the speech. Why? "So they can compete in the global economy," wrote Duncan.

The Department of Education provided two separate "menus of classroom activities," one for preK-6<sup>th</sup> grade and one for 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades. The PreK-6<sup>th</sup> grade menu encourages teachers to read books about Barack Obama, tell students that it is "important to listen to the President," to "take notes while President Obama is talking," to "write down key ideas and phrases" and "discuss them after the speech." Students should then "write letters to themselves about how they can achieve their short-term and long-term education goals." These letters should be "collected and redistributed at an appropriate later date by the teacher to make

students accountable to their goals."

Students in 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades should do all this, and also ponder "What is President Obama inspiring you to do?" and "How will he inspire us?"

Byron York reminded readers of the *Washington Examiner* that President George H.W. Bush's speech to schoolchildren in 1991 raised an uproar among Democrats, followed by investigations and public hearings. The *Washington Post* declared about the 1991 speech, "The White House turned a Northwest Washington junior high classroom into a television studio and its students into props." House

Majority Leader Richard Gephardt charged that "the Department of Education should not be producing paid political advertising for the president, it should be helping us to produce smarter students." Most media outlets and politicians raised no such questions about Obama's speech this fall.

Public elementary school students starting the school year in Farmington, UT were also treated to a video in which 50 celebrities pledged to serve the president in various ways, most of which lined up with political and environmental goals of the left. Actors Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher produced the video, entitled *I Pledge*. The celebrities' pledges included "to sell my obnoxious car and buy a hybrid," "to advance stem cell research," and "to make sure that senior citizens have access to health care." Quite a few pledges centered on the environment, with celebrities promising they would forgo plastic

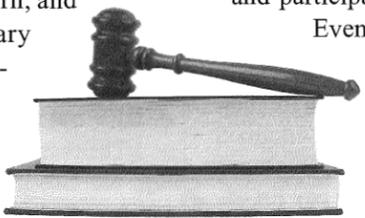
(See Video, page 4)

## New Hampshire Court Orders Christian Child into Public School

Ten-year-old Amanda Kurowski has been homeschooled by her mother since 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Her parents divorced when she was a newborn, and her mother has primary

custody. Although others who know Amanda don't seem to share his concerns about her, Amanda's father complains that

his ex-wife's homeschooling has not adequately "socialized" their daughter. Mr. Kurowski took his complaints to court, asking the family court system to overrule Amanda's mother's wishes and order Amanda into public school.



Amanda is by all accounts a perfectly well-adjusted, normal young girl. She attends supplemental public school classes and participates in a variety of sports.

Even the court order that mandated she must attend public school acknowledged that "the evidence supports a finding that Amanda is generally likeable and well liked, social and interactive with her peers, academically promising, and intellectually at or superior to grade level."

Why would a judge order a flourishing homeschooled child into public

(See Christian Child, page 4)

# EDUCATION BRIEFS

An *Education Week* article summarizing research on community colleges pointed out that “few studies can inform Obama’s \$12 billion initiative” to boost community college attendance. Graduation rates from community colleges are surprisingly low; only one in ten students earns an associate’s degree within three years of enrollment. After six years, just half of students have earned an associate’s degree or certificate or transferred to a four-year college. (*Education Week*, 9-2-09)

Arizona’s superintendent of public instruction is leading a charge against ethnic studies classes in schools. Supt. Tom Horne and others became concerned when students said they learned in these classes “not to fall for the white man’s traps.” Some classes use a textbook, *The Mexican American Heritage*, that promotes the Aztlan movement for the return of five Southwestern states to Mexican control. (*Washington Times*, 8-3-09)

A study in Hong Kong showed that only about half of health care workers said they would be willing to receive the swine flu vaccine. Scientists predicted the results would be similar elsewhere, since low percentages of health workers in most nations get the regular flu shot — only 35% of them in the U.S., for example. Those in the Hong Kong study who said they would refuse the swine flu shot cited concerns about the vaccine’s safety and effectiveness. The CDC recommends swine flu vaccination for all children, and is pursuing an ambitious vaccination program. (Associated Press, 8-26-09)



(See Briefs, page 2)

### Sworn Statement of Ownership

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## Colleges Turn ‘Affirmative Action’ Against Asian-American Students

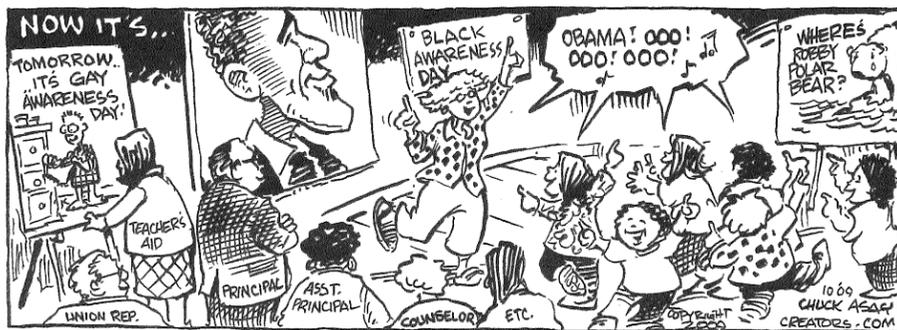
In 1996, Californians voted for Proposition 209, which outlawed racial discrimination in college admissions. Now, however, the University of California (UC) system may be reintroducing racial and ethnic bias in admissions through changes to the process. Currently, the top 12.5% of California high school students based on statewide performance tests are automatically admitted to the UC campuses of their choice. But the UC Regents have proposed ending this policy in 2010.

Former UC Regent Ward Connerly believes this policy change is designed specifically to discriminate against Asian-American students. Connerly reports a conversation he had with a high-ranking UC administrator five years ago, in which Connerly questioned the need for a plan intended to increase racial and ethnic diversity on campus. The administrator replied that unless the university moved to “guide” the admissions process, Asian-Americans would predominate at UC. “What would be wrong with that?” Connerly asked. The administrator explained that Asians are “too dull — they study, study, study.”

Current admissions statistics seem to

demonstrate that the administrator was right about one thing — Asian-American students do study. The student body across all nine UC campuses is 40% Asian, while the population of California is just 13% Asian. These statistics reflect the high academic achievement of Asian-American high schoolers in California. Asian students make up 55% of the student body at UC Irvine, 43% at UC Riverside, 42% at UC Berkeley, and 38% at UCLA. “Where there are policies that emphasize and reward academic achievement, Asians excel,” Walter E. Williams summarized on Townhall.com (6-24-09).

Connerly argues that the UC Regents are well aware that the admissions policy change will reduce the number of Asians on campus. Such proposals for changes to admissions are always run through computer simulation models that predict how changes will affect campus demographics. “The net effect of these changes is that academic achievement will be less significant,” states Connerly, “and UC admissions administrators will have the ‘flexibility’ to discriminate against those ‘dull’ Asians who ‘study, study, study,’ all the time without violating Proposition 209.” (www.mindingthecampus.com, June 2009)



### Briefs (Continued . . .)

On September 9, a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory panel endorsed Merck’s HPV vaccine, Gardasil, for males ages nine to 26. Gardasil targets four strains of HPV, two of which cause 90% of cases of genital warts. If the FDA accepts the panel’s recommendations and approves Gardasil for men and boys, Merck and other interested parties may push for more widespread inoculation efforts targeting both school-aged boys and girls. (CNNMoney.com, 8-9-09)

Central Michigan University’s Student Life department de-recognized CMU’s chapter of Campus Conservatives (CC) four days before a visit from state Sen.

Michelle McManus, forcing the group to host the senator in a cafeteria instead of a more appropriate venue. Student Life was punishing CC for failing to pay for extra police security at a speech by David Horowitz last fall. The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) informed CMU that requiring “student organizations hosting controversial events to pay for extra security is clearly unconstitutional, as it affixes a price tag to events based on their expressive content.” CMU Student Life has already dropped three sets of previous, unrelated charges against Campus Conservatives — twice after warnings from FIRE, and once after a warning from the ACLU. (www.studentsforacademicfreedom.com, 8-25-09)

## Book of the Month



**You’re Teaching My Child What?**, Miriam Grossman M.D., Regnery Publishing 2009, 246 pps., \$24.95



In this book, Dr. Miriam Grossman backs up unpopular truths about waiting and abstinence, sex and relationships, homosexuality, and gender confusion with the most up-to-date science — science that teens *don’t* learn in supposedly “science-based” and “comprehensive” sex ed classes.

Since one in four teen girls now has a sexually transmitted infection (STI), Grossman’s exposé of STI miseducation is especially important. Sex ed materials and instructors send students to websites such as “Go Ask Alice,” an award-winning site that receives thousands of questions a week. “The only way to be 100% certain you don’t get any infections is not to have any oral, vaginal, or anal sex,” “Alice” tells anxious teens. “Most people eventually decide to take the plunge and explore the joys of sex.”

“Alice,” like other sex ed “experts,” presents teens with two alternatives: dreary lifelong celibacy, or “taking the plunge” and risking some mildly inconvenient viruses that everyone gets eventually, anyway. “Just remember that almost everyone gets HPV at some time . . . the virus is so common that having only a single lifetime partner does not assure protection,” another site asserts.

But as Grossman explains, “the medically accurate message is that *all* sexually transmitted infections, and the anguish that accompanies them, *are 100% avoidable.*” Teens need only to wait to have sex, find someone who also waited, and then be faithful. In today’s sex ed classes, students learn little to nothing about this alternative. Nor do they learn about the trauma that even the mildest of the two dozen widespread STIs can cause.

Many students learn that condoms provide 98% protection against pregnancy and STIs, including HIV. “Perfect use” of condoms prevents pregnancy at a rate of 98% (though the rate for “typical use” by adults falls to 85%). But perfect use of condoms during vaginal intercourse reduces the risk of HIV transmission by 80% at best. Condoms only reduce the risk of transmission of gonorrhea by 62%, of Chlamydia by 26%, of genital herpes by 25-50%, and of HPV not at all.

The material in the book is disturbing, but Grossman has spared readers much that teens are routinely subjected to. She conclusively proves that SIECUS, Planned Parenthood, and Advocates for Youth, the leading sex ed organizations, want to present students with a view of sex driven by outdated, warped Kinseyan ideology, not by science or teenagers’ best interests.

# FOCUS: Disorientation At Yale

by Matt Shaffer

My freshman orientation at Yale was disillusioning. I thought I would learn something about the kind of education I could expect over the next four years, but I was sorely disappointed.

Orientation featured addresses by the President, the Dean, and one keynote speaker. President Richard C. Levin stressed our need to interact with other cultures, in order to prepare for global citizenship, while then-Dean Peter Salovey drew on his expertise as a psychologist to provide examples of the ways in which people from different cultures think differently, and told us how much we could benefit from the diversity of our class. Dean Salovey said, "We will help you learn how to think rather than tell you what to think." The unifying theme of these two speeches was diversity and open-mindedness, things which are as inoffensive as they are uninspiring and insubstantial.

But with one speech to go, I hoped that perhaps this keynote speaker, as an academic, rather than an administrator, might say something bold about what it truly means to be an educated person. But the speaker, law professor Kenji Yoshino, was evidently saved for last precisely because he was the least oriented towards education, and the most overtly political. His speech said nothing about education; instead, he discussed his book, *Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights*. He painted a grim picture of the lives of gays and Muslims in America, asserting that they were subject to near constant oppression and forced into silence about their differences and persecuted in ways that the rest of us don't notice.

So all three speeches to introduce students and parents to the university were devoted to praising diversity, with one

zeroing in on our alleged homophobia and supposed contempt for Islam. Many of us got the message right away. Yale is not as interested in intellectual matters as it is in inculcating the reigning prejudices of the academic class: the blasé multiculturalism, the hair-trigger sensitivity of protected groups, and the total approval of all of the 'narratives' and all demands of self-styled 'disempowered groups.' In short, Yale seemed less interested in actual education than in preaching its preferred attitudes. They assumed, despite all the praise packed into our acceptance letters, that, as non-academics, straight out of Ordinary America, we must necessarily be bigots in need of reform. This assumption showed tremendous arrogance and a disconcerting detachment from reality on the part of the academic community.

Condemning prejudice is great, but devoting the keynote speech of Yale orientation to a finger-wagging lecture against bigotry, as Professor Yoshino did, was like opening a conference of physicists with a warning on the dangers of astrology. In short, despite Dean Salovey's assertion that, "We will help you learn how to think rather than tell you what to think," it looked more and more that they were going to teach us neither how to think nor what to think, but rather, what to feel.

That evening, things went from mere disappointment to sheer farce. Tedious lectures turned into indoctrination. We were required to attend 'discussions' with our freshman counselors about Professor Yoshino's speech. The freshman counselor set the tone, and then student after student performed a series of variations upon a single theme: white men are bad, Islam is fabulous and judgment is bad. We need to be eternally vigilant and morally courageous in the face of the innumerable male WASP bigots around us. (Why we

are allowed to judge white people as bad and Islam as good when judgment is supposedly forbidden is beyond my ken.)

I attempted to make my own small contribution to the conversation, by pointing out that Professor Yoshino's narrative seemed a bit delusional, that I had never heard a bigoted remark about homosexuals or Muslims at Yale, and that earlier that day at the freshman activities bazaar I had heard a member of a pro-Palestinian student group shouting "we hate Christians, Jews, and all other Zionist pigs!" In fact, Yale has a reputation for being particularly popular and open to gay students, and media and academe show infinite sympathy with gay activism, but Catholic students whose convictions might put them at odds with gay activists are regularly blacklisted from Yale Political Union office. Not all judgments are bad at Yale.

It was evident that I had transgressed. I still remember the looks of shock and disgust on the faces of my classmates and my freshman counselor, as, losing caste, I found myself labeled a bigot and a political pariah. Questioning the narratives of the self-appointed leaders of 'disempowered' groups was not acceptable, and the next day I found myself on the receiving end of suspicious looks from the Dean and Master to whom my freshman counselor was expected to report.

This was merely the first in a long string of very similar incidents in my time at Yale. Worse, our first evening at Yale communicated to the class of 2010 that our university is not actually interested in free, open, and dispassionate inquiry. Questioning the narratives of disempowered groups won't merely generate intellectual disagreement; you will be labeled with the word against which there is no defense, the most stigmatizing and socially debilitating label that exists in the modern university: intolerant.

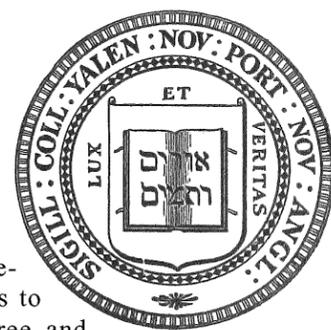
To put something beyond reproach is to forbid free and open inquiry. As such, Yale's political correctness hysteria is not merely politically imbalanced; it is absolutely contrary to the purpose of the University. This trend is reflected throughout the Yale University experience. We now have a semi-annual "Sex Week," at which porn stars are invited to address students on issues of vital academic importance, and at which stimulating events such as the "Skull and Boned" party are thrown. Surely these porn stars look at the world in a different way than I do (I wonder if this is what Provost Salovey had in mind). Many students have privately shared with me their distaste for the porn star lectures and the grotesque advertisements, but they are afraid to make this distaste public, not wanting to be labeled 'close-minded,' or, worst of all, 'intolerant.'

So, too the humanities are in decline. This is partly because it is difficult for a university to justify the existence of a field of study determined precisely to cultivate our moral and aesthetic judgment while still asserting non-judgmentalism as the highest ideal. Witnessing the total lack of self-confidence of the Humanities, students flock instead to vocational training or the grievance-mongering departments.

It is still possible to find small pockets of students at Yale who are actually interested in the life of the mind, and there is at least one department that still really teaches a non-politicized core curriculum centered around the Western canon (the Yale Humanities department), and we non-conformists have done our best to ignore those who have been calling us bigots for our attempts at cultivating the life of the mind in preparation for responsible leadership. Despite all the mandatory nonsense on campus, I will still praise Yale 99 times for every one time I criticize it, for the university still provides magnificent opportunities to those who know where to look to get a great education, and who are willing to put up with stigma and insults. It still provides an opportunity. But it no longer demands that its students become truly educated. It has other fish to fry.

Unfortunately, the problem will not be easily solved. The reigning academic orthodoxy, nihilism, states that there is no truth. Since there is no truth, all knowledge is political; facts and reason are merely justifications for various power structures. So, we can forget about accuracy and reason, and devote ourselves instead to enforcing attitudes we desire, and affirming the narratives which reinforce the right political beliefs. Until academe can once again believe in truth, in beauty, and in goodness, and believe that it has a duty to impart knowledge of these to its students, the university will continue to fail in its purpose.

Matt Shaffer is a student at Yale University. This piece first appeared at *Minding the Campus*, [www.mindingthecampus.org](http://www.mindingthecampus.org), a publication of the Manhattan Institute.



## College Entrance Exams Tell Bad News

Results from both of the major college entrance exams demonstrate that few high school seniors are well-prepared for college. The 2008 ACT, the second-most widely administered college entrance exam, demonstrated that less than a quarter of test-takers who graduated in spring of 2009 demonstrated in all subjects the skills they would need to do well in college. Just as with the SAT, ACT test-takers are a subset of all students, and should be the students most likely to succeed in college.

ACT Inc. surveys thousands of high school and college instructors about the skills students need to succeed in entry-level college courses. The ACT is intended to test these skills, and test-score cutoffs in each subject can predict whether a student has a 75% chance of earning at least a C in an introductory class in that subject. The average composite ACT score in 2008 was 21.1 out of 36. 67% of test-takers met the college-ready benchmark in English, 53% in reading, 42% in math, and 28% in science. Only 23% of



students met the college-ready cutoff in all four subjects — meaning that not even one in four test-takers has a 75% chance of earning at least a C in every freshman course. (*Education Week*, 8-26-09) Given high levels of grade inflation over the past several decades (See *Education Reporter*, July 2009), a C at most schools does not demonstrate an adequate understanding of course material.

Students who took the SAT last year averaged 515 out of 800 in math, 501 out of 800 in critical reading, and 493 out of 800 in writing. The composite average score on the test was the lowest this decade, and the 510 in critical reading was the lowest since 1994. 46% of students who graduate from high school take the SAT, normally in their junior year for the purpose of college admissions. The test is designed as an objective measure of students' academic abilities and a predictor of their success in college.

The SAT results showed a wide disparity in the scores of various racial and ethnic groups. On the math section, which

shows the greatest disparity across different groups, Asian-American students scored 72 points higher than the overall average, and African-American students scored 89 points below the average. Asian-American students showed the most improvement of any racial group, with the average Asian-American test-taker scoring a 587 in math, a six-point improvement over the year before.

Both the ACT and SAT score sets look even worse in light of the billions of new dollars federal and state governments have added to education budgets in the past 25 years. "This is a nearly unrelenting tale of woe and disappointment," said Chester E. Finn Jr. of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. "If there's any good news here, I can't find it."

Gaston Caperton, president of the College Board, was able to find some good news in the fact that more students, from more diverse backgrounds, are now taking the tests. More students took the SAT in 2009 than ever before. About 40% of the 1.53 million test-takers were of minority descent, compared to just 29% of test-takers ten years ago. (*Wall Street Journal*, 8-26-09)

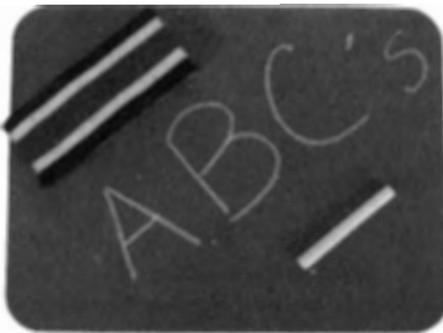
# Liberal Professor Exposes the 'Sham' Of College Freshman Writing Courses

Radical deconstructionist literary critic Stanley Fish may have little in common politically with most advocates of teaching traditional grammar and rhetoric in college composition courses. But in a recent piece for the *New York Times* online, Fish argues that something must be done about college students' poor writing skills, and explains why he believes universities should rethink the political and ideological emphasis of most composition classes.

Fish relates that a few years ago, he became alarmed and curious about the poor writing skills his English graduate students demonstrated in their research papers. Graduate students should write well, Fish believed; especially since they were responsible for teaching undergraduate students how to write in introductory composition classes. Fish asked to see lesson plans for the 104 sections in which English graduate students taught composition to

undergrads. He found that in 100 of the sections, "students spent much of their time discussing novels, movies, TV shows and essays on a variety of hot-button issues — racism, sexism, immigration, globalization." Only four sections emphasized grammar, rhetoric, and the craft of writing well.

"As I learned more about the world of composition studies I came to the conclusion that unless writing courses focus exclusively on writing they are a sham," writes Fish. Although Fish is a prominent scholar, his faculty peers "contemptuously dismissed" his concerns and his advice that the university strengthen its composition program by focusing on composition itself.



Fish cites a report from the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) that analyzes the general education requirements at 100 top American colleges and universities. While he disagrees with some of ACTA's criteria for evaluating core curricula, Fish sums up his main point of agreement with the ACTA report in this way: "Don't slight the core of the discipline." Students who don't write well still won't write well after a "composition" class that neglects grammar, style, and clarity. "It can't be an alternative way of teaching writing to teach something else (like multiculturalism or social justice)," writes Fish. (fish.blogs.nytimes.com, 8-24-09, 8-31-09, 9-7-09)

## Video (Continued from page 1)

grocery bags and water bottles and stop flushing the toilet as often. Some of the pledges were not exactly political but merely strange: "I pledge allegiance to the funk, to the united funk of funkadelica," one celebrity proclaimed. Another promised "to never give anyone the finger when I'm driving again."

"I pledge to be a servant to our president, and all mankind," the video concluded.

Some parents and other community members objected to the screening, without parental knowledge, of a video with such a strong political slant. Jennifer Cieslewicz, mother of a 1<sup>st</sup>-grader at Eagle Bay Elementary, also objected that it was age-inappropriate to expose very young children to adults' environmental and other fears. "They shouldn't be troubling our youth with the woes of the world and making them feel like we're in slavery or they have to worry about how many times they flush the toilet or if they have a plastic water bottle," said Cieslewicz (one of the celebrities pledged in the video to "end slavery").

## UNESCO (Continued from page 1)

A scathing article in *Time* retaliated against American conservatives for criticizing the U.N. document. "There's a chance that, in the U.S., UNESCO's recommendation will be drowned out by the knee-jerk outrage of conservative pundits," wrote journalist Bruce Crumley. "But at least the guidelines can undergo sober and thoughtful examination in more open-minded places . . . like Ethiopia." Crumley had quoted from UNESCO spokeswoman Sue Williams, who asserted that the recommendations received largely positive press everywhere except the U.S., even "conservative places like the Solomon Islands and Ethiopia, which have to balance traditional values with pressing problems created by unwanted pregnancy and disease." It is difficult to credit Williams's report of nations everywhere embracing the UNESCO guidelines wholeheartedly, especially since of the two nations she named, abortion is illegal in one and legal only under certain circumstances, such as rape or incest, in the other. (*Time*, 9-3-09)

Paul Mason, of the pro-life Population Research Institute, criticized the UNESCO guidelines as "culturally insensitive," among other problems. "We think it's a kind of one-size-fits-all approach that's damaging to cultures, religions and to children," Mason told the *New York Times*.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), one of the key participating agencies that funded work on the guidelines, asked that its name be removed from the draft soon after the story broke. Some critics pointed to an inconsistency here, however, since within a week of pulling its name from the UNESCO guidelines, UNFPA held a conference in Berlin training 400 activists to advocate for abortion around the world. The UNFPA released a statement at the end of the conference urging all nations to provide taxpayer-financed abortions, to "eliminate parental . . . and age restrictions" for youth to access "the full range of sexual and reproductive health information and services," and to

increase funds for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) advocating abortion and other "reproductive health care services." UNFPA director Thoroya Obaid reminded the activists assembled for training that they could go even beyond the U.N. in abortion advocacy: "Unlike us at the U.N. who are held accountable by intergovernmental mechanisms, you as NGOs have more freedom and space to push the agenda ahead." (Report from the Catholic Family & Human Rights Institute, 9-4-09)

Whatever the significance of UNFPA's reaction, widespread outrage about the guidelines prompted UNESCO to make several changes before presenting its draft in Birmingham. UNESCO will continue to rework its sex ed recommendations and will finalize the guidelines by the end of the year. The agency is not exactly "repentant," however; it responded to criticisms with a press release defending its guidelines as "evidence-informed and rights-based." (*New York Times*, 9-3-09)

## Christian Child (Continued from page 1)

school? Judge Lucinda V. Sadler apparently agreed with the *guardian ad litem's* negative assessment of Amanda's religion: that Amanda "appeared to reflect her mother's rigidity on questions of faith." The *guardian ad litem* had opined that Amanda "would be best served by exposure to multiple points of view at a time in her life when she must begin to critically evaluate multiple systems of belief and behavior and cooperation in order to select, as a young adult, which of those systems will best suit her own needs."

"In a state whose motto is 'Live Free or Die,'" writes William McGurn, "this is an extraordinary line of reasoning. Just how extraordinary might best be appreciated by contemplating the opposite scenario" — what would happen if a judge ordered a child removed

from public school and placed in a Christian school in order to gain "exposure" to other "systems of belief?" (*Wall Street Journal*, 9-7-09)

Marital Master Michael Garner, who heard the case, decided that Amanda's "vigorous defense of her religious beliefs to [her] counselor suggests strongly that she has not had the opportunity to seriously consider any other point of view." The case highlights the extraordinary power that the entire family court system gives to the judge, Marital Master, and *guardian ad litem* appointed to the child's case. Court documents show that the *guardian ad litem* told Amanda's mother at one point, "If I want her in public school, she'll be in public school."

Shockingly, the *guardian ad litem* was right. Amanda started 5<sup>th</sup> grade

## Loans (Cont. from page 1)

their families can afford *without* recourse to publicly subsidized loans. Such lending practices also disadvantage many of the students they purport to help, since these practices leave many B.A.s, and even Ph.D.s, lawyers, and M.D.s, with tens of thousands of dollars of loans out of all proportion to the salaries they receive after graduation. (See *Education Reporter* April 2009, *Forbes* 2-2-09)

Sarah Bauder, director of the University of Maryland's financial aid office, told Congress that "the perils and costs associated with moving entirely to one loan system for students need to be re-evaluated." For one thing, said Bauder, private lenders work rigorously to prevent defaults on loans, while the Department of Education demonstrably does not. Financial aid offi-

at her local public school in Meredith, New Hampshire earlier this fall. The Alliance Defense Fund is helping Amanda's mother to challenge the court order. ADF-allied attorney John Anthony Simmons writes: "The court is essentially saying that the evidence shows that, socially and academically, this girl is doing great, but her religious views are a bit too sincerely held and must be sifted, tested by, and mixed among other worldviews. This is a step too far for any court to take."

cialists from 14 schools, including Notre Dame and UCLA, wrote a letter to Congress warning of the "unintended consequences that come from basing reform on current political pressures without sufficient consideration of what best serves the interests of all stakeholders — students, parents, schools, and taxpayers."

Rep. Miller's plan starts with eliminating all government-backed loans through private lenders, and then goes much further in providing a taxpayer-funded bonanza for both students and universities. The plan locks in 3.4% interest rates on some students' Stafford Loans. The bill also has students who receive another type of federal loan benefiting from a lower rate if interest rates fall, and a cap on students' rates — meaning taxpayers will bear the burden — if interest rates rise. Obviously, no private student loan company can compete with the practices of a lender with this kind of power to lavish money from public coffers on students and graduates.

"What we have here is Congress aiding, abetting and obfuscating a government takeover of an industry," assert the editors of the *Wall Street Journal*. "It has grown difficult for Mr. Obama to deny that he favors a single-payer system. The question is how much of the U.S. economy will have to live under it." (*Wall Street Journal*, 8-20-09)