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# Los Angeles Times

May 26, 2012

## Letters: Liberals-only UC?



A report by the California Assn. of Scholars asserts a liberal bias among professors at schools like UCLA. (Los Angeles Times / May 25, 2012)

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[Re "When academics are advocates," Opinion, May 20](#)

It's regrettable that John M. Ellis and Charles L. Gesheker of the California Assn. of Scholars, which produced a report purporting to show a liberal bias in University of California instruction, have so little faith in our students' ability to reason and develop their own political opinions based on strong personal values.

[UCLA](#), like our sister campuses, welcomes and embraces all points of view. Though we agree that faculty should not inject political views into the classroom, Ellis and Gesheker have merely strung together anecdotes from handpicked courses across our system to try to prove a crisis. The plural of "anecdote" is not "data," however, and they cite no meaningful evidence. In fact, credible studies have shown that left leanings are typical of young Americans, and college does not make them any more liberal.

The real crisis in California public universities now is whether we will have the resources in the future to continue preparing our students — who are sharpening their independent, critical thinking skills at our campuses — to serve as the leaders of tomorrow.

*Gene D. Block  
Los Angeles*

*Andrew Leuchter  
Los Angeles*

*Block is chancellor of UCLA; Leuchter, a professor of psychology, chairs its Academic Senate.*

I accept the figures Ellis and Gesheker cite on the ratios of [Democrats](#) to [Republicans](#) teaching in the UC system. I also accept that some courses may lean left because of that ratio.

But Ellis and Gesheker do not give any reasons why we have this situation. For example, does the system discriminate against

Republicans applying for teaching positions by not hiring them in favor of hiring left-leaning teachers? I could go on and on.

I can't back this up with data, but I believe that Republicans who get a degree are less inclined than Democrats to teach. They've been content to let left-leaning professors take the small-paying jobs of teaching. You reap what you sow.

*Larry Klimas  
Los Angeles*

If many Americans with degrees lack the ability to reason, write and read at a level once expected of college graduates, one obvious explanation is that more of us attend college than ever before, inevitably diluting the talent pool. Other factors — inattentive parenting, underperforming schools and a culture that glorifies mindlessness — probably limit the potential benefits of education more than faculty-lounge revolutionaries ever will.

It can't be fun for serious educators to teach youngsters who don't really belong in college. For the proselytizers, however, this is an age of opportunity: Their target audience is not only huge; it's grown softer.

*Michael Smith*  
*Cynthiana, Ky.*

Ellis and Gesheker tell us the UC system is getting liberal and that is a bad thing. This is not surprising. Their organization was founded to prove that the universities of California serve as liberal indoctrination camps. Sure enough, just as Sen. [Joe McCarthy](#) found communists everywhere he looked, so the California Assn. of Scholars finds liberals.

Despite their protestations, [UC Berkeley](#) and the rest of the system remain at the top of the world's academic pile. The most recent review by the National Academies found the programs at UC Berkeley to be among the world's elite, including the humanities. Those "liberal" professors are doing great work. UC seems to be doing something right.

*Al Stroberg*  
*Ojai*

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