Dear Colleagues,

As this issue of Trail Notes goes to press, one of our first legislative achievements as an organization is dying an agonizing death in Salem. Well, perhaps that is overly-dramatic. Senate Bill 409, which promotes curricular transparency in Oregon public schools, was introduced by Senator Kim Thatcher who drew upon the important work of the Civics Alliance model K-12 legislation in writing the original bill. As you know, the National Association of Scholars is a core member of the Civics Alliance, whose legislation is spreading like wildfire in state legislatures across the country.

Transparency seemed a relatively benign request even in deep blue Oregon. But when the original SB 409 was in Senate committee, the ironically named Oregon Education Association (our state’s main teachers union) weighed in against it, arguing that the bill “would only serve to make educators more vulnerable to unsafe, targeted attacks.” For good measure, an astro-turf group calling itself Alianza Poder warned that the bill “empowers the anglo [sic.] majority to bully racial minorities in Oregon.”

You can read our full Issue Brief on the resulting vivisection of the bill by the Democratic Party of Oregon, which will probably result in a net decline in transparency. Still, assuming the bill is passed by the House and signed into law by our 47% governor, it may serve as a useful symbolic reminder of the importance of curricular transparency. It may also, because of its false promise, draw more attention to what the teachers union is trying to hide from parents, which is why we supported even the gutted legislation. Time for real grassroots organizations like the superb Oregon Mom’s Union and your OAS to put the pressure on at the school and district levels.

In January, we issued a report on racial segregation at Portland State University. The launching point for the report was the university’s underwriting of a cocktail party for non-whites only, at an estimated cost of $20,000 to the financially insolvent institution. In the course of writing it, we came across many other instances of neo-
segregation at the university, including a jarring set of photos from a November workshop in which whites were told to sit at separate tables with the helpful sign “White” on a table card. While the cocktail party was outrageous, the “whites only” table was more visually unusual, and became the focus of press coverage of our report. One piece, by the College Fix, centered on these “race-based tables” and quoted a university spokesman as saying this is the only way for non-whites to “feel safe”. Another, in the Daily Caller, picked up the same theme while helpfully including an image from our report cover which featured a “Colored only” taxicab from the era of the segregated South. We were grateful for the coverage. Our report has been downloaded 3,000 times so far.

Shall we have a drink sometime? As I was heading to San Francisco in March to give a talk at Stanford, this is the question I posed to NAS members in the Bay Area. The enthusiastic “Yes” led us to organize the first in-person meeting of the California Association of Scholars since the Mesozoic era, or so it seemed. We held it at the Berkeley faculty club in order to make the point that the National Association of Scholars belongs on campus, not hiding in fear at a Motel 6 conference room worried about mob assaults. In the event, we had no protestors, only convivial conversation and a talk by yours truly (forthcoming in Academic Questions) followed by a much better one by the fearless Elizabeth Weiss, which was published in Minding the Campus. It was well-worth the time and effort. Shall we have a drink sometime, be in in Eugene, Portland, or Corvallis?

Is it too much to ask that faculty in higher education (as well as professionals in any field for that matter) be hired based on merit and their competency for the position? Why would anyone want to live in a society where jobs were handed out on any other basis? We have become so numb to the fact that faculty hiring is based on ideological conformity and racial “affirmative action” that when glimmers of sunlight appear, we are like creatures whose eyes have not seen sunlight for years, blinking in bewilderment.

Yet a national backlash against “diversity statements” in faculty hiring and promotion has gathered steam. Texas and Florida have taken the lead, but other places like North Carolina and Wyoming followed suit. In February, caught up in the enthusiasm of the moment, we issued a press release calling for Oregon public universities to follow suit by banning diversity statements.
Now before you giggle, remember that the revolution usually collapses on itself. The race and ideological litmus tests of diversity statements have led to a plague of terrible hiring and promotion in the state’s universities, which, given that they are overwhelmingly, or exclusively in most cases, composed of liberal faculty has caused the most alarm among liberals. Sometimes the only hope of getting rid of the diversity-hired faculty is to pass them off to another institution as a great professor, rather like the old board game *Masterpiece* where you tried to get other players to take your forgery. Better yet, don’t bring forgeries into your collection in the first place. An expert is sure to notice before long.

The Winter was so full of news on Oregon college campuses that one needs to run a list:

1) In March, *Minding the Campus* ran the first of several articles on Portland State’s new link-up with a military-affiliated university in China to send their engineers to PSU. The university was already told to shut down its Confucius Institute in order to host one of the National Security Agency’s new cybersecurity education centers. What will the NSA make of its new ties to the People’s Liberation Army?

2) In April, Portland State president Stephen Percy was mugged....by reality. After supporting the anti-police and violent BLM demonstrations of 2020, and disarming the campus police, Percy announced that he was re-arming the campus police because of the surge of crime on campus. Students who had not yet been victims of crime protested.

3) In March, Oregon Health & Science University hosted a Zoom seminar on how it is gearing up to conduct a wave of new gender mutilation surgeries on children without their parent’s consent under new state laws. The seminar, oddly, was hidden from the public, but obtained by an alert member of the public and can be viewed [here](#).

4) Portland State replaced Stephen Percy with an even Woker Ann Cudd as president in March. Cudd imposed a mandatory anti-racism course in order to graduate when she was Provost at the University of Pittsburgh, claiming that 98% of participants did so “voluntarily”. She has also coined the Orwellian term “inclusive freedom” to describe her approach to free speech that bans anything that hurts people’s feelings. Fasten your seatbelts.

5) Finally, my lawyers at the Institute for Free Speech have appealed to the Ninth Circuit an Oregon federal judge’s denial of my request for preliminary injunction against the University of Oregon in a suit about Twitter blocking. I wish I could explain more, but the legal technicalities are at this point far above my pay grade. All I can say is that we are making law, and holding to account Woke public institutions that think they are playgrounds for progressive ideology.
Now to some business, which in business-like manner, I will enumerate in point form.

- Our coffers are sufficient. But if we had a donor willing to support a specific project we would do something big. Please keep this in mind at your summer gatherings in case you come across a like-minded individual, and make the pitch for an OAS donation.

- Save the date for the First Ever NAS Members’ Townhall on Friday, May 12 from 11:00am to 1:00pm Pacific (on Zoom). It will be a chance to brainstorm with NAS members from across the country on the goals and activities of your NAS. Please put in a good showing for Oregon! Chance Layton will be sending out information soon.

- On June 22, there will be a Special Members meeting for all NAS members (on Zoom) to introduce and vote on proposed new Members of the Board. This will be a chance to learn out our efforts to revitalize the NAS leadership, starting with the Board of Directors and the Board of Advisors.

Thanks for all you do!
Bruce Gilley, OAS President
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