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TOP STORIES MOOCs are back.... Jerry Falwell Jr. out at Liberty.... A fall without football.... A humpty-dumpty new school year.... Yale on the admissions hot seat.... An epidemic of cancel culture.... Princeton says goodbye to Woodrow Wilson... New sex assault rules upheld... and much more.

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MOOCs are Back Yes, Massive Open Online Courses, once written off as digital chimeras, now have a track record—just in time for the pandemic

Online Schools Have a Way to Go MOOCs may be back, but online education costs just as much as the in-person kind

A Fall Without Football Several conferences will be on the sidelines, at a cost of millions

Adding Athletes to BLM Protests With 49 percent of Division I football players black, gridiron civil rights is not surprising

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The Humpty Dumpty Chronicles Still trying to put together the pieces from a frantic year, American colleges and universities face multiple reopening challenges

Endowments Under Pressure With the pandemic causing

Ole Miss Dodges a Memorial Controversy Somehow it moved a venerable Confederate statue from the center of its Oxford campus to a cemetery without drama

Name Change Fights Hit the Ivy League Elihu Yale escaped the #CancelYale effort, but Princeton showed no mercy for Woodrow Wilson

Negotiating Tuition Discounts Though colleges claim that online classes cost just as much as the brick-and-mortar ones, many are offering discounts for virtual learning

Yale on the Admissions Hot Seat The Trump Justice Department is accusing the Ivy League school of admissions discrimination

Doing Time for Cheating An admissions scandal that involved schools from Stanford and USC to Georgetown and Yale is finally winding down, with some defendants going to jail

Students Afraid to Talk The fear of being criticized is causing a surge of self-censorship on American campuses

A Princeton Prof Declares Independence from Cancel And, of course, is immediately denounced

For Dreamers the Nightmare Continues A Supreme Court ruling gives undocumented immigrant students only a little breathing room in their hopes of staying in the U.S.

U.S. Cracks Down on Chinese Trump administration charges researchers with ties to China with theft and fraud

New Sex Assault Lawsuits Both University of Michigan and USC have to answer multiple charges against once respected personnel

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Philanthropist Gives Millions to HBCUs Jeff Bezos' former wife, MacKenzie Scott, is giving money away “until the safe is empty”

Falwell Is Out at Liberty In the end, a former Fontainebleau hotel pool attendant named Giancarlo brought down the powerful Christian college president

California Dreaming In the middle of several environmental catastrophes, UC makes historic appointments

Safety Is Concern #1 for College Presidents Followed, not surprisingly, by fall enrollment, student mental health, and long-term financial viability

Foreign-Student Decline Is Costing Billions Between the pandemic and increased Trump administration barriers to entry, colleges face severe financial losses

The SATs and ACTs Continue Their Slide More than 1,550 four-year colleges will be “test optional” or “test flexible”

Young Partygoers Blamed for Covid Outbreaks At least 251 cases of the virus tied to fraternities and sororities

PUBLIC TRUST | Canceling Pinker More than 550 academics call on Linguistics Society of America to strip best-selling tenured Harvard prof of membership

An Epidemic of Cancel Culture Pinker is not the only one facing censure

EXTERNAL ORDERS | The Future of Higher Ed Were we “headed for a cliff” before the pandemic?

The Value of a College Degree It still delivers a 15 percent annual return even if only 66 percent of graduates have jobs requiring a degree

Language Matters But no one is sure how, as indiscreet tweets, videotapes, and postings can and will be used against you

Calling for the End of Cancel Culture More than 150 celebrity writers and academics—J.K. Rowling, Gloria Steinem, Wynton Marsalis, et al.--signed an instantly controversial letter on *Harper's Magazine* website condemning “a vogue for public shaming and ostracism.”

ICE Melts on Online-Only Classes The Immigration and Customs Enforcement folks rescinded their order barring foreign students from taking online-only courses

PURPOSE

CURRICULUM

1 **No Longer Free, MOOCs are Evolving and Thriving** After nearly dying off, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) are back. MOOC companies like Coursera added 10 million new users over a two-month period this spring. Enrollments at edX and Udacity saw similar upticks. MOOCs sprang up nearly ten years ago, attracting hundreds of thousands of students from around the world. The problem was that most of them signed up for free and never actually completed their coursework. Through trial and error, companies tweaked the curriculum to make it more skills-focused and interactive, adding online forums, mentoring, and tutoring. They also discovered that earning credentials and paying fees dramatically boosted completion rates. Students are now flocking to courses in fields like programming, data science, and artificial intelligence, where they can earn a “nanodegree” in six months or less at an average cost of \$1,200.

2 **Online Schools: What's It Worth?** As colleges and universities scramble to move to all-online instruction for the fall, students and families are wondering: Is it worth the money? According to a survey of students attending a cross-section of colleges in the spring, 75 percent were unhappy with their e-

learning experience during the spring 2020 lockdown. In another survey, 51 percent of students said online classes are worse than in-person instruction, and 16 percent said a lot worse. Only 6 percent said they are better. Despite the widespread dissatisfaction, however, experts say online learning is here to stay, even though a recent analysis found it's not cheaper for colleges. Students at Kansas State University recently took to Twitter to denounce a "special fee" for digital classes originally scheduled to be taught on campus. And a growing group of colleges like American University and Georgetown, which are starting the fall semester all-online, are reducing tuition, offering discounts of 10 percent. California State University at Fresno spent \$1.2 million on online training, the bulk of it going to faculty.

COMMUNITY

3 **A Fall Without Football** After what *The Wall Street Journal* called "an intense power struggle between university administrators, powerful coaches and star athletes," college football's venerable Big Ten and Pac-12 conferences announced in August that they were postponing their fall sports due to Covid-19 concerns. This is a first for the Big Ten. Since its founding in 1896, Big Ten schools have played through two World Wars and the 1918 flu pandemic. In the run-up to the Covid decision, players across the country demanded better safety protocols and took to Twitter with #WeWantToPlay and #WeAreUnited. Colleges rely on sports to attract students and revenue, and football is especially lucrative. Empty stadiums this fall could have a crushing economic impact not just on colleges, but also on the surrounding communities. College towns that count on fall weekends for survival will likely lose tens of millions of dollars. The party is now over at schools that spent recklessly on multimillion-dollar stadium upgrades, lavish salaries for newly invented administrative positions, and "buildings that look like a Kardashian's closet." Without football, some institutions stand to lose more than half their athletic revenue. As a result, athletic budgets are being slashed to the core, staff laid off, salaries reduced, and entire sports eliminated. To make ends meet, some colleges are considering borrowing tens of millions of dollars. And just five days before the season opened, Big 12 commissioner Bob Bowlsby was still counting on his teams' playing, though not taking any bets on the future. "Forecasting with any precision is a fruitless exercise," he says. "We could find ourselves in the same situation as the Big Ten and Pac-12 are in later in the season."

4 **Adding Athletes to BLM Protests** Since the death of a black man, George Floyd, in police custody last May, college athletes across the country have mobilized to speak out against systemic racism. Athletes at the University of Texas at Austin took to social media with a list of demands they wanted the university's athletics department to take, including abandoning the school song, "The Eyes of Texas," which was once performed at minstrel shows, and donating a portion of annual earnings to the Black Lives Matter movement. While today's movement echoes the activism of the late 1960s, some things have not changed much over the years. According to the NCAA, 49 percent of Division I football players identify as black and 37 percent as white. Yet 82 percent of head coaches are white.

GOVERNANCE

TRUSTEESHIP

5 **The Humpty Dumpty Chronicles** After initially planning to open this fall, hundreds of colleges abruptly changed their minds when Covid-19 infection rates persisted into the summer. In the northeast, home to the first coronavirus hot spots, Smith College, Mount Holyoke College, and the Berklee College of Music reversed course and announced they would move to online-only instruction. On the West Coast, where Covid-19 cases spiked later, reopening plans at the University of California fell apart, with UC Berkeley and UC Merced saying they would shift to fully remote instruction. As of early September, less than 25 percent of American colleges were planning to go fully or primarily in-person, according to the College Crisis Initiative at Davidson College. (The Davidson initiative can be checked, in real time, for the

latest data on college openings: <https://collececrisis.shinyapps.io/dashboard/>.) Those colleges that are moving ahead with in-person classes have come up with imaginative ways to reopen—including lecture classes in big outside tents and a shortened semester that ends at Thanksgiving. But it's not just students that the administration needs to worry about. Lawyers on behalf of faculty and staff at the University of North Carolina's 17 campuses filed a lawsuit to postpone fall classes, saying the state has a duty to keep employees safe. The federal government's \$2-trillion-plus stimulus package included \$14 billion for emergency relief for higher education institutions, but this might not be enough. Fall enrollment could drop between 5 and 20 percent, and public institutions that don't have the financial reserves face tough financial challenges.

6 Endowments Under Pressure During Pandemic The richest universities in America keep getting richer. Since 1981, Harvard's and Princeton's endowments have grown at an average annual rate of, respectively, 8.75 and 9.2 percent, while the University of Michigan's increased by a robust 13 percent. The coronavirus pandemic has caused massive budget shortfalls at institutions across the country. Instead of implementing staff furloughs, pay cuts, and tuition increases, however, many observers say it may be time for the richest universities to tap into their sizable endowments. However, this isn't an option for the average college. As a whole, higher education endowments "significantly underperform" market benchmarks such as the S&P 500 index. Increasingly, colleges are coming under pressure from student activists and "woke" foundations to focus on social justice. Spurred on by students worried about the effects of climate change, big-name universities like Cornell, Georgetown, and George Washington University are divesting from the fossil fuel industry. The Independent Petroleum Association of America is warning that the divestment trend could cost U.S. pensions \$431 million a year in losses.

7 Philanthropist Gives Tens of Millions of Dollars to HBCUs At least four historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) received their biggest single donations ever thanks to MacKenzie Scott, one of the richest women in the world. Scott, an author and philanthropist whose marriage to Jeff Bezos ended last year, has pledged to give away her money "until the safe is empty." So far, she has donated \$1.7 billion to a long list of groups supporting racial, LGBTQ, and gender equality. The four HBCUs are Howard University (\$40 million), Hampton University (\$30 million), Tuskegee University (\$20 million), and Xavier University of Louisiana (\$20 million). Two other HBCUs—Morehouse and Spelman colleges—also received gifts from Scott but did not specify the amounts.

8 Jerry Falwell Jr. Is Out at Liberty Jerry Falwell Jr., the embattled president of Liberty University, finally resigned in August, after months of rumors, when news hit of a six-year sexual relationship that he and his wife had had with a business partner. The scandalous fall was fittingly proportionate to Falwell's assumed moral heights as leader of one of the nation's most unabashedly Christian universities. Giancarlo Granda says he was working as a pool attendant at the Fontainebleau Miami Beach hotel when he met Falwell and his wife, Becki, and eventually had business dealings with them. Granda claims that, starting in March 2012 and continuing into 2018, he was erotically involved with the couple, having sex with Becki while Jerry looked on. In early August, Falwell was placed on leave after he posted, and then deleted, a provocative picture of himself and his wife's female assistant on Instagram. Both had their zippers partially down and Falwell was holding a dark beverage he called "just black water." Back in May, Falwell mocked the social distancing orders of Virginia's Democratic governor, Ralph Northam, by tweeting a face mask with an image of two people—one in a KKK robe and hood and one in blackface. The resulting uproar led to staff resignations, a Change.org petition denouncing Falwell, and a violent protest in the university's home of Lynchburg, Virginia. Because of a clause in his contract, Falwell may still be entitled to a severance package of \$10.5 million: his \$1.25 million salary for two years, followed by a lump-sum payment of about \$8 million.

9 California Dreaming Amid environmental disasters and a deadly pandemic, California's public

higher education system, the nation's largest, announced two historic appointments; Michael Drake as UC's 21st president and the first black leader in the system's 152-year history, and Juan Sánchez Muñoz, a farm worker's son, as the new chancellor of UC Merced. The sprawling UC system educates some 285,000 students, the majority of whom are now nonwhite. Drake succeeds Janet Napolitano, who stepped down after seven years. Although she had a rocky tenure, Napolitano is credited with championing immigrant students and survivors of sexual misconduct, pushing forward initiatives on climate change, and opening the UC system to more California students. The Merced campus, which Muñoz will lead, is the youngest and most diverse of the UC system's ten campuses, educating the highest percentage of first-generation and low-income students in the system. On the downside, at the University of Southern California, when President C.L. (Max) Nikias was ousted in the wake of a sex abuse scandal involving a campus gynecologist, he received an exit package of \$7.6 million.

10 Safety Is the No. 1 Concern of College Presidents Given the now accepted reality of the pandemic, it would seem a truism to say that "safety protocols for the fall" is the top issue facing college presidents, which is what a survey by the American Council on Education recently found. And it also wouldn't be surprising that two-thirds of survey respondents named safety their most pressing concern. The next most pressing also lined up as might be expected: "fall enrollment" (56 percent), "mental health of students" (39 percent), and "long-term financial viability of the institution" (38 percent). It is clear that American higher education has entered a new era.

11 Ole Miss Dodges a Memorial Controversy While scores of statues have been toppled, vandalized, and torn down during the recent Black Lives Matter protests, at the University of Mississippi a venerable Confederate statue, erected in 1906 as a memorial to fallen Confederate Soldiers, went quietly—from the center of the Ole Miss campus to a campus cemetery, where it will remain. Initial plans to include a lighted pathway and elaborate headstone at the new location have been scrubbed. But even faculty and staff who fought for years to have the statue moved decided that the monument should be preserved as a reminder of the school's deep-rooted Civil War history.

12 Name Changes Go to the Heart of the Ivy League With histories deeply connected to racist figures, many of the nation's most well-known and well-endowed universities are having their own moments of naming reckoning. The hashtag #CancelYale was trending nationwide on Twitter this summer as protestors demanded that the school stop commemorating Elihu Yale, a onetime slave trader. At Princeton, the fourth oldest college in America, the board of trustees voted to drop Woodrow Wilson's name from its public policy school. Wilson was not only a graduate of the school, but also its 13th president, not to mention the 28th president of the U.S. Said Princeton's current president, Christopher L. Eisgruber, "Wilson's racism was significant and consequential" and "his segregationist policies make him an especially inappropriate namesake for a public policy school." Newly formed committees at universities across the country are busy deciding how to handle the barrage of requests by faculty, students, and alumni to rename buildings and memorials that represent a controversial and sometimes racist history.

ADMINISTRATION

13 Negotiating Tuition Discounts Colleges and universities across the country are in a tough predicament: Offer a price break to students unhappy with virtual instruction and lose revenue or stick with full tuition and lose students. The decision is not one to be made lightly. Williams College, the wealthiest liberal arts school in the U.S., was the first major college to announce a discount—a 15 percent reduction in tuition and room and board for the upcoming academic year. Other institutions such as Princeton University, Spelman College, and Clark Atlanta University quickly followed suit, cutting tuition by 10 percent, while Southern New Hampshire University is offering all incoming freshmen a onetime full-tuition scholarship. But the majority of colleges are sticking with their sticker prices—including the

California State University system, which lost \$337 million this spring and is facing a \$300 million state budget cut. A handful of small colleges are offering students an extra free semester or two in the future if they enroll this fall. The “PLUS Year” program at Pacific Lutheran University will allow students to take a lighter course load during the coronavirus pandemic with the option for a tuition-free fifth year.

14 Yale on the Admissions Hot Seat In an impressive move against a major American college, the Trump Justice Department has accused Yale of discriminating against Asian-American and white applicants in its admissions practices, in violation of federal civil-rights law. And in California, there are calls to reconsider that state’s ban on public universities’ considering race or gender in admissions—Proposition 209, passed in November 1996. The Justice Department’s move against Yale marks an escalation of the Trump administration efforts to challenge the long-standing consideration of race in selective colleges’ admissions decisions. Yale maintains it relies “on a holistic review of applicants, including academics, leadership experience, their backgrounds and more.” California’s law is being called into question since “people of color remain underrepresented in many of the critical indicators of opportunity, from higher education admissions (particularly acute in UC’s most competitive campuses) to public contracts.” What has changed in California since the ban 24 years ago are demographics—now only 35 percent are white, and no Republicans hold statewide office. Studies following the effects of race-based preferences in college admissions programs show that there are no shortcuts to increasing equality and improving race relations, as some students continue to struggle during school and, even after graduating, have subpar grades that hamper career advancement.

15 Doing Time for Cheating Television star Lori Loughlin and her fashion designer husband Mossimo Giannulli were sentenced in August to two and five months, respectively, in prison, by a federal judge, for conspiring with a college counselor (for a \$500,000 fee) to represent their two daughters as crew-team recruits and get them accepted to the University of Southern California. Loughlin is one of the best-known defendants in a nationwide college-admissions scheme, which has involved more than 55 defendants and is slowly winding down. The parents have admitted to various charges, including money laundering, conspiracy, mail fraud, and bribery, in connection with their efforts to help their children gain admission to USC, Georgetown, Yale, and Stanford, among other prestigious universities. Under the plea agreements, in addition to fines, restitution, and community service, prosecutors can now add prison time. All cases have involved William “Rick” Singer, an admissions consultant who helped numerous parents, sometimes with their children’s knowledge, enhance test scores and create fake athletic profiles (when they sometimes never played the sport). Singer pleaded guilty to multiple charges of fraud, money laundering, and racketeering in March 2019 and is still awaiting sentencing.

16 Foreign Student Decline Is Costing Billions U.S. colleges and universities were already grappling with the impact of declining foreign student enrollment when U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement announced that *new* international students—those not already enrolled as of March 9, 2020—would be barred from entering the U.S. if their college courses were entirely virtual this fall. The recent threat to end DACA by the Trump administration (later rescinded after a Supreme Court ruling, brought about renewed attention to the deep dependency of U.S. colleges on foreign student enrollment. International students contributed roughly \$40 billion to the overall U.S. economy, with colleges facing devastating fiscal losses. Domestic enrollment may also suffer with the loss of higher foreign tuition money that helps subsidize domestic students—and fiscal losses for universities often mean less attractive financial aid packages for students.

17 The SATs and ACTs Continue Their Slide As the coronavirus pandemic spread, a wave of colleges and universities announced they would—at least temporarily—no longer require that applicants submit SAT or ACT scores. The University of California (UC) system was one of the first to jump on the

bandwagon when its Board of Regents unanimously voted to make standardized tests optional for two years, then “test blind” for two years. According to the nonprofit organization FairTest, more than 1,550 four-year accredited colleges and universities will be “test optional,” “test flexible,” or otherwise de-emphasize the use of standardized tests for fall 2021 admissions—including public flagships like the University of Maryland at College Park, liberal arts colleges like Amherst, as well as the entire Ivy League! Given UC’s immense size and prestige, its decision to drop the SAT/ACT is clearly seen as “a blow to the image of the tests.” Although standardized tests are often criticized as biased and unfair, some experts argue they give a leg up to black, Latino, and low-income students who might be rejected because of their grades. UC officials say they are now studying the feasibility of creating their own replacement admissions test.

CAMPUS LIFE

18 Young Partygoers Blamed for Covid Outbreaks Not surprisingly, perhaps, a wave of college coronavirus outbreaks across the country are being linked to Greek life. *The New York Times* identified at least 251 cases of the virus tied to fraternities and sororities. And at the University of Washington’s Seattle campus, at least 165 coronavirus cases identified by the school are associated with its Greek Row. Most outbreaks occur in dorms and other campus housing, but fraternities and sororities are especially challenging for universities to oversee. The president of Georgia State College and University, where 7 percent of students have tested positive for the virus, blames off-campus parties and student gatherings for the surge in cases. Campuses that are reopening for in-person instruction are banking on young people to be responsible and “make it all work—and students are being set up to take the fall when the plans fail.” (See the Davidson initiative: <https://collegecrisis.shinyapps.io/dashboard/>.)

PUBLIC TRUST

CRITIQUE

19 Canceling Pinker The idea that someone can be “canceled” for making comments that others find offensive has stepped into the mainstream. In extreme cases, people are hounded for things they said or wrote years ago. Jobs are lost and reputations ruined, yet few dare to speak up. One of the latest victims is Steven Pinker, the 65-year-old tenured Harvard professor who has some 600,000 Twitter followers. More than 550 academics wrote an open letter calling for him to be stripped of his status as a Linguistics Society of America fellow. (Pinker was one of the signatories of a controversial open letter published by *Harper’s*.) The group stated that Pinker has “a history of speaking over genuine grievances and downplaying injustices, frequently by misrepresenting facts,” and pointed to six tweets dating back to 2014, and a 2011 description of a man who shot four muggers as “mild mannered,” as evidence. *The Atlantic* called the incident “chilling,” saying it “did send a message to less powerful scholars that certain opinions, publicly stated, could result in professional sanction.”

20 An Epidemic of Cancel Culture A resident scholar was labeled a “horrible human being” before ever setting foot on campus just for using the phrase “free-market environmentalism.” Researchers are afraid of losing funding if they can’t justify how their research will explicitly combat systemic racism or sexism. A math professor was fired for criticizing the concept of “microaggressions.” These are just a few of the numerous examples of academics who’ve been sanctioned for their “incorrect” beliefs. Is it any wonder that only 48 percent of Americans have confidence in higher education? “In some ways the left has become even more conformist than the right,” David Brooks wrote in a *New York Times* column. But, “happily, there’s a growing rebellion against groupthink and exclusion.” According to a Politico poll, a clear majority of Americans—across almost every demographic category—think cancel culture has gone too far, and 49 percent say it’s had a negative impact on society. By and large, Americans are forgiving and believe that the longer ago a comment was made, the less likely it matters today.

21 Students Afraid to Talk Political debate is supposed to be at the core of liberal learning, yet a lot of students are afraid to speak up on campus. According to a 2020 University of Carolina survey, college students—particularly conservative ones—regularly engage in self-censorship. More than 25 percent of liberal students, 55 percent of moderates, and 75 percent of conservative students said they were at least somewhat concerned that other students would have a lower opinion of them if they shared their political beliefs. A 2019 survey had similar findings: More than two-thirds (68 percent) of students said the fear of offending their classmates stopped them from expressing their true opinions.

22 A Princeton Professor Declares Independence From Cancel Culture On July 4, more than 350 Princeton faculty signed a letter demanding the university do more to address racism on campus. The letter began with the statement “Anti-Blackness is foundational to America” and included a lengthy list of demands ranging from the removal of the statue of John Witherspoon—a slave owner, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and former Princeton president—to higher pay and longer sabbaticals for nonwhite faculty. Four days later, Joshua Katz, a 22-year veteran of the classics department and self-described liberal democrat, published his dissent in *Quillette*, titled “A Declaration of Independence by a Princeton Professor.” Katz warned that many of the faculty proposals “would lead to civil war on campus” and characterized the now defunct Black Justice League as a “small local terrorist organization.” He was immediately denounced by colleagues, students, and Princeton’s president, Christopher Eisgruber, and the university threatened an “investigation.” But it later backed off, and Eisgruber affirmed that Katz would not be censored or sanctioned. Writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, Katz said his story is of interest “since I have no doubt that many more people, from once-obscure professors to public figures, will be vilified and in some cases materially punished for thought crimes.”

REGULATION

23 For Dreamers the Nightmare Continues President Trump’s attempt to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA), forcing thousands of undocumented immigrant students out of the country and U.S. colleges, was dealt a temporary defeat by the Supreme Court last June, when it ruled, 5-4, that Trump did not have the authority to end the program—but the fight is far from over. The move by the Trump administration would have deported more than 600,000 students, while also acting as a heavy-handed attempt to force university officials to keep schools open amid the pandemic. After the ruling, Chief Justice Roberts noted that the administration’s decision to end DACA is not unconstitutional. “The appropriate recourse is therefore to remand to DHS so that it may reconsider the problem anew,” Roberts wrote, with Justice Samuel Alito, adding that the court recommended that DHS “go back and try again.” For students like Yongbin Chan, a Berkley law student and one of thousands of immigrant students studying or working within the University of California system, there is little time to celebrate. “It’s a small victory,” Chan says. “There’s still a lot of work ahead.” In an effort to continue the fight, Chan works with the East Bay Dreamers Project, a collaborative effort between the East Bay Community Law Center and Berkley Law to support DACA recipients. The center will be busier since the ruling, says Chan, “but it’s a welcome busy.”

24 U.S. Cracks Down on Chinese Interference in Higher Ed When the U.S. government abruptly ordered China to close its consulate in Houston last July, it did not immediately reveal that it had also delivered a related message: “Remove all Chinese military researchers now in the U.S.” That order came amid rising concerns by the Trump administration over the theft of technology and trade secrets by researchers with ties to the Chinese military. The Justice Department charged four Chinese researchers with visa fraud for lying about their ties to the Chinese military on their U.S. visa applications. One of the four, a visiting cancer researcher at the University of California, Davis, was arrested after photos of her in full military uniform surfaced. “While Americans may think of academic interests as separate from business or the military, the Chinese government has used them all as levers in its quest for global

influence,” according to *The New York Times*. The U.S. is also taking a hard line on Confucius Institutes, campus-based Chinese government-funded institutions for language and culture education. Despite warnings by the FBI, 78 still remain open. The U.S. State Department has ramped up the pressure by ordering the Confucius Institute U.S. Center in Washington, D.C., which manages the campus institutes, to register as a foreign mission.

25 New Sex Assault Lawsuits Filed Against the University of Michigan and USC For decades, it was an open secret at the University of Michigan that a longtime physician was using medical exams to sexually molest student athletes, according to a lawsuit filed by more than 50 former students, including 26 football players. The suit contends that legendary football coach Bo Schembechler and athletic director Don Canham, among others, were aware of the abuse but took no action to stop it. Dr. Robert Anderson worked at the university for nearly 40 years, until 2003, and was given “unfettered access” to students and athletes. He died in 2008. Meanwhile, the University of Southern California’s former head gynecologist, Dr. George Tyndall, has pleaded not guilty to a half-dozen new felony charges. The latest charges involve alleged crimes against five women between 2011 and 2015—five counts of sexual penetration of an unconscious person and one count of sexual battery by fraud. Last year, Tyndall was charged with 29 felony counts involving 16 other women dating back to 2009. He pleaded not guilty and was released from jail on bond. After stepping down in 2018 amid the scandal, USC President C.L. (Max) Nikias walked away with a \$7 million payout, newly released tax documents reveal. Nikias also received a \$3 million housing loan, which at the time of the filing had not been repaid. It’s not clear how much of the payout was earmarked to achieve the board’s goal to “accelerate his departure.”

REGULATION

26 Big Win for Betsy DeVos U.S. Education Department Betsy DeVos’s controversial new rules governing how schools and universities should respond to allegations of sexual assault and harassment went into effect August 15 after a federal judge rejected an effort to stop it. Among other changes, the new rules narrow the definition of sexual harassment and give the accused the right to a live hearing and cross-examination of accusers. Students and women’s-rights and education groups sued to block the new regulations from taking effect. Plaintiffs, including a 10-year-old from Michigan, say the new rules will harm students and burden institutions. And colleges and universities argue that the timing is unreasonable as they continue to deal with the coronavirus pandemic.

EXTERNAL ORDERS

TERTIARY EDUCATION

27 The Future of Higher Education The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted all learning pursuits, but as one researcher has noted, higher education had been “headed for a cliff...even before coronavirus pressures emerged.” Harvard researcher Anthony Carnevale views the current environment as “something of a moment of judgment for higher education.” One administrator observed that “if one were to invent a crisis uniquely and diabolically designed to undermine the foundations of traditional colleges and universities,” this pandemic would fit the profile. Others see some good: “one positive, long-term effect of the crisis—colleges moving away from the SAT and other standardized tests.” Also, the transition to online education from on-campus schooling is “practical, given the younger generation’s habit of creating community in the digital world.” Looking ahead, some expect a return to the campus model: “Students are saying they want to go back to their relationships with peers and friends, and learning from professors. I think we’ll crave the human interaction even more post-pandemic.”

28 **The Value of a College Degree** The conventional wisdom is that college degrees are a great investment and the reason that recruiters say things like, “Ultimately, not going to college is a decision that sabotages you for the rest of your life.” Benefits of a college education do look great. Research at Brookings Institution’s Hamilton Project shows that in 2011 a college degree delivered an inflation-adjusted annual return of more than 15 percent per year. “The return to college is more than double the average return over the last 60 years experienced in the stock market.” Costs for a degree, however, went up by 98 percent from 1989 to 2016. And in 2019 just 66 percent of graduates were in jobs requiring a college degree, and only 27 percent were in jobs related to their college major. In “Winners and Losers: Universities and the Pursuit of the American Dream,” researchers report that higher education continues to be an important driver of upward mobility: In their study, over half of the low-income students had moved up to the two highest income quintiles by the time they reached their early 30s. But not all institutions deliver an education that points students in such a direction, and understanding the variation among colleges is critical to the climb up the income ladder.

CULTURE

29 **Language Matters** In the current countrywide reckoning on racism, many universities have not been charitable toward indiscreet student and faculty tweets, videotapes, and postings. More than a dozen colleges have “rescinded admission offers to incoming students over instances of racism”; a St. John’s fencing coach was fired over contents of a videotape; and Liberty University’s president Jerry Falwell Jr., before resigning over sexual indiscretions, had already been asked to resign for a tweet showing a pandemic mask with an image of a person in a KKK robe and another in blackface. The Rutgers English Department announced it would de-emphasize traditional grammar in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, challenging the dogma that “writing instruction should not put students from non-standard ‘academic’ English backgrounds at a disadvantage.” Hillsdale College has taken the stance that actions speak louder than words, claiming that it was the first American college to prohibit discrimination based on race, religion, or sex in its 1884 charter. “The College founding is a statement,” says the school.

30 **Calling for the End of Cancel Culture** More than 150 prominent and mostly liberal journalists, authors, artists, and academics signed an open letter, published on the website of *Harper’s Magazine*, that sparked intense debate over cancel culture and the state of free speech in politically progressive circles. The group came together to condemn “an intolerance of opposing views” and “a vogue for public shaming and ostracism.” The letter is notable because of some of the household names who signed it: J.K. Rowling, Noam Chomsky, Gloria Steinem, Wynton Marsalis, and Margaret Atwood, among others. Still, people from many walks of life are hesitant to express their views, including many who are “left of center,” and fear for their professional prospects “if they get on the wrong side of left-wing opinion,” as one professor who signed the letter said.

POLITICS

31 **ICE Melts on Online-Only Classes** U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced in July that *new* international students—those not already enrolled as of March 9, 2020—would be barred from entering the U.S. if their college courses are entirely virtual this fall. Following a nationwide backlash, and lawsuits by 20 universities and 20 states, ICE walked back its directive, which would have also put *all* international students at risk of deportation if they were enrolled exclusively in online college classes. Colleges and universities are scrambling to find workarounds like hybrid instruction consisting of a mix of in-person and online classes. Hampshire College, in Massachusetts, says it still has spots available for international students who might otherwise have to leave the country.

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