

Advice for Ivy League Universities: Take the Trump Deal, Before It's Too Late

By Victor Davis Hanson

We've talked about higher education before, but now it's come into sharper focus with the Trump administration's deadlock with [Harvard University](#) over its unwillingness or inability—whatever term we like to use—to meet the administration's demands that it ensures an antisemitic-free campus that does not allow people to disrupt classes. It doesn't use race, after the Supreme Court decision that went against Harvard and said that affirmative action was no longer legal.

Columbia had the same type of disagreement, other campuses are.



I don't think it's a wise thing for them to get into a fight with the federal government. If

they are dependent on federal funding, these big private marquee universities—Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Stanford, Duke—and they want federal money, then the federal government is going to ask for some transparency. And we, the

public, really don't know much about it.

It's like a rock, a traditional rock on moist ground. You don't wanna turn it over because there's going to be things underneath there that you would better not—it would be better not to be seen. And that's what the public is going to learn about [higher education](#).



Now, what do I mean? I mean loans. These universities are raising tuition higher than the rate of

inflation. And that started when the federal government said, "We will ensure these loans for students." Once that happened, the moral hazard shifted away from the university. So, they have been gouging students for room and board.

I'll give you an example. [Hillsdale College](#), its room, board, and tuition is about \$45,000 a year. It takes no money. Harvard gets about \$9 billion in total. Its room, board, and tuition is about \$95,000. Same with Stanford. They're about double what Hillsdale charges. And one of the reasons is that they're so dependent on federal money and therefore they can spend like drunken sailors.

Remember, of that 1.7, about 10%, 8% are nonperforming and about maybe 14% are late. The public doesn't know all that. But they're paying for it—especially kids, the half of the cohort 18 to 30 that's not going to college, they're

subsidizing this university boondoggle.

The second thing is the university doesn't really obey the first 10 amendments of the Constitution. If you get accused of particular crimes as a student, faculty member, let's say, sexual harassment or untoward speech, hate speech—whatever the term they use—it's very unlikely you're going to get Fourth and Fifth, maybe Sixth Amendment protection. That is, you're not going to have an open hearing. You're not going to be tried by a jury of your peers. You're not going to necessarily have legal counsel. You're not necessarily going to know who your accusers are.

The affirmative action ruling by the [Supreme Court](#) outlawed the use of race in admissions. And we have civil rights statutes that also do that. But the universities do something funny. They have safe spaces. They have theme houses. And they have auxiliary graduations. But the common denominator, they're predicated on race. So, a black theme house, a Latino theme house has almost very few people.

Nobody would want a European, so-called white theme house or an alternate white graduation. And you would say, "Why not, Victor?" Because it would be considered racist, I suppose.

But at Stanford, only 22% of the student body is white. Are they going to say, "Well, we're one of the minorities now. Why don't we do this?" That's where it will lead if you enhance tribalism.

There's no intellectual diversity. The National Association of Scholars did a study not long ago. They found not one of the 133 faculty members at Bryn Mawr was a Republican. At Williams, I think they found one or two. They found a lot of elite universities where there was nobody who openly acknowledged that they were a Republican.

There are a couple of other things that are disturbing too. And that is the universities get individual faculty

grants—[Department of Energy](#), National Institutes of Health. And usually, in most private foundations, the university is not following their model.

What I mean is, a private scholar at a think tank, they might deduct 15% for the use of the phone or office that they would get out of that federal grant. But universities like Stanford, Harvard, Princeton, they can go from 40% to 50% to 60% and they're relying on that multimillion-dollar—I guess we'd call it—price gouging from the federal government.

And finally, these universities don't have multimillion-dollar endowments anymore. They have multibillion-dollar—\$30 billion, Stanford \$53 billion. And they're predicated—the income—on that. And sometimes they get almost 10%. They're very good in investing. This \$5 or \$6 or \$7 or \$4 billion a year in income is tax-free, for the most part. Tax-free. And that's predicated that they're nonpolitical, they're nonpartisan. But when you look at the makeup of the faculty and the use of race and gender, contrary to federal law, you can see they're very partisan.

So, let me just sum up. Does the university really want to get in a fight with the Trump administration and then bring all of this information about their endowments; their lack of intellectual diversity; their segregation; their lack of due process for people who undergo inquiries or accusations; their separate racial graduations, safe spaces, theme houses; the use of student loans? I don't think they want to do that. The public would be shocked. And it's a losing proposition.

If I were the presidents of these major universities, I would do this: I would make a deal with the Trump administration. And I would welcome it because then I would tell my radical students, "You can't wear a mask. I'd like you to, but the federal government won't let me." Or, "We can't have racially segregated dorms anymore, theme houses. I'd like to, but it's against the law." And that would be their way out.

Is that going to happen? I don't think so. And I think we're going to see some accountability. And the universities are not going to like the consequences.

First published in the [Daily Signal](#)