

College Donor

QUARTERLY

a publication of the **Fund for Academic Renewal**

2023 Alumni Summit on Free Expression

On March 30 and 31, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) and the Alumni Free Speech Alliance (AFSA) co-hosted the second annual Alumni Summit on Free Expression at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC.

More than 120 alumni and supporters of free speech learned about AFSA’s vision for the national alumni movement and how to protect free expression at their alma maters. The conference was generously supported by the Stanton Foundation.

Attendees represented AFSA’s 16 member groups of organized alumni at Yale University, Harvard University, Stanford University, Washington & Lee University, Bucknell University, the Virginia Military Institute, Cornell University, the University of Virginia, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and others.

Thursday evening’s keynote remarks were delivered by **Janice Rogers Brown**, retired judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and former associate

justice of the California Supreme Court. In her speech, “The Wisdom of Sesame Street or the Madness of Mao?”, Judge Brown traced the influence of Marxism, communism, and social justice theory in American higher education

and explored how these ideologies make truth-seeking difficult.

The next day, ACTA President Michael Poliakoff, U.S. Representative Greg Murphy, and AFSA President Chuck Davis (recently elected by AFSA’s Executive Council in January 2023) each gave opening remarks.

They praised alumni for acting as watchdogs of free expression at their alma maters and

for working with students, faculty, and administrators to foster open inquiry and intellectual diversity. Referencing students who are fighting back against restrictions on free speech, Representative Murphy said, “It is absolutely incumbent upon us—us—to stand behind them.”

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Judge Rogers Brown delivers the dinner keynote address.

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INTELLIGENT COLLEGE GIVING. The Fund for Academic Renewal serves alumni and college donors who aim to support a renewal of the highest standards on college campuses through targeted philanthropy.

An Interview with Professor Beth Breeze

Beth Breeze is the director of the Centre for Philanthropy at the University of Kent. Dr. Breeze has authored and co-edited seven books, launched a master's program in philanthropic studies, and published extensively in industry journals and media outlets. Her book *In Defence of Philanthropy* won the Association of Fundraising Professionals' 2022 AFP/Skystone Partners Prize for Research on Fundraising and Philanthropy. Her most recent book *Advising Philanthropists: Principles and Practice*, written with Emma Beeston, was released in February of this year.



What prompted you to write *Advising Philanthropists*?

My research is focused on the complexity of the philanthropy space - how to understand and navigate it. There is far more to private giving for the public good than most people realize, but also do not want people to feel overwhelmed. There are a lot of choices out there, like who to support and how to do it. Advisers help people navigate that complexity. Despite the growth of the number of philanthropic advisers, there is still a lot of mystery surrounding the career, and I hope to demystify the world of philanthropy advising.

How can a philanthropy adviser help donors give more effectively?

Rationing is the natural state of philanthropy. Nobody can support every good cause, so people have always had to make choices—

often between equally worthwhile options. The hope would be that if you have an adviser, you're being supported to make better choices—better in the sense of being more impactful for society and more meaningful for the donor. Advisers help donors make those choices by enabling their clients to identify and unpack their values, ideals, and hopes for how their money can make a difference.

What do you wish the public knew about the philanthropy sector?

I wish the public was more aware of the positive potential of philanthropy to save and improve lives. No one is obliged to give away anything, and many wealthy people give nothing or only trivial amounts, so it's frustrating that those who do put their heads above the philanthropic parapet so often get shot down. People relish the cartoon caricatures of big donors as tax-dodging,

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Following these remarks, four panels explored AFSA's growth and mission; how to use the legal system to address First Amendment violations on campus; the work of nonprofits to promote open discourse and debate; and student perspectives on campus culture and viewpoint diversity. Our expert panelists included ACTA's Steven McGuire and Bryan Paul, student and alumni leaders from AFSA member groups, Joe Cohn of the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, Cherise Trump of Speech First, Samantha Harris of Allen Harris Law, John Tomasi of Heterodox Academy, and Lindsey Burke of the Heritage Foundation.

Virginia Secretary of Education Aimee Rogstad Guidera delivered a luncheon keynote address, entitled "Defending Virginia's Hallmark: Free Speech and Inclusion in Education." She remarked, "The

undisputable trend is that campuses are on the verge of losing the very thing that led to their prominence: free inquiry and free speech. Unfortunately, this attack on individual freedom to express thoughts different

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— VA Secretary of Education Aimee Rogstad Guidera

than the prevailing groupthink of the day has spread across our society.”

In the robust Q&A sessions that followed each presentation, our panelists and speakers answered questions from attendees about how to tackle specific problems at their institutions. During the conference, ACTA premiered *Alumni Rising*, a short

video highlighting AFSA and the national alumni movement and inviting others to join. You can view the video on ACTA's YouTube channel, [youtube.com/@GOACTA](https://www.youtube.com/@GOACTA).

Attendees praised the panel topics, speakers, and the opportunity to convene on a pressing national issue. Daniel Wagner of the Steamboat Institute shared that his most valuable takeaway from the event was "that there is a growing network of concerned, sincere, motivated alumni who deeply care about the state of education

and freedom of speech in this country.”


ACTA was honored to co-host the Alumni Summit on Free Expression. We look forward to the continued growth of AFSA and the alumni movement as more Americans realize the urgent need to restore free expression and intellectual diversity at their alma maters. 🌱

Let Philanthropy Be Personal

Philanthropy is often deeply personal. Many donors are motivated by a desire to pay forward the kindnesses they received earlier in life. John Altman, chairman of ACTA's Board of Directors and a distinguished entrepreneur and philanthropist, shared with FAR one such life experience that inspired his philanthropy.

As a teenager, Dr. Altman worked at a wealthy country club near Chicago. By the time he graduated from high school, the club owner, Nate Winski, asked the young Dr. Altman if he would like to stay on and eventually become a manager.

"Mr. Winski, I've got to find a way to go to college, so I'd like to work for you," he replied. To save for his tuition, Dr. Altman planned to work in steel mills during the week and at the country club on weekends and holidays. "The next Saturday night, [Mr. Winski] put 10 one-hundred-dollar bills in an envelope in my tuxedo. I vowed that night, if I ever had the resources, I would try to emulate what he had done for one kid from the South Side of Chicago."

This experience of generosity inspired Dr. Altman to give back generously to his alma mater, Miami University. He gave to college students the same gift he received from Mr. Winski: an investment in education that can change the trajectory of young people's lives. To read stories from other higher education donors like Dr. Altman, please visit FAR's Intelligent College Giving interview series at www.AcademicRenewal.org. 

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power-hungry egotists, but that obviously involves unfair generalizations, and most often the critique is really about the accumulation of wealth rather than its philanthropic distribution. The general public thinks that if you have money, everyone just dances to your tune, and that is not an accurate representation of the nonprofit sector or the higher education sector. Gifts have to be accepted as well as given, and those responsible for running nonprofits and universities can decide whether or not to accept a gift—for example, if they have concerns about the source of wealth being tainted, or if the donor is making unreasonable demands in return for the gift. Philanthropy advisers can support their clients to interact respectfully with potential beneficiaries—for example, by avoiding being a burden when visiting projects or not asking for excessive amounts of reporting. So one of my main goals is to shoot down the caricature of irritating big givers, because it's not fair. You cannot caricature any group of people. They are just people, and within the category of "donor," there is a whole range of personalities and motivations and so on. Life is always more complicated than stereotypes allow, including in the giving sphere.

Who is the audience for your book?

The first audience is people who are thinking of becoming philanthropy advisers, whether as their main career or those who are already in a professional advising role, like accountants, managers, lawyers, and so on who can incorporate philanthropy into conversations with their clients.

The second audience is other people in the philanthropy space who might work with advisers and have concerns about that—including fundraisers but also nonprofit leaders, grant-makers, and anyone who is thinking, "Who are these people? What

are they doing?" We want them to understand what the advising role involves so that they can see advisers as potential allies, rather than as a barrier that makes reaching donors even harder. Advisers and fundraisers have more in common than they realize. An adviser can be an ally in helping the fundraiser because it is in the adviser's best interest to put good causes in front of the client.

We know from our work with higher education donors that giving well is harder than it looks. How can nonprofit fundraisers help donors make more meaningful contributions to their organizations?

"Meaningful" is the key word because one thing that we know about philanthropy is that if people do enjoy it and get meaning out of it, then they give more. And without wishing to sound too cheesy, what philanthropy does is turn money into meaning. That is quite some alchemy, so it is worth taking time over.

No matter how tempting it is to just grab that \$100,000 for this year's target, it is in the fundraiser's and the institution's interest to take the time to work with donors. You might discover that a different gift would suit the donor better and still suit the institution. That may turn into a repeat gift or a much bigger gift.

This article was first published in Philanthropy Daily on April 19, 2023. 

FAR helps higher education donors craft gifts with enduring impact. If you or someone you know is planning a gift to a college or university, contact us at EJae@AcademicRenewal.org or at 202-467-6787.



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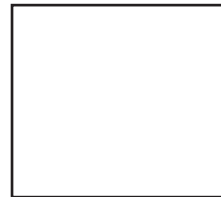
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About FAR

A program of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, the **Fund for Academic Renewal** (FAR) serves alumni and college donors who aim to support a renewal of the highest standards on college campuses through targeted philanthropy.

With access to a network of on-campus contacts, FAR assists donors in maximizing the impact of their investment by helping them craft gift agreements that are carefully tailored to achieve their goals. FAR has guided over \$188 million in gifts since 2016. Because every gift is different, FAR offers personalized guidance for individuals at every giving level.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation, FAR provides these services, including legal consultation from Arnold & Porter LLP, at no cost to donors.



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