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AFT's Kelly Mayhew speaks at a rally downtown

Now is not the time for false hope. The election of Donald Trump was a gut punch for American labor, public sector unions in particular. It represents a threat to many of the communities that our students come from, and we need to stand with them on our campuses and in the larger political arena as we insist on the maintenance of civil rights of everyone and the basic human dignity of all.

This is not a time to pretend that everything will go back to normal. It will not, not with an administration that believes in rolling back the fundamental pillars of the New Deal, assailing some of the basic

principles of openness and democracy we hold dear, and asserting that it has the right to its own facts, reality be damned. As educators, we have much at stake as do many of our students, but at the heart of the Trump agenda is an economic program that makes use of divide-and-conquer tactics and ugly divisive racism, sexism, and xenophobia in order to promote an economic program aimed at further empowering the very rich in the guise of populism.

But what, more specifically, does the Trump era mean for us as AFT members and for American Labor as a whole?

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WHERE WE STAND

United in the Age of Trump

By *Jim Mahler*
President, AFT Guild, Local 1931

In the face of the fundamental attacks that we are facing from the new administration, Congress, and the Courts that will likely prevent us from collecting dues, hinder our organizing, and attempt to take away many other hard-fought gains, we need to return to the basics. Now more than ever we need to stick together as a union—and most importantly—we need to remember what that word means.

The dictionary definition of “union” tells us that it is “an orga-

nized association of workers formed to protect and further their rights and interests; a labor union.” Digging deeper we learn that a union has to do with “brotherhood” (and “sisterhood”), a marriage of sorts, a “unification” that seeks to merge people through their “shared interests.”

If we look to our history, we learn that unions as we know them are a relatively new institution. They began as fledgling organizations in the 19th century but did not gain legal recognition and the power to collectively bargain until the New Deal era in the 1930s. And for those of us in the

public sector, basic union rights were not born until the 1960s nationally, and the late seventies here in California. One needs to pause and reflect on the fact that many of the basic rights and benefits we enjoy as a result of our ability to collectively bargain, play a role in politics, and have some autonomy in our workplaces have only been in place during a very brief period of the history of the United States.

Before the collective bargaining era in the public sector, “bargaining” was jokingly referred to as “meeting

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Thank You From an AFT Student Intern

To all the AFT Local 1931 membership,

More than two and a half years ago I received my bachelor’s degree, with a good GPA and a host of out-of-class experiences. And for two and a half years I have been stuck in unrewarding, low-retention minimum wage jobs. I saw that nearly all of my friends, who were all excellent students, were stuck in similar positions. I felt lost. I felt like the vast majority of



my generation did not have a place in this world. But that never shook my faith in the infinite value and tremendous power of education. That never shook my faith in the words of progressives like Fred Hampton, who said that there is “power anywhere where there’s people.”

I developed a plan to pursue a degree in labor law, to stand for the rights of working people to unionize. I discovered San Diego City College’s labor studies program, and I enrolled to assure myself that I was making the correct decision before officially applying to law schools early next year. The first night of class was the first night that I had ever heard of your internship, or even the AFT for that matter. I was welcomed with open arms, and I cannot thank you enough for what that has meant to me. This internship and this Local 1931 have removed any shadow of a doubt I had about my future plans.

The AFT Local 1931 embodies what progressive unionism and coalitions of people must be about as we work towards a better day. It stands for principles of the people and policies of progress. Thank you for being a social justice union. Thank you for standing for racial justice. Thank you for standing for economic justice. Thank you for standing for environmental justice. Thank you for standing with district employees, teachers or not. Thank you for standing with students. Thank you for standing with all people, and giving us a voice when we need to be heard now more than ever.

On behalf of all your interns,
Jonathan Smith, AFT intern

The Final Assault on Public Education Is On in Earnest

During the halcyon days of the Trump transition period, the Education Committee confirmation hearing of Betsy DeVos

Astonishing Things Betsy DeVos Said—and Refused to Say—at Her Confirmation Hearing” as *Esquire* opined that “The Betsy DeVos Hear-



Women's March, San Diego

stood out as perhaps the most jarring example of the craven cynicism that defines the new regime.

The headlines said it all, with nearly every major media outlet noting DeVos's scant qualifications and terrible performance with extreme skepticism. *The New York Times* expressed “Big Worries About Betsy DeVos” while the *New Yorker* outlined “Betsy DeVos and the Plan to Break Public Schools.” Over at the *Washington Post*, they wrote “Six

ing Was an Insult to Democracy.” The *Los Angeles Times* editorial “Betsy DeVos Embraced Herself and Should Be Rejected by the Senate” pithily observed that “what disqualifies her is her lack of understanding of existing law and policy, and her inability to address them thoughtfully.”

But, of course, the new leader of the free world was undaunted by all of this as he signed a stack of executive orders, one of which was

his formal nomination of DeVos for Secretary of Education, saying simply, “Ah Betsy, Education. Right?”

Of course, Trump's glib disregard for the terrible public reception that DeVos has received should surprise no one because he didn't appoint her for her education credentials but rather for her status as a key operative in the world of corporate think tanks and foundations promoting the privatization of everything from the military and national parks to education.

As Andrew Hartman explains in his *Jacobin* piece:

Donald Trump's nominee to be the nation's next secretary of education is Betsy DeVos, a longtime Republican operative from two of the wealthiest and most powerful conservative families in the nation. She is the daughter of Edgar Prince, founder of the Prince Corporation; sister of Erik Prince, founder of the private military contractor formerly known as Blackwater; and daughter-in-law of Richard DeVos, the billionaire who co-founded the Amway Corporation. DeVos, who received her entire education from private Christian schools, also has close ties to the conservative Christian Reformed Church.

In a recent *In These Times* piece, Diane Ravitch discusses those same connections and outlines how DeVos's privatization agenda has been a colossal failure in her home state of Michigan:

The DeVoses and their foundations have spent millions nationwide to elect pro-school choice candidates to school boards, state legislatures and Congress. Anyone who wants to understand the failure of the school choice movement should look to Michigan. Charter

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Big Wins in San Diego and California

While the 2016 election news was dire at the national level for anyone who cares about labor rights, education, immigration, civil rights, climate change and a host of other important issues, we should not let that make us forget the remarkable electoral success that your AFT Local 1931 had in San Diego county. What did we win and why should you care?

AFT members and a stellar team of over 20 student interns worked hard on the following successful campaigns:

- Proposition 55 passed overwhelmingly statewide and here in San Diego. Without this crucial



AFT in action at the phone bank

extension of Proposition 30's taxes on the wealthy to help fund education, we would be in dire straits with regard to the budget for years to come. The passage of Prop. 55 does not solve all our funding problems, but it is an essential revenue source that will help bolster education for a generation of California students.

- Mary Graham won re-election to the San Diego Community College Board and Elena Adams won her race for the Grossmont-



CFT's Fred Glass gives Prop. 55 training

Cuyamaca Community College Board. By maintaining a majority of pro-education candidates on our boards we will be able to ensure better conditions for all of us and continue to serve our students well.

- Despite being outspent by the billionaire-funded Charter Schools Association, we re-elected Rick Shea to the County Board of Education, assuring that an educator rather than an advocate for wholesale privatization of public schools leads the majority on that board.
- We elected educators and union members Elva Salinas and Chris Fite to seats on the Grossmont Union High School District, a victory that will be good for students and the community as well as the educators in that District.
- We participated in a coalition that pushed Measures K and L to victory in

San Diego, which will result in moving all elections to November when more people participate. This is a win for a more robust democracy in our city.

- We played a key role in the coalition that defeated SANDAG's Measure A and prevented a terrible transportation plan that was bad on climate and transit from shaping the next several decades of our region's future.

Thus, even as we face grave challenges nationally, our electoral victories last November will make it easier for us to stand up and fight for a better future for education and the communities we serve. 🙌



Elva Salinas and Rick Shea celebrate their victories with AFT interns

City College of San Francisco Accreditation Fully Restored

Amidst a sea of bad news coming out of Washington, D.C. after the election, we got some wonderful news here in California out of San Francisco. After years of outrageously unfair treatment from the rogue accrediting agency ACCJC, City College of San Francisco was finally granted full accreditation. As all of us know who have followed the story, the faculty, students, and community who supported CCSF waged a heroic struggle to hold ACCJC accountable and have finally won a huge victory. This win is the result of countless protests, concerted legislative efforts, electoral campaigns, lawsuits, and solidarity efforts from CFT and people of good will from all over California and the country.

AFT local 2121 deserves fulsome praise for standing up and fighting for the CCSF through what was frequently a hard and hopeless-seeming campaign against a recalcitrant agency that appeared bent on making



the college an example in an effort to intimidate educators across the state. Now, the very good news is that ACCJC's draconian leader, Barbara Beno is gone, ACCJC is on the way out as an accreditor, and CCSF will still be there to serve the students and community of the Bay Area. Local

2121 could not have prevailed alone and our statewide union came in and provided crucial aid and support throughout the course of this long, grueling, and at times dramatic campaign to save the college.

In their statement after CCSF's accreditation was restored CFT noted that:

The California Federation of Teachers, representing twenty-five thousand community college faculty in thirty colleges across the state, welcomes this news. It is the right decision, and it is long overdue.

CFT president Joshua Pechthalt, an outspoken critic of the ACCJC's decision to place CCSF on "show cause" in the first place in 2012, said, "This is great news for the students, faculty, staff, and city of San Francisco, all of whom depend on that outstanding college for access to an affordable higher education. This successful outcome could not have happened, however, without the continued pressure of AFT Local 2121, the CFT, national AFT, and other allies who have advocated for the college since the disastrous and illegal ACCJC decision of 2012. It is also clear that new leadership at the commission has made a difference."

City College faculty union president Tim Killikelly said, "All of us at the college are so excited and relieved that the accreditation crisis is over. But we mustn't forget that the accreditation crisis at CCSF should never have occurred. The quality of its education was never in doubt."

Now that City College's accreditation crisis has been

resolved, the CFT looks forward to a productive conversation with the Community College Board of Governors to discuss the next steps for accreditation in California. The reform of a broken accreditation system has been uppermost in stakeholders' minds ever since 2013, when the CFT, together with AFT 2121, filed a third-party complaint with the US Department of



Education over ACCJC's actions.

This was but the first of many actions taken by CFT and its allies that brought close scrutiny to this particular ACCJC decision, but more broadly to the culture of secrecy and arrogance that had sent the Commission down the wrong path. It took lawsuits, legislation, a state audit, a Chancellor's Task Force, and Board of Governors actions to arrive at today's announcement.

AFT national President Randi Weingarten said: "After five years weathering needless sanctions and punitive attacks from their rogue accreditor ACCJC, the brave students and faculty at City College of San Francisco can finally focus on creating opportunity rather than on fighting for survival. Faculty can get back to teaching and students to learning, without the specter of institutional decima-

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Shortly after the November election in the bluntly titled “Trump Presidency Could Kill Labor Unions,” distinguished journalist Harold Meyerson ponders the possibility that the 2016 Presidential election was “an extinction-level



Inauguration Day protest, Downtown San Diego

event for American labor.” Noting the sad fact that a high percentage of union households (about 43 percent nationally) went for Trump, Meyerson wastes no time in outlining what the costs will be for working class folks in America:

Now, Trump, the Republican Congress, and the soon-to-be Republican-dominated Supreme Court are poised to damage unions—and the interests of working people, both union and not—even more. Indeed, within the GOP, the war on unions engenders almost no dissent. Since Republicans were swept into office in a host of Midwestern states in the 2010 elections, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin have all effectively eliminated collective-bargaining rights for public employees and subjected private-sector unions to “right-to-work” laws that enable workers to benefit from union contracts and representa-

tion without having to pay their union any dues. Previously, such laws were largely confined to Southern states, whose respect for worker rights has improved only somewhat since they were compelled to abolish slavery. As the GOP has become steadily whiter and more right-wing, those Southern norms have become national.

Surely, Meyerson points out, we will soon see the elimination of all of Obama’s labor-friendly executive orders followed by national Right-to-Work legislation and a death blow from

the Supreme Court to public sector unions.

We know all this because the people behind Trump are part of a network of corporate think tanks and front groups for plutocrats bent on selling oligarchy to the masses. George Monbiot aptly describes this nexus of economic and political power in *The Guardian*, “Its purpose is to portray the interests of billionaires as the interests of the common people, to wage war against trade unions and beat down attempts to regulate business and tax the very rich. Now the people who helped run this machine are shaping the government.”

And there really is nothing at all new here as a look behind the curtain quickly reveals that we are dealing with the usual suspects. As Monbiot notes:

Charles and David Koch—who for years have funded extreme pro-corporate politics—might not have been enthusiasts for Trump’s candidacy, but their people were all over his campaign. Until June, Trump’s campaign manager was Corey Lewandowski, who like other members of Trump’s team came from a group called Americans for Prosperity (AFP).

This purports to be a grassroots campaign, but it was founded and funded by the Koch brothers. It set up the first Tea Party Facebook page and organized the first Tea Party events. With a budget of hundreds of millions of dollars, AFP has campaigned ferociously on issues that coincide with the Koch brothers’ commercial interests in oil, gas, minerals, timber and chemicals.

In Michigan, it helped force through the “right to work bill,” in pursuit of what AFP’s local director called “taking the unions out at the knees.” It has campaigned nationwide against action on climate change. It has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into unseating the politicians who won’t do its bidding and replacing them with those who will.

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City College rally

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Of course, the bitter irony of this is that part of what energized Trump voters in key swing states was a backlash against “economically and politically disastrous” trade policies that prominent Democrats embraced over the wishes of their allies in labor. And now that the Right has triumphed, they will crush those very same unions in order to further gut the political power of the Democrats who rely on labor for voter mobilization, not just among unionized workers, but also in working class communities of color.

Despite their hopes for strongman populist magic, what the angry white workers in Ohio (where the majority of union households went Republican) and elsewhere in the Rust Belt will get in exchange for their embrace of Trump will not be a reversal of the excesses of unlimited capital but more inequality, the slashing of the social safety net, and further humiliation.

Along with this they will also have the opportunity to witness the decimation of the only counterbalance to the power of the rich and corporate America that ordinary people in the United States have ever had—their unions. As Meyerson correctly observes:

One thing is certain: If Trump’s victory does indeed become “an extinction-level event for the labor movement,” it would also extinguish any prospect that America could ever become “great again.” No country in history has ever achieved decent working-class living standards (and the social and political stability they engender) absent a vibrant labor movement. Anyone who hopes for American greatness must also hope that labor has the strength and smarts to survive what’s coming in the Trump years.

But American labor’s survival will not come from mimicking Trump’s nativist bluster or from continuing to endorse and rely upon neoliberal Democrats who disdainfully treat them like a handy ATM. Instead, unions will have to, by necessity, return to old-school organizing or die. New kinds of workers’ collectives along with innovative political strategies will need to be born.

Unions will also have to find real community-labor alliances that are more about movement building and less about transactional politics as usual. This will mean reinvigorating an ethos of solidarity across occupational,

racial, and gender lines and keeping that fire burning in opposition to the ugly, divisive backlash populism of Trumpism.

Unionists might also try to get more comfortable talking about class again in ways that many labor leaders have forgotten how to do—hence the pathetic state of affairs that brought us a cartoon billionaire populist champion of the revanchist downwardly mobile white man as President of the United States.

The real question is not whether the American labor movement will be able to stop the coming assault in the short term—it won’t—but whether it will be able to learn

how to fight again in pre-New Deal conditions with more boldness and courage than we’ve seen in a long time. Shortly, we’ll all be on our backs and, like it or not, there will be nowhere to go but up.

And if labor isn’t ready to reinvent itself, it’ll be a long dark night for workers and American democracy as the furies unleashed by the Trump administration will bring out the worst in us and continue to shred our social fabric. Our present level of historic economic inequality isn’t going away anytime soon and labor is the only force in American life that has traditionally been able to channel the anger that this brutal inequity will continue to produce toward creating a

more thoroughgoing democracy rather than scapegoating and recrimination.

Unions can sit back and let racist demagogues tear us apart or insist with a fresh urgency that an injury to one is an injury to all. We can keep begging for scraps from the table with an even meeker voice or start, as Martin Luther King Jr. suggested, questioning the edifice that creates beggars.

The massive post-election and post-inaugural protests have been stirring and offer a way forward if we can join with our allies in our community and stay active in the streets, on our campuses, in our neighborhoods, in our representatives’ offices, and on future election days. We must move forward with an energy guided by a fierce love for our profession, our students, and the larger principles we believe in and have dedicated our lives to serve. 🇺🇸



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schools were first authorized in the state in 1993. In 2014, a year-long investigation by the Detroit Free Press concluded that the state was spending \$1 billion annually on charters that performed poorly, and were neither accountable nor trans-



Betsy DeVos

parent. Today, 80 percent of the state's approximately 300 charter schools are operated by for-profit management. Since the onset of school choice, Michigan's performance on national tests has steadily declined.

Thus, it should be clear that the DeVos nomination has nothing to do with her qualifications or any record of success. It really doesn't matter which department she is in as long as she has a firm commitment to transferring public money to private hands. That, more than anything else, is the guiding star of the Trump administration as every one of his nominations has shown, though none quite as clearly as DeVos, who was confirmed on a party line vote despite her deep flaws, financial conflicts, and ethical challenges.

Ravitch goes on to make another crucial point in her piece, one that Hartman echoes in his *Jacobin* article: As bad as DeVos is as a

potential Secretary of Education and as terrible as her privatization agenda will be, it is only a step further in a direction that many corporate Democrats have been heading in for years. Hence, no one should have

been shocked to see DeVos introduced by the consummate Democratic sell-out Joe Lieberman, who now serves on the board of DeVos's organization, the American Federation of Children. But maybe, Ravitch ponders, this is a kind of silver lining:

If there's an upside to DeVos' nomination, it's that she may force policymakers to admit the U.S. is headed toward privatization of its education system. Previous education secretaries, including Arne Duncan under President Obama and Rod Paige under President George W. Bush, have pushed school choice policies based on free-market ideology. But during the Obama years, the Department of Education vocally supported charter schools while pretending it could draw the line at vouchers. DeVos, to the contrary, makes no bones about her goal of clearing the path for vouchers. Her disastrous legacy in Michigan demonstrates that once policymakers accept school choice as a positive path, there is no philosophical barrier to other kinds of privatization.

Now, with all the window dressing and bogus civil rights rhetoric stripped away from the corporate education reform movement, we can finally have an honest debate about

whether America still believes in public education or if we are truly ready to sell off the commons to the highest bidder, consequences be damned.

When it comes to higher education, what stands out the most about the DeVos pick is the fact that she knows virtually nothing about it and revealed very little about her views during her confirmation hearing. However, we can clearly tell from her record that she will not be a defender of open and diverse higher education for all in America. As a recent piece in *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* reports:

Dr. Kevin Kumashiro, dean of the School of Education at the University of San Francisco, says that, despite the fact that many claim "we know very little about what DeVos has done in the field of higher education, or what to expect," there are enough clues to suggest otherwise.

"I believe there's much we can say about her track record on issues of diversity, par-



"My desire to be well-informed is currently at odds with my desire to remain sane."

ticularly the causes that she has financially supported and the organizations for which she has served on boards," Kumashiro told *Diverse*.

"For instance, she chairs the Philanthropy Roundtable,

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tion and devastation hanging over their heads. We fought hard for this and won, and we are thrilled to have been proven right about how great this college is.”



“We need to stay on track to a new accreditor,” said Pechthalt, “as well as make sure no student faces the obstacles to a quality education that the ACCJC created in this situation. Toward that end, we will need key policy safeguards so that the CCSF situation is never replicated in other colleges. We hope this turns a page for higher education in California.”

Let’s be optimistic that this is the beginning of the end of the bad old days of draconian accreditation practices in California, and we can look forward to a more productive future focused on genuinely improving education and serving our students to the best of our abilities. 🙌

Where We Stand continued from page 2

and begging.” Thus, many of the things we may take for granted such as salary schedules with steps in them that annually improve our pay, health benefits, pensions, and rights in the workplace are not just historically new but fragile and subject to political attacks from people, like those in Washington, who never thought employees should have living wages or dignity in the workplace ever.

And now they are trying to take those hard-fought precarious gains all away.

Even if the new administration is able to impose a “right to work” status via Supreme Court ruling for the public sector that limits our ability to collect dues in order to weaken us at the bargaining table and electorally, it will only work if we allow such a ruling to divide us. While there will certainly be many attempts to undercut us, if we stand together, maintain our membership status, contribute to COPE, and become more active rather than

Final Assault continued from page 8

a cornerstone of the conservative movement,” Kumashiro noted.

“She headed efforts to ban same-sex marriage in Michigan and elsewhere; she funded and served on the board of the Acton Institute, which recently blogged in favor of ‘loosening’ child labor laws; and she funded and chairs the American Federation for Children, which works closely with the American Legislative Exchange Council, well-known for its influential role in drafting model legislation that both advances corporate interests and rolls back gains of the civil rights movement.

“We need an education secretary who advocates for those on the margins, not for the 1 percent, and given the role that education can and should play in strengthening democracy, her track record on issues of diversity should raise alarms,” Kumashiro said.

With a background like that, it’s clear that there will be little concern about the casualization of labor in higher education or the need to serve our increasingly diverse student populations. Those issues certainly have not been part of the agenda of Jerry Falwell Jr. of Liberty University who will be heading up a higher education **task force** in the days to come.

Oh brave new world with such creatures in it!

In sum, as educators who believe in adequately funded, inclusive public higher education, we need to steel ourselves for the fight of our lifetimes. 🙌

surrendering to despair, we will not just survive—we will continue to thrive and can continue to fight for our collective interests.

Importantly, this doesn’t just mean negotiating for pay and benefits. It also has to mean that we stand for the rights of our students and the communities we serve. Our voices need to be raised for quality public education but also for all of society’s democratic and civil rights and the basic principles of fairness and free inquiry in our classrooms and places of work.

I would be lying to you if I told you it will be easy but, if we commit to staying unified, I believe we can stand together, weather the storm, and come out stronger in the end. That, after all, is the meaning and value of solidarity.

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they suppress.”

—Frederick Douglass

What Will a Trump Administration Mean for Higher Education?

“I will hazard a guess that, campaign promises aside, the Trump administration will not be in a hurry to increase, say, the Pell Grant program, but will usher in an influx in private student loans (courtesy, of course, of those newly deregulated banks), which have higher interest rates and markedly less repayment flexibility. The numerous student-loan reform measures the Obama administration enacted and Republicans decried—such as income-based repayment—may get the axe, as Trump looks for ways to scale federal education involvement ‘way, way, down.’ (Alas, all the 19th-century manufacturing jobs Trump has promised will probably not help with loan repayment.)

It is difficult to predict what, if anything, Trump will do or say about the already-volatile political conflicts affecting many American college campuses—or, for that matter, about the apparent uptick in hate incidents since his election. But it is a no-brainer to predict what his massive tax cut for the wealthy will do: absolutely decimate the already-paltry public funding for our country’s state and land-grant universities.

The well-documented corporatization of the American university will likely accelerate under an administration whose cabinet posts are filled with recruits from the private sector (if, that is, they can handle the pay cut), and this will mean an even larger reliance on private fundraising for public universities, which will mean plenty of money for gleaming football stadiums and very little for the physics department. The visibility of the adjunctification problem, which received at least some government lip service in recent years, will all but disappear, with the added bonus that the few adjuncts who could afford to purchase ACA-subsidized health insurance on the exchanges will now get to apply for Medicaid (if that remains an option after it’s block-granted to states).”

Slate, 11/15/16

Trump, Immigration Policy and Higher Education

“On immigration policy as it relates to higher education, there are over a million foreign students attending U.S. colleges annually with 10 percent coming from Muslim countries. Policy statements by Trump have raised concerns for many Muslims as they consider which schools to attend in which countries. Preliminary signs already point to a decline in foreign-student applications to U.S. colleges. A decline in enrollment of full-paying foreign students would put upward pressure on tuition costs that might be passed on to remaining students. Such discriminatory policy also negatively impacts classroom dynamics, level of diversity and learning that happens when students from different cultures and backgrounds come together.

Meantime, the Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals Program signed into law by President Obama in 2012, which provides some protection to undocumented immigrants who are attending college, also could be in danger. Disbanding this program would erode the cultural inclusiveness that is one of the strengths of our higher education system.

Trump’s nomination of Betsy DeVos as education secretary, someone who lacks hands-on teaching experience and who supports public school funding cuts, creates only more uncertainty in the higher education world. Her policies would set the standard for how students are taught and what resources are (or are not) made available. Such decisions will

influence the quality and quantity of college students able to represent the class of 2021 and beyond.”

WBUR, 12/22/16

Betsy DeVos’s Higher Education Experience?

“During DeVos’ Senate hearing this week, some senators celebrated her but others seemed to cringe, particularly on some higher education issues.

DeVos not only lacks any government service on her résumé but also has no actual experience in the realm she soon may be overseeing. DeVos does have experience as an activist. She has been speaking out on education issues for years. She is chairwoman of the American Federation for Children, a group that promotes expanding charter schools and voucher programs. DeVos primarily has been engaged in that effort in her home state of Michigan.

Stephen Henderson, an editorial writer for the Detroit Free Press, has covered DeVos for years. In a Dec. 3 editorial, he wrote, “DeVos isn’t an educator, or an education leader. She’s not an expert in pedagogy or curriculum or school governance. In fact, she has no relevant credentials or experience for a job setting standards and guiding dollars for the nation’s public schools. She is, in essence, a lobbyist.”

Her devotion to broadening school choice apparently hasn’t provided her with much knowledge about many of the important programs she would be tasked with overseeing at the Department of Education. In fact, at her confirmation hearing this week, she appeared to be lacking in, well, education.”

The Press Enterprise, 1/20/17

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