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# Los Angeles Times

May 20, 2012 [OPINION](#)

Op-Ed

## UC problem: When academics are advocates

*University of California campuses are tilting to the left as radical activism overtakes scholarly knowledge.*



Students walk past the library at UC Berkeley. According to a report by the California Assn. of Scholars, the University of California supports overwhelmingly liberal academia that stifles dissent. (Los Angeles Times / April 6, 2012)

By John M. Ellis and Charles L. Gesheker

May 20, 2012

Political advocacy corrupts academic institutions. Why? Because the mind-set of a genuine academic teacher is in every important respect the opposite of a political activist's. Academic teachers want to promote independent thought and analytical skills; political activists want conformity. The one fosters intellectual curiosity and encourages opposing viewpoints; the latter seeks to shut it down.

This vital distinction is well understood. In California, the state Constitution contains this unambiguous statement: "The university shall be entirely independent of all political or sectarian influence and kept free therefrom." Yet despite that, a bias to the left is now accepted as a routine part of a University of California education. That's the finding of a recent study by our organization, the California Assn. of Scholars.

Perhaps this is not surprising given that the tilt to the left among college faculty members has been growing nationwide for several decades. At [UC Berkeley](#), the ratio of [Democrats](#) to [Republicans](#) even in the hard sciences had grown to 10 to 1 in 2004, many times what it was 30 years ago, according to a study by Daniel Klein and Andrew Western. In the humanities and social sciences the ratios were 17 to 1 and 21 to 1, respectively.

The visible signs of activism at work are shocking. Why should the mission statement of the sociology department at UC Santa Cruz claim that a "just, free and equal society" may require "fundamental social change"? Sociology classes should help students understand how societies work, but at Santa Cruz, the mission seems to be enlisting students in activism.

Or consider the course description for UC Merced's History 131, which proposes that students study "the way in which the U.S. has aggressively expanded its role on the world stage."

It is a fact that the importance of the United States on the world stage has steadily increased since its founding. It's certainly worth investigating how that happened, and the question of aggressive intent would be one factor to consider against others. But that cannot happen when the only important question has been preempted in the course description.

The catalog description of [UC Santa Barbara](#)'s Feminist Studies 230 reads like a parody, offering the "experiences of women of color, both within the U.S. and globally, with interlocking systems of racism, classism, sexism, homophobia/transphobia, ableism and colonialism."

These tendentious descriptions are reflected in what many students say about their UC education. "Ten weeks of anti-capitalist, anti-globalization rhetoric," said one UC Santa Barbara sociology student about his class.

Even in science classes, the political bias seems unavoidable. A student in Berkeley's Computer Science 61AC wrote, "How does a statement like 'Nothing Saddam has done could be any worse than what [George Bush](#) has done' find its way into a computer science lecture?"

UC administrators protest that these are isolated examples, but research shows they are not. A recent study found that at UC Berkeley and [UCLA](#), 49% of students reported that they had had a course on a controversial subject where the readings were completely one-sided. This is a deeply and dangerously politicized system.

Real academics would consider a department of political science, or of sociology, that lacks one-half of the spectrum of ideas as incompetent. Today's campus proselytizers think it's just fine for the objective they have in mind, which is not educational but ideological.

Where are the high-paid UC administrators expected to exercise quality control? At a recent meeting at the Chico Chamber of Commerce, one of us asked UC President Mark Yudof for his views on classroom politicization. Yudof admitted that it aggravated him. "Professors are there to educate," he said, "not to rouse the troops for a cause."

If he felt this way, he was asked, why wouldn't he say so in a memo to his campus chancellors, telling them to take appropriate action? Somewhat shaken, Yudof could only say: "I could do that. I don't know that it would do much good."

But surely what he meant is that he didn't want to kick that hornet's nest. Taxpayers are annoyed by excessive salaries for administrators; they ought to be even more annoyed at how little they do to earn those salaries.

As the cost of a college education skyrockets, quality sinks. Numerous studies show that an alarming proportion of recent college graduates have not learned to reason, to write, or to read complex material, and know little about American history and our political and socioeconomic institutions.

That happens when radical activism replaces academic knowledge in campus classrooms. The politicized university is an intellectually bankrupt one.

*John M. Ellis and Charles L. Gesheker are president and chairman, respectively, of the California Assn. of Scholars. The report they refer to can be found at [http://www.nas.org/images/documents/A\\_Crisis\\_of\\_Competence.pdf](http://www.nas.org/images/documents/A_Crisis_of_Competence.pdf).*

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*Los Angeles Times*  
November 3, 2008

## 2008 Presidential Campaign Contributions

# Top employers of California contributors

### Barack Obama

University of California Berkeley (#5)	\$ 281,348
University of California Davis (#21)	110,790
University of California Irvine	56,567
University of California Los Angeles (#3)	342,461
University of California Merced	2,530
University of California Riverside	14,348
University of California San Diego (#16)	130,402
University of California San Francisco (#6)	265,231
University of California Santa Barbara	31,407
University of California Santa Cruz	23,781
University of California TOTAL	1,258,865
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Stanford University (#2)	475,309
University of Southern California (#8)	193,173

### John McCain

University of California Berkeley	\$ 350
University of California Davis	531
University of California Irvine	5,401
University of California Los Angeles (#38)	14,671
University of California Merced	0
University of California Riverside	176
University of California San Diego	650
University of California San Francisco	3,050
University of California Santa Barbara	0
University of California Santa Cruz	0
University of California TOTAL	24,829
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Stanford University (#35)	15,100
University of Southern California (#30)	16,320

## 2008 Presidential Donations Ratio: Barack Obama / John McCain

University of California Berkeley	\$281,348 / \$ 350 =	<b>803.85</b>
University of California Davis	110,790 / 531 =	<b>208.64</b>
University of California Irvine	56,567 / 5,401 =	<b>10.47</b>
University of California Los Angeles	342,461 / 14,671 =	<b>23.34</b>
University of California Merced	2,530 / 0 =	-----
University of California Riverside	14,348 / 176 =	<b>81.52</b>
University of California San Diego	130,402 / 650 =	<b>200.62</b>
University of California San Francisco	265,231 / 3,050 =	<b>86.96</b>
University of California Santa Barbara	31,407 / 0 =	-----
University of California Santa Cruz	23,781 / 0 =	-----
University of California TOTAL	1,258,865 / 24,829 =	<b>50.70</b>
Stanford University	475,309 / 15,100 =	<b>31.48</b>
University of Southern California	193,173 / 16,320 =	<b>11.84</b>
UC, Stanford, and USC Combined	1,927,347 / 56,249 =	<b>34.22</b>
University of San Diego	18,936 / 3,886 =	<b>4.87</b>
Pepperdine University	6,353 / 3,775 =	<b>1.68</b>
California Institute of Technology	0 / 0 =	-----

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-na-calmoney4-2008nov04,0,6053478.story>  
From the Los Angeles Times

## ELECTION 2008

# California a generous friend of Barack Obama

The state has contributed \$84 million to the Democratic presidential nominee, 20% of his itemized contributions. Republican candidate John McCain has raised less than a third of that here.  
By Dan Morain and Maloy Moore

November 4, 2008

California, the ATM for politicians nationwide, has spit out cash for Barack Obama at an extraordinary clip. One of every five dollars he has raised in itemized contributions to his campaign has come from the Golden State.

At last count, in mid-October, the Democratic presidential nominee had withdrawn \$84 million from California, or 20% of his contributions of more than \$200 -- the threshold at which campaigns must disclose detailed information about donors.

The \$84 million was two-thirds more than Obama collected from the next most generous state, New York. It also exceeds the \$83.7 million raised in California for all federal races a decade ago, when the state emerged as the richest source of campaign money.

John McCain got far less from California, a state that is expected today to vote heavily for Obama. The Republican nominee raised \$25 million.

A Times analysis of California's role in bankrolling federal elections also found that the state has contributed a larger slice of the campaign accounts for the major party candidates than in 2004. Obama's take, one-fifth of his itemized contributions, was up from John F. Kerry's 17%. McCain's California contribution was 12%, higher than George W. Bush's 10%.

Federal Election Commission records show that Californians have provided 13% of the \$2.6 billion in itemized donations raised by candidates for president and Congress and by the two major parties. Millions have been sent to hopefuls nationwide, notably Democrats seeking U.S. Senate seats, including Al Franken in Minnesota, Mark Udall in Colorado and Jeanne Shaheen in New Hampshire.

Californians have also sent \$33 million to independent campaign groups.

But nowhere has the state's impact been more apparent than in the presidential race.

About 126,000 Californians made donations to Obama and McCain. Most of the money has come from people who list their occupation as self-employed, retiree, student or homemaker.

Obama tapped employees of Silicon Valley companies, Hollywood studios, law firms, universities, state and local governments, and many others.

**Among employers, Obama's single largest source was the University of California, with professors and other employees contributing \$1.3 million.**

Among California-based companies, Google employees were Obama's richest source, at \$562,000.

Nationally, Google's employees almost tied Microsoft's as Obama's largest source of money from a single company -- \$727,000 from workers at Google and \$729,000 from those at Microsoft.

McCain's donors hail from real estate, investment and law firms, and a mix of telecommunications, oil and other companies. Employees of the Irvine Co., the Orange County developer, were McCain's largest source, at \$67,000.

Some of these donors have big hopes for the next administration. A few may become ambassadors; others may see their law partners become judges.

Many work in industries that have major interests in Washington, D.C., and will expect access to the next administration.

Many are like William Bloomfield and Jamie Alter Lynton -- true believers.

Neither Bloomfield nor Lynton is sure how much they've raised for their respective candidates. They haven't kept track. Certainly, each raised hundreds of thousands.

Lynton, whose husband, Michael, is chairman of Sony Pictures Entertainment, comes from a politically active family and used to work for CNN. But until Obama came on the scene, she had never gotten so deeply involved in a campaign.

She helped put on perhaps 10 fundraisers for the Illinois senator and spent 30 hours a week volunteering for Obama, a candidate she believes is transforming politics and, she hopes, the nation's reputation in the world.

"Barack Obama asked me to do something for my country. No one had ever asked," Lynton said. "He said, 'We can do this together.' It was an immediate wake-up call. He said there is a path to make this world better, and make this country a better place."

Bloomfield is every bit as passionate for McCain. He had been a modest donor in past elections. But he had never gone all-in for a candidate, until now.

He sold his business -- he provided washing machines and dryers to apartments and colleges in the Western United States -- and moved from Manhattan Beach to Arlington, Va., where McCain has his headquarters.

Now he volunteers full time for McCain, a man he believes could be this century's Abraham Lincoln.

"That is heady stuff for someone who has been in the laundry business," Bloomfield said. He'd do it all over again, "in a heartbeat. It's the best thing I've ever done."

The scores of financial reports that the campaigns have filed with the Federal Election Commission also offer a measure of the candidates' appeal.

Obama's attraction to young voters is evident in his fundraising. He raised \$820,000 from Californians who described themselves as students, to McCain's \$56,000.

**Besides the more than \$1 million Obama raised from people who work at the state's university system, he raised \$475,309 from Stanford University employees and \$193,173 from USC workers. McCain raised less than \$57,000 from USC, UC and Stanford employees combined.**

One reason Google became a major fount of Obama money is the company's chief executive, Eric Schmidt. He is one of Obama's most energetic backers and appeared on Obama's 30-minute infomercial. Overall, Californians working for major high-tech firms accounted for \$1.9 million to Obama.

Google employees gave just \$12,000 to McCain. On the other hand, employees of the Irvine Co., McCain's top-dollar firm, accounted for less than \$9,000 to Obama.

The Irvine Co. spent \$80,000 on federal lobbying in the first three quarters of the year on issues related to housing, insurance and disaster recovery. In the past, the company battled the government over the reach of the Endangered Species Act.

Google spent more than \$3.1 million lobbying Washington in the first nine months of 2008. Its issues include copyright, broadband access, energy, immigration, privacy, child pornography-related matters and others.

Obama doesn't take money directly from lobbyists. But law firms, including several with offices in California, have lobby arms in Washington and are among his biggest sources.

Attorneys and others at Wilmerhale, a nationwide law firm whose lobby arm represents Google, donated more than \$361,000 to Obama, \$15,000 from lawyers in California.

Hollywood is another major source of Obama's money. Californians who listed major studios as their employer gave Obama more than \$1.8 million during the campaign.

His overall haul from the entertainment industry is far greater. The nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics counts more than \$14 million nationally from the television and movie industry.

Although many celebrities who donate to Obama are driven by ideology, the industry is also a major lobby force. The Motion Picture Assn. of America has spent more than \$3 million on lobbying this year. Lawyers at the association's largest outside lobby firm, Akin Gump, are major donors to Obama, giving him more than \$160,000, of which \$45,000 came from California.

McCain is not without support in the industry. MGM chairman Harry Sloan has hosted two fundraisers at his home and helped raise money at two galas. Noting that polls suggested his candidate could lose today, Sloan said he doesn't believe his efforts were for naught.

If McCain loses, there will "be a battle for the heart and soul of the Republican Party," he said. The better McCain does, the more likely the party could recast itself as more moderate.

"McCain and what he stands for is the Republican Party that I want to support," Sloan said. "It's the tolerant party with the big tent. There is another side of the party that I haven't been as comfortable in."

**For the most part, California's green is tinted deeply Democratic blue.**

"The country has been going in the wrong direction for the last eight years," said Steve Westly, the former state controller and eBay executive who ran for governor in 2006.

A co-chairman of Obama's campaign, Westly has co-hosted numerous events for the Democratic ticket, including one recently for vice presidential candidate Joe Biden. "Watching Sen. Obama, there is just something different."

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Times staff writer Doug Smith and data analyst Sandra Poindexter contributed to this report.

<http://www.uclaprofs.com/articles/affiliation.html>



December 29, 2005

## [The One-Sided University \(Part Two\)](#)

### UCLA Professor Political Party Affiliation

[DOWNLOAD EXCEL FILE](#)

In determining whether UCLA or any other institution is politically one-sided, the primary challenge lies in quantifying the alleged bias. For the purposes of this survey, we have chosen Democrat or Republican affiliation as a natural (and above all, clear) representation of where a professor stands politically. While party registration is certainly not a perfect proxy for a given person's exact politics, it provides a reasonable facsimile. A Democrat-affiliated professor is unlikely to be pro-life, pro-gun, and strongly in favor of tax cuts, just as a Republican-affiliated faculty member is unlikely to favor a welfare state, affirmative action, or a reduction in American military forces.

Our study focused on English, History, Philosophy, Political Science and Sociology, the five largest departments in the social science and humanities divisions, with the Economics faculty serving as a "baseline." While the results were hardly a surprise given our findings in the [political donation survey](#), the results were still stark. With 58.7% of the faculty conclusively identified, the Democrat to Republican count stands at 136 to 11, a ratio in excess of 12 to 1. Even the Economics department, supposedly a refuge of conservatism, still tallies 10 Democrats to only 2 Republicans.

The incredible imbalance represented in these numbers strongly suggests, as does the survey of political contributions, that at UCLA, students are only hearing one side of the story. This same imbalance leads to the biased teaching noted in many of our [professor profiles](#). Not because every Democrat-affiliated professor uses his classroom for indoctrination, but because a 12-to-1 ratio represents a faculty that falls along the entire Democrat spectrum of scholarship and ideology, from mainstream to radical. UCLA students in these Social Science and Humanities divisions of the College of Letters and Science will thus encounter a full range of ideas from one side of the aisle. But a Sociology student studying in his major will *never once* have a Republican professor. Even in the other four departments studied, the one to three Republican professors will only present to their students a haphazard sampling of Republican- and conservative-oriented thought and research.

This abject failure to preserve intellectual diversity (compounded by the documented political abuses by more extreme UCLA professors) undoubtedly has an effect on student political formation. Just as ominously, this conservative blackout affects students' likelihood to move into graduate study in the field, including Ph.D. programs. Moreover, because doctoral dissertations are done under the direct supervision of a professor, students pursuing conservative scholarship must find a mentor willing to guide study on an idea that the professor considers personally distasteful. And even with that barrier behind him, our hypothetical conservative professor candidate must still win the favor of a faculty hiring committee. Based simply on the ratios discovered in this survey, a typical department's 10-member hiring committee might in any year not have *any* conservative or Republican members, or at most, a single one. As with doctoral mentoring, the professors on the hiring committee would again have to swallow their (presumed) distaste for the content and message of the candidate's scholarship. And, as with doctoral mentoring, the likelihood of this is remote given that the 10-member hiring committee quite likely contains several hard-core radicals who would view conservative ideas as nothing short of ideological fascism.

### Methodology:

This survey of the political affiliations of tenure or tenure-track UCLA faculty was conducted in January 2003 at the Norwalk, California Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters. The list of tenure- and tenure-track professors was compiled from the respective department websites, omitting lecturers, visiting and adjunct professors, and joint appointments.

Department	Democrat	Republican	American Independent	Decline to State	Green	IR	Multiple	NP	RM	No Record
Economics	10	2	1	5	0	0	7	0	0	20
English	37	2*	0	4	0	1	8	1	0	13
History	36	3	0	4	0	0	18	0	1	15
Philosophy	6	3	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2
Political Science	24	1	0	4	0	0	12	0	1	8
Sociology	23	0	0	3	1	0	8	0	0	10
TOTAL	136	11	1	22	1	1	55	1	2	68

### KEY:

"*Decline to State*" is a California voter designation that indicates no public party affiliation.

"*Multiple*" indicates the professor has a common name which returned multiple results. For consistency, no attempt was made to guess which of the voters was the professor, even when geographic location suggested a strong choice.

"*No Record*" indicates that no voter exists in the Registrar's rolls under that name, or a formal derivation thereof.

"*IR*," "*NP*," and "*RM*" were all Registrar codes reported as the party affiliation.