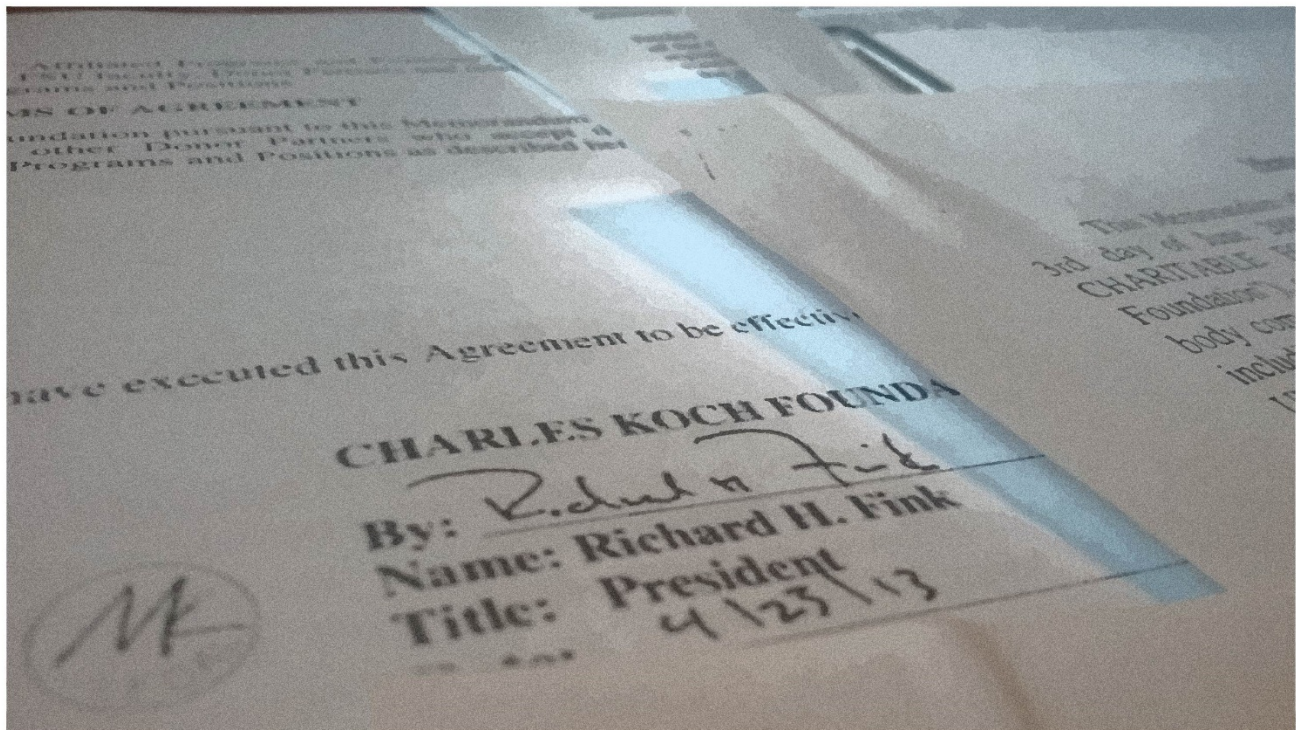


Executive Summary: Violations of Academic Freedom, Faculty Governance, and Academic Integrity

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHARLES KOCH FOUNDATION



Initial Publication June 2016, Republished Dec 2018



Executive Summary:

Violations of Academic Freedom, Faculty Governance, and Academic Integrity

Introduction

UnKoch My Campus has collected examples of the Charles Koch Foundation exerting undue donor influence over academic and administrative decisions on campuses they fund.

The report is separated into examples of specific kinds of influence.

Chapter 1 examines the main mechanisms of contractual influence as it is built into the Koch foundation's donor agreements.

Chapters 2-6 are examples of that influence, including donor influence over faculty responsibilities, including hiring, scholarly activities, and the creation of curriculum and academic programs. Donor influence is also seen in student activities, from student groups to graduate fellowships.

Other items of concern include conflicts of interest, threats, intimidation, deliberate misinformation, and bypassing faculty dissent. The report also lists several examples of inappropriate political activities of Koch funded faculty, some of which includes scientific misconduct, like failing to disclose funding sources.

See the full report at www.unkochmycampus.org/academic-violations.

1. Contractual Control

A. CONDITIONS FOR DONOR WITHDRAW

At universities where the public has been able to see a contract between by a university and the Charles Koch Foundation, a common stipulation is that any activities comply with the provision of the contract that CKF calls its “Objectives and Purposes.” In later

contracts, this provision is restructured so that the activities must comply with a predefined "mission" of the program.

B. LEVERAGING ANNUAL PAYMENTS

A common feature of Koch's large multi-year "gifts" to universities is a donation broken into annual installments, disbursed annually only after the donor reviews the programming and hires for compliance with the donor's objectives. The provision allows the donor the annual ability to renew or withhold funding for curriculum and teaching.

2. Donor Influence Over Hiring

A. INTERFERENCE IN EARLY HIRING

In addition to extensive examples of direct influence in hiring, there is considerable evidence of the Koch foundation interfering in hiring much earlier than the exercise of a veto, or renewal of a hire.

B. VETO POWER GIVEN TO DONOR

Koch foundation contracts tend to provide considerable decision-making power to the donor, most times allowing them multiple opportunities to veto decisions about the use of their funding. Older examples were more overt (esp. at Florida State University), but nearly all publicly available contracts for the Koch foundation's large multi-year programs give Koch foundation officials multiple opportunities through which they can veto funding.

3. Donor Influence Over Programming

A. PERFORMANCE OBLIGATIONS

Despite often being classified as charitable donations, or "gifts," we find consistently that the Koch foundation requires services in return for their funding, and the donor agreements detail much of these expectations and the requirements for renewed funding

B. DONOR CREATED CURRICULUM, CERTIFICATES, MINORS, AND MAJORS

In a gross overstep of donor intent on faculty governance, there are several instances where Koch network donors have been allowed to require or create new curriculum, Certificate Programs, Minors, and Majors.

C. INTEREST IN INTRODUCTORY COURSES

In order to maximize their exposure to students, we see a consistent interest in the introductory level, or "principles" courses. Koch funded faculty are seen using these courses "primarily as recruiting grounds" for Koch's "Liberty Movement" comprised of free-market think tanks, political groups, and political campaigns.

4. Donor Influence Over Student Programming

A. GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS

We have seen startling constraints on graduate students funded by the Koch foundation. It has been seen that, at some campuses, the donor has the ability not only to screen the recipients and their annual renewal, but it is also seen that the Koch foundation has approval power over their dissertation topic for Ph.D. fellowships.

B. DONOR CREATED STUDENT GROUPS

A consistent feature of Koch programs is their coupling with donor affiliated student groups. In many instances, there are also reading groups that pay students to read donor selected reading lists.

5. Bypassing Transparency and Dissent

A. ANTI-TRANSPARENCY AND MISINFORMATION

As with the rest of their political operation, the Koch foundation's academic programs are held very closely under considerable secrecy. Often there are anti-transparency clauses built into the donor agreements.

B. CIRCUMVENTING FACULTY DISSENT

The Koch foundation's programs are consistently created without faculty approval and behind closed doors. In other instances, faculty and/or administrators have helped the Koch foundation force the programs on the campuses against the dissent of the faculty, at times overtly using misinformation to obscure the Koch foundation's objectives.

6. Political Activity

A. POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF KOCH FOUNDATION ACADEMICS

As expressed clearly by the Koch foundation, academic programming is essential to their "integrated strategy" for the "implementation of policy change." Many of these academics engage in overtly political activities in ways that benefit the policy agenda of Koch's political network.

B. TIES TO THE FREEDOM PARTNERS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Charles Koch's network of political donors, many of whom make up the Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce, have joined in the use of Koch's integrated strategy. We see several instances of these donors joining the Koch foundation in jointly financing academic programming to further their joint political agenda.

C. CALLS TO REDEFINE ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND VIOLATE SHARED GOVERNANCE

Not only has the Charles Koch Foundation attempted to redefine "Academic Freedom" after it was discovered that their agreements routinely violated the principle, but several organizations funded by Koch and their donor network are openly calling for the redefinition of academic freedom and violation of faculty governance.