

# OASES OF EXCELLENCE

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni's (ACTA) Oases of Excellence initiative promotes rigorous academic study, a strong liberal arts curriculum, and broad viewpoint diversity at colleges and universities across the nation. The over 70 programs in the Oases of Excellence network share a commitment to educating students for informed citizenship in a free society by maintaining the highest academic standards, introducing students to the best of the foundational arts and sciences, teaching American heritage, and ensuring free inquiry into a range of intellectual viewpoints. To qualify as an Oasis of Excellence, a program must be led by faculty, focused on students, and supported in part by donors. Inside, you will find a full list of our Oases of Excellence programs.

The Stephen S. Smith Center in the Williams College of Business at Xavier University is one of the outstanding academic programs in ACTA's Oases of Excellence network. The Smith Center "promotes learning, scholarship, and debate about fundamental questions and ideas that impact society." At the core of the center is the Smith Scholars Program. This undergraduate, cohort honors program "provides a challenging and comprehensive learning opportunity for students who want to pursue a business major that is enriched by an in-depth study of the liberal arts." Smith Scholars complete a minor in political economy built on a foundation of texts in philosophy, history, and economics. The minor includes a study abroad grant. Smith Scholars also edit and publish *Publius*, a quarterly magazine.



Smith Scholars on a trip to France and Belgium in May 2022.

The center's Smith Fellows Program offers students research and networking opportunities, guest speaker events, and workshops. The Stephen S. Smith Center is directed by Dr. R. Stafford Johnson, and Dr. Steven Frankel serves as the center's academic coordinator. To learn more, visit [www.xavier.edu/smith-center/](http://www.xavier.edu/smith-center/).

"The Smith Scholars Program has been an excellent experience! The opportunity to learn about the Great Books and political economy as a business major has helped me to become a more well-rounded student. The cohort aspect of the program has presented me with intellectual challenges and has given me a support system of other hardworking business students."

—**John Fritz**, Xavier University, Class of 2023

"I am grateful to the Smith Scholars Program for allowing me to enrich my understanding of course topics, reflect on how those topics impact the world around me, and immerse myself in opportunities meant to heighten the academic experience."

—**Austin Wagner**, Xavier University, Class of 2023



**ACTA**  
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF  
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**FAR**  
FUND FOR ACADEMIC RENEWAL

## NOTE FROM ACTA'S PRESIDENT:



Oases of Excellence represent the very best that our nation's colleges and universities have to offer, providing the kind of rigorous study that equips students to safeguard our freedoms and progress as a nation. These programs promote liberal arts education, help students explore foundational questions, and encourage intellectual diversity. They regularly focus on areas that are underrepresented in the contemporary curriculum, fields of study such as free markets, Western Civilization, Great Books, and the enduring influence of the American Founders.

These programs are sanctuaries for unfettered inquiry and the free exchange of ideas. In an age too often defined by apathy and ignorance, initiatives like the Oases of Excellence ensure that students who enter America's higher education system can grow into the informed citizens and successful leaders that our nation needs. They are a worthwhile investment for any donor seeking to advance academic excellence and academic freedom on campus.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael B. Poliakoff".

Michael B. Poliakoff  
President, American Council of Trustees and Alumni

### Our Oases of Excellence include:

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#### **American University**

Political Theory Institute  
Lincoln Scholars Program

#### **Amherst College**

James Wilson Institute on Natural Rights and the American  
Founding

#### **Arizona State University**

School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership

#### **Ashland University**

Ashbrook Center

#### **Baylor University**

Baylor in Washington

#### **Boston College**

Clough Center for Constitutional Democracy

#### **Brown University**

Political Theory Project

#### **Bucknell University**

Bucknell Program for American Leadership

#### **Christopher Newport University**

Department of Leadership and American Studies

#### **City Colleges of Chicago**

Wilbur Wright Great Books Curriculum

#### **Claremont McKenna College**

Henry Salvatori Center for the Study of Individual Freedom in  
the Modern World

#### **Clemson University**

Clemson Institute for the Study of Capitalism

#### **Colgate University**

Center for Freedom and Western Civilization

#### **Cornell University**

Program on Freedom and Free Societies  
Chesterton House

#### **Dartmouth College**

The Daniel Webster Project in Ancient and Modern Studies

#### **Duke University**

Program in American Values and Institutions  
Civil Discourse Project  
Center for the History of Political Economy

#### **Eastern University**

Philadelphia Commons Institute

#### **Emory University**

Program in Democracy and Citizenship

#### **Florida Atlantic University**

Adams Center for Entrepreneurship  
The Phil Smith Center for Free Enterprise

#### **Florida State University**

Gus A. Stavros Center for the Advancement of Free Enterprise  
and Economic Education

#### **Furman University**

Tocqueville Program

#### **George Fox University**

John Dickinson Forum

#### **Georgetown University**

Georgetown Institute for the Study of Markets and Ethics  
Tocqueville Forum for Political Understanding

**Grove City College**

The Institute for Faith & Freedom

**Hamilton College**

Alexander Hamilton Institute for the Study of Western Civilization

**Hampden-Sydney College**

Wilson Center for Leadership

**Harvard University**

Program on Constitutional Government  
Abigail Adams Institute

**Indiana University**

Tocqueville Program

**Louisiana State University**

Eric Voegelin Institute

**Marshall University**

John Deaver Drinko Academy

**Mercer University**

Thomas C. and Ramona E. McDonald Center for America's Founding Principles

**Miami University**

John W. Altman Institute for Entrepreneurship

**Michigan State University**

LeFrak Forum and Symposium on Science, Reason, and Modern Democracy

**Middlebury College**

Alexander Hamilton Forum

**Monterey Peninsula College**

Great Books Program

**Northern Michigan University**

Center for Academic and Intellectual Freedom

**Notre Dame University**

Center for Citizenship & Constitutional Government

**Ohio University**

Menard Family George Washington Forum

**Pepperdine University**

Pepperdine School of Public Policy

**Princeton Theological Seminary**

Scala Foundation

**Princeton University**

James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions

**Rochester Institute of Technology**

Center for Statesmanship, Law, and Liberty

**Skidmore College**

The Franklin Forum

**St. Olaf College**

Institute for Freedom & Community

**Saint Vincent College**

Center for Political and Economic Thought  
Center for Catholic Thought and Culture

**Texas Tech University**

The Institute for the Study of Western Civilization

**Trinity College**

Churchill Institute for the Study and Extension of Western Civilization

**University of Arizona**

American Culture and Ideas Initiative  
Center for the Philosophy of Freedom

**University of California–Los Angeles**

Center for Liberal Arts and Free Institutions

**University of Colorado–Boulder**

Bruce D. Benson Center for the Study of Western Civilization  
Engineering Leadership Program

**University of Colorado–Colorado Springs**

Center for the Study of Government and the Individual

**University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**

The Academy on Capitalism and Limited Government  
Foundation

**University of Louisville**

McConnell Center

**University of Mississippi**

Declaration of Independence Center for the Study of American Freedom

**University of Missouri**

Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy

**University of Montana**

Project on American Democracy and Citizenship

**University of Nevada**

Great Works Academic Certificate

**University of South Dakota**

W.O. Farber Center for Civic Leadership

**University of Texas–Austin**

Thomas Jefferson Center for the Study of Core Texts & Ideas

**University of Virginia**

Program on Constitutionalism and Democracy

**University of Wisconsin–Madison**

Center for the Study of Liberal Democracy

**Utah State University**

Center for the Study of American Constitutionalism

**Utah Valley University**

Center for Constitutional Studies

**Villanova University**

Matthew J. Ryan Center for the Study of Free Institutions and the Public Good

**Washington College**

The Institute for Religion, Politics and Culture

**Wellesley College**

The Freedom Project

**Xavier University**

Stephen S. Smith Center

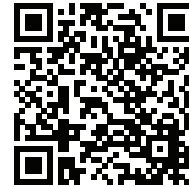
**Yale University**

William F. Buckley, Jr. Program

Directed Studies Program

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**For a full list of Oases of Excellence and a description of each program, visit [www.goacta.org/initiatives/oases-of-excellence](http://www.goacta.org/initiatives/oases-of-excellence), or scan the QR code.**



## AMERICAN COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) is an independent, nonprofit organization committed to academic excellence, academic freedom, and accountability at America's colleges and universities. Founded in 1995, ACTA is the only national organization dedicated to working with alumni, donors, trustees, and education leaders across the United States to support liberal arts education, uphold high academic standards, safeguard the free exchange of ideas on campus, and ensure that the next generation receives an intellectually rich, high-quality education at an affordable price. Our network consists of alumni and trustees from nearly 1,300 colleges and universities, including over 23,000 current board members.

## THE FUND FOR ACADEMIC RENEWAL

A program of ACTA, the Fund for Academic Renewal (FAR) serves alumni and donors who aim to support a renewal of the highest standards at colleges and universities through targeted philanthropy. With access to an extensive 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. Because every gift is different, FAR offers personalized guidance for individual philanthropists. 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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