

“Anti-american” “Leftist” Professors: “Being Watched”.

New McCarthyism

By [Colleen Flaherty](#)

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A new website is asking students and others to “expose and document” professors who “discriminate against conservative students, promote anti-American values and advance leftist propaganda in the classroom.”

The site, called [Professor Watchlist](#), is not without precedent — predecessors include the now-defunct [NoIndoctrination.org](#), which logged accounts of alleged bias in the classroom. There’s also David Horowitz’s 2006 [book](#), *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America*. But such efforts arguably have new meaning in an era of talk about registering certain social groups and concerns about free speech.

At the same time, the new list has attracted Twitter jokesters under the hashtag [#trollprofwatchlist](#), with complaints about Indiana Jones, Professor Plum of “Clue University,” and Gilderoy Lockhart from *Harry Potter*’s Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, among others.

Professor Watchlist, launched Monday, is a project of Turning Point USA. The group’s mission is to “identify, educate, train and organize students to promote the principles of fiscal responsibility, free markets and limited government.” Its national college and university field program works to “identify young conservative activists, build and maintain effective student groups, advertise and rebrand conservative values, engage in face-to-face and peer-to-peer conversations about the pressing issues facing our country,” according to its website.

The group’s founder, [Charlie Kirk](#) — a millennial who has emerged in some conservative political circles as a major player — did not immediately respond to a request for comment about Professor Watchlist, but he promoted it on social media.

PROFESSOR WATCHLIST



Charlie Kirk
@charliekirk11

Follow

Crazy radical professor at your school?

CHECK OUT "Professor WatchList" professorwatchlist.org

Submit your professors on the site!

11:50 AM - 21 Nov 2016

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In a [write-up](#) of the project, Kirk said, "It's no secret that some of America's college professors are totally out of line" and that he often hears stories about "professors who attack and target conservatives, promote liberal propaganda and use their position of power to advance liberal agendas in their classroom. Turning Point USA is saying enough is enough. It's time we expose these professors."

Professor's Name *

How did you find out about this Professor? *

- ☐ Article/News Report
- ☐ 1st Hand Experience
- ☐ Word of Mouth
- ☐ Other

Please describe what this professor did that may justify adding him/her to the Professor Watch List. *

Have any news sources covered this? If yes, please include URL links to all sources. *

Upload Video/Photo Evidence (Optional)

Choose File no file selected

Upload

Delete

Professor Watchlist

While the project invites readers to submit “tips” and “evidence” of bias, it already has profiles on scores of academics. Many of them are known for opinions that the site opposes. [David Guth](#), an associate professor of mass communications at the University of Kansas, for instance, tweeted after the 2013 Navy Yard shooting, “The blood is on the hands of the #NRA. Next time, let it be your sons and daughters. Shame on you. May God damn you.” [Saida Grundy](#), an assistant professor of sociology at Boston University, faced criticism in 2015 for some of her tweets about race, including, “Why is white America so reluctant to identify white college males as a problem population?” Lawrence Lessig, the Roy L. Furman Professor of Law and Leadership at Harvard University, has promoted campaign finance reform, and Robert Reich, Chancellor’s Professor of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, is a vocal critic of income inequality.

Others appear to have been singled out merely for their academic work. Naomi Oreskes, a

professor of the history of science at Harvard University, for example, co-wrote the critically acclaimed *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues From Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*. Her Professor Watchlist profile says she “believes scientists funded by Big Oil skewed information on global warming, much like tobacco smoking, acid rain and the ozone hole were misrepresented. Interestingly, Oreskes is not eager to adopt the low-carbon lifestyle she pushes on others.” The page links to a Breitbart.com story criticizing her work and a 2014 tweet in which Oreskes said she likes to ski in Utah (presumably she’d have to fly there). Most of the profiles thus far are similarly sourced from politically oriented blogs or Fox News.

While the views of professors on the list skew overwhelmingly to the political left, a few cut across ideological lines. Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting denier [James Tracy](#) is profiled, for example.

Some include alleged errors of fact or interpretation. Deandre Poole’s profile, for example, says that the instructor of communications at Florida Atlantic University told students to “stomp” on a piece of paper on which they’d written “Jesus.” Yet Poole has said the [2013 exercise](#) came from a popular textbook manual and that the point was not for students to step on the paper, but to think about why they wouldn’t want to.

Shannon Gibney, a professor of English and African diaspora studies at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, was [accused of racism](#) by two white students after talking about structural racism in class, also in 2013. She received a letter of reprimand but said the letter was later removed from her file and destroyed. Her Professor Watchlist profile says “she is a repeat offender” who “now been formally reprimanded multiple times for racial harassment.”

Gibney said via email, “If sites like this are going to promote this kind of targeting information about faculty — particularly those who are already vulnerable, coming from historically marginalized groups in the academy — they should at least get their facts straight. ... Professor Watchlist has chosen to promote a false narrative of guilt on my part, rather than the true narrative, in which lead institutional actors realized that they had no basis on which to support the claims of racial harassment, and therefore chose to rescind them rather than face more public embarrassment.”

She added, “Many of us, particularly outspoken, progressive women of color professors, have known for quite some time now that there is an organized conservative online apparatus in place to discredit and impugn those in the academy who dare to challenge institutional racism and its ongoing corrosive legacies. This watch list is just the latest example.”

Hans-Joerg Tiede, associate secretary for tenure, academic freedom and governance at the American Association of University Professors, said the site was concerning.

“The AAUP has spoken out against organizations that conduct these kinds of activities going back to the 1920s, when it was the American Legion, through the 1980s, when it was an organization that called itself Accuracy in Academia,” he said.

The association issued a statement against the latter organization in 1985 that said, in part, “External monitoring of in-class statements not only presents the prospect that the words uttered will be distorted or taken out of context; it is also likely to have a chilling effect and

result in self-censorship. ... The monitoring of classrooms for an outside organization which arrogates to itself the prerogative of determining accuracy from what is reported to it ... can only inhibit the process through which higher learning occurs and knowledge is advanced."

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