

One Wisconsin Now: Report: Bradley Foundation has spent \$154 million on higher education agenda

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Underwrites Efforts to Suppress Student Speech on College Campuses, Funds University Professors to Generate Promotional Propaganda

MADISON, Wis. — With students across Wisconsin having returned to college campuses, research from One Wisconsin Institute reveals how the Milwaukee-based right-wing mega-funder Bradley Foundation has undertaken a comprehensive, well-funded effort to suppress free speech on campuses and to use universities to generate propaganda to support their agenda.

“The right-wing mega-funder Bradley Foundation is using their checkbook to try to impose their radical agenda,” said One Wisconsin Now Research Director Joanna Beilman-Dulin. “Their agenda is to turn college campuses into propaganda factories and right wing safe spaces where students could be expelled for speaking out against racist, sexist and homophobic provocateurs.”

Internal Revenue Service tax filings for 2005 through 2016 analyzed by One Wisconsin Institute show nearly \$154.9 million in contributions from the Bradley Foundation to organizations participating in their advocacy campaigns targeting

higher education and in direct support for higher education institutions. This includes nearly \$5.5 million related to the University of Wisconsin and \$3.2 million to Marquette University.

The Milwaukee-based Bradley Foundation is both generous and ruthless in pursuit of its goals. The right-wing behemoth spares no expense, with nearly \$900 million in assets, they annually dole out roughly \$40 million to promote their views. In exchange for their financial support, they demand fealty to their agenda.

Using public records and federal tax information One Wisconsin Institute was able to determine the Bradley Foundation funded organizations involved in the campaign to create a false crisis and media narrative that conservative views were not able to be heard on college campuses and orchestrated the proposing and promoting of legislation to suppress liberal dissenting voices.

In 2017, the Republican-led State Assembly proposed and Gov. Scott Walker and his appointees on the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents eventually imposed new speech restrictions.

The One Wisconsin Institute report also exposes examples of how the Bradley Foundation financially supports the projects of professors who support Bradley's ideology and give their right-wing agenda a veneer of academic respectability. Examples include funding a project at the University of Wisconsin Madison run by a professor who sought a job with Gov. Walker's presidential campaign. The chair of Walker's 71 day run was former head of the Bradley Foundation. In total, University of Wisconsin entities have been awarded dozens and dozens grants from Bradley, totalling nearly \$5.5 million between 2005 and 2016.

In addition to the One Wisconsin Institute report, One Wisconsin Now maintains a comprehensive database of Bradley Foundation contributions spanning tax year 2005 through 2016, the latest year for which data is available. The Bradley database shows, for example, Bradley has given over \$3.2 million to Marquette University, including \$1 million for construction of their law school building, home of a polling project oft used by conservatives to generate media narratives.