

Association of Private Enterprise Education (APEE)
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Session 2.E.5: [Being a Liberty-Advancing Academic](#)

Moderator: Debi Ghatge, Charles Koch Institute/Foundation

Panelists:

Audio: [Peter Boettke](#), George Mason University, "Stepping out of Your Comfort Zone: Engaging with Mainstream Academics"

Audio: [Adam Christopher Smith](#), Johnson and Wales University, "Expanding Your University: Building a Free-market Platform"

Audio: [Art Carden, Samford University](#), "So Many Birds, So Little Time: Killing Them All With Just a Few Stones"

Audio: [Stephen C. Miller, Troy University](#) - Johnson Center for Political Economy, "How to Leverage Faculty and University Resources Toward Center Success"

Audio: [Question and Answer with all panelists](#)

PETER BOETTKE,
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

[Full audio of Pete Boettke's presentation.](#)

DEBI GHATE, CHARLES KOCH FOUNDATION, CHARLES KOCH INSTITUTE:

[0:00]

Each of our panelists will speak for ten minutes, by talk in order of the program, and hopefully that will be a warm up for discussion and we can hear about your experiences as well, answer any questions that you might have. [...] We'll start with Pete.

PETER BOETTKE:

[0:16]

Okay. Thank you Debi for putting that together. I'm talking on the idea of stepping out of your comfort zone, and engaging with mainstream academy.

I am, so just as a background, I spend most of my career teaching Ph.D students and trying to get them placed in jobs. I started the first part of my career at New York University, where I taught throughout the 1990's. And then I moved back to George Mason University in 1998 and I've been there ever since. But I've been a visiting professor, over the years, at Stanford, at London School of Economics, and the Academy of Sciences in Moscow, as well as Charles University in Prague.

[1:02]

And right now, I'm a visiting professor at King's College in London, and also I was at Texas Tech a year ago.

"The best advice I've ever heard was actually at an IHS conference when I came out of graduate school, and I was used as one of the faculty. And it was at the end of the week, and David Schmitz and I were sort of the main faculty and we were asked sit up on a stage like this and talk to the young, would-be professors. Dave was at Yale at the time and I was at NYU so I was sort of [inaudible]. Dave said, 'look, life is too short, your colleagues are too interesting, for you not to take the opportunity to learn from them. Those who don't share your ideological worldview.' And I thought those words were extremely important to internalize.

[2:00]

You simply cannot neatly divide the world into those who are stupid, those who are evil, and those who agree with you, and have a healthy and vibrant existence as a life long learner. And that, ultimately, at the end of the day, is what we all want to do. That's why we're in this business. We get excited about ideas, we wanna continually learn about ideas throughout our life, and continually improve our understanding of the human condition.

I actually think for all of us who are here, we just witnessed, perhaps, the greatest example of a life long learner, right now, in operation. And that's Vernon Smith, at the age of 89, giving the talk that he gave and the work that he's doing. So, try to emulate that, rather than emulate someone who got a full understanding of the world at 21 and then never change for the rest of your life. That's like my mother in law...[laughter] you don't want to do that. So you want to be this life long learner.

It might be especially strange for you to hear these words at an APEE meeting, and also from a professor who's spent the vast majority of his educational career, both as a student and a

faculty member, in an environment known for their strong support of Austrian Economics and Classical Liberalism.

[3:06]

I'm here in this room only because of my experience as a student at Grove City College and George Mason University. I was able to learn and develop as an economist in those environments, that were very nurturing and supportive environments for people who believe in private property and the free market system.

But it's important, I think, to know that at Grove City, I was both an economist and a philosophy student. And the Philosophy Department is decidedly not pro-Libertarian, they were the opposite. And [I] had to learn how to argue with them.

And at George Mason University, I study economics. I work very closely with a professor who compelled us to engage in a lot of ideas which are...weird, to say the least. And many of those ideas were ideologically-removed from Libertarian perspective.

[3:54]

So when I started my teaching career, I taught an interdisciplinary honors program, as well as my disciplinary home in economics. And I've done that at every school I've taught in, all along the way. So that meant I always had to deal with English professors, Philosophy professors, Political Science professors and whatnot. And not all of whom [...] are conservative, free market types, but decidedly sort of the opposite.

And so I want to make a very basic point to everyone here: I think the way that you learn to be a life long learner and promote these kind of ideas is to learn in concentric circles of comfort. So, see figure one...not up on the board now. [laughter].

But imagine, a circle, starting with a small circle here, then a circle that's a little bigger here, and a little bigger here, and a little bigger there, and a little bigger there...[gesturing to audience].

All of us who are devoted to the world of ideas want our ideas to reach as wide an audience as possible. But what do we want? Not just to reach a wide audience, but reach a wide audience with the ideas that we believe are truth.

[4:58]

And so it's the concentric circles is the ability to take ideas from the core and continually express them, further and further out. The more successful that you're at doing it, the wider your job opportunities are and the wider your reach is going to be and whatnot. But if you get all the way out here and what you're talking is unrecognizable to the core, then you really haven't done anything for the advancement of the [core].

And remember what the title of this [panel] is: 'a Liberty-oriented person.' So I'm putting in the core, a 'Liberty' orientation. This is mainly, again, to the young people here: the inner core is the foundation. It consists of those who share your most fundamental priors, most completely. And then you keep pushing out into communities of scholars that don't share those intellectual commitments. But to try to persuade them about those commitments. And obviously, as an ambitious young scholar, you would like to maximize the impact. You want, in operating the furthest circle out, of the core. But here is the key: again, you're communicating ideas from the core.

[6:02]

First, it's critical to understand something about our profession. This is as we go out [to further concentric circles, away from the core]. And this will be a little controversial for some of you, but I actually think it's a correct Sociological example.

There are only five schools in economics that matter: Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Chicago and Princeton. And that's been true since around 1950. Okay? All schools outside of that are simply one among twenty that claim under some measure to be a top ten school, and one of fifty that claim to be a top twenty school. Job placement, publications, advantages, networks for pulling fellowships, et cetera, are pretty much identical for anyone outside of those top five. Whether or not you go to Texas Tech or you go to Berkeley. Okay? What matters is if you're in the top five, then life totally changes. In fact, in recent studies, eighty-five percent of placements in economics at elite jobs are by Harvard, MIT. Not even Chicago, Stanford or Princeton.

[7:03]

Okay? So it's MIT and Harvard dictate where all those jobs go. That's true in academia, but also in policy. Go around and look at who's heading up central banks. Go around and look at who's heading up IMF positions, things like that. It's always going to be people who go to Harvard or MIT. And then there's the rest. That's our profession." [07:24]

GMU by the way--this is again, gonna be controversial to some, but I challenge you to look. GMU just ranked in Applied Economic Letters as the number-two school in the South. We were number one, so we just went down one. It's in terms of research productivity, as conventionally measured...not unusually measured. [laughter] Conventionally measured.

And conventionally measured rankings

GMU just ranked #2 school in the south for research productivity. US News and World report and others conventional rankings from the JEL [Journal of Economic Literature] to the US News and World Report, to the whatever...we're ranked in the forties to sixties in all conventional rankings. That makes us the highest-ranked free market program in the world. Okay?

[8:00]

No other program scores as high as us, on conventional rankings. Now, nine conventional rankings, we're even in the elite. So, look at SSRN [Social Science Research Network], we're in a whole...another elite class of people that are reading this. Depending on how you rank these things.

So, does it matter? Well, it doesn't really matter unless you're in the top five is what I'm trying to say to you. So when students agonize, 'oh, should I go to Harvard?' or, 'should I go to Michigan...?' Well, one: let's see if you get into Harvard. We'll worry about that when that happens. Second: 'Should I go to Michigan or should I go to GMU?' Well, why don't you look at graduate student placement?

What you're gonna find out in all these schools is that there's a star system. Meaning one student can leapfrog the academic appointments, but everyone else gets normal jobs. Let's look at the history track record at GMU, right?

[8:59]

So, where's one of our graduate students teaching? Well, he's a joint professor in the Law School and Economics Department at the University of Pennsylvania.

If you go down the list of the number of GMU graduates that have landed in Ph.D-granting institutions, which is considered the gold standard, you're gonna end up finding that we have a pretty basic...same kind of standards that you'd have from Michigan. Or anyplace else.

What we don't have is the same kind of appointments that you would have at MIT or Harvard. That's my bottom line.

By the way, all of you who have lived in a reality know that your colleagues at your various universities...Roy teaches at North Carolina State. I guarantee you that if you talk to people at North Carolina State, they don't think this way. But it's in complete opposition to the data that's right in front of their face. And this is one of the main things I've seen throughout my career, actually, is a willful denial of empirical reality by people who claim to be the most empirical social scientists. [laughter, agreement]. It's a phenomenon.

[9:55]

So second, placement, then, if you're outside of the top five. Placement, then, is basically a function of a few things that you, as a young scholar, have control over. As a general rule of thumb, you cannot get a job at any school that would not hire your adviser. This is very simple. Look at your adviser's CV and look at what university job interviews they've done recently. They should be going and giving seminars at universities.

If they don't ever go to give a seminar at a university, then they don't have much of a play. Unless they're, like, 90 years old and they're famous or something, and you already know that.

But if they're an associate professor level and they're not going to give job talks anywhere, then you pretty much know that they're not really in the game.

Publication will be a separator, and there's a difference between volume and impact. Don't overplay that in your head too much. Alright, so you have to actually be swinging the bat in order to be able to hit a homerun. Right? So you might also hit a lot of singles, but you gotta be swinging the bat. If you sit there and hold the bat on your shoulder all the time, waiting until just your pitch so you can hit a homerun, you'll be sitting there waiting for an awful long time.

[11:01]

Teaching is local, research is global. But still hone your craft as a teacher and make sure you get good evaluations. And you have to be both a departmental and a professional citizen.

This third point: these ideas are so important that we can't hoard that. We want to, in fact, get them out. We want to teach them well, we want to communicate them clearly and we want to continually try to expand our audience. Recognize that this is a lifelong process of learning how to effectively communicate with different audiences. Publish in journals such as the Journal of Private Enterprise [JPE], and hopefully use that opportunity to learn how to publish articles.

Of course, we all want to publish in the JPE Chicago. If and only if the substantive content that we currently publish in the JPE APEE is actually what we're communicating. What matters for scientific advancement is not placement, but substantive content.

[12:01]

So that's what you should be focusing on: how do I get these ideas into these new different audiences. The biggest mistake that young people make is never publishing in a variety of outlets that exist within our comfort zone of organization. The biggest mistake not-so-young people make is never graduating from working inside of those comfort zones and only talking to each other.

Let me repeat: these ideas are too important for us to hoard within our inside club. But there's a strong case to be made for utilizing the opportunities that exist in these consecutive circles of comfort. Right? To find where your comparative advantage lies as an intellectual scholar.

So translate this into mainstream social science. Imagine you have a median voter model. Now you have a median scholar model. You have your base, and what you're gonna try to do is move as far across, away from your base, without losing your base, as much as possible.

[13:01]

And the people who are heroes are the ones that went the farthest and captured the biggest share of the vote. Right? But don't forget that there's also people over here that have things of value to learn from. And that's the key issue! You can't look down. You gotta always remember this kind of idea. And we find different comparative advantages along the way.

So, constantly test yourself. As Dave Schmitz said, so many years ago, 'life is short, colleagues too interesting, opportunities to learn from everyone too precious to waste.' But recognize there are important opportunities for meaningful careers as economists within each of the concentric circles of comfort.

Embrace who you are. Teach engagingly. Write clearly. Be a good citizen in your department, your profession. And know yourself. That's the hardest thing, I think, is people knowing themselves. Knowing what their comparative advantages and working with that.

[14:01]

And let the competitive tug and pull of academic life sort accordingly.

And at the end of the day, again for the youngsters there, work in proportion to your aspirations. If you have really big aspirations, you work 24/7, forever. If your aspirations aren't like that, you have other trade-offs in life...play the piano, I like to do this...

Work in proportion to your aspirations. And as long as you do that, and you should do that by sorting along the concentric circles. There's *[sic]* wonderful careers in each of those and you can make a great life doing that.

Thank you.

[panelist transition, 14:45 - 15:35]

ADAM CHRISTOPHER SMITH, JOHNSON & WALES UNIVERSITY

[Full audio of Adam Smith's presentation.](#)

[0:00]

"Awesome. Okay! Well this is one of the first presentations where I've taken Deirdre McClosky's advice seriously: to put pictures in the presentation, mostly, instead of words. That's what she said a presentation should be about. [...]"

So, taking the last thing Pete said...Pete was my dissertation chair. I look up to him still today, a lot of things he says. But one of the things he really nailed there is how we can be successful in very different parts of the academy. And so I think that's a great way to think about what I want to talk about.

I'm at a very small university that sort of goes under most people's radar screens. But, I think I've done a lot of work there that I've certainly found fulfilling in pushing out free market ideas and bringing other free market ideas to me.

[0:57]

The way I'm thinking about my center, and again, the way I'm going to present remarks, is my center as a platform. And thinking about what we do, whether we have a center or its just ourselves working within our little hubs in, our little universities, or your little siloes...how we can think of that as a platform for the ideas of others as well.

So to give you just a little background, my Center for Free Market Studies was started in 2013, I first landed at Johnson & Wales in 2010, so it took a while to get the center up and going. But we found generous support from an outside donor and were able to launch some of the standard things you see with free market centers or any kind of university center, which is supporting a speaking series, having student research and scholarships, and faculty travel, et cetera.

Where I think that we've gone in a peculiar direction that I was asked to speak today about is hosting the Classical Liberals in the Carolinas organization. I'll speak a lot more on that in a moment.

[2:00]

We've had two of those meetings, and from that we actually had a new series, a new set of projects, that are again are relying on the center as a platform rather than something to just kind of throw one person...throw myself or a couple people that work there, out there in the media.

Okay, a few things looking at the other talks...and Steve's gonna talk on this thing a lot more than I am so I'll just mention a few things that's [sic] been helpful in terms of the background of founding the center.

Building internal support is crucial. One of the gentleman you'll see in some of these photos is a person who probably is, well not as old as Bernie, but certainly would vote for Bernie...(I'm thinking about our luncheon comments)...you know, a Bernie Sanders Liberal. And very not completely opposed to what we do but I'd certainly call him a skeptic, let's put it that way, of the free market movement.

[3:00]

But one of these people that hopefully we're all lucky enough to know, and that is just inside field teachers. People who are there to do the work, love the work, love the students, and want to give the students every opportunity.

These individuals are rare, but again I'd like to think they exist within every university and they certainly exist within mine. So finding a very proactive ally, even if they're not compatible on the ideas dimension, just having someone who's willing to share the workload, come up with ideas, even bringing in opposition to what I want to do has helped. Right? Because I think it makes those programs that much better, and that it's got an appeal to a much more general audience even at the creation stage."

"Obviously, bringing in students. Hugely important. If you don't like students, first off, I'm not sure why you're working at a university. But second, definitely don't go and build a center because everything will be a nightmare. Building a center obviously means you're going to work with students more, but I view that as a privilege. And secondly, I said that bringing those students in to work on that center is a crucial...not only in building more connections among students and fostering those relationships, but also I would say even in a more self-interested sense having more students be a major part of your organizations provides a kind of firewall between you and opposition within the university. You know, it's easy to knock on bringing the wrong speaker to campus, it's harder to knock on twenty thousand dollars of scholarships. That's tough to argue, is wrong inherently.

"Okay and finally, this networking with other free market centers and organizations, which I'll turn to right now. So, I was very, very lucky to find some people in Charlotte--which if you don't know the Carolinas region, right, we're on the border between North and South Carolina...

[5:04]

So I met with some individuals in Charlotte that had a lot of interest in bringing together academics, think tank reps, people who are working on a lot of the same ideas within the Carolinas together, through a collaboration between CFMS, which is my own center, we were the host and the university of course was the larger host, but along with the John W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy--that's a think tank in Raleigh, and who was also instrumental in helping us get our grants, I should say--they were important in forming this organization. And also the Bastiat Society, which is a great organization that's got all these chapters across the world now, chapters that bring together people from the business community and introduce free market ideas there.

[5:53]

"So these three organizations helped to create the network, formulate who are contacts, who are people in the universities that we can invite, and then really energize those connections to get them out there. To get people to come.

So one of the things that we thought was so successful about the first one is that it became almost a can't-miss sort of event. People were re-scheduling vacations and other things because they said, 'well if that many people are coming, and those *particular* people are coming, we should really be there as well.'

Before showing some of the pictures I have, one of the things I would say that's so beneficial about an area-centered, you know, a geographic-led coalition like that are two things. One thing is that we're obviously all working in the same area, so we're working on local ideas so it allows us to come together and talk about the Carolinas. But one thing that people miss or under state is that we are geographically-located next to one another, right? I mean we can go and visit each other, we can collaborate, we can share speakers. All these things are very easy to do, but hardly done, right?

[7:01]

Because we all just get in our silos and it's really easy to hunker down and deal with the million problems we have right there, much less actually looking around and seeing what other schools are doing in the region. But we're obviously all doing something.

And so bringing that connection together, that's been very beneficial.

Okay, so a couple of pictures from our meetings [presents photos]. You see the logos of our partnering organizations. That's [me]. I was giving a talk at our first luncheon, you see a lot of our Carolinas folks there, a lot of APEE folks attendance at this conference were there as well.

And then this was a panel of some of the major research centers in North and South Carolina. We got all of Charleston, Western Carolina, Duke, Clemson and Wake Forest represented. So having these folks get on board--they were some of the first ones I invited--having them there, people from other places, outside that margin, outside [of] the major research schools, wanted to go there, right? Wanted to be part of the conference, to be a part of it.

[8:10]

This next one I've got CLC 2015 [Conservative Leadership Conference], we technically have it in January, but this is Southern counting, you know? We can just count it as 2015 anyway because we got another one coming up in August that will be our real 2016 meeting.

But we had Jeff Tucker from FEE [Foundation on Economic Education] start us out. We always have an outside-the-Carolinas speaker to get everything up and running as a reception. And then we have an inside-the-Carolinas speaker to close things out. So again, an interesting way of the model.

The middle cut: some really interesting speakers... Jeremy McLellan, he's a comedian, and Jeremy's actually gone on to do some larger Libertarian events. I think he's opened for Gary Johnson on...something, since then. He's gone on to great things, and after our death. But he was hilarious, and really just...very well with the crowd even though it was so different.

[9:03]

And then finally, this is a panel of our foundations. This shows our own Steve Sweet here, from CKF in the back, who was on the panel. And then Jack Sommer, who was a retired UNCC professor [UNC Charlotte] who also joined.

So that platform, again, has been the largest platform that the center has facilitated. And the work that is being done with that is way outside of my schools. Again, at best I'm just a facilitator for those conferences. But one thing that has grown out from that, personally for me, is creating a little bit of a speaker series that has a little bit more of a theme to it. Something that has its own kind of mini-platform opportunity. So let me very quickly show you what we've done this last year, because again I think it has the same idea behind it.

[10:00]

Charlotte's one of the fastest-growing cities in craft brewing. Students like beer, so it's pretty easy to talk about that, of course, at a university. And, our university is known for its placement within the foodservice industry. So it's not like we're just teaching them how to drink, or something, we're bringing in speakers from the industries that they're gonna go into. So we're kind of covered...even though, yes, we like beers too, that's another reason we're there. Anyway.

So we knew it'd be a good, local topic that would work. North Carolina has plenty of political economy issues that I'm interested in, and other scholars at the center are interested in. So what we've done is we've brought in individuals from breweries and wholesaler associations. Let me just quickly point this out, because it shows how a platform can kind of build on itself, alright?

The Bird Song Brewery was an alum that spoke. She had pretty much no interest politically in this topic, she's a brewer!

[11:00]

She's a craftsman, right? An artisan, rather, that's what she does. *But*, we got great lines out of her! Like for example, we just asked her, 'can you think of any regulation that has helped your business?' She was like, 'gosh...no, no.' [laughter] It was like the best moment of the talk, and it was totally not-scripted! It was authentic as it can be. [27:00]

What she did for us, though, is she helped us find this gentleman, Ryan Self, the main spokesman against craft brewing regulation. A big time activist. He had plenty of detail on regulation, and kind of explaining the regulatory landscape in North Carolina, which helped us a lot in understanding the issue.

Finally, he found his counterpart for us, this is the bootlegger in the story here. Tim Kemp, who is executive president of the North Carolina wholesalers association.

[12:01]

Again this guy was kind of like the the tobacco exec coming down to tell us that cigarettes *aren't* cancerous. But, having him there, being able to present his case gave us the best arguments from the other side, which again is really helpful to us in formulating what we're going to do next. As you can see some of this in these panels.

Other events that are coming out of this, other events that are coming out of other organizations, but related to ours. And even some academic work here, with a student who's going to University of Louisville for his work, showing some interest in empirical results on brewing.

Okay, I know I'm out of time so let me just...two seconds to wrap up.

Both with Classical Liberals in the Carolina's and the craft brewing speaker series, again I think the real value added is not necessarily getting my name out there, or being some kind of superstar North Carolina. I mean hell, we got Mike Munger down there, there's no way I'm competing with that anyway. I wouldn't want to compete with that.

[13:02]

But, what the center can do, even at a small school like mine, is get a lot of other people into the room. And have a lot of other organizations interested in what we're doing, and build off of that. Again, a platform for free market ideas is the way we think of ourselves, and we've seen tremendous benefit from that.

[29:05]

GHATE: I think Art is next.

ART CARDEN, SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

[Full audio of Art Carden's presentation.](#)

[0:00]

Great! I would like to tell you about four facets of my life as an intellectual academic entrepreneur. But first is the book that I'm writing with Deirdre McClosky that I have finally come to peace with the fact that it's probably not gonna be published until next year, but that will, nonetheless, solve all problems associated with the bourgeois era that you might have pointed out, that you might have seen or heard about in the first session this morning.

The second is my work on Wal-Mart. The third is the work I do with Southern Economic History. And then finally, I'd like to say a couple quick words about my work as a public intellectual and

in economic education, and how I've been able to strike while the iron's hot when it comes to policy issues in Alabama and when it comes to policy issues beyond.

So when I look at my CV, and I look at the things I have on my plate, the book with Deirdre is probably the biggest thing that I have going on. The proximate cause of the problem was we were both part of a Competitive Enterprise Institute video "I, Pencil" that was filmed in Chicago in 2012.

[1:00]

So I sent her an email, I said, 'hey, let's have lunch.' She said, 'okay, let's have lunch.' So I went and met her at the club and we had lunch. She said, 'I want to write a condensation-slash-popularization of my overall Bourgeois Era project, would you like to co-author it?'

Now then, for the young scholars in the room, if someone of Deirdre McClosky's stature asks you a question like that, the answer is yes. [laughter]. The answer is yes. I will stop everything I'm doing and I will work on this book. I'll work on this project.

But, it goes back a little bit farther than that. We'd been corresponding for some time. I, at one point, read, I think, in *The Bourgeois Dignity*, that she wanted to include a chapter about Wal-Mart in one of her future books. [I] emailed her and say, 'hey, I've invested a non-trivial amount of human capital in this, I'd be happy to write the chapter for you. Okay? So perhaps that's something she could be thinking about.'

The story starts with being in the right place at the right time.

[1:57]

Specifically, it's 2004 at Washington University in St. Louis and it's the week before my dissertation proposal. I get an email from my chair, John Nye, saying, 'hey would you like to go pick up Deirdre McClosky at the airport? And then take her to the airport the next day?' Now it would be very easy to say, 'no, my proposal's on Monday, I've gotta go focus on that.' I said, 'yeah sure, what the heck, I'll do that.'

I read the entire draft of *Bourgeois Virtues* the week before my dissertation proposal, which explains why my dissertation proposal wasn't as pleasant as I expected it to be. But nonetheless, we had a very nice conversation. She said, 'you *are* ambitious,' because I had, in fact, read the entire 400-page manuscript.

So, sow those seeds, water those seeds, eventually they sprout into great things.

Similar story with Wal-Mart. It's 2006, I've just started my job at Rhodes College. And I get an email from two friends from graduate school saying, 'hey, we know that you wrote about social capital in your dissertation.' And indeed, I wrote a paper on social capital that was published in

2009 in the *Review of Austrian Economics* and ended up being cited in the *Journal of Economic Growth*.

[3:01]

So, I had written on social capital.

They said, 'let's write an empirical paper on social capital!'

To which I responded, 'okay, let's write an empirical paper on social capital.'

We had a conversation in class where we talked about Wal-Mart. And then it kind of hit my: my friends want to do this social capital project, I know where to get Wal-Mart data, people are arguing that Walmart destroys communities and blah blah blah blah blah...let's throw the Wal-Mart data in and see what happens.

So one paper turned into three papers turned into basically a project that's hijacked my entire research agenda. Not my entire research agenda, but a lot of it. And now we've published, like, a half a dozen papers on big box retail, and recently published, if I may be so bold, the definitive summary of the literature of big box retail: Walmart, Costco, et cetera. In the Elgar Handbook of the Economics of Retailing and Distribution. And, if all goes well, we have a paper on Walmart and food security that, once we get the final round of data collected, I hope will appear in [NBER Working Papers](#) this summer.

[4:04]

Now a word about Wal-Mart. I in some sense strayed from my first love, which was the economic history of the South. I'd explored the relationship between lynching and economic growth, you know it wasn't quite what I was expecting, then this Wal-Mart stuff came along and it sort of derailed the Southern history stuff for a little bit.

[33:36]

But nonetheless, I was asked to write an article for the Oxford Handbook of Southern Politics, on Southern economy. That came out in 2012, and I probably have Pete [Boettke] to thank for that. The editor is from George Mason. I talked to someone at George Mason, they said to contact you...

For the longest time I've been looking to resurrect this project and resurrect areas of, and attributes of, this work. And I'm working now with a scholar at University of California at Davis on the relationship between lynching and crime.

[5:03]

We found some really interesting data from Louisiana. And UC Davis is a really great topic. And on the history program, we found some really nice data for Louisiana. And further, you had on the part of many Southerners, unapologetic...saying that lynching was necessary to defend the

honor of White women. You had to clamp down on lawlessness by being vicious and awful, drunken evil guys.

There formed in the early 20th Century an organization called the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching. And they argued, no. This, in fact, is a measure of lawlessness, the frequency with which this happens is basically a rebellion against the notion of the rule of law.

So fortunately now we have, with, some of the data that my co-author was able to pull together in her dissertation on North Carolina, some of the data that my research assistant is now pulling from Louisiana, and then, various large inventories on lynchings, when they happened, to whom, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera...

[6:05]

We hope to be able to shed some light on this and add some statistical rigor and some theoretical rigor to a very volatile, very emotionally-charged issue. But one for which we have to be very, very careful with the inferences we wish to draw.

Most of what I've said so far has been an exercise in putting yourself at the right place at the right time. Or, an exercise just in being lucky. I forget who it was that said, 'fortune favors the prepared mind.'

I realized, a couple of years after I finished graduate school, I had written a couple of pop pieces and done a bit of blogging as a grad student and decided to focus, instead, on my research. And then I realized when our older son was born that I'm, in some sense, responsible for the intellectual climate in the world that he grows up in. And so I started writing more op-eds and things like that. And I would write for free. I'd write for anyone, I'd write for free, for free, for free, for free...

[7:00]

I got an email from Forbes saying, 'he, we found this circulating version of your paper on Walmart and obesity. And the early version actually said that Wal-Mart reduces obesity a tiny little bit. So my co-author and I were just dragged through the mud for that. It ended out being turned into a question on NPR's Wait Wait Don't Tell Me, in fact actually misinterpreted our result.

But they [Forbes] said, 'would you like to write an article about this for the magazine.' And this, again, is one of those things, when Forbes calls or sends you an email and says, 'we'll give you some money to write something for our magazine....' Yes. Yes, I will.

And I went a little bit beyond that. I said, 'well, I've been writing op-eds for a bunch of different places for some time now. I would be happy to contribute anything, whatever you think, anything that might be relevant.'

So I started contributing to Forbes, their online product, fairly regularly. And then in 2010 I was asked to go for Forbes full-time, roughly.

[7:58]

For a long time, I was weekly with Forbes. Forbes.com. The website. Now, I don't contribute as frequently, but it's been, for me, an opportunity to practice the craft of writing, practice the craft of making an argument, and practice the craft of distilling economics down to something that the reader of Forbes.com can understand, appreciate, and then comments saying that he hopes I and my family all die in a terrorist attack [laughter]. So, it's an opportunity, again to do a little bit of public intellectual work.

A lot of this boils down to alertness. It boils down to alertness and, I don't know, maybe [...] Discovery. And there's a lot to be said for the role we can have in infecting freedom-advancing institutional change.

Summer 2014: Birmingham was trying to consider whether they would allow Uber and Lyft into the city. I spent about thirty-five minutes on the phone with a member of city council who was leading the charge against it.

[9:00]

I mean this in the technical sense: that she literally had no idea what she was talking about. So, regardless. No Uber, no Uber, no Uber, no Uber...

Summer of 2015: we have a music festival. A bunch of people come and get drunk and they say, 'what kind of cow town is this, that I can't get an Uber?'

[The] iron's hot. I was able to write an article for the Birmingham News which then spurred some people to have a demonstration outside of city hall, and then eventually later we ended up getting Uber in Birmingham. And now I have a student that said to me one day, 'hey, I heard you're the reason that Uber in [sic] Birmingham!' Well, probably not. But, I like to think that at least, at the margin, that's a tangible example of how to be a Liberty-advancing academic.

So with that, I turn it back over to Debi.

STEPHEN MILLER, TROY UNIVERSITY

[Full audio of Steve Miller's presentation.](#)

[0:00]

"The title of this panel is 'Being a Liberty-Advancing Academic.' The title of my contribution to it is 'How to Leverage Faculty and University Resources.' So it's...It's very specific event. For

those that don't know me, I'm Steve Miller. I'm the director of the Johnson Center at Troy University.

There's a long story of how I got there, and part of the theme here...Art's right about alertness. He's definitely right about alertness.

One of the most important things to be alert to is find out what your comparative advantage is, and where those comparative advantages are. And then that allows you to really think of the opportunities you can work with.

One thing I see as lacking in the world of liberty-advancing academics is people who can't or are unwilling to take on any administrative responsibilities and take on administrative load.

[1:03]

And I assure you, for myself and those that have been doing that for a few years now, it's not like we love it. It's not like it's all pleasant. But there are real opportunities there. And there are real opportunities in a lot of ways. But there's a real opportunity there to see things happen that you want to happen.

[40:24]

I'll say this: there's a very good trend I'm seeing right now. So Scott Beaulier, my predecessor at Troy, is now going to be the Dean of the College of Business at North Dakota State. Bob Mulligan right here is going to be the Dean at the University of Indiana East, at their business school. We're starting to see more of this. Nonetheless, I'm starting to think we need more deans, we need more provosts. That's what I want to see from us. Now if that is completely repulsive to you, don't worry. Probably not your comparative advantage [audience chuckles].

Alright?

[2:00]

But it is strange how that changes in your mind as you go along. It was repulsive to me, certainly, when I was a new assistant professor. I had no intention of ever being a department chair, or working on accreditation or anything like that. And then I ended up doing all those things.

I want to talk about these resources to be leveraged. So the absolute--and I'll talk about them kind of in terms of how scarce they are, but we'll under-report them even though they're not that scarce. You just may not be aware of them where you are.

However, the most scarce thing and the most important thing is faculty lines. Pete [Boettke] has a--he has a mantra, almost. Of ideas, funding, and positions. That these are the three things that take an intellectual movement...that make an intellectual movement progress. And if we

were talking about free market economics, if we were talking about Austrian economics, public choice economics.

[2:56]

If we were talking about what most of us in this room do, Pete would say we're doing great on the ideas. There's no shortage of ideas. As a matter of fact for the people in this room. There's no shortage of ideas. Ideas are not the problem, and he would also say that funding is not really the problem.

However, if you do think funding is the problem, we should talk because I can talk about some strategies and how that works. Because what does seem to be the problem, where people do seem to struggle, is hiring people, or themselves sometimes getting hired. It's the faculty lines, particularly tenure-track lines. That's the gold standard right there is a tenure-track faculty line. And so this comes down to alertness, we'll have these themes repeat. But, you should always, always be aware of how any open tenure track line at your university or in your college could be something that you potentially bring in an ally or partner. And I don't mean a pure ideological partner, I mean someone who's gonna help you do the work in building student programs and doing great things.

[4:03]

That's extremely important. And you'd be amazed at how those opportunities appear.

It may be, 'oh, well we don't have any openings in economics. It's terrible. Well, do you need someone to teach business staff? Is that a job that comes up infrequently? If you're in a business school? Is there a chance to hire someone someone who does the right kind of geography? Is there a chance to hire someone in political science? Look for these opportunities, because what you want is people in the social sciences especially, or in other business disciplines who are potential allies.

The other thing to look at is people who are already at your university, already at your institution, and try to figure out who those allies are. Adam mentioned this, he managed to find someone not who's ideologically aligned with free market economics, but who was interested in doing great things with students. So it's a very wide net when it comes to that, but it is surprising.

[5:02]

I have a great story at Western Carolina. So, I mean, first of all, I was there because of Bob Mulligan, who has done a ton of Austrian macro research. That may slow down, when he's a Dean.

But one day I'm sitting in my office and there's a guy moving in next door. A marketing professor. And I look on his shelf, and there's Ayn Rand and Frederic Bastiat and Friedrich Hayek, Ludwig Von Mises, all sitting on his shelf. And I'm like, 'uh, hey dude what's up with that?' [laughter]

And his name's Scott Rader. And it turns out he's just really into free market economics, he had a career in industry before he came into marketing and he just...he had come to know the nature of regulation, without even really studying public choice, just by studying Austrian economics and Milton Friedman free market economics generally. He had just a really good intuitive sense of the relationship between the state and the market, and how [inaudible]. And he had the advantage of traveling to places like Vietnam and China, et cetera, et cetera. He was really keenly aware of the role of government in the economy and the interplay there.

And so he was a natural ally and I realized this is someone who can help Ed Lopez and I and Bob build student programs. And so always be on the lookout for that, there's an alertness that matters.

That's the most scarce thing, is faculty lines. Another thing to think about in faculty lines--and I'm focusing the most on this because it's *the* most important thing, it's the most scarce thing as far as I can see.

You might be surprised at how many endowed professorships or endowed chairs are at your university that aren't currently filled. And sometimes they're not filled because administrators are lazy, sometimes it's because they're lazy and a little greedy, so what they like to do is skim the interest off of an endowment every year and spend it on whatever the hell it is they want to spend it on. **[inaudible joke]**

[7:03]

A lot of times these things are unfilled, and...I'm not saying, 'do it this way,' but a lot of times these donors are still alive, they're still around, they'd like to see something happen but no one from the university has ever contacted them or dealt with it.

That is an opportunity. You want to be careful about how you start that conversation.

Sometimes the way to start that conversation is actually to go to another donor, especially if you are working with another donor, and say, 'hey, I think we can kind of do a deal where we start to build a program, maybe even a center, where this endowed position...you know, we think we can do this consistent with that donor's intent. And then if this endowed position or this endowment combined with a temporary gift from you. And it could be the Koch foundation, it could be another donor. It could be...you know. We have a big advantage at Troy, we have Manley Johnson, we have other donors that are really interested in what we do. And some of them are willing to put up a lot.'

...everybody [???

[8:00]

So one scarce thing to focus on is donors. And donors are actually less scarce than you think. That's why I think he [Art Carden] said, 'well, the funding's not actually that big of a problem.' Because a lot of times there's actually these endowments, these chairs, these professorships, that are out there. And there's an opportunity. And you'd be surprised at how often they are basically free enterprise chairs. But even then if they're not, it could be something for regional economic development, or economic development that, you know...there's one at Western Carolina like that that they're hiring for right now. These opportunities come up. Be alert and be ready for it.

So that's essentially what has happened. By the way, I hold the Adams-Bibby Chair of Free Enterprise. I think there was a period of time where that was not held, where no one held that chair for about ten, fifteen years. And then when Scott Beaulier was hired they said, 'oh, this fits! The guy running the Johnson Center can have this Free Enterprise chair. And then when Scott left I just took it.

[9:00]

Those opportunities are there. Be aware, be alert to that. Now there is a lot of other things...

And by the way, you often have to pay the university back. And the main way we pay the university back is we credit hour production. So if you want to have this awesome class that only has ten students in it and you're doing all these readings and you're doing all of that...try to, if you have some control over this and you have the ability to do it, try to make it up somewhere else. Where maybe you and your colleagues who are especially effective in the classroom are teaching larger sections and generating those credit-hours.

So for example George Crowley, my colleague here, he's teaching a section of 100 students...

[Crowley: "Last semester."]

Last semester? Alright. I'm teaching right now a section of one hundred students, and I also will next semester.

We have lighter loads in our Center than the rest of the College of Business. But we more than make up for it, because we're generating way more credit-hours than those sneaky accountants. [audience chuckles]. And that's important. That's a very tangible thing you can show university administrators. That is very much speaking their language, talking about credit-hour production, per faculty member.

[10:02]

But there's lots of other things. There's media resources. A lot of times there's a tendency to for people who have centers and programs, sometimes they want to take on their own load with media. Start the conversation. Meet with people in the university media department, they are usually very very willing to help you, and that is something you can very much leverage. And

they are happy to do it because it's their job. They're excited to do it. These kind of things that we do, the kind of things that you will be doing in your institutions, these are things that they can get out there. They have a hook there.

Obviously there are other centers at the university. So we have a Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Innovation on our Dothan Campus. We've already started partnering with them in terms of having joint events together. And then they love us because they have essentially no budget. So we can afford to bring speakers and other stuff like that, and we love that because that allows us to go into frankly a more populated and prosperous part of Alabama, and reach out to a larger audience.

[11:00]

There's faculty development grants. Make sure that faculty, you with some other faculty member, make sure you are taking advantage of every opportunity to get funding to go to conferences and present research and that.

George [Crowley] mentioned accreditation this morning in a presentation. Accreditation is an opportunity. Don't look at it as a threat or a waste of time. Maybe it is a total waste of your time! But I view it as an opportunity. And that's worked really well. Particularly in business schools, AACSB [Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business] accreditation, they are very interested in getting faculty research output up so they can get or maintain their accreditation.

Guess what? This is great for we, the liberty-advancing academics. Because I don't know any of us who has said, 'research? Forget it!' That's why we're here, that's why we went to grad school, that's why we love students and we love to do research. That academic focus, the fact that so many of us are so talented in the classroom. That pays off well with the university but then also if you are generating research and raising the profile of the university.

[12:00]

'Well hey! This is a university where people do research and they do research that matters.' And if you follow Pete's advice, It's not just in 'Everyone Thinks I'm Insane At Home Journal.' It's in...you know. It's been widely read and you're trying to influence the profession more broadly.

One last thing I'll tell you is: branch campuses. Other locations. So I mentioned doing something at the Dothan Campus.

We have a campus in Montgomery. Well, Montgomery is the state Capital. We opened up offices in Montgomery last month. We hired a policy analyst there, we're hiring another policy analyst. This is our chance to actually be more directly involved in state politics. And it's already started to pay off.

So Dan Smith and John Dove did a very detailed [diagnosis](#) of the fiscal state of Alabama. We were able to get an audience with the governor's staff. And the next day we might have heard more back from them if the very next day his sex scandal hadn't broken...[laughter].

[13:00]

But we've actually met a couple times with different groups of legislators and they're very very interested in what we do. The first time there was a presentation of their research they were actually very excited. They had Dan come and speak. The people who do pension reform, that committee on pension reform, they're very interested in what we do, they're very interested in that. And then ABC privatization is another thing where we've already started to get our message across.

And if you're in a state with ABC laws, like North Carolina or whatever...if you're anything like me, a Catholic, that should be one of your highest personal priorities [laughter]. It is being able to just go to a store and buy decent bourbon after seven o'clock at night.

I'll end it there. [laughter]

QUESTION AND ANSWER:

[Full audio of the Q&A](#) with Boettke, Smith, Carden and Miller.

[0:00]

GHATE: We do have about twenty minutes for questions and discussion. Questions for the panel, if anyone wants to share what they are doing on their campus, compliment what the panelists have said...

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Very small comment?

GHATE: Yeah.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: So it speaks very highly of what Steve and the guys down at Troy are doing that they timed a sex scandal to direct attention away from their *[laughter, inaudible reference to Smith/Dove report]* on the state of Alabama. It's like wag the dog in reverse.

BOETTKE: So I want to pick up on something that Steve mentioned. I wasn't in your session, George, so I don't know what you said. I agree that accreditation can be a major issue and I

think that's all part of the sorting. Basically, to run a center or to be a person on a campus that has impact, you have to be viewed as, kind of, a version of a gorilla. Either from a tiny gorilla to, like, the big eight-hundred pound gorilla. And the more you're the eight-hundred pound gorilla the more you're able to, like, get your way.

[0:59]

And how do you get your way in academics? Depending on the different schools that you're in, but in an accreditation world, to get your way, you either have to be in the top ten percent of publishers on the campus at a minimum, and better if you're in the top one percent of publishers.

Now how do you do that? This goes back to what I was saying before, the concentric circles of comfort. In most places, especially business schools, you have to remember is that they go by a journal list called Cabells. They don't go by SSCI journals, right? They go by Cabell's list, so that's a list of journals. And then what you're gonna in do that is you're gonna have basically journals that are counted as referee.

Now in a lot of business disciplines, that means any journal that doesn't have a watch ad in it. Okay? [laughter]. So, what you're gonna do is just think about, in your own head, the journals here: the Journal of Private Enterprise, Independent Review...just go out here [the conference exhibitor hall]. Cato Journal, right?

[2:00]

You can basically get tenure, not publishing in the same journal twice, in a bunch of journals that the editors are actually very predisposed towards classical liberalism.

Then what happens, you stretch it out and you go to, sort of, Public Choice. You know, Public Choice is actually a very high-impact journal, in the field. But it's actually very sympathetic to our position. You know, right? But there's also the European Journal of Political Economy and blah blah blah blah, and all that stuff. Then there's other journals, and other journals, and other journals, like that. And so, if all you have to do is follow the general rule, which is a [Mike] Munger rule, right? Which is that you have to have three articles out at any one time, and then you're working on a new one. And then you get the reports back, and you do it. And you just, you know, work on that. And if that makes you be one of the one percent publishers on your campus, you get to...I'm not saying you get to act like an eight hundred pound gorilla. That's the key thing.

[55:44]

Like, I'll give you one last thing that was the coolest thing that was Jim Buchanan, who was my and Roy's teacher, and you know what Jim Buchanan had going for him?. When the president wanted to have a meeting with Jim Buchanan, he went to Jim Buchanan's office. Jim didn't go to George Johnson's office.

And that was true at every single university that Jim Buchanan taught at, starting back when he was at UVA. Presidents came to sit and talk to him. Alright? That's the kind of...the best of all possible worlds. That's the world you want to be in. And the only way you do that is through two things: lots of funding, [laughs], if you have access to that, especially in this day and age, and lots of publications that will destroy the school if you leave from accreditation.

And that's the key issue, is the academic exit option because if I leave in the midst of an AACSB [Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business] accreditation, then the school's publications go down, they get hit, they don't have accreditation, which means what? No third-party payer will pay, understand? That's the tuition-driver.

[4:00]

That's why accreditation matters because the company won't pay for you to get a non-accredited MBA.

And so in our world, where we are, we get..the third party payer is government. Right? It's all people trying to move up the GS levels, or whatever. So again, we lost accreditation and then that would matter for the government funding the thing. So this is the economics of the university. Not saying, by the way, from a Libertarian point of view that it's the best thing in the world, but, you have to recognize and take advantage of it in building programs. And I think that's, you're a hundred percent right on that. Great opportunity.

AUDIENCE MEMBER:

Pete, uh, all of you. I have, over the last ten, fifteen years or so developed a hypothesis about starting a program...a center, or whatever.

[4:55]

And that's to stay away from a school that has an established and ongoing Ph.D program, that if you really wanted to establish something that's successful, either go to a school that doesn't have a Ph.D program or one that's about to start a new one. If I think about programs, from a classical liberal perspective, that have really taken off it's been one's that didn't exist 25 years ago, 30 years ago. Okay.

George Mason, of course Texas Tech, now. Even Auburn. NYU had an existing program, and it went nowhere. And because--I would argue because it has the existing program with all these people...I think what happens is that you get...if you're an existing program, you have an existing model of success that you never break away from.

I see that at NC State just on this ongoing basis. That there's this model of success which prevents it from hiring at George Mason's rate. Absurd! Right? NC State! [inaudible sentence]

[6:02]

NC State won't hire outside George Mason. It's ridiculous. When that...George Mason's grant actually moved them up the ladder. But it's because they're a long-established Ph.D program with a long-established model of how things work in their [...]. And that affects hiring, and also the kind of places they look for money, and the kind of programs they're willing to run, and all that kinds of stuff. Anyway! Just a hypothesis, and you can [...] comment on it.

BOETTKE:

Just real quick, Ryan Oprea is one of our more recent graduates from George Mason who has had a stellar career. I mean, he's been in the AER [American Economic Review], Econometrica, JET [Journal of Economic Theory], you know, all these places like that. He's at Santa Barbara [University of California]. And so I sat down and I asked him, I said like, 'okay, so Ryan, how do we win this unfair game?' I think of this as, like, Moneyball, right? So, we're the Oakland A's versus, you know, the New York Yankees or whatever. So how do you win at an unfair game?

[6:57]

And his argument is that the problem in economics is that any school that's outside of those elite schools is amazingly risk averse. So rather than being risk taking, because they're...like the [James] Buchanan model, 'Dare to be Different,' they instead are amazingly risk averse because they don't want ever to be made to look...so I agree completely with you. The reason why someone can do something unusual is because there are no traditions. So they're not being risk averse, they're just trying to figure it out.

And the way that you say that reminds me of when I was a student at Mason and Ken Boulding was one of my teachers. And one of the things Boulding said: he loved Mason because there are no traditions! Right? And even...mind, that was in 1984 and George Mason only established itself, really, as an independent university in '72, and established an economics department basically in '79. So it's very very young. You know, in terms of the world. We're talking '85, that's six years it was there.

[7:58]

And Boulding loved it because there wasn't any of the traditions, where when he taught at...Colorado, or at Michigan, it's all, you know, historical tradition. And therefore it's very risk averse. And I think that's kind of an interesting thing about the inertia in academia.

GHATE: Anyone else?

MILLER: Well I wanna add that that's exactly the story of Troy's success. Troy is not the obvious choice to start something like the Johnson Center. It was a bit of luck that Manley Johnson is a Troy alum, before he went on to get a Ph.D, be a George Mason professor, work for the Federal Reserve, et cetera. Right? So that's a bit of luck. But, it turns out Troy is kind of the perfect place to build a new program. [...] Dan [J. Smith], George [Crowley], and I compared to the rest of Troy faculty, we're, like, the traditional academics. We're, like, the weirdos who think that

there should be a lot more emphasis on research, and that there should be things like seminars going on, and discussion...you know.

[9:02]

And that this is not just a money printing game, this is a serious intellectual environment. But people like that. Right? That culture is infectious, partly because of the way students respond. And partly because it makes us look, you know...raises the profile of the university.

And so I think Roy's exactly right. If you can go somewhere and build anew, that gives you a lot less to overcome. Then the only issue is overcoming that culture of, 'well what do you mean faculty need to go to more than one conference a year?' Right? Or, 'what do you mean, this journal has a submission fee?' It's like, yeah, that's what a lot of big-time journals do.

GHATE: Go ahead

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah I was gonna say I appreciate all that you guys did. But I was wondering...

[9:58]

Would you have any advice to non-economists--and again, no disrespect--but for someone like me who's in... I don't know. I can say it modestly, I'm in a top-ten department in its discipline, top-twenty university in the world. But in a culture where you don't have a pecking order in terms of where candidates come from...I mean I was hired up from when I got my Ph.D. I've been on advanced search committees, in Geography. None of that matters. But at the same time the ideological culture is, well, you know it sort of ranges between left-wing anarchism and Marxism, these days, so...

I was wondering if you have any advice in terms of building bridges between people who might be isolated in other departments, in terms of finding alliances on campus. If this is something you've ever really looked at, or any experience.

BOETTKE:

Well I mentioned that I taught honors colleges, I was part of the Morse Academic Plan at NYU. I actually won the university-wide teaching award because of my job in that.

[10:56]

And I had a consolation prize of being offered to become an associate dean at NYU, which I turned down because what they wanted me to do is becomes the associate dean of student problems. [laughter]. I didn't want to do that for a living. So here's what I would say, I think this goes back to the allies point: I think you have to find, within your university, people who believe in scholarly excellence. That's the first thing. Especially in a school like you're at, there's gotta

be people there who literally just believe in excellence above ideology, above everything else. And so you'd find those and aid them.

The other one is also a commitment to teaching. That's less so in researching universities, but clearly in liberal arts colleges, there are people who don't care whether or not you're a Marxist or a Libertarian but they want to be engaged with students, they think that they have a service to provide to students, things like that. And you can find allies in them. Cause as Steve said, if you're from this point of view, you care about ideas. You want to communicate the ideas as effectively as possible, you get excited about various different methods of doing that.

[12:00]

And then I think also just the idea of being just a decent person and a good citizen and professional, like jobs, like committees and stuff, right? And that you're not like a, a kind of a loose cannon and you are reasonable and whatnot, and you can go build coalitions there, and I think that that's a very big part. I mean, I'm sure Steve, who's building a program, or Adam, who's building a program there, they have to do a lot of discussions with people that at times seem unreasonable to them, but they have to actually be like, okay, it's okay, and I can interact and live with that.

But I think the first thing in a university kind of setting like your end is build on the idea of who are those people who believe in excellence and scholarship and then work on that. That means, you know, that's your criteria by which you lock into.

MILLER:

I think it is a priority to not be alone. Whatever you have to do, right? Try to make something happen so that you're not doing this totally alone.

[13:00]

SMITH:

Benefits that administrators can see directly benefit students, you know, objectively. Right? Another thing I've heard before is allowing other organizations outside of your own help inform the speaker series, for example. 'We don't want to hear a bunch of free market people on our campus.' Okay, well, *you* help us decide who you'd like to have at the university. You know, something you can do of course is debates, they get to pick the other side. You know? As long as you pick a good person, right? You know, the ideas are gonna get out there, at least.

BOETTKE:

And I think debates are a really important thing. If you read the cases of where the world has gone crazy, recently, it's not ever because there's been a debate. It's because one side or the other has been brought in. But it's never been the case that a debate was going on and then one side said, 'we can't have a debate!' Right? What they do is they can't listen to Wendy

McElroy, you know, talk, because she's gonna give one position on it. And then they say, 'let's have the alternative.'

[14:02]

And I'm not saying it was wrong for Brown [University] to even try to do that, cause I actually think her voice is very important in the broader social...but one way to have that conversation is to have a roundtable discussion around that issue. That's a different setting than having one position presented. So I think that that's probably an important thing too.

HOWARD WALL, LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY:

Well I'll just follow up. I actually started a center a few years ago, and now we've grown. And I have a standing offer to the entire university that I will help them no matter what their ideological position is. I will help them establish and create a center. Not financially, but I'll help them design a website, I'll give them all the plans, whatever side they are. Because I figure we can beat them if we made them. So I view them as the Washington Generals [laughter].

But then they say, 'oh okay that's actually a help.' [...] Don't close yourself in. Be helpful to everybody else, and think of them as your allies too.

[15:02]

BOETTKE:

Can I say one last thing? So I'll give you an example. So ten years ago, I, with several other people, got named BB&T professors. Probably some of you in this audience, or whatever. Well, as the politics in the United States turned a little bit, people started to...this guy from the New Yorker, sort of a pal of Jane Mayer, decided that he was gonna write this hit piece on "Ayn Rand Nation." And [he] got some contact with John Allison. John Allison said, 'I'll give you permission to talk to three of my BB&T professors: Geoff-Sayre McCord, myself, and Brad Thompson at Clemson.

Now, depending on how you present yourself is gonna influence. This guy called, [we] talked for five hours. Okay? He also talked with, you know...he called several times, right? For different things. And same thing with Geoff-Sayre McCord, and also with Brad Thompson.

[15:57]

In the book itself--and remember, it's a hit piece--in the book itself, the only phrase from a professor that gets quoted is actually Brad Thompson.

Now why would that be the case? Well first, Brad let him have it, with both barrels. And both Geoff and I handled it differently, which was, the guy called me, he started asking me, he says, 'so you have to use Ayn Rand in your classes.'

And I said, 'uh, yeah, I use Ayn Rand in my classes but I also use Charles Dickens, and John Steinbeck. Are you against debate? New perspectives?' The class is called Contending Perspectives in Contemporary Society. So I'm talking about contending perspectives, is there a problem with that?

That guy is completely neutered, understand. **Now, what did I do in my class? I used the economic way of thinking as the literary device to assess the quality of the stories told in Dickens' *Hard Times*, Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, and Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*.** Right?

[16:57]

You would have to be, kind of, deaf, dumb and silly, or whatever, to not understand that Steinbeck does not understand economics, right? That Dickens got, like, the economics of it wrong. **And that Ayn Rand's the most economically literate of all those people.**

By the way, I also said that to the guy in the interview. I said Steinbeck doesn't understand supply and demand interactions, so that's why the wages of the workers don't make sense to him. You know, Dickens doesn't understand, he's making fun of the philosophy of fact. Right? That's professor [**Gothard school??**], making fun of the philosophy of fact. That's an attack on utilitarians you know...What flipped him was the fact that I pointed out that the utilitarians were the anti-slavery folk. And that Dickens and all of them were that.

Anyway, the bottom line is that it's not like I held back telling the guy that I'm a Libertarian, that I teach Ayn Rand, that I use economics...But the fact is that I put it in the context of an open and free debate among our students, which I did, and all of a sudden he can't tell this story. His story isn't about that, his story is somehow we were being manipulated to, you know, brainwash the students.

[18:03]

That's not what we're doing, right? We're trying to have open discussion. That's what what our colleagues are in fear of, afraid of. You know? That we're cutting off debate.

But if we're the ones who are the leaders in promoting debate on campus, I don't think we get into trouble.

AUDIENCE MEMBER:

I'm surprised that prevented him from telling a story anyway. [Boettke laughs.] I'm serious. I interviewed for an hour with Jane Mayer, when she did her piece on the Koch foundation. Talk about hit pieces. And it didn't matter what I told her. She had a story to tell, and she was gonna tell it. And no matter what context I put something in, like your story about Ayn Rand, they're not bound to be held by that context.

BOETTKE: Well, Brad gave them juicier quotes.

Q: 'He focuses on Ayn Rand in his course? Forget about Dickens!' So, anyway, just saying...the fact that you present the way you did doesn't prevent them from telling the story they want to tell.

Especially the New Yorker, and *anyone* associated with Jane Mayer.

[19:07]

GHATE:

So we have one minute left. Is there, like, a final question that someone wants to ask before we wrap up? ... Any final thoughts from...[the panelists]?

BOETTKE:

My view is that you just teach economics, teach it--I know it's not in Geography...but you're an economist too! You just happen to be trapped in geography [*interacting with specific person*]. Teach economics, teach it well, and teach it unashamedly. And go be great.

Look, there's a science of economics, there's not a science in a lot of other disciplines that are running around. And economics...can trust. Teach economics. Be proud of it.

GHATE: ...go team.

[laughter]

[applause]