

His Biggest Mistake Was Trying To Fix Universities | Clips | Dad Saves America

6 MIN • YOUTUBE • [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=QW1MoQEOWHA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QW1MoQEOWHA)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QW1MoQEOWHA>

SUMMARY

The discussion centers around seven principles aimed at reforming higher education, which the speaker believes could significantly improve teaching effectiveness and accountability. Despite the obviousness of these ideas, the speaker reflects on the challenges faced in implementing them and the personal consequences of engaging in educational politics.

- Seven principles for improving higher education were proposed, focusing on teaching effectiveness and accountability.*
- Key suggestions include measuring teaching efficiency, rewarding exceptional teachers, and separating research and teaching budgets.*
- Evidence of teaching skills should be required for tenure, as current practices often prioritize research over teaching.*
- Implementing results-based contracts with students to ensure accountability in teaching.*
- State funding should be given directly to students to allow them to choose their educational institutions.*
- The current accreditation system is seen as a barrier to innovation in higher education.*
- The speaker's involvement in educational reform led to personal and institutional challenges, including threats and corruption scandals.*
- Despite efforts, significant reforms in the Texas higher education system have not been achieved.*

- These seven principles, by the way, led to the greatest mistake I've ever made in my life. But I'll let you read them. Go ahead. I know. It was the biggest mistake I've ever made. - So, for the dads watching. - Yeah. - I'll look at each camera. For the dads watching. The thing about what I'm about to read is that these are things that if you're about to drop 50 grand on your school, on University of Texas or University of Pennsylvania or anywhere in the country, you would think all of these are done as a matter of standard practice.

- And I should set this up, for the audience and for you. The only advantage I had was I was an entrepreneur who'd been both on the inside of the academy and seen how it really worked, and been on the outside as an entrepreneur. So I'd really been on the inside. And I was approached by then Lieutenant Governor Perry, who later became the governor for 14 years, and he said, "We ought to really look at higher education, and what could we do to make it better?"

And I wrote down one day on a napkin these seven, very obvious ideas. I mean, they're embarrassing they're so

obvious. - So, first thing, you noticed that 17 of you are basically teaching enough of the- And completely ludicrously outsized the amount of the student body. - And in fact, we could have run the entire school for about 25 cents on the dollar, if you wanted to do all the math. And it was like, "Gee, what's the other 75 cents being spent on?"

- It's going to a lot of heads doing a lot of questionable things. - [Jeff] Yes. - So, you say, "Okay, all right, future Governor Perry threw down a gauntlet, I'll take an afternoon, I'll write some things down. Seem pretty obvious to me." - Yeah. - Here they are. One, measure teaching efficiency and effectiveness. Okay? So, we want people to teach and do a good job. We should measure if they are in fact doing that. Two, publicly recognize and reward extraordinary teachers.

Three, split research and teaching budgets to encourage excellence in both. I had this, I went to Penn State. - [Jeff] Yeah. - There were sort of general classes that I took that were in giant auditoriums. And it was like the person at the front of the room giving the lecture clearly was like a physics researcher, had no business being in a classroom. - [Jeff] Right. And that doesn't mean, by the way, physics research is very important, right?

- Yeah. - All the great physics researchers should be at the University of Texas doing the best physics research. We should just measure them separately. And if you can do both, good for you. - Okay. Require evidence of teaching skills for tenure. - Because, as everyone inside the academy knows, you only get promoted because of research skills, and actually for publishing articles and journals no one reads, in most cases, and that's how you get promoted. And if you teach well, it is taken as pure evidence that you must not be a good researcher, otherwise you would not be wasting time as a teacher.

And anyone inside the academy knows what I just said is true. - Signs that you're a good teacher are indications that you're not valued actually at the institutional level. Like, "Why are you such a good teacher? That means you must not be doing good enough research." - [Jeff] Absolutely. Absolutely true. - Okay. Use "results-based contracts" with students to measure quality. What does that mean? - Well, this means, I'm gonna promise you what I'm gonna deliver. We're gonna publish with the grading, and we graded harder than anyone else, but we're gonna have a contract that says, "I promise to deliver these things, you will rate me based on that.

Not my popularity, not my good looks. We're gonna have very detailed of what I promised you as a teacher." And these are the same kinds of contracts we have. - And then, put state funding directly in the hands of students, which seems to be pretty straightforward. But what did you mean by that? - Well, the University of Texas has a \$2.2 billion budget, or it did last I checked. Only 300 million of that came from tuition.

So the idea was, there's a whole bunch of money going on for a whole lot of different things, let's just, instead of that budget getting all confused inside the university, let's just hand checks to the scholarships, to the students, and allow them to spend it at any

university they want. - So, we got this giant education budget. The way I like to think about that is, just do what the G.I. Bill did, it came home from the- - It's the G.I. Bill with scholarships.

Give everyone a scholarship and let them vote with their feet. - Yep. Okay. How dare are you? How dare you want the

G.I. Bill for everybody? And then create results-based accrediting alternatives. - Yeah. So the accreditation cartel in America is very anti-competitive. It's private institutions that have the right to spend government money, but they each have a certain geographic area of the country that they own. And it's used as an excuse not to innovate in higher education.

And until that's fixed, will likely block most of the innovative things in higher ed'. - What does this word mean? "Accreditation"? Do people even know what that is? - Most people think it's a good housekeeping seal of approval. - Oh, you're accredited? It's a stamp. - Yeah. It's a much longer discussion, but that's not what it is. I mean, it's a lot of things, but that's not what it is. But it's mainly used to prevent innovation inside universities.

And so, all we were saying is, until you break up that cartel, that government monopoly, then you're not going to

have real results-based education and learning inside higher ed'. - You basically, on a prompt, write down what seems like a pretty straightforward set of things that if I could summarize our- Prioritize teaching, and measure teaching, and reward teaching, and praise teaching. - I'll make it even simpler than that. Just be very clear about what you promise, and deliver on your promises.

Not much more complicated than that. And measure what you promise to deliver. - What is the response of the institutions of higher education in Texas? - I'll fast forward through 10 years. The biggest mistake I ever made in my life, which was to get involved in politics, to where a courageous regent at the University of Texas, named Wallace Hall, discovered corruption that still exists at the university in terms of admissions, far bigger crisis than the varsity blues, which is the famous scandal we just had.

It results in the

president of the university resigning over the corruption. It results in someone shooting a high-powered rifle into our school on the day the president is fired, or resigns. - And this is not, when you say "this," which school are you talking about here? - Acton Academy, our K12 school, full of, at the time, students. Someone shot a high-powered rifle into the school by accident. They never found out who shot the rifle. I had death threats.

I carried a 9 millimeter gun in my car because of that. Because, basically, Wallace Hall and a group of people stumbled into an admissions crisis at the University of Texas, admission scandal, the University of Texas. And so, 10 years of politics, 10 years of trying to reform the system, and at least I'll say that those of us, Governor Perry and Wallace and myself and the others involved, you know, accomplished nothing. - If you enjoyed this video, we've got more where that came from.

Be sure to check out my full conversation with Jeff Sandefer. And one of the best ways you can help support us is to subscribe to the channel so you won't miss our interviews and short videos as they come out each week. (upbeat music)