# Money and Academia: Koch Foundation Proposal to Florida State University: Teach our Curriculum, Get Millions

Documents show group sought control over hiring at Florida State's economics department

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In 2007, when the Charles Koch Foundation considered giving millions of dollars to Florida State University's economics department, the offer came with strings attached.

First, the curriculum it funded must align with the libertarian, deregulatory economic philosophy of Charles Koch, the billionaire industrialist and Republican political bankroller.

Second, the Charles Koch Foundation would at least partially control which faculty members Florida State University hired.

And third, Bruce Benson, a prominent libertarian economic theorist and Florida State University economics department chairman, must stay on another three years as department chairman — even though he told his wife he'd step down in 2009 after one three-year term.

The Charles Koch Foundation expressed a willingness to give Florida State an extra $105,000 to keep Benson — a self-described "libertarian anarchist" who asserts that every government function he's studied "can be, has been, or is being produced better by the private sector" — in place.

"As we all know, there are no free lunches. Everything comes with costs," Benson at the time wrote to economics department colleagues in an internal memorandum. "They want to expose students to what they believe are vital concepts about the benefits of the market and the dangers of government failure, and they want to support and mentor students who share their views. Therefore, they are trying to convince us to hire faculty who will provide that exposure and mentoring."

Benson concluded, "If we are not willing to hire such faculty, they are not willing to fund us."

Such details are contained in 16 pages of previously unpublished emails and memos obtained by the Center for Public Integrity.

While the documents are seven years old — and don't reflect the Charles Koch Foundation's current relationship with Florida State University, university officials contend — they offer rare insight into how Koch's philanthropic operation prods academics to preach a free

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market gospel in exchange for cash.

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