



Student triggered after prof suggests reading Cato paper

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A graduate student at the University of St. Francis attacked one of her professors on Twitter for suggesting she read a paper published by the Cato Institute.

Jennifer Martin, a graduate student studying Medical Sociology, fired off numerous tweets condemning the professor for suggesting that she read *The Grass is Not Always Greener*, a Cato paper written by Michael Tanner on how the United States healthcare system would benefit from pro-market reform.

"Just assigned reading material written by Cato institute-conservative propaganda machine funded by Koch bros." [Tweet This](#)

The professor, Fran Steel, told Martin in an email exchange that the article "might give you a broader perspective on the subject," to which Martin replied indignantly that the article was "written by the Cato Institute, a think tank founded by the Koch Brothers."

The article was not mandatory, but rather came as a suggested reading from the professor, which Martin said was recommended "in rebuttal to a previous discussion" she had been having with the professor.

She later posted the exchange on Twitter, lamenting that her professor had "just assigned reading material written by Cato institute-conservative propaganda machine funded by Koch bros. Wow!"

She followed up after the tweet started to attract attention, bashing both her school and her professor for the "assignment," and even tweeting her diatribe at MSNBC, NBC Nightly News, and ABC in hopes they'd cover her professor's misstep.

"I pay big [money] to go to [The University of St. Francis]," she wrote. "They assign me ideological garbage. We pay astronomical amounts for higher education in this country. Don't throw me an article published by a political think tank."

At one point, she also responded to her critics by insisting that "I do recognize propaganda when I see it."

Numerous high-profile conservative writers and professors responded to her, some of whom noted that higher education entails hearing both sides of a debate. Martin continued to hold her ground, later tweeting that the assignment was “great conservative posturing” but a “terrible choice of assignment.”

Martin did claim to have read the article after it was assigned, and complained that “there was not a single mention of the fact that the #1 source of bankruptcy in this country is due to medical bills.”

When one user recommended that “even if it is a bad assignment,” it was still worth reading for the sake of learning new perspectives, Martin replied sarcastically, saying, “Oh It was read, and then thrown in the garbage.”

“Graduate level students expect more from their profs than articles written by political think tanks pushing an agenda,” Martin wrote in another comment. “I’m not a modern college kid. I am 35 have been a working professional for 10 years and this is a graduate program.”

She also repeatedly condemned the Cato Institute for advocating limited government, saying in one tweet that “limited government is a conservative agenda which they adhere to” and calling Cato a “propaganda machine.”

Martin did not respond to *Campus Reform*’s request for comment, and Professor Steel was unreachable. The University of St. Francis did not respond to multiple calls and emails regarding the situation.