

**Realizing the Distinctive University: Vision and Values, Strategy and Culture****Mark William Roche****Publication Date**

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# Realizing the Distinctive University

VISION AND VALUES, STRATEGY AND CULTURE

*Mark William Roche*

## Realizing the Distinctive University



MARK WILLIAM ROCHE

# Realizing the Distinctive University

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Vision and Values, Strategy and Culture

University of Notre Dame Press

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# Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
-----------------	-----

Introduction, or How I Almost Managed to Become Someone Else	1
--	---

## PART I. VISION AND CHANGE

ONE	
The Idea and Reality of the University, or How We Got Where We Are	27

TWO	
Vision, or What No Administrator Can Do Without	61

## PART II. EMBODYING AND FUNDING THE VISION

THREE	
Embodiment, or Why Not All Meetings Are Dull	83

FOUR

Resources, or What a University Needs Besides People and Ideas	120
--	-----

PART III. STRUCTURES, STRATEGIES, STRUGGLES

FIVE

Flexibility, or How to Juggle Just about Anything	141
---	-----

SIX

Competition, or How American Universities Have Always Embraced the Market	159
---	-----

SEVEN

Incentives, or What the Second-Best Way to Motivate Faculty Members Is	173
--	-----

EIGHT

Accountability, or How Criticism Can Be a Gift	184
--	-----

NINE

Community, or How Something Can Be Both an End and a Means	233
--	-----

Conclusion	249
------------	-----

Works Cited	261
-------------	-----

Index	277
-------	-----



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In the course of my eleven years as dean, I appointed and worked with a dozen associate deans and more than fifty department chairpersons. I learned from them in immeasurable ways and I owe all of them considerable gratitude. Many of them will see their work mirrored in these pages. I would like to name the two associate deans who helped me in unusual ways, particularly during my partial leaves: Chris Fox, who was my first appointment as associate dean, had bold aspirations for the university and the spirit of an entrepreneur; Greg Sterling, who became in my final years my second-in-command, provided a peerless level of support and counsel; his work ethic knew no limits. I would like here as well to thank my successor, John McGreevy, whose work I allude to in these pages and whose effectiveness as dean has been matched only by his modesty and generosity.

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## Introduction, or How I Almost Managed to Become Someone Else

From 1997 to 2008, I served as dean of the College of Arts and Letters at the University of Notre Dame. One day my staff ushered me into our conference room for one of the brief birthday celebrations they occasionally arranged. I was a bit late. They had waited for me before beginning to sing, and I joined in with full voice, but I quietly paused after a while and whispered to one of my colleagues, “Whose birthday is it?”

“Yours,” she said.

With twenty-one departments and more than five hundred faculty members in the college, my identity as dean was overwhelmingly collective, and forgetful immersion in its day-to-day responsibilities had become a way of life.

But I didn’t adjust to the identity of dean immediately. A week or so after I had started, I set up a meeting with our computer technician, Dave Klawiter. “Let’s meet at eight o’clock tomorrow in Harry’s office,” I said. “Harry” was Harry Attridge, who was my predecessor and had since moved to Yale. Dave responded, “Maybe you should start calling it *your* office.”

When someone would ask where I worked and what I did, for years I simply said that I taught at Notre Dame. Somewhere along the way I made the transition to, “I’m dean of Arts and Letters.” I became the role I was playing.

I served for eleven years, six more than I originally intended. But I had learned that it takes time to make substantive changes, so I stayed longer than I had planned.

In eleven years I made many mistakes. And yet I learned many lessons as well. Experience is fed in part by reflection on mistakes. I hope in this book to help others avoid pitfalls by offering a kind of surrogate narrative experience. But the book is not only about mistakes: It is about intellectual principles in administration and strategies for moving from vision to implementation. It offers an analysis of best practices, with particular stress on the value of distinctive mission. More than twenty-five years ago, Henry Rosovsky, at the time dean of Arts and Sciences at Harvard, published a splendid book called *The University: An Owner’s Manual*. One might think of this book, as one of the readers for the press suggested, as *The Distinctive University: An Operator’s Manual*.

I once heard a president say he had no power. He meant that he could not take any action without strong support from below. What he said is not quite true. Certainly, there are areas where an administrator must and should defer to the faculty. At Ohio State the chairperson never overturned the department after a good and substantive discussion, but he or she had the right to argue persuasively for a given position. A dean tends to defer to the faculty in certain areas as well. The only time I ever even contemplated overturning our legislative body, the College Council, on a curricular matter was when our classics department proposed a classical studies major, in addition to its majors in Greek and Latin, that would require no knowledge of Greek or Latin whatsoever. That seemed bizarre to me and a minority of faculty colleagues, both in the department and the college. The College Council vote was mixed but positive, and I chose to honor the vote. It turned out that the major, which already existed at several peer universities, was a success and led indirectly to higher enrollments, even in Greek and Latin; the classical studies majors *wanted* to know Greek and Latin. The majority was right, and I was wrong, though wise enough to defer.

Even though I love small discussion classes, I am also a fan of superb lectures, which model high standards of thought and elocution, inspire students, and encourage them to work through the material analytically, synthesize ideas, and develop questions as they listen. A few colleges and universities have lecture classes that everyone says you must take. At Williams College, the Introduction to Art History served this prominent role; as recently as 1988, 58 percent of the graduating class, representing majors across the full spectrum of the arts and sciences, had taken the year-long lecture course (Toomajian). When I became dean, I proposed that we elevate our best lecturers by creating the temporary designation Notre Dame Master Lecturer for those faculty members who were excellent scholars, had very high student evaluations, regularly taught courses with more than a hundred students, and did not inflate grades. My colleagues were aghast that I would introduce such a concept to a community that prizes small classes; they gave the idea a resounding no, and I had to retreat.

Still, there are unambiguous areas where an administrator has considerable power or means to elicit motivation; these lie above all in vision, personnel, and budget.

First, academic leaders can inspire and motivate faculty toward a vision that is widely shared. The most powerful and enduring tool of any administrator is vision, and the ideal strategy for motivating faculty members to further the university's goals is to collaborate with them to craft an appealing vision. When we act because we identify with a vision, we are intrinsically motivated. A vision must be collectively formed, but there is no question that the role played by academic leaders is central.

The second realm involves personnel, that is, hiring faculty, making tenure decisions, and appointing academic leaders: the first case requires considering candidates put forward by the departments, and the latter two cases require consulting with faculty members. Although these decisions, which determine the personnel who will carry out a vision, are made in consultation with faculty, administrators tend to have the final say.

Finally, budget expresses vision through priorities and differential allocations. The apportionment of resources is normally not an issue of faculty governance. Departments may request a faculty position from the dean, but they do not vote on whether they will receive it. The faculty has a right to be consulted and informed, but it does not have authority over

budgetary decisions. And it is through the budget that incentives are most fully realized and, indeed, that negative consequences can be felt—for example, when only minimal resources are allocated to weaker departments. In this book, I tell the story of how I worked with vision, personnel, and budget without holding back tales of my own missteps.

For a university to flourish, it needs to embrace a distinctive vision and instantiate or embody that vision in specific practices. I use my own experience at Notre Dame as a lens through which to tell of the challenges as well as of the best and worst practices in realizing the idea of a distinctive university. Though many of my examples come from Notre Dame, which can be viewed as unusually distinctive, my goal is to use this university simply as an exemplar. Decades ago Burton Clark identified a set of distinctive institutions, focusing on small liberal arts colleges: Antioch, with its work-study program and community participation; Reed, with its combination of intellectual vigor and nonconformity; and Swarthmore, with its signature honors program. Religious colleges, single-sex colleges, and historically black colleges are further obvious examples of distinctive institutions that inspire allegiance, dedication, and affection. George Dennis O'Brien ended his postpresidential memoir with a plea for more distinctive and mission-driven universities, ones with a "specific character" and, drawing on the language of Burton Clark, an "institutional saga" (217). More recently, Jonathan Cole has lamented the "lack of differentiation among our leading universities" and called for "a more intense search for individual identity" (*Toward* 274, cf. 61).

One can criticize many universities for looking too similar to one another and employing as their markers vague and indistinguishable rhetoric, which often amounts to fostering excellent research and educating future leaders. I have heard more than one high school senior announce after a tour of multiple college campuses, "They're all the same!" Despite the trend toward similarity in self-presentation, all colleges and universities are at some level distinctive, though along a spectrum, with some more interchangeable and others more distinct. In fact, most American colleges and universities do see themselves as distinctive; more than half of the nation's private colleges and universities, for example, are religious. Although one can learn from other universities and their practices, each college or university benefits by making general

practices its own, by being different. In this light, processing stories about other distinctive colleges and universities can be helpful. Clark's book sought to help us understand distinction through case studies. More recently, George Keller has written a case study about Elon University, and Bill Bowen has offered general insights into administration by focusing on lessons learned at Princeton.

Through concepts and stories, my study explores challenges and puzzles that arise when we seek to realize the idea of a distinctive university. Though I occasionally interweave literature on higher education and management as well as data, my analysis is based mainly on experience and reflection, including seventeen years in administration, six as a chairperson at two institutions and eleven as a dean. The tale interweaves the personal narrative, the idea of a distinctive university, and prominent structures of the American university, with examples taken from practice, into one larger story.

**P**art 1, "Vision and Change," links the historical development of the idea of a university with transformations in vision and argues for the value of distinctive vision even today. Chapter 1 provides a broader setting for the more specific narrative that follows. How have universities historically been led by a distinctive vision? How should we understand the two most significant changes in the history of the idea of the university, the German revolution in the early nineteenth century and the American transformation after World War II? In what ways do our universities today differ from what they should be? Recognizing gaps that need to be addressed is one possible way to move toward articulating a distinctive vision and effecting change. My second chapter emphasizes the advantages of vision and distinctive identity, offers examples of contradictory and compelling visions, and explores the ways in which vision can motivate change.

Part 2, "Embodying and Funding the Vision," shows that a vision without embodiment and resources is illusory. Chapter 3 exhibits the extent to which even a compelling intellectual vision must always be linked to rhetoric, support structures, and community. It also addresses contexts in which vision can only be realized by working through conflict. Chapter 4 addresses nuanced connections between vision and funding. Here, and in part 3, one finds firsthand reflections on the landscape and inner workings of the American university.

Part 3, “Structures, Strategies, Struggles,” reflects on administrators’ more pragmatic tools, which explain to some degree the distinguishing characteristics and indeed the success of the great American university. The overarching structures and strategies, each of which receives its own chapter, are flexibility, competition, incentives, accountability, and community. Each is a means to realize a distinctive vision, even if community is both a means and an end. The chapters conclude with the challenges and problems that arise with these otherwise attractive concepts.

Whereas I introduce my own story in the remainder of this section, in chapter 1 I look more broadly at the historical and contemporary context. All of the subsequent chapters interweave my personal voice with broader ideas and data.

Over the course of many years, I have experienced a wide range of American universities. Williams, my undergraduate alma mater, is a liberal arts college with just over two thousand students. I received my doctorate at Princeton, a private research university. Ohio State, where I taught for twelve years and was an administrator for five, is one of the country’s largest comprehensive public universities and today has more than fifty-eight thousand students. For the past nineteen years I have been at Notre Dame, one of the nation’s top-twenty universities and arguably America’s leading Catholic university. My experience draws on the diversity of the American system, which, along with its liberal arts colleges, private research universities, and large public universities, also includes community colleges with relatively easy student access and modest fees. America benefits from this institutional diversity.

I have also had extensive experience at German universities. I studied for one semester at an American program affiliated with the University of Bonn and for two years directly at the University of Tübingen, where I completed a master’s degree. Some years later I taught at the University of Dresden and at the University of Essen, where I also enjoyed a Humboldt Fellowship. In 2009, I served as Christian-Wolff-Professor at the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg. At these universities, I developed great admiration for the distinctive strengths of a different tradition, including the students’ remarkable independence, the high academic standards, and the strong sense for the intrinsic value of



study and scholarship. Some of my criticisms of the American university include comparisons with German universities. One can learn from other universities' best practices, even when one's own system or university is superb.

When I was a graduate student at Princeton, those of us teaching German language and culture had an office together in a spacious and comfortable attic. My teaching developed in the context of sharing best practices with colleagues. Even today my greatest advances tend to come from speaking with colleagues about challenges they face and strategies they employ. We certainly do know, on the basis of empirical research, some basic principles of pedagogy: for instance, that students learn more when they are actively engaged in the learning process and when they can also learn from their peers. Teaching well means being attentive to such principles; beyond that, good teachers know their material, reflect on the match between learning goals and student performance, and ensure common sense and creativity, which are enriched by the sharing of best practices.

Administration is not radically different. The few absolutely essential principles are effectively complemented by the sharing of common challenges and best practices. Despite the name, best practices can become better still when they are shared with others, who make them their own and thereby enrich them further. No less important than best practices are mistakes from which we can learn.

When I was dean, we had monthly meetings of the twenty-one chairpersons, four associate deans, and three senior staff persons, who reported to me. The agenda had three categories: brief items, which I zipped through very quickly and summarized in a follow-up e-mail; discussion items, which took the bulk of our time; and best practices, which entailed chairpersons, usually but not always at my invitation, speaking about some innovative or productive activity in their departments, be it in teaching, mentoring, public relations, or any number of other areas. Chairpersons liked this part of the meeting the best, and so did I.

One of the challenges of being an administrator is that you are often alone. You wrestle frequently with personnel issues, which cannot be shared. Venting about complexities or frustrations with a colleague is

inappropriate. Therefore, to have a window onto the experience of another administrator can be advantageous. Also, there is a natural human desire to see theory in the world, and practical examples can be inspiring to others. Administrators at diverse kinds of institutions often face similar challenges.

Some years ago I wrote a book about the idea of a Catholic university. I also gave talks that introduced audiences to the book. I was often asked about next steps, and my talks increasingly became focused not on the abstract idea of a Catholic university but on strategies to realize the idea, which drew on my experience as dean. Widening the circle some, I also gave talks to leaders of Christian colleges and universities about aspects of mission that were more formal and expansive, including plans for ensuring that chairpersons are encouraged, well supported, and given appropriate feedback. Then I wrote a book about the value of a liberal arts education, and similar practical discussions ensued. If we accept this vision of the liberal arts, how can we realize it on our campus? This book builds on the reception of those two books to address the following: how to bridge the normative (what we should be) and the descriptive (what we are now) through the strategic.

Further reflections on strategy emerged in the context of a series of talks I gave that led to a third book, this time for a German audience, on the distinguishing characteristics of American higher education and the following questions: What can Germans learn from the American university and what should they avoid? I realized that some of the stories I told to Germans might also have wide appeal in the United States.

Serving as a chairperson or dean is in a sense not that complicated. One needs to have a vision, some sense of strategy, a sensibility for structures, and a capacity to deal with people. The issues are basically the same, only larger and more intense, as one moves up the ladder. Certainly some handbooks can be useful, as several were to me when I would think out loud about how their thoughts applied to my own situation.

But even good technical books are of less value than the indirect insights one gains from reading philosophy and literature and exchanging stories and experiences. I often said to colleagues that you don't really need experience to become a chairperson: It is a matter of common sense. I still believe that, but I also learned that because extensive experience brings with it a certain kind of expertise, you become more efficient. We

know from cognitive science that expertise and efficiency are linked (Neubauer and Fink); in an administrative context, experience accelerates decision making and gives you a wider range for your deliberations. Experience can also be vicarious; as we listen to the stories of others, we gain expertise.

This book is not an overview of American higher education, as Derek Bok offers in *Higher Education in America*, nor is it an introduction to a particular administrative role, like the many handbooks on being a dean or chairperson, though it contains elements of both. It is animated by ideas about the value of articulating and embodying a distinctive vision for higher education and is enriched by experiential reflection, which seeks to give life and color to the story.

The book was written partly for academic administrators, especially but not exclusively administrators at distinctive colleges and universities: deans and aspiring deans, who may be interested in learning from a former dean and his experiences; chairpersons, whose roles are not dissimilar and who may want to understand how a dean thinks; and other administrators, such as associate deans, associate provosts, and directors, who face challenges they will find mirrored here. I hope faculty members, whose interest in the inner workings of the university has increased dramatically, partly because of disturbing changes and new challenges, will also find reflections that engage them as they think about their own institutional cultures and strategies. Beyond its audience of American administrators and faculty members, the book may also interest global readers, who turn to the world's leading system of higher education for ideas and best practices, as well as to those American readers—from board members and donors to students and parents—who are curious about the functioning of higher education.

**L**et me turn now to some personal reflections. I begin my story at the end. After serving as dean for a decade and being very much ready to return to the faculty ranks, I anticipated several potential challenges.

The first was seemingly trivial but not unimportant. As dean, I had a superb staff. I never had to worry about mundane matters, but I knew that as a regular faculty member I would. Before I left office, I ordered a scanner and a dictation program for my computer and made sure that I

knew where to make copies, how to place books on reserve, where to order supplies, and so forth. I anticipated as many practical needs as I could.

The second involved giving up the activity of shaping a college. A dean is the center of a great deal of activity, and one gets an adrenaline rush from making things happen. What would replace that dynamism, that sense of mission and accomplishment? Would I miss it?

Despite immersing myself in the larger enterprise, I found I was even happier when I could steal a few hours alone, usually on Sunday evenings, for thinking and writing. The intrinsic value of scholarship is great, and little, including higher administration, can trump the joy of doing something for its own sake.

Being dean means that you are always pressed for time. One has to juggle so much. When as a graduate student I juggled in the marketplaces of Germany, I had the freedom to choose how many balls, rings, clubs, and apples to send into the air; as dean, others often tossed me the objects, and they came unexpectedly and relentlessly, too many at once for me not to let a few drop. Often I would go for a swim in the early evening to wake myself up for the second half of the workday. One day I snuck in a quick swim during the afternoon. Racing to the office and entering through the back door, I was scurrying through the suite, ready to greet a donor, when my staff practically tackled me and told me in exasperation that my hair was heading in about sixty different directions. In rushing out of the locker room, I had neglected to comb my hair or look in the mirror. My colleagues quickly searched their drawers and purses to find a brush so as to rescue me.

Time and inattention were constant challenges. My wife and I had turned down a couple of invitations from a generous local donor, when I saw an invitation in my inbox. I glanced at it, called my wife, and told her that she didn't need to go but that I should, since we had been unable to accept the last few times. I wrote yes on the invitation and dropped it back in the outbox for my assistant. On the day of the event, the invitation was back in my inbox; this time, I looked at it a bit more closely. It was not a social event, it turned out, but a fundraiser at the host's home with one of Indiana's senators. I lived in Michigan. Oh, well, I thought, and headed out. There was a donation box for checks. I didn't have a checkbook on me, so I passed by the box and found myself getting my picture taken

with the senator. I then proceeded on to a modest buffet and an after-dinner address. The next day, my assistant informed me that the host's assistant had called. Since there was no check from me, she wanted to know if I was planning to send my check in the mail. I said (of course) yes and looked now for a third time at the materials (this time very closely). There were various levels of giving suggested. I decided that being already late, I should probably not pick the lowest amount. Each Christmas after that, I received a picture of the senator and his family along with a note.

My wife called it my thousand dollar Christmas card.

Hurrying from one event or meeting to another and being so oriented toward fund raising, structural issues, and, often, long-term goals, a dean misses the kind of immediate personal satisfaction that comes from focusing more on teaching—seeing students smile, for example, as they get excited about a topic or grasp new insights. When as dean I would come home and be in an especially good mood, my wife would sometimes say, “You taught today, didn’t you?” She could tell that being around students and engaging texts and ideas, as opposed to dealing with management issues and long-range university planning, led to a more immediate and visible joy.

My Christmas vacation each year consisted of carefully analyzing the promotion-and-tenure packets of approximately forty candidates; writing assessments of those cases, which at times were several pages in length; and then making my recommendations to the university promotion-and-tenure committee. In difficult cases I would meet with the departmental committees just after the holidays or in some cases before. For eleven years, that work pretty much consumed the entire holiday vacation. No, I would not miss it.

After being dean for such a long time, I realized my third challenge would be how I would react when someone new came in and started dismantling things I had created, without even asking why I had introduced them.

Still, I had stayed in the position long enough that most of the important structural changes had become part of the routine. I was superfluous, and the changes were no longer foreign innovations but had become the way Notre Dame did things. One of my goals as dean had been to institutionalize changes so that I personally would become

irrelevant. Much of what we had done was now part of the fabric of the college. I wasn't needed, and that's exactly what I wanted. My successor, John McGreevy, had worked with me for five years as chairperson of one of Notre Dame's best departments. In becoming dean, he was sacrificing his scholarship to take a turn in administration because of his love for the institution, so he had no qualms about contacting me now and again, especially in his early years, when he wanted advice on a particular puzzle. Whatever he did change, I welcomed. After eleven years, I was eager to see someone else set new accents, address what was not working well, push new initiatives. I knew that a university benefits from fresh ideas, new personalities, and the ritual experience of new beginnings.

The fourth challenge was getting back to full-time teaching and research. I had continued to teach one course per year as dean, which had been good for my soul. It had also offered me a window onto current Notre Dame students and given me a shared topic with faculty members. I had always preferred the somewhat antiquated model, which I admired already as an undergraduate at Williams College, whereby an administrator is an active scholar-teacher, who serves for a period of time and then passes the baton to return to full-time teaching and scholarship. Having had the opportunity to serve so many years in administration, I also pushed that older model to its limit. I looked forward to serving as a full-time teacher and scholar. When I asked a former provost what advice he had for someone leaving administration, he recommended that I teach and do research in some new areas. So besides returning to German language teaching after many decades of other kinds of teaching, I added a course on German cinema and a year-long humanities seminar for first-year honors students, taking them in the fall from Homer to Dante and in the spring from Machiavelli to Woody Allen. Being back in the faculty ranks was more fun than I could have imagined.

On the research front, I had continued to publish as dean but, save for a very slim book on the idea of a Catholic university and an emerging book on the value of the liberal arts, I had not developed new research projects. I was leaving the dean's office intellectually empty. This is the predicament of long-serving, higher-level administrators. Frank Rhodes writes soberly of presidents: "Busy with this, preoccupied with that, distracted by a dozen pressing issues, presidents develop an inner emptiness and personal hollowness; they are starved of the intellectual and spiritual nourishment which is the sustenance of the campus" (18). I was saved

after I stepped down by a lengthy leave, which allowed me to develop a large number of new research projects. I now have three postdean books behind me, am overseeing a large multiyear grant, have another two books well under way, and have ideas for several more. The leave completely recharged me intellectually. It is difficult to think new academic thoughts when all of your time is consumed by meetings and memos.

The transition also brought with it some minor disadvantages. It is much simpler to tell someone outside the university that you are a dean than a professor. As dean, one goes to the office every day, and to the outside world, it looks much like real work. A professor may not teach every day and so may stay home, getting even more work done, but it doesn't appear that way. Americans still associate work with the office or the job site. One Friday afternoon, before I had become dean, my wife came home after a tough work week; she opened the garage door that faced onto our living room and saw me lying on the couch, seemingly watching TV, with a Coke on the table. She looked at me in disgust and said, "You never work!"

My defense—that I was watching a John Ford film, on which I was writing an essay—somehow didn't dispel the impression.

That Sunday afternoon I folded some wash, put it away, and then sat on the bed against a backrest and started reading. Shortly thereafter my wife came into the room, saw me reading, and said in exasperation, "You're always working!" I replied, "The two statements can't both be true!"

A professor's work is his hobby. Being dean, however meaningful the labor, is nothing like pursuing a hobby, so I actually looked in those years like an upstanding member of the community. After stepping down, I became, in the eyes of nonacademics, one of those professors who never works.

I can recall my wife many years ago telling a coworker in Columbus that I worked at Ohio State. "What does he do?" "He teaches German . . . and he does research." Silence. "Research? What kind of research does a German professor do?" "Well, he's a literary critic. He writes books about other books, you know, novels and dramas and such." "Oh, you mean, CliffsNotes."

I had to cut back on some scholarly activities as dean and I rarely attended disciplinary conferences. I felt a bit disconnected from my scholarly peers, especially the next generation, when I began attending

again. It was as if I, as a German scholar, had been away for a few months, but the profession and its personnel had suddenly aged a dozen years. There were full professors who had been graduate students when I took my extended exit. A saving grace has been that much of my research had moved into broader areas, and I have different kinds of connections.

There have also been partly unanticipated advantages. When I left office, I knew each faculty member, and so have a different relationship to my colleagues and my environment than if I had not served in administration for many years. Walking the faculty halls as a former dean is like strolling through an expanded departmental space, where you know hundreds of colleagues, often quite well. Those colleagues greet you and engage in friendly conversations in ways that are quite different from the often hurried and at times agenda-laden exchanges I managed when rushing across campus as dean.

But there was one final challenge that awaited me, one that I had not in the least anticipated. I finished my term at the end of June 2008, but I worked until about six o'clock in the evening on July 3, trying to finalize the recruitment of two endowed chairs and postdating letters I had not had the chance to clear off my desk. At six that evening I turned off my computer, walked outside, clapped and rubbed my hands, and said to my wife, "I'm done."

But for the next eighteen months or so, my dreams were overwhelmingly and repeatedly related to my life as dean and the kinds of puzzles I had encountered. They were not amusing, as dreams sometimes are, but an extension of work: I discussed tenure standards with faculty members, gave a rationale for students taking four courses per semester instead of five, and offered reasons to fund a proposed social science building. So while my conscious mind was on to new activities, my body was telling me that the traces of all-consuming administrative work, one seventy-five-hour week after another for more than a decade, could not be washed away so easily.

**B**efore becoming an administrator, I never dreamed of it.

Within a year of receiving tenure, I was invited to breakfast by my dean at Ohio State, Mike Riley. There, he explained that the recent search for a chairperson, which had led to both internal and external finalists,



had not brought forward the candidate he thought would be best. I was that candidate, he said, and if I told my colleagues I would be willing to serve, he would take care of the rest. He knew they would support me. I protested that I was much too young, that it would not be fair, that there were better candidates—all to no avail.

My previous executive experience had consisted of running the kitchen of a restaurant one summer when I was seventeen. Five days before Independence Day weekend, the chef announced he was leaving. The owners saw no other option than to close until they could find a replacement. I had begun as a dishwasher two summers earlier, had moved up to fry cook and now assistant, and had learned most of the dishes. I told the owner that if he would bake the bread and if the chef, before leaving, would teach me how to prepare the sauces and broil the meats, I could take over the kitchen. I became the chef, preparing dishes from Chateaubriand to lobster thermidor. When unexpected requests came my way, I had to improvise. One customer ordered his sirloin “black and blue.” I asked an older waitress what that meant. “Black on the outside and raw on the inside,” she replied. I turned on the gas burner and stuck the steak in the flames. One afternoon I made some mashed potatoes with cheese and chives, laid them out in a hotel pan, and spread bacon strips on top. It seemed too long a description for the servers’ blackboard. I thought of the odd circumstance that “shrimp scampi” means “shrimp shrimp” (*scampi* being the plural of *scampo*, prawn in Italian), so, armed with my high school knowledge of German, I wrote on the board “*Kartoffeln* potatoes.” That night I sold about eighty-five *Kartoffeln* potatoes (potatoes potatoes) and, for the less curious and adventuresome, a few smatterings of Delmonico, Lyonnaise, baked, and fries.

In much the same way that I had gotten in over my head in the restaurant, I accepted the position of chairperson ahead of my time. Yet here I perceived a calling. Already while I had been an assistant professor, I had developed a sense of what the department most needed, but I was torn about serving as chairperson. On the one hand, as a newly tenured associate professor, I wanted to preserve my research time and thought the appointment was in principle inappropriately early. On the other hand, I knew the problems and had ideas about how to deal with them. We had been in difficult circumstances, and the first task, I determined, was to develop, with an internal advisory committee, a professional code

of conduct that was later unanimously approved and ensured that relations remained civil and that graduate students, for example, would never be the victims of faculty strife. In all, those five years went very well. We implemented innovations of various kinds, and our department, along with a small number of others, was chosen for selective excellence funding. We developed a vision and set of priorities. We received external funding for a visiting professorship from Germany, a study abroad program in Dresden, visiting graduate students from Germany, and a beautiful Victorian home on the edge of campus, which was renovated and converted into a German house suitable for residency and events. We reformed both the undergraduate and graduate curricula, creating diverse tracks for majors and offering graduate students new opportunities for apprenticeships in teaching literature. Unanimous approval was given to a document on variable teaching assignments, with some faculty teaching more, some less.

Since I in many ways did not want to become chairperson, I was in a good negotiating position and was able to arrange for an acting chairperson during my first year, which I spent on leave, though I was still responsible for budget, promotion and tenure, and other weighty matters. In January, I was called into the dean's office; informed that the college had to come up with its share of a midseason budget cut, unexpectedly imposed by the state legislature; and told that I needed to make some drastic cuts of my own. Among other tasks, I had to call an eminent professor at Yale, who was slated to join us as a visiting professor and who had written a sterling review of my first book, in other words, someone I had imagined could become a mentor and writer of recommendation letters; that dream ended when I asked him if he could get back on Yale's payroll, since we no longer had any money for him. Welcome to administration!

But overseeing the budget also became an opportunity for creativity. We converted two departing faculty lines to fellowships so that we were able to fund graduate fellowships more generously and increase the number of graduate student research fellowships. I reasoned that we would likely have lost the lines in any case, but, more importantly, we did not need the courses offered by those departing faculty. We needed more competitive but fewer graduate students and stronger support, including top-off dollars, to compete with the best stipends nationally. We used

funds to create an innovative visiting position for a two-week residency that involved regular breakfasts with students, a public lecture, and an intensive compact graduate seminar (for one-third of the price we had once paid to have someone fly in once a week for a ten-week quarter). Because it was a two-week instead of a ten-week commitment, we were able to obtain our first-choice candidate each time.

When, after three years, a new dean arrived, he asked if he could use me to pilot a review scheme for chairpersons. After reviewing the results, he told me that on his five-point scale, he had never seen evaluations like mine, which included numerous 5+ and 5++ scores—a great contrast to some of the scores I would later receive as dean. During my first term, I had the image of the recalcitrant chair, uneager to stay in the job but doing fine work, and that very much helped my reception. I was offered another four-year term, which I was inclined not to take. As part of the negotiation, the dean offered me either two or four years; the four-year term involved a much higher base salary, but the two-year one still included a welcome raise. I took the two years. I did not see myself as a long-term administrator.

When I moved to Notre Dame and the dean who hired me announced a week after my arrival that he was moving on, a search commenced. Someone nominated me, and I composed a letter saying that I preferred not to do it. I did not want to be impolite, so I did not send it. In January, when the search was presumably well under way, the provost called to say he had never heard back from me. I dutifully printed out the letter and brought it to his office. I trudged across the snowy campus in my boots and hand delivered it to his assistant. I had left the window a bit too open and I became for the second time a reluctant administrator. But here, too, and even more so, I sensed a mission and threw myself into the work.

In the process of deciding to come to Notre Dame, I had spent considerable time thinking about its strengths and weaknesses in comparison with Ohio State. I had developed a sense for what should be preserved and enhanced and what needed radical reform. These ideas ranged from a crisper vision and higher tenure standards to seemingly mundane matters of administration. Because I intended to get in and get out, I worked

very quickly. I ignored the conventional wisdom about waiting a year before undertaking any significant reforms. Instead, I waited a month, until I could meet publicly with the faculty. On the day before classes started, I called the faculty together and explained why I had grown to love the distinctive mission of Notre Dame, but I also stressed that we were not nearly as good as we could or should be. We had too many long-term associate professors and needed to introduce annual reviews and merit raises. We would change the practice of all departing faculty positions staying in the departments and would instead return them to the dean for reallocation. We needed to reduce underenrolled classes and the number of classes with too many students. Despite the strong rhetoric on my part, most of the faculty questions that day were about less controversial matters, including the integration of academic and residential life and Notre Dame's distinctive interest in ultimate questions.

When I explained my plans in still greater detail a few weeks later to a group of about sixty donors, who formed our advisory council, they focused on the changes. They were both enthusiastic and deeply skeptical. One of them mumbled to another, "This guy won't last very long." Another, used to a dog-and-pony show about how great Notre Dame was, was taken aback not only by my sober assessment of our gaps but even more so by my intentions. "Does anyone else at Notre Dame know of these plans?" he asked.

My highest goal as dean focused on vision and my second on strategies of efficiency and accountability that I thought would also be necessary prerequisites for gaining more resources. I did not initially place much stress on the social element, which was for me not a natural strength and whose importance I had underestimated. At Ohio State that did not matter for several reasons. First, it was not expected of me, a young associate professor, who had been drafted into the job a year after tenure; and fortunately one of the senior faculty considered hosting social events for the department to be part of her vocation. Second, since we had only twenty or so colleagues in our department at Ohio State, I saw them on a regular basis, and additional social events were not a high priority. I spent all day Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in the office; I taught on those days and my door was open all day long. The chair's door opened not only onto the departmental suite, which housed the assistants, mailboxes, and the like, but also directly onto the corridor.

Unless I was speaking with a faculty member or a student, both doors were always wide open. On Tuesdays and Thursdays I worked at home, preparing my teaching, doing more complex administrative work, and engaging in research. I told faculty not to hesitate calling me there. A short interruption was nothing. My wife worked, and we had no children, so knowing only I would answer, my colleagues called as needed. Third, the social dimension can mean different things in different contexts. For us, a department that had seen much strife in recent years, the social involved running meetings effectively and diplomatically, engaging in level-headed conversations with all, and creating structures and procedures that ensured civility and fairness.

As a dean with hundreds of faculty members, the social element was wildly different. The challenge and difficulty were exacerbated because I had come from elsewhere, and was not, therefore, known. Moreover I had inherited a very informal operation. Everyone had direct contact with the dean, and there were few or no procedures, faculty committees, and the like. Changing how everything functioned meant also changing the social fabric. In addition, I made multiple decisions, in terms of both structure and personnel, that went against tradition. One does not remain wildly popular, for example, by announcing that faculty lines are no longer owned by departments or by overturning positive tenure recommendations.

Beyond those factors one of my own personality traits created challenges. As a chairperson, one can be a modest introvert, but as a dean, that is impossible. I remember that the first time I taught, I was suddenly transformed from an introvert into an extrovert, but that was always only for an hour or so. As a natural introvert, I found my new role as dean difficult. In my family I was the youngest of three boys. When we were growing up, the neighbors jokingly called us “the vert-brothers.” I was the “introvert,” my middle brother was the “extrovert,” and my oldest brother was awarded the name, well, I’d better not say.

To succeed as dean, I had to become an extrovert, and the number of years I spent in the role fundamentally changed my personality. I say to my students, “You have to play the role of an articulate intellectual, and over time you will become increasingly articulate and intellectual.” As dean I played the role of the extrovert, who increasingly reached out to experience and enjoy other people’s company.

In fact, after my five-year review as dean, one of the faculty members on the committee told me that she had pegged me on the Myers-Briggs scale as intuitive, thinking, and judging, but she was not sure whether I was introverted or extroverted. I had heard of the scale but I had never taken the test. When I took several versions of it, I saw that she was right on the first three, and the results were mixed on the scale of introversion/extroversion. I was indeed in my history and core introverted, but as dean I had become extroverted. I had almost managed to become someone else. In the overall scheme I had moved from what David Keirseay calls the “Mastermind” (encompassing less than 1 percent of the population) to the “Fieldmarshal” (encompassing less than 2 percent of the population). I kept retaking the test to try to come out with a more innocent and appealing title like “Healer” or “Teacher,” but I failed each time. In truth, some of what seemed to be the strengths and weaknesses of the Doctor Mabuse and Erwin Rommel types had in fact surfaced in my review, a rather bracing and sobering experience to which I return later in the book.

Since I still saw myself in some sense as a faculty member, who thinks independently, and not yet as a dean, who has a greater administrative and social identity, I also fell into the trap of underestimating the role of simple and innocuous ritual and overestimating the value of engaged intellectual discussion. When asked in the first weeks of my tenure as dean if I would give some opening remarks for a gender studies panel and reception, I said yes, and offered some thoughts about gender studies that went beyond, “Gender studies is essential to our flourishing as a college, have a great year, and enjoy the refreshments!” I reflected out loud on the strengths and weaknesses of gender studies as a discipline and on strategies for its distinctive flourishing at Notre Dame. I suggested that it not isolate itself from the departments but instead reach out to and seek to influence the more traditional disciplines; that its scholars write in a language intelligible to colleagues and students from all disciplines; that it weigh the self-cancelling structure of any reduction of values to power alone and instead embed itself within a tradition that makes strong, rational arguments for the validity of universal human rights; and finally, that it continue to bring its appealing existential component to scholarship and teaching but be wary of restricting justice to identity politics, thereby overlooking broader issues of neglected justice, such as those involving future generations.

It was not a smart move.

The halls were abuzz about what hidden messages I was trying to convey. I received letters, e-mails, and requests for meetings. I told the provost that my tenure might be shorter than he intended. But in the end, the commotion was calmed. I met with several people one-on-one over lunch; they immediately saw that I was still thinking as a scholar, not as an administrator, and that my arguments were not absurd. Inadvertently, I had initiated a not uninteresting public debate on complex puzzles that continued in one of the campus newspapers. I had learned in a surprising way that being a dean meant people really listened to what I had to say, and I quickly became aware that if I was going to think out loud, not as a scholar, but as an administrator, I would need to consider the occasions very carefully. Since one of an administrator's goals is to cause a rupture only when it serves an important and targeted purpose, gaining a deeper understanding of the value of occasionally innocuous talking points was valuable.

I was also modestly surprised at how often, at times on unexpected occasions, I was asked to speak. In my first weeks I was invited by one of our centers to an award ceremony, and, after a pleasant dinner with faculty and guests and a few minutes of comments by the director, I unexpectedly heard, "And now Dean Roche will tell us how important the such-and-such center is to the life of Notre Dame." I did not know that I was on the docket. I somehow managed to hit the right notes, even after wondering in the back of my mind whether I had even internalized the names of the two honorees. From that point onward, when I was on my way to any event, I always thought of a word or two to say, should it be necessary or appropriate.

Another challenge for the scholar-teacher as dean involves suddenly giving up research projects, when one is, let's say, in the middle of a book. I had accumulated significant research time from my days at Ohio State, and I insisted on taking a year's leave, even though I would continue to be involved with important issues, such as promotion and tenure, senior hiring, budget, and fund raising. I took that partial leave during my third year as dean. I was still involved in administrative work about a third of the time, but I was able to finish two books that were well under way when I entered the dean's office and to write another very short book. That was very important for my identity as a faculty member and scholar.

Although some faculty told me they appreciated having an active scholar-teacher as dean and no faculty member ever said a negative word to me directly, I was told in my five-year review that a good number of faculty members had complained about the leave. A dean, they said, should be first and foremost a dean. In truth, if the leave had not been granted, I would have declined the post and had a much different story to tell.

When I was asked by the provost to stay for one additional year beyond ten, I was not keen on the idea. I could have imagined stepping down after about eight or nine years. But several factors—the arrivals of a new president and a new provost and my desire to see multiple internal candidates for dean develop, and ensure they had some leave time before I announced my departure—resulted in my deciding to finish my second term. I had certainly not paced myself for more. As it turned out, however, I stayed on for an eleventh year, which meant I ended up serving as an administrator for seventeen of my first eighteen years as a tenured faculty member. The provost and I agreed that in the second semester of year ten, I would take a partial leave to work on another book. That spring I was on 90 percent of the time, which still represented a break but demonstrated how quickly administrative positions can become complex. Fortunately, as I went into my final year, the provost made clear to the faculty that nothing would go on hold: He had full confidence in my work, and I would lead as if this were not my last year as dean, so that no time would be wasted in a transition. Just as I did not hold back in my first year, I did not hold back in my final year.

Faculty members tend to have an intuitive reluctance to serve as academic administrators; most faculty members were drawn to the profession through a love of teaching or research and were then socialized into an atmosphere whose default rhetoric expresses unease about administration. My initial reluctance about moving into administration shifted over time to ambivalence: I remained eager to return to the faculty ranks even as I enjoyed the different puzzles and positive effects of being an engaged administrator. There were also clear moments of fulfillment, as I worked with others to realize a vision and enhance a community of scholars and learners. An academic administrator with even a modest vision and a modicum of formal capacities, I saw, can address inadequacies and make a positive difference; in that sense, administration is worth the time and effort. I grew to embrace what had seemed foreign



and uninviting. I saw more and more positive changes, developed an entirely new cohort of colleagues and friends beyond the department and later the college, and learned to appreciate more fully the ways staff persons, often behind the scenes, provide effective support for faculty and students. Further, administration allowed me to develop different sides of myself. The unusually quick pace sharpened various of my capacities and was in its own way energizing, even as it pulled me away from otherwise preferable pursuits. I developed a broader horizon, learning much more about the detailed workings of a university as well as about broader issues that affect higher education. And I gained a much stronger sense of collective identity: I realized in new ways that faculty members who had administrative experience were able, if they returned to the faculty ranks, to bring new perspectives to the local collective and help break down the automatic divide between faculty and administration.



## PART I

# Vision and Change

The two great revolutions in the history of the idea of the university flowed from new visions of what a university could and should become. How are we to understand these visions and their capacities for inaugurating change?

Despite these revolutions, first in Germany and then in the United States, the gaps that remain in the contemporary higher education landscape are staggering and sobering. How might recognizing and addressing these gaps trigger yet new aspirations and new visions of what a university could and should become?

Vision is central not only for the idea of a university as such. It is the driving force in the collective identity of any particular university or college. What strategies exist for developing a vision? Why is distinctive vision so significant and at the same time so difficult to sustain? How can vision work effectively today, and how can it go awry? Finally, in what ways can vision be a vehicle for both solidifying tradition and inaugurating change?



## CHAPTER ONE

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# The Idea and Reality of the University, or How We Got Where We Are

The history of the university has seen three paradigm shifts. In the early nineteenth century, German universities, with their signature integration of teaching and research, changed the landscape of universities across the world and remained preeminent for well over a century. In the second half of the twentieth century, the American university, with unprecedented resources and enrollments, further transformed the idea of the university. Today we are undergoing a third paradigm shift characterized by increasing internationalism, including global competition for faculty and students, new technologies that allow universities to reach international audiences, collaboration of scholars across countries and of universities around the world, and the emergence and importance of international rankings.

My brief account of the idea and reality of the university focuses on the first two transformations, both of which were animated by compelling and distinctive visions: the German revolution in the early nineteenth century and the American transformation in the mid-twentieth century. One can learn a great deal, both on the formal level and in terms of content, by understanding other models and one's own past.

A vision for a university can emerge from an ideal of what should be, which then triggers action to realize that vision. But a vision can also arise by analyzing the deficiencies of the existing university and seeking to address them, making their reversal the focus of the vision. I conclude this chapter with a brief account of gaps in the American system. Both strategies—the ideal and the critical—presuppose that the university is not yet what it should and could be.

### **The German Revolution in the Idea of the University**

The general view of the universities in the eighteenth century was not positive. The university was viewed by many as sterile, with knowledge understood to be fixed and professors considered to be simply transmitters of that knowledge to students. Most universities offered their students little more than an extension of secondary education, with emphasis on training in ancient languages and the interpretation of classical works. Mastery of the classics was viewed as a test of intellectual ability. But there were other, more practical tests of good thinking, and advances in astronomy and physics had rendered many of the classical scientific texts outdated. Unease arising from the lack of practicality and the nonintegration of modern science led to research, often done by amateurs, outside the universities, as well as to the creation of independent institutes to train professionals, including engineers. Some argued that utilitarian, practical knowledge, which was in high demand, could best be obtained elsewhere. Most of the great thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, John Locke, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Voltaire, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, among others—developed their work outside the universities.

In addition to having few students, the universities were inadequately funded. The poor reputation of the universities was not aided by student dueling and rioting. Further, the universities were perceived as perpetuating past privileges. Thus in 1793, in the wake of the French Revolution, the French universities were abolished. To take their place, France created specialized institutions, with independent faculties, focused on the professional education of doctors, engineers, lawyers, and teachers.

Germany developed a different model. By the 1740s, Germany had begun to see some changes. At the time, Halle, which was a center of both the Enlightenment and Pietism movements, enjoyed the best reputation among German universities; it was also the largest, with more than a thousand students (Ellwein 332). Göttingen, which became the most prominent after 1750 (Turner 504), introduced new subjects, such as history and philology, and invested heavily in mathematics and science as well as in law, for which it became famous. Jena also gained a flourishing reputation, having become renowned in philosophy and aesthetics and for numbering such luminaries and younger intellectuals as J. G. Fichte, Friedrich Schiller, F. W. J. Schelling, G. W. F. Hegel, and the brothers Schlegel (August and Friedrich) among its teachers. Johann Wolfgang Goethe was close by in Weimar.

Both Halle and Jena were closed during the Napoleonic Wars, but their revolutionary advances bore fruit in 1810, with the founding of the University of Berlin, which sought and, in many cases, obtained the best faculty and whose early teachers included Fichte, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Schelling. Halle, Göttingen, Jena, and Berlin set the stage for what became the first towering achievement of the modern university. The German universities not only ascended in quality, they transformed the idea of the university.

Instead of having different faculties focused on professional education, the German university, animated by idealistic thinking, embraced the unity of knowledge across disciplines. No longer subject to direct oversight by the government as the French institutes were, German universities secured autonomy. In France the new curricular model was animated by the professional schools, whereas in Germany the driving force was research, including new scholarly and pedagogical methods. The educational reforms in Germany integrated the French abandonment of past privilege: status was to come not from tradition and social rank but from the meritorious achievement of faculty in scholarship and of students in examinations, each bolstered by freedoms along the way.

Very quickly the new ideas spread. At the German research university of the nineteenth century, the discovery of new truths, rather than the transmission of knowledge, became the animating principle. The German idea was that professors should not be giving textbook summaries of what others thought but should instead be scholarly models

themselves, showing students how one arrives at new knowledge. As Schleiermacher described it, “The teacher must let everything he says emerge in front of his listeners; he should not recount what he knows but instead reproduce his coming to know, the act itself, so that the listeners are not constantly gathering in mere bits of knowledge but should instead see immediately before them the act of reason itself in bringing forth knowledge and intuitively emulate it themselves” (62–63).<sup>1</sup>

In contrast, Cardinal Newman’s *Idea of a University*, published in 1852, still held to the idea that the university should be primarily oriented toward teaching, even if the German thinkers shared with Newman the value of learning and knowledge as ends in themselves. At the German universities, the teacher and scholar were one; it was considered important that students have the personal experience of encountering great scholars. A primary educational goal was to draw students into research and guide them toward autonomy. For Fichte, “the formation of the capacity for learning” was more important than learning itself (131). The concept of the seminar, which engaged students as active learners, was introduced, initially in philology and then in history, becoming a distinctive and essential part of the German university. Spread from Göttingen already in the 1770s, it had become central to the pedagogy of the German university within one or two generations. The seminar was given a philosophical defense by Fichte as a supplement to lectures and merely receptive learning (13–34). Examinations and student essays, Fichte argued further, should not parrot back information but instead exhibit the self-activity of the student’s mind, the capacity to take what one has learned and extend it in a variety of areas (130–34).

New subjects were added to the university, led by the work of Alexander von Humboldt, brother of the founder of the University of Berlin, Wilhelm von Humboldt. The early nineteenth century had seen considerable expansion in the humanities. In the second half of the century, the construction of modern research facilities, including scientific laboratories, led to widespread development of the natural sciences. Here Germany left behind France and England, which were still making piecemeal scientific advances on the basis of makeshift laboratories and amateur

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1. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by the author.



activity. Germany in contrast offered first-rate laboratories. Luminaries in science, such as Justus Liebig in Gießen, whose chemistry laboratory lasted decades beyond its founding in 1826, and the great mathematician Karl Friedrich Gauss in Göttingen, advanced the reputation of the German university. This asymmetry continued for generations. In the early twentieth century, Berlin enjoyed the presence of two of the greatest physicists of all time, Max Planck and Albert Einstein.

By the 1830s, the German model had become solidified and was supreme. It was adopted not only by the other German-speaking countries but throughout parts of northern, southern, and eastern Europe, including Scandinavia, Greece, and Russia (W. Clark 28–29). By the end of the nineteenth century, the German model had triggered changes in England and America. Eventually France, too, fell under German influence. Even Japan, despite, like France, having a strong central government, opted for the German not the French model. Students from around the world came to study with master teachers in Germany, where new methodologies were pioneered in classical and comparative philology, biblical criticism, history, and the sciences. Bliss Perry wrote, “That Germany possessed the sole secret of scholarship was no more doubted by us young fellows in the eighteen-eighties than it had been doubted by George Ticknor and Edward Everett when they sailed from Boston, bound for Göttingen, in 1814” (88–89). The German concept of *Wissenschaft* had almost magical meaning for Americans at the time. James Morgan Hart, reminiscing on his experiences of German universities, wrote, “By *Wissenschaft* the Germans mean knowledge in the most exalted sense of that term, namely, the ardent, methodical, independent search after truth in any and all of its forms, but wholly irrespective of utilitarian application” (250). In one discipline after another, the Germans towered above others, distinguished, for example, by teachers such as Leopold von Ranke and Theodor Mommsen in history, Ulrich von Wilamowitz in philology, and Max Weber and Georg Simmel in sociology.

What made the German universities so distinctive? At least five principles are essential to the idea of a university. Two of them—the unity of knowledge across disciplines and the value of knowledge for its own sake—were strengthened and redefined during the long era of greatness

at the German universities. Three of them—the integration of research and teaching, academic freedom, and *Bildung* or self-formation—were invented by the Germans.

The first principle originated in the medieval idea of the unity of being and knowing and was reinforced by the striving of German idealism for an understanding of the organic relation of all knowledge. It holds that the university should be characterized, first, by the integration of disciplines and the search for not only specialized knowledge but also the relation of the diverse parts of knowledge to one another. This is what animates the pursuit of ever-more simple but comprehensive theories, and this is why the various disciplines—mathematics, science, the social sciences, the arts, and the humanities along with architecture, business, engineering, law, and medicine—are housed within a single institution. In this sense, the university differs from institutes that focus on individual disciplines, such as the arts, business, or technology, which was the practice in France during the ascent of the German university and which has become increasingly common in developing countries and at for-profit institutions as unity gives way to isolated applications. In contrast, the relation of the disciplines to one another and the search for unity, however difficult, still belong to the idea of a university.

The second principle of the university, drawing on the ancient and medieval elevation of the value of contemplation, recognizes knowledge as an end in itself. It therefore encourages basic science, independently of its applications. The German university elevated pure research and the centrality of the arts and sciences. This reevaluation reversed the hierarchy of the faculties that had held sway at the medieval universities, where the arts and sciences were merely preparatory to the higher study of law, medicine, and theology. In the wake of the German revolution in higher education, application took a secondary position in relation to the search for truth, a search that remains central to the idea of the university.

As stated above, the first two principles, advancing the unity and the intrinsic value of truth, were strengthened and redefined at the German universities. The next three originated with the Germans and revolutionized the concept of the university in fundamental ways.

The third principle is that, for universities to compete with one another and for faculty to attract students, classes should integrate new and interesting material; the rote transmission of past knowledge and second-

hand material virtually disappeared from the German lecture halls and seminars of the nineteenth century. The idea of the teacher as a scholar has since become an essential part of what we call a university today. Oxford and Cambridge along with Harvard, Yale, and Princeton would today be unthinkable without the principle of the unity of teaching and research. Faculty endeavor to impart knowledge to students through teaching, thereby preserving and interpreting the cultural documents of the past and making transparent the most recent advances and still unresolved questions in their fields, but they also attempt to make new discoveries through their scholarship and creative activity. In short, the university elevates both the transmission of knowledge and the discovery of new knowledge, and it seeks to awaken among its best and most advanced students not simply a reception of knowledge but an active interest in research. The research laboratory and the research seminar are essential parts of the university's teaching function. By integrating teaching and research, the university also fosters community among students and faculty.

The fourth principle concerns academic freedom. German universities, though dependent on the state for funding, retained their autonomy in scholarship and curriculum. Academic freedom prevented invasive state interference and guaranteed the university's freedom from the church. Academic freedom also involved the autonomy of the scholar, who was now free to consider all positions in the search for truth, no longer weighed down by the power of tradition and more likely to inspire students because he was teaching what he was actively discovering; the concept of academic freedom remains core to great universities today. Germany invented the concept of *Lehrfreiheit*, according to which scholars have the right to select topics for teaching along with the corollary freedoms to follow investigations wherever they might lead and disseminate the results as they wish. The state retained financial authority, control over some of the more professionally oriented examinations, and final decisions on appointments to chairs. *Lernfreiheit*, also a German invention, placed little stress on required courses and emphasized the student's freedom to choose various courses and teachers, to transfer from one university to another, and to learn independently, without interim exams. In reflecting on the independence of students, Schleiermacher argued, "that a whole new life, a higher, truly scientific spirit should be

awakened,” which could not succeed “under external constraints; instead, the attempt can be carried out only in a climate of complete freedom of spirit” (110).

The student was free to pursue his path until it was time for graduation-related examinations: “freedom and independence” along with an awakening “longing . . . for science,” recognized only from afar during the school years, should guide the university student (Humboldt 4: 261). *Lernfreiheit* or freedom of learning thus created “the primary social constitution of the Humboldt university, one that united professors and students in social parity” (Schelsky 92). Through the middle of the twentieth century, outside of a small number of fields, such as medicine, few compulsory lessons existed. The idea behind this freedom was that students needed to be educated to autonomy. Moreover, the very idea of the seminar was that the common striving for knowledge animated faculty and students and united them in a common pursuit; not only were faculty there to help guide students, but students were there, according to Humboldt, to help faculty in their search for new knowledge: “It is further a distinction of institutions of higher learning that they always treat science as a problem that has yet to be fully solved and therefore remain constantly engaged in research, whereas the schools deal with, and teach, only completed and agreed-upon bits of knowledge. The relationship between teacher and student becomes in this way a thoroughly different one than before. The former is not there for the latter; both are there for science” (4: 256).

Central to the concept of *Bildung* or formation—the fifth principle—was the elevation of active thinking, the creative mind, and the individual. Engagement with scholarship presupposed the student’s independent activity, and this activity was directed also toward the formation and cultivation of self. Not simply scholarship or future employability but the development of character and a well-rounded person were central to the idealist concept of education. Broad exploration of the world as it is and as it should be were considered central to the concept of the educated person, as defined by the idealists. Although universities and students have increasingly elevated scholarly inquiry and job preparation over the development of the well-rounded person, no university education that earns the name can involve only training; it must also involve education and to some extent formation (Roche, “Should Faculty?”).

The intellectual superiority of the German universities from the early nineteenth century through the Weimar Republic was universally acknowledged. From 1901 through 1932, Germany received over thirty Nobel prizes in the sciences, more than the next two countries, the United Kingdom and France, combined.

What has happened since then? The most important change was the decimation of the universities and intellectual life under the Nazis. The loss of Jewish scholars and scientists as well as critics of the regime, overwhelmingly to America, was enormous. Some 25 percent of the pre-1933 physicists and twenty current or future Nobel winners, including eleven in physics, were displaced (Beyerchen 47). The names of those in the humanities and social sciences who were dismissed or who fled reads like a who's who of modern German letters and includes Theodor Adorno, Hannah Arendt, Rudolf Arnheim, Erich Auerbach, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Martin Buber, Rudolf Carnap, Ernst Cassirer, Erik Erikson, Sigmund Freud, Erich Fromm, Max Horkheimer, Karl Jaspers, Hans Jonas, Erich von Kahler, Siegfried Kracauer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, Karl Löwith, Karl Mannheim, Herbert Marcuse, Erwin Panofsky, Leo Spitzer, Leo Strauss, Paul Tillich, and Alfred Weber.

Not only the scholars of this generation but many of the children of émigrés who settled in the United States went on to achieve illustrious university careers; these children were fifteen times more likely than the average American to be listed in *Who's Who*, and at least four of them—Eric Kandel, Walter Kohn, Arno Penzias, and Jack Steinberger—received Nobel prizes in science (Sonnert and Holton 2–3, 66). Also among these children one can include Henry Kissinger, the eminent intellectual historians Peter Gay and Fritz Stern, and the author of one of the best books on American higher education, Henry Rosovsky.

Germany of course struggled to get beyond the rubble: the loss of faculty, the compromised position of many who remained, and the loss of continuity all made the German situation difficult, but three additional factors were at play.

First was the conflict between two competing visions: on the one hand was the vision of an elite university that educated the best students in research, that is, the heritage of the Humboldt university, as the

traditional German university increasingly came to be called (*Lange-wiesche*), while on the other hand was the vision of a mass university that had increasingly sought to educate a majority of young persons. In 1950, only 4 percent of the German cohort went to the university. By 1960, this had increased to 8 percent, by 1970 to 15 percent, by 1980 to 20 percent, by 2000 to 33 percent, by 2010 to 46 percent, and by 2013 to 53 percent (Heinzel 26; *Bildung und Forschung* 52). Unlike the United States, Germany does not have elite universities with selective admissions, and the ideals of the traditional German university are not easily achieved at the mass university.

Second was the insufficient funding that led to abysmal student–faculty ratios. Even the creation of new universities and the expansion of faculty could not keep pace with the rise in student numbers. In 1875–76, Tübingen had a student-to-professor ratio of 14 to 1, and in Bonn the figure was 9 to 1. In 1980–81, the figure in Tübingen had risen to 94 to 1 and in Bonn to 117 to 1 (Ellwein 338–39). No German university comes close to having the premier funding enjoyed at America’s top universities. The expenditure per student at an Ivy League university such as Princeton is more than eleven times the German average (*Report of the Treasurer* 27). Princeton is an exceptional institution of course, but even lesser-endowed American universities have better student ratios and on average more funding than their German counterparts. A study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that German universities are funded at a per-student rate of only 64 percent of the US average (*Education at a Glance 2015*, table B1.1a). The recent Excellence Initiative, designed to advance dozens of German universities with a variety of projects, has a projected investment of approximately €1.9 billion from 2006 to 2012 and €2.7 billion from 2012 until 2017. On a comparative scale, the larger second installment is a bit less than the amount of research support the United States allocated in fiscal year 2011 to four leading American universities (*Chronicle of Higher Educ., Almanac 2013–14*, 58).

Third was a set of cultural parameters that do not foster excellence: little competition among universities, especially for students; little room for flexibility and initiative on the part of university administrators; an inconsequential concept of accountability; and a lack of attention to student centeredness and community, which will mean few serious dona-

tions from alumni for generations to come. This differs from the United States. Even underfunded state colleges and small private ones that struggle with their budgets operate with a good deal of flexibility and are engaged in a market environment that rewards initiative. Although the German university had developed an extraordinary vision, it failed to grasp the significance of conflicting identities and lost sight of strategies to make its vision a continuing reality (Roche, *Was die deutschen*).

### The Distinction of the Great American University

The premier standing once held by Germany is now occupied by the United States, whose universities were radically transformed in the second half of the twentieth century. How was this transformation possible and what distinguishes the greatness of the American university?

First in the eyes of the world is the dominance in research. In the 2016 *U21 Ranking of National Higher Education Systems*, the United States places first (Williams et al. 7). The overwhelming percentage of Nobel prize winners each year consists of scholars trained or working at American universities, many of whom were not born in the United States. Of the Nobel prizes for research from 2000 to 2015, for example, 100 of 155 went to scholars working in the United States (70 of these went to individuals who were born there), 14 to scholars in the United Kingdom, and 12 to scholars in Japan. No other country had more than 8. In the *Academic Ranking of World Universities 2015*, fifteen of the seventeen top-ranked universities are American (Cambridge and Oxford are the other two).

America's research trajectory benefited immeasurably from the nineteenth-century importation of the German research university model and the postwar influx of federal research funding, private gifts, and tuition dollars. The early American universities were for the most part small and focused on educating students to the baccalaureate. Four years after the first graduate programs appeared at Harvard, Johns Hopkins University was founded in 1876 as an American version of the German research university. A large number of the faculty had received their degrees from German universities, so that Johns Hopkins was informally called the American Göttingen (Röhrs 80, 83). Virtually all of the leading

university presidents of the late nineteenth century, including Charles William Eliot, who introduced doctoral studies to Harvard, had studied in Germany (Lucas 177; Rüegg 3: 169). Already in the 1850s, the German model was much discussed, and by the 1870s Americans had begun to imitate it. Tremendous competition developed, especially among private universities. This was foreign to the German climate and indeed to the overwhelming number of public universities elsewhere in the world. Universities competed with one another for the best graduating PhDs and the best advanced scholars. Reputations rose or fell with the results. Clark University never recovered its standing after the University of Chicago raided almost its entire faculty in the early 1890s (Hall 295–98); both universities had been founded, like Johns Hopkins, for graduate study.

But the great unleashing of American research came much later. Scientific advances, including the development of the atom bomb, aided the American war effort in World War II. At the time, many university professors became government workers. Scientific research for military purposes was conducted by government personnel. After the war, a new paradigm was proposed. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt asked Vannevar Bush, former dean at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), to make a recommendation on how university research could aid the nation also in a time of peace. During the war, Bush had directed the US Office of Scientific Research and Development. Bush had the idea of contracting out this research to universities and other scientific institutes. His report *Science: The Endless Frontier*, published in 1945, advocated university science as useful to advances in public health, national security, standard of living, job creation, and cultural advancement, as well as to the development of future talent. Not simply applied but also basic research was to be supported, as basic science could lead to unanticipated applications. Grants would be awarded on the basis of merit; geographical distribution would play no role.

After much discussion in Congress, these recommendations led to the expansion of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in 1947, the creation of the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 1950, and the allocation of significant financial resources from the federal government to universities. In some ways this was a continuation of the German conceptual model—that original research and education should work in tandem—and a rejection of the most recent American development, which involved scientists leaving their universities to work directly for



the federal government. The result was tremendous federal support of university science, from faculty salaries and postdoctoral scholars to graduate stipends, travel, project-specific equipment, and administrative costs in support of research.

After the Russians launched Sputnik in 1957, America resolved to subsidize education even more. In effect, competition meant the release of more resources. National Science Foundation funding for fiscal year 1959 was increased from \$40 million to \$130 million (Geiger, *Research* 174). Another consequence was the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which involved direct subsidies of higher education, not simply contracted research. In the 1960s, federal support was extended to the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Besides continuing to support an already-existing elite set of institutions, President Lyndon B. Johnson set the goal of increasing the number of very good research universities, expanding the range of institutions that could successfully compete for funding (Graham and Diamond 40).

Today multiple federal agencies support research. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education's Almanac 2011–12*, total spending on research by colleges and universities in 2010–11 was \$54.9 billion, with 59 percent coming from the federal government, 20 percent from the institutions themselves, 7 percent from state and local governments, and 6 percent from industry (4).

**B**ut ascendancy in research was not the only bringer of resources to the American university. Tuition from ever-expanding numbers of students and the gifts of alumni and other supporters were also sources of support. The English model of the importance of residential life had become no less prominent than the German emphasis on research. In the United States, one found residential halls, student unions, athletic teams, academic clubs, counseling centers, and the like. With their students having a special undergraduate residential experience, colleges found themselves the beneficiaries of financial support, which also funded research, from those who fondly recalled their alma maters. A cycle served to establish the preeminence of a smaller set of universities: the more resources, the better the faculty and the greater the investment in student life; the better the undergraduate experience, the more abundant the donations from alumni.

The United States developed a unique institutional structure: a residential undergraduate college of arts and sciences coupled with a graduate school and professional schools in fields such as architecture, business, education, engineering, law, and medicine. Even undergraduates majoring in professional disciplines such as business were and still are required to take arts and sciences courses, which develop liberal arts skills. America imported the German model of the research university, with its stress on graduate studies and research, but transformed it by creating a split between undergraduate and graduate education that was foreign to the German landscape (Turner and Bernard). Faculty who taught graduate students and conducted research also taught undergraduate students, including students not pursuing degrees in their fields. As much as the Americans were enamored with the German research university, they found some aspects wanting, and they sought on American soil something other than a direct imitation (Axtell 244–56).

The distinction of the American college did not only involve a rich undergraduate life and a liberal arts curriculum; America became the first country to move to more and more students, a development that culminated in the mass university. These huge student numbers, unlike those in Germany and elsewhere, were not a burden but rather a boon to finances. The students, aided by federal grants and loans, paid tuition. Not until after World War I did the demographics begin to change. In 1914, the average liberal arts college had only fourteen instructors and 165 students (Levine 38). It is a wistful memory that, before the advent of World War I, the president of a college, who still taught classes and knew all the faculty and students, might board a ship for Europe in May and not return until August. The twentieth century saw a radical expansion of the number and variety of institutions, along with raised standards for admission, diversification of the curriculum, increasing professionalization among the faculty, and greater opportunities for college graduates, all of which have continued to the present day. As recently as 1910, only about 2 percent of young Americans went to college, but by 1940, the result of a postwar boom that stretched through the 1920s, the figure had risen to around 12 percent. In 1925, the American population of 117 million was only 1.7 times greater than the German population of 63 million, but the US student population of some 800,000 was a remarkable 11.7 times greater than the German student population of some

68,000 (Levine 42). America was moving from an elite system of higher education toward a mass system of higher education.

The two decades after World War II saw still more dramatic growth, which fueled all kinds of economic activity in the United States, including at universities. The student population skyrocketed. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (G.I. Bill) subsidized tuition and books and supported living expenses at each veteran's college of choice. In 1947, 69 percent of the male students and 49 percent of all college enrollments were veterans (Olson 26). Further factors were the baby boom, so called for the unusually high number of births from 1946 through 1964; increasing inclusiveness, resulting in more and more women attending college; and an enhancement of the American dream, which included the expectation that an ever-greater percentage of the population would attend college. President Johnson played a significant role in expanding federal financial aid, which in his mind was linked to the war on poverty and unemployment. Between 1963 and 1966, federal aid to colleges increased from \$1.4 billion to \$3.7 billion (Loss 169). What the G.I. Bill did for a select group, Johnson's Higher Education Act of 1965 accomplished for all. These transformations resulted in growth in campus size, faculty, and support staff. The majority of American universities benefited from the increase in tuition dollars paid by students and the greater state subsidies, which were in many cases tied to enrollment. The numbers are staggering: fewer than 250,000 college students at the turn of the century, 1.1 million in 1930, 8.5 million in 1970, 15.3 million in 2000, 17.4 million by 2005, and more than 21 million by 2010 (Natl. Center for Educ. Statistics, *Digest*, table 303.25). Today, some 71 percent of America's youth enter college (OECD, *Education at a Glance 2014*, table C3.2.a).

To deal with these numbers, America invented another unique phenomenon, the community college. Over 90 percent of Americans live within twenty-five miles of a community college, and close to 50 percent of students attending community colleges live within 10 miles of their campus (Cohen and Kisker 447). Community colleges offer remedial education, which is needed by an estimated 60 percent of their students (Esch). The community colleges have helped immeasurably in expanding access to higher education. Instead of viewing the new community colleges as competition, the premier colleges and universities, both private and public, welcomed them. Part of the thinking, though incorrect, was

that community colleges would free up four-year colleges and universities from the first two years of college instruction; traditional colleges would then accept transfer students and focus on advanced undergraduates and graduate students. University educators did, however, correctly understand that community colleges would help them avoid being drowned in large numbers of students. And between the community colleges and the research universities is an incredibly diverse range of colleges and universities.

Along with federal funding came ever-more private gifts. Private spending, including both tuition and gifts, towers above what one sees in other countries. Between 1890 and 1930, the premier universities wanted to ensure stability, autonomy, and competitiveness and so became active in increasing and shepherding their endowments (Kimball and Johnson). The United States invests 2.8 percent of GDP in higher education, a greater percentage than any other country (OECD, *Education at a Glance 2015*, table B2.3). Only three other countries reach 2 percent: Canada and Chile at 2.5 percent and Korea at 2.3 percent (table B2.3). The OECD average is 1.5 percent (table B2.3). The United States also invests more in higher education per student than other countries with the exception of Luxembourg, which, after having not reported data for some years, comes in at a surprisingly high \$32,876 per student (OECD, *Education at a Glance 2015*, table B1.1a). *Education at a Glance 2015* shows the US investment to be \$26,562 per student (table B1.1a). The OECD average is \$15,028, and the only other countries that come close to the United States are Switzerland at \$25,264, the United Kingdom at \$24,338, Sweden at \$22,534, and Canada at \$22,006 (table B1.1a). According to the annual survey of the National Association of College and University Business Officers and Commonfund Institute, in 2014, ninety-two American universities had endowments of \$1 billion or more, and an additional eighty-one had endowments over \$500 million (*Chronicle of Higher Educ., Almanac 2015–16*, 52–53). The Council for Aid to Education reported that in 2015 American universities received almost \$40.3 billion in private donations.

The American university landscape has yet a third distinctive element. The country invested in public universities in order to foster applied

fields and public service. Although federal money for universities was essentially a post–World War II invention, the federal government had already played one major and truly decisive role in the nineteenth century. The Morrill Land-Grant College Act of 1862, passed by the wartime Congress and signed into law by Abraham Lincoln, granted federal land to the states. They in turn were given the incentive to sell the land, with the obligation that the proceeds would be used to establish and advance public colleges and universities for liberal and practical education, as well as for outreach extension programs for persons not in college (Thelin 75–79). The goal was to ensure the country had well-educated engineers and farmers and to add a public-service component to the teaching mission of colleges.

Americans did not see a conflict between pure and applied scholarship, and so universities quickly integrated scientific and clinical scholarship with university hospitals and introduced applied scholarship in agriculture, engineering, and education. Whereas the German universities kept engineering at bay (the technological institutes did not receive the name university until 1899) and did not integrate practical fields such as agriculture, business, and social work until the 1960s (Ben-David 48), American universities readily combined pure and applied scholarship. However passionately American academics had received the German model, they transformed the idea of specialized research to fit into an environment that was no less responsive to the integrative liberal arts ideal and the value of utilitarian learning, both of which were foreign to Germany.

One could say, then, that the modern American university integrated three dimensions: a focus on scholarship and advanced study, which came from Germany; the elevation of undergraduate student life and the development of the whole person, which partly drew on the British model; and the land-grant tradition of applied scholarship in areas such as farming, manufacturing, and veterinary medicine, which was distinctly American. Some universities sought fully to integrate all three elements. Others integrated one or two elements, research and liberal education or research and public service, while still others focused on one of the models. Whichever model was adopted, the landscape of American higher education collectively fostered all three elements and became thereby distinctive.

Whereas other countries have begun to catch up with America's mass education, no country has anything that resembles our diversity of institutions. I devote the first two parts of my book to the idea and reality of the distinctive university. American universities have furthermore interwoven a set of structures and strategies—flexibility, competition, incentives, accountability, and community—that differ from what one has traditionally seen in other countries. I devote the third part to these concepts.

### **Contemporary Gaps between the Ideal and the Real**

Although the United States now has an overwhelming percentage of the world's premier universities, gaps remain. Whereas educational attainment in the United States rose dramatically for the first seventy-five years of the twentieth century and towered above other countries, it has grown only modestly since then. Other countries have seen their higher education completion rates increase, so that the United States has lost its first-in-class status. To remain the best, one must do more than congratulate oneself on having an exceptional history; one must focus on addressing weaknesses.

A comprehensive plan for improvement requires not only an idealistic vision of the future but also a sober assessment of contemporary reality. What are the most significant gaps in the American college landscape?

#### *College Preparation*

Although some young Americans receive a superb school education that is second to none, the average quality of an American high school education is so weak that many students are inadequately prepared. In a 2011 survey, 58 percent of American college and university presidents said that public high schools were doing a worse job than a decade ago in preparing students for college (Pew 73). Universities make few efforts to address the problem, as they are focused on their own challenges, and many states do an inadequate job of working toward an articulation of the two systems.

This widespread unpreparedness is certainly one explanation for the United States' not producing enough strong American prospects for graduate study. Large numbers of graduate students come from Asia and elsewhere. While such students greatly enrich the United States, the high numbers mask the problem of insufficiently prepared and interested Americans. In 1977, 82 percent of doctoral degrees awarded in the United States went to American citizens; by 2007, the figure had dropped to 57 percent (Wendler et al. 21). In 2007 only 29 percent of engineering doctorates went to US citizens, whereas thirty years earlier the figure was 56 percent (Wendler et al. 21). During that span the percentage of US citizens obtaining doctorates in the physical sciences dropped from 76 percent to 43 percent (Wendler et al. 21).

### *Opportunity Gap*

Whites graduate at a much higher rate than African Americans and Hispanics. Between 1975 and 2010, the gap in degree attainment between African Americans and whites increased from 13 percent to 19 percent, and the gap between Hispanics and whites increased from 15 percent to 25 percent (Aud et al. 74). Although the number of Hispanics and African Americans among first-year students enrolling in college grew by 107 percent and 73 percent, respectively, compared with 15 percent for white Americans, between 1995 and 2009, 82 percent of the additional white students attended the 468 most-selective and best-funded four-year colleges, compared with just 13 percent of Latino Americans and 9 percent of African Americans (Carnevale and Strohl 9, 16).

Even greater than the racial gap is the economic gap (Reardon). Despite the considerable resources of the American universities and the professed desire of the elite universities to enroll students from less privileged backgrounds, the results have been poor. A study from 2003 showed that at the 146 most selective colleges and universities, more than 90 percent of first-year students came from the top half of the socioeconomic ladder, with 74 percent coming from the top quartile and only 3 percent from the bottom quartile (Carnevale and Rose 46). Even as students from lower-income families have improved their academic credentials, so have students from higher-income families, thereby ensuring the latter's competitive advantage for the limited slots at the premier colleges.

As a result, the net gain in access for lower-income students has been modest (Bastedo and Jaquette). The gap, based on family income quartile, between those who graduated from college and those who did not has grown remarkably. In 1970, the gap between the bottom and the top quartile in attaining a four-year college degree was 33 percent (22–55 percent); in 2011 it was 64 percent (23–87 percent) (Mortenson 13). Persons with lower incomes are less likely to attend college and when they do, they tend to land at the local community college. These differences apply independently of test scores. In a 2015 study by the National Center for Education Statistics that divided students into three groups on the basis of parents' education, income, and occupation, students who scored in the top quartile in math but came from the lower socioeconomic group graduated college at a rate of 41 percent; their counterparts in the highest socioeconomic group graduated at a rate of 74 percent (*Postsecondary Attainment* 6). The other group to graduate at 41 percent consisted of those from the highest socioeconomic group who scored in the second quartile in math (6).

The issue of access for poorer students has much to do with the students' environment in the earlier years—at home, in school, and in the neighborhoods. Quality of student preparedness correlates closely with parental income.<sup>2</sup> Better schools operate in wealthier districts, and in certain areas young persons must contend with drugs, violence, and other challenges. Sobering is the comment of Gladieux and Swail: “The data suggest that the die is cast for many students by the eighth grade. Students without the appropriate math and reading skills by that grade are unlikely to acquire them by the end of high school” (186). Arguably the greatest factor is the home environment: college-educated parents spend 50 percent more time talking, reading, and playing with toddlers than other parents, which creates differences in preparedness for learning and reinforces the opportunity gap (Putnam).

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2. Mean scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) rise on average, and without exception, at each \$20,000 income-level shift from under \$20,000 to over \$200,000; mean scores also consistently rise with parental degrees, from high school to associate to bachelor's to graduate (2013 *College-Bound Seniors* 4).



## *Undermatching*

Universities have collectively been unsuccessful in marketing their financial aid opportunities to lower-income students who have college potential, and too many such students are insufficiently informed about college selection and resources, such that they enroll at colleges below their capabilities. Students in less competitive colleges, that is, students who are underplaced, tend to graduate at lower rates than students placed in more ambitious universities, as these institutions have better educational resources and more financial aid, as well as a more positive peer effect and a stronger aspirational climate (Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson 233–34). The lower the family income, the more likely students are to suffer from an undermatch, and the lower the level of parental education, the more likely they are to experience an undermatch (Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson 103).

## *Admissions*

American universities take into account the whole person and do not simply accept students on the basis of grade point average, as is the case in some other countries, which have no understanding that test scores are not the only predictors of success. Nonetheless, adjustments are made for children of donors and even potential donors, children of alumni, and children of the famous and politically well connected (Golden). Whereas state universities were traditionally known for their commitment to access, we now see an ever-greater effort to recruit students, including out-of-state students, who can pay full tuition and don't need financial aid (Green 7). The unintended result is a reduction in underrepresented minorities (Jacquette, Curs, and Posselt). An analogous situation exists at less endowed private universities, where students who can pay may receive preference in admissions, even if they have weaker credentials (Green 10). The university knows what its budget will permit, and it accepts a certain percentage of students who can pay and a certain percentage who need financial aid, which increases the chances of acceptance for wealthier students and diminishes the prospects for students who need financial aid. Some Americans accept these trade-offs as inevitable, but admitting students on the basis of parental income and personal connections would seem to counter basic principles of justice;

indeed, in some countries, such as Germany, the practices would be unconstitutional.

### *Scholarship Deficit*

Private universities fund scholarships from one of two sources: either endowment or general operating costs, so-called tuition discounting. When the endowment is the source, tuition is actually paid; the payout from the endowment becomes part of the university's operating budget. When significant levels of financial aid come from the endowment and when the endowment payout is low at the same time that tuition continues to rise, the university must essentially cut its budget or reduce its commitment to financial aid.

If financial aid comes from so-called tuition discounting, that is, waiving all or part of that obligation for selected students, then a more needy student body means less funding is available to address the university's needs and ambitions, including programming support for students. When the endowment drops or student need increases, cuts are necessary elsewhere in the university to subsidize financial aid. To offset the cuts, some universities raise tuition even higher, but much of that increased tuition disappears because it is used to subsidize financial aid (McPherson and Shapiro 68). There is no easy way out of the cycle. The higher tuition leads to public unease about the price of higher education, and the reductions in the general operating budget tend to weaken academic quality. Only a small number of colleges are fully need blind, that is, they admit students independently of their ability to pay, and cover the costs of anyone who cannot. Precisely when the economy is weak and students need more support, states have tended to reduce allocations for public universities, thus forcing them to raise tuition and thereby making access to public universities more challenging. Since the Great Recession of 2008, states have reduced spending on public higher education by 17 percent, while tuition at state universities has risen 33 percent (Mitchell, Leachman, and Masterson 2).

### *Merit Aid*

Not only are most colleges unable to be fully need blind, universities have been increasingly awarding merit scholarships to attract students on the

basis of academic quality, irrespective of their financial situation. This, in turn, reduces the pool of funding for poorer students. Although need-based aid to students increased from 1995–96 to 2007–08, merit-based aid increased more dramatically. In 1995–96, 8 percent of full-time undergraduates at public colleges received merit aid; by 2007–08, the figure had risen to 24 percent; meanwhile, merit aid for full-time undergraduates at private universities increased from 24 percent of students to 44 percent (Woo and Choy 9). Merit aid is especially widespread at less selective colleges, which try, as it were, to buy the best students. According to a College Board study, from 2007–08 through 2010–11, selective institutions awarded 7 to 10 percent of their grants for merit, whereas less selective colleges and universities allocated 25 to 30 percent of theirs for merit (*Trends in Student Aid 2011–12*, 27). Also, state governments have increasingly chosen to expand politically popular merit-based aid at the expense of need-based aid (Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, *Empty Promises* 37).

College leaders defend merit aid by noting that modest additional support helps them compete with other institutions by attracting students who can raise the college's intellectual atmosphere as well as its standing. Moreover, since merit funding often comes in smaller amounts than need-based aid, such students pay most of the tuition, some of which can be redirected to support needier students. The arguments, then, are not insignificant, but when financial aid is scarce, widespread movement of funding from need-based to merit aid means that in many cases poorer students are unable to afford a good education.

Athletic scholarships are merit scholarships as well. One can understand awarding athletic scholarships for revenue sports such as football and basketball, since good teams can bring resources to the university, but defending the idea for the dozens of other sports in which colleges compete and which are also subsidized is difficult. Is athletics more central to the core of the university than biology or philosophy? Some universities will admit (and support) a B-level student who is an A-level hockey player over an A-level student who is a B-level hockey player. That is difficult to defend in terms of putting resources behind the university's highest priorities. Instead, it is more like competition run amuck; yet once a university has invested in facilities and coaches, begun recruiting student-athletes, and raised alumni expectations, retreat is difficult.

### *Burdening Expenses*

For many American families, tuition is the second-largest lifetime expense, after the purchase of a house, and thus, not surprisingly, is a major concern for parents (Clotfelter 1). Even though the total amount of student loans has finally begun to decrease, the figures remain high (College Board, *Trends in Student Aid 2015*, 16). Loans were held by 64 percent of private college students who graduated in 2013–14 and averaged \$30,200; for public college graduates, the figure was 60 percent and the loans averaged \$25,500 (College Board, *Trends in Student Aid 2015*, 24). In the 1970s, funding from the federal government was overwhelmingly in the form of grants, which do not need to be repaid—at one point they covered as much as 70 percent of student financial aid—with federal loans as low as 20 percent; by 1990, federal grants constituted only 15 percent of financial aid and federal loans had risen to 60 percent (Vest 61–62). The remainder of student financial aid in both cases was being absorbed by institutional grants or loans. Although the country has slowly been moving from loans as a mortgage-like obligation, which must be repaid on a fixed schedule, to income-based repayment, stories remain fresh of persons struggling when the loans come due. Moreover, the federal government has increasingly shifted its support for educational expenses to tax benefits, which for the most part aid politically important middle-class and upper-middle-class families instead of the lower-income families who most need the help (Russo 87).

Some 45 percent of American students at four-year colleges work twenty or more hours per week to help cover costs (Johnson and Rockkind 4). Although the figure is affected by the 62 percent of part-time students who work more than twenty hours, a still high 23 percent of full-time students work twenty hours or more (*Almanac 2011–12*, 38). The stress of combining work and study dilutes the quality of education and contributes greatly to the dropout rate at American universities.

### *Temporary Faculty*

Increasingly, at many universities, teaching is being done by part-time faculty members, adjuncts, or other persons not on the tenure track. The national average for faculty who are either working part-time or are on

fixed-term appointments is, according to the American Association of University Professors, 65 percent (*AAUP Contingent Faculty Index* 5). The figure is misleading in the sense that the AAUP counts not classes or credit hours but individual instructors, so if a university hires a businessperson or a journalist to teach a single vocational course, that person counts as much as a tenured faculty member with a normal load of two to eight courses annually. Similarly, when a faculty member takes a one-year sabbatical and is replaced by a visitor, the visitor is recorded. Still, whatever figure one settles on, it is high and unappealing, the result of a steady climb over the past forty years (Schuster and Finkelstein 233). The trend is the consequence not only of efficiency and cost cutting but also of other, often complicated factors, such as reducing teaching for the best researchers; giving temporary positions to former doctoral students, who have difficulties locating positions; extending teaching opportunities to retirees; and wanting to include professionals, who can integrate their experiences into their teaching (Cross and Goldenberg 30–32). The problem is especially acute in cities, where abundant temporary help is available. New York University, a majority of whose classes are taught by adjuncts, employs more than three thousand part-timers per year (Washburn 200). The ideal of the scholar-teacher is being further eroded by more and more faculty becoming specialists in either teaching or research (Schuster and Finkelstein 232–33), with the former teaching more credit hours at lower pay (since the competition for such persons is less intense).

### *Uneven Quality*

The diverse landscape of American higher education means that some institutions are much weaker academically than others. The range of quality is advantageous in serving a diverse student clientele; however, this diversity also means that an American college education can be relatively mediocre. Some college graduates are simply not well educated, and the integration of teaching and research exists only at the better colleges and universities. Moreover, not all students recognize the differences, including some of the disadvantages of for-profit universities, between better and weaker institutions. Students are often unaware of the best potential fit for their academic qualifications and aspirations. The

twofold puzzle here is the uneven quality, even if that diversity also serves positive ends, and the often unmet need for students to be sufficiently informed so that they are able to find the right fit.

The current graduation rate in the United States is wildly diverse across institutions, depending on quality and selectivity, and the 59.2 percent average for graduation within six years is less than ideal (Natl. Center for Educ. Statistics, *Digest*, table 326.10). At the doctoral level, the graduation rates are still lower: universities rarely provide financial support for graduate students beyond five or six years, but the graduation rates for five and six years are 22.5 percent and 36.1 percent, respectively (Sowell, Zhang, and Redd 15). Even the ten-year graduation rate of 56.6 percent is low (15). The result is a considerable waste of faculty investment and financial resources, since most graduate students require intensive faculty engagement and many receive generous financial aid. This sobering figure contrasts with regularly reported graduation rates of higher than 95 percent in medicine and attrition rates of lower than 15 percent in law (Caulfield, Redden, and Sondheimer; American Bar Association).<sup>3</sup>

### *Research versus Teaching*

There is a widespread sense in the United States that undergraduate learning takes a backseat to research. Although this is often the lament of outsiders, who criticize the academy, the concern has also been raised in academic circles (Kronman; Lewis; Sperber; Deresiewicz). It is perhaps not surprising that Jonathan R. Cole's *Great American University* is devoted almost exclusively to research. At some universities, one can get tenure on the basis of research alone. I have seen that from some

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3. Surprisingly, no organization tracks or publicizes law school graduation rates. The focus instead has been on employment outcomes and bar passage percentages. Attrition data do exist, however, and one can use the attrition data reported by law schools to the American Bar Association to calculate attrition rates per class. The attrition figures for the entering classes from 1999–2000 through 2009–2010 hover between 12 and 14 percent. The figures are only approximations, for they do not capture students, including part-time students, students who step out for a couple of years, and dual-degree students, who might leave after four years (attrition data stop after four years).

of the faculty members I refused to hire, even though they would have been coming from higher-ranking universities. America's preparation of graduate students for teaching is less than ideal. In graduate school, research is the focus, and when younger faculty are hired, they often resist teaching general education courses, which ask them to stretch beyond their disciplines or teach their disciplines to students majoring in other fields. As the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre quipped, at a Notre Dame gathering to celebrate his eightieth birthday, "If you have a doctorate, you must work very hard to become an educated person." Specialization cuts against the breadth elevated in the liberal arts tradition. One of the weakest areas nationally is the teaching of science to nonscientists (Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges* 260–61). One cannot awaken the highest levels of learning without teachers who are also active researchers, but the more research gains the upper hand, the more teaching and mentoring can be neglected. A recent Gallup poll indicated that only 14 percent of college graduates had one or more professors who cared about them as a person, made them excited about learning, and encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams (*Great Jobs* 10).

### *Narrowness*

Although students in the United States receive a broader undergraduate education than those in other countries, they tend to study only one subject at the graduate level, whereas advanced students in a country such as Germany have traditionally taken a second major or two minors; this has tended to make academics in the United States narrower in their outlook. The breadth continues even beyond the doctorate. The habilitation, a second book beyond the dissertation that must be written to qualify for a professorship in Germany, is normally expected to be in an area different from the first. In literary studies, for example, that would be a different century and genre.

Faculty in the United States, at least outside the sciences and engineering, have tended to view any doctoral student who wants to pursue a nonacademic career as a second-class citizen; this is disadvantageous not only for society but also for graduate students, who may encounter difficulties finding an academic position or may prefer to pursue careers at other kinds of institutions, such as museums or archives, or in other

realms, such as journalism, publishing, business, or politics (Bender). Even as the situation is starting to change here, led partly by academic leaders in the discipline of history, we are behind on this issue (Grafton and Grossman). A recognition of the broader worth of the intellectual to society exists in other countries that runs counter to, and is a much richer tradition than, the narrowness of the academic track one tends to find in the United States. Whereas America has had, in its entire history, only one president with a PhD, nine of the nineteen politicians who have led postwar Germany as chancellor or president have had a PhD. Related to this problem is the narrowness of the categories by which graduate programs are ranked. In political science, for example, books, policy-relevant essays, and essays published in related fields but outside the discipline proper carry little weight (Campbell and Desch).

Scholarship in the United States tends to be more local and national than international compared with other countries, including even England (Evans). The percentage of faculty members in departments of history and sociology and political science who are working primarily on America or in philosophy departments who are focusing on work written in English is remarkable. In a comparison from the 1990s, 91–99 percent of professors in every country surveyed except for one agreed with the statement that in order to keep up with developments in his or her discipline, a scholar must read books and journals published abroad; the figure for the United States, the one outlier, was 62 percent (Altbach 42). Comparisons of citations in a major American sociology journal and a major German one reveal that the publications in the German journal are much more likely to take account of, and cite, scholarship from other countries. In this sense, they represent a richer international standard (Münch 134). Reasons for the narrowness of American scholars are multiple and include, among others, a greater sense of the importance of our own country and its traditions and less facility with other languages. Narrowness is not ideal for future global competitiveness.

We also see a confining instrumentalism. Neither the intrinsic value of knowledge nor engagement with great questions but practical ends dominate in American higher education. Although some American educators argue for more idealism in education (e.g., Kronman; Delbanco; Roche, *Why Choose?*; Edmundson, *Self*), faculty tend to focus on disciplinary knowledge and critical thinking. Students, who may not grasp the



full potential of college for them as persons, often see higher education as little more than job preparation; this view can be easily reinforced by politicians unsympathetic to the liberal arts model.

The American tendency to value the instrumental over the intrinsic and idealistic is evident in our federal budget for research and scholarship. In fiscal year 2012, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) received \$146 million compared to \$30.9 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and \$7.033 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NEH figure represents 0.38 percent of the federal allotment to these three agencies and 0.1 percent of the total 2012 federal funding for research and development, including that for such agencies as the Department of Defense. In Germany, in contrast, during the same year, the humanities received 9 percent of federal funding (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft 158). This was no aberration: the humanities figures for Germany for 2013 and 2014 were 9.2 percent and 9.6 percent, respectively (158).

### *Student Culture*

The student culture in America is weakened by the social element, careerism, the sports culture, and cheating. Students are sometimes attracted to the premier colleges as avenues to success and the fostering of social connections instead of being driven by opportunities for learning (Douthat). In student surveys, making a living scores especially high compared to developing a meaningful philosophy of life (Pryor et al. 72–73). Because where one studies is more important than what one studies, the pressure to get into an excellent university leads to a focus on grades, an accumulation of extracurricular activities, and, for wealthier families, even the hiring of coaches to assist with preparation for standardized examinations and college application essays. The competition to get into the best colleges and universities and the pressure to do well once enrolled have led to an increase in student mental health problems, including eating disorders, the result of a wider cultural fascination with success and prestige that seems to be most visible and exacerbated in the lives of undergraduates.

The burden of carrying loans sometimes leads students to elevate practical over intellectual pursuits. Whereas only 8.6 percent of students

in Germany major in business, in America the figure is 19.6 percent, higher than for any other subject and double the next highest major (Statistisches Bundesamt, *Bildung und Kultur* 36; Natl. Center for Educ. Statistics, *Digest*, table 322.10). Of all students, those majoring in business spend the fewest hours studying; as a result, they tend to be less engaged in substantial learning (Arum and Roksa), further diminishing the intellectual climate.

America has a long tradition of focusing on campus activities—social and extracurricular events, including athletics—that can overshadow learning and research. This was the case also in the Ivy League from the 1880s to World War I. When asked early in his presidency at Princeton University how many students there were at Princeton, Woodrow Wilson replied, “about 10 percent” (Oberdorfer 102). Slowly throughout the twentieth century, the better American colleges and universities moved away from an overwhelming orientation toward social clubs, campus life, and athletics to a primary focus on academics. Still, the appropriate balance is not always met. Student abuse of alcohol, hazing in student fraternities, and sexual assault are problems and are rarely dealt with outside the confines of the campus, which has a built-in incentive to keep stories quiet.

Athletics, the most prominent nonacademic activity on many campuses, brings substantial resources to a small number of the most successful programs, yet a majority of universities do not make a profit but instead pour funding into athletics that could otherwise go to academics. Indeed, fewer than twenty universities regularly bring in net revenues through athletics (the others, hundreds of them, lose money), and even the figures for those whose revenues exceed their expenses may be inflated, given the often hidden costs associated with buildings and overhead. Academic leaders who see the budgetary and other problems can easily get caught up in what Howard Nixon has labeled “the athletic trap”: the lure of apparent advantages, such as institutional prominence, outweighs the political costs of scaling back. In 2014, the universities in the Southeastern Conference spent twelve times as much on athletics per student-athlete as they did on academics per student (Knight Commission). The work of Bowen and Levin has revealed the remarkable advantages student-athletes have in gaining admission, even at premier colleges and universities. The claim that athletics helps to build character, a sense

of teamwork, and a competitive spirit, while true in many cases, can also be challenged; athletic experience can be linked with less desirable traits, such as lack of compassion and an overly black-and-white worldview (Edmundson, “Do Sports?”).

Cheating is widespread. Some 75 percent of college students admit to one or more acts of academic dishonesty (McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield 220–21). The causes are presumably multiple: fear that others may also be cheating and gaining an edge, a relative confidence that one will not be caught or that the penalties will be light, the admission of students who are not prepared to do the work, pressure to do well, institutional apathy or student indifference toward the institution’s values, poor instruction and unclear expectations, carelessness, lack of integrity, and lack of student effort and interest in learning.

### *Grade Inflation*

Students can be more concerned about grades than about learning, and grade inflation by faculty members, who do not want to exert the effort to make distinctions among students, do not want to deal with student complaints, and do not want to receive poor student evaluations, only exacerbates the problem. While some might argue that higher grades result from better students and better teaching, grades have risen at a time when students report that they are studying less (Arum and Roksa) and faculty are lamenting that students are not as strong in critical thinking, cultural literacy, or communication skills as they would like them to be. Yet grades have risen over the past thirty years, and A is now the most common grade assigned on an overwhelming majority of campuses (Rojstaczer and Healy).

There are several reasons to address grade inflation. First, not differentiating among students’ levels of performance is unfair to the best students. Second, a failure to communicate meaningfully through grades means that we place greater reliance on test scores and informal avenues of recommendation. Third, undifferentiated grading does not signal to students the areas in which they truly excel. Fourth, and most importantly, grade inflation does not support good learning, because it does not send a clear signal to students that they could improve their work and stretch their capabilities.

The heralded financial strength of the American university is fragile. At least three issues loom as challenges. First, private universities are heavily dependent on endowment assets, which have undergone market fluctuations. As a result of occasional drops in endowment, many American universities have had to scale back staff, cancel faculty searches, and freeze salaries. Paradoxically, the wealthiest, those with the highest endowments, have been among the most adversely affected, since a greater percentage of their annual budgets come from the endowment payout, which, unlike tuition at most universities, saw decreases, not increases. Every Ivy League university has had to deal with cuts (including 19 percent over two years in arts and sciences at Harvard, whose problems were especially severe), layoffs, generous early-retirement buyouts, salary freezes, or delayed construction projects (Munk; Kaplan).

Second, state universities have seen their allocations drop dramatically. State funding per full-time public student, adjusted for inflation, dropped 26 percent nationally from 1990–91 to 2009–10 (Quintero, *Great Cost* 2). Although 81 percent of millennial voters support increasing state funding for public colleges, 96 percent of states saw reductions between 2008 and 2014; meanwhile, tuition and fees at public colleges rose 28 percent during that same period (Young Invincibles 5–7). Public universities are invariably affected by the health of the state budget, and when budgetary crises arise, as they have recently, public universities have to contend with the fallout, including budget cuts resulting in layoffs; reduced salaries; the dissolution of vulnerable programs; increased teaching loads; frozen positions; and, for the students and their parents, significant tuition increases. Over time, state universities have seen consistent cuts in education. Other state needs, such as prisons, schools, and Medicaid, compete for scarce resources. Investing in prisons instead of education is not the most forward-thinking strategy, especially given the US's already-high prison population compared with the rest of the world. Still, between 1985 and 2000, state spending on prisons grew six times the rate of higher education (American Council on Educ., *Putting* 5). In California, the largest university system, 9.5 percent of spending in 2010 went to prisons, up from 4 percent in 1985; during that same stretch, spending for universities dropped from 11 to 5.7 percent (*Economist*).

The net result has been less per-student funding for the university, tuition increases, or both.

Third, federal funding for research and student loans will likely not keep pace with university and student expectations unless the federal government is able to increase revenues, cut spending, or reallocate resources. With competing demands in defense, health, infrastructure, and other areas, federal funding for research has not seen substantial increases in years, and most recently we have seen a decline. According to the National Science Board, during the five-year period 2004–9, when adjusted for inflation, the annual average increase in federal research funding was 0.8 percent (*Science and Engineering Indicators 2012*, ch. 5, p. 9). In the years from 2010 to 2014, levels of federal support for research dropped 11 percent, and when adjusted for inflation the drop was 17 percent (*Science and Engineering Indicators 2016*, ch. 4, p. 6). The major federal grant for low-income students is the Pell Grant. Created in 1972 to encourage more low-income students to attend college, Pell Grants are based entirely on financial need. In 1976, a Pell Grant covered almost 90 percent of the cost of attending a four-year public college, but by 2004, it covered a mere 24 percent (Sacks 178). With the federal budget strained from many angles, the amount of funding that would be needed to continue the program in accordance with its original intentions appears to be unsustainable.

### *Unseemly Incentives*

The increasing prominence of money in the academy has affected behavior in ways that contradict the ideal of disinterested scholarship. The search for dollars can lead to overly close, potentially even unethical, collaboration between research and industry, in such a way that the hunt for grants and patents takes precedence over the search for and communication of truth (Washburn). Not only is there a widespread concern about conflicts of interest arising from the funding of research, but funding from industry seems to affect research: for example, 83.3 percent of independent studies concluded that sugar-sweetened beverages could be a potential risk factor for weight gain, whereas 83.3 percent of studies in which a potential financial conflict of interest was disclosed concluded that the evidence was insufficient to draw any such conclusion (Besa-Rastrollo et al.).

The 1980 Bayh-Dole Act, which allowed, and in a sense encouraged, universities to patent discoveries made by researchers whose projects are funded by federal dollars, has led to such close partnerships between universities and industry that concerns have been raised about publications delayed or embargoed to give industrial sponsors time to obtain patents, about faculty adjusting their data and conclusions or holding back on publications to serve their sponsors' and their own commercial interests, and about universities becoming more interested in relations with industry and in the accumulation of new resources than in ensuring quick access to data and avoiding conflicts of interest. Increasingly, universities have a stake in the outcome of research; disinterested inquiry stands in tension with continued financial support and potentially large income opportunities, especially in medicine.

Peer review is the appropriate method for the evaluation of research proposals, but not all research funding is distributed this way. Allocations in the form of "earmarks" or "pork" bypass the peer review system and are an ineffective way to advance the worthiest projects. Beginning in the 2011 fiscal year budget cycle, Congress forswore earmarks, but they could return in force, and in the interim, modest special interest provisions have made their way into spending bills. In the 2010 fiscal year, the last before abundant earmarks were curtailed, \$1.9 billion was allocated this way. The universities having the best-placed connections brought in the most money. The University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa led the way, garnering \$58.7 million in grants; three Mississippi universities were among the top twelve; and none of the twenty-five leading American universities were among the top twenty-five recipients (Lederman).

This brief account of gaps makes evident that the premier American model is not without problems, and with movement to ever-more international competition, the gaps loom even larger. At the end of each chapter of part 3, I outline further challenges and problems that exist even in areas where the American university otherwise shines.