

A University without Intellectuals: Western Governors University and the Academy's Future

by Johann N. Neem

Western Governors University was conceptualized in 1995 at a meeting of the Western Governors Association, and founded soon after in an effort to increase degree production in higher education at a lower cost.¹ It has expanded significantly over the past few years, driven both by increased demand for online education and by drastic state budget cuts. Touted as offering a new, faster approach to college degrees by rewarding students for what they already know, some see in it the future of higher education. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, for example, lauds WGU for challenging “the century-old practice of awarding degrees based on seat time in a classroom, rather than on demonstrated competence.”²

Rather than require students to spend time and money to learn what they already know, WGU asks students to demonstrate mastery of a set of competencies, which students can do over years or, if they are able, months. Once a student has passed the competencies, she or he is eligible for a degree.³ In an economy that depends on specialized technical skills and requires certification, WGU's approach rewards experience by recognizing how much people learn on the job.

Despite the espoused goal of producing low-cost degrees, however, WGU's costs are similar to traditional public institutions. Two six-month terms at WGU cost about \$6,000, while the cost per student at public colleges has remained around \$10,000 per year since 1985. College costs, in other words, have not been rising dramatically. What has been rising is the tuition paid by parents and students, thanks to drastic cuts in state funding. Moreover, unlike most schools,

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WGU charges the same for part-time and full-time students.⁴

WHAT DEFINES A COLLEGE EDUCATION?

WGU does not offer a college education. The problem is not that WGU is online, although there are reasons to doubt whether a good education can be offered online.⁵ Instead, the very thing that makes WGU valuable for certification—its competency-based approach—prevents it from providing the kinds of learning experiences that define liberal arts college education. As other other institutions experiment with the competency-based approach—including, recently, the

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University of Wisconsin system and Northern Arizona University—it is important to understand where this approach might be applicable and where its application would be detrimental.⁶

Liberal arts education is much different than what WGU offers. College education can be compared to learning to drive. We all know what it takes to pass a driving test, and we all know how we do it: we cram a bunch of stuff into short-term memory, and then pass a competency-based exam. We also know that becoming a driver is a much different process; it requires guidance and repeated practice (or seat time). WGU's approach may help students pass licensing exams, but it does not help them become drivers.

Similarly, one could argue that the Boy Scouts has a “competency approach” because scouts are asked to earn merit badges. But of course, the Boy Scouts’ mission is to offer “a program for young people that builds character, trains them in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and develops personal fitness.”⁷ Thus, scouts camp together, learn together, and work together under the guidance of masters who teach knowledge and model the scouts’ values. Abstracted from this broader culture of scouting, the merit badges would lose their meaning and value.

Had the competency approach been able to achieve the goals of liberal arts education, it would have done so long ago. Not only have we long had correspondence courses, but textbook producers also have long packaged their products with assignments and assessment tools. Despite their efforts, the core learning experience has continued to take place in interactions between teachers and students, and between students themselves—the stuff that happens beyond the textbook. WGU's online modules may be better than correspondence courses, but they are variations on a theme, and suffer from the same limitations.

Although commentators embrace WGU's model because it offers easily assessable outcomes, this may also be its problem; too often we conflate easily assessed outcomes with accountability.⁸ A liberal arts education cannot be narrowed to a set of technical skills or knowledge. Because the goal of liberal education is more profound and time intensive and because in many ways a liberal education is a personal quest, efforts to standardize outcomes threaten its value. What Diane Ravitch, education historian, has recently concluded about high school is applicable to college, "When we define what matters in education only by what we can measure, we are in serious trouble. When that happens, we tend to forget that

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schools are responsible for shaping character, developing sound minds in healthy bodies, and forming citizens for our democracy, not just for teaching basic skills. We even forget to reflect on what we mean when we speak of good education."⁹

Ravitch's comments point to another concern about WGU's approach. Colleges do more than require seat time; they ask students to think about subjects in which they have not had much experience. Unlike education that is learned or reinforced on the job, college education is grounded in the liberal arts.¹⁰ Colleges introduce students to a world divorced from their everyday experiences and thus one that requires significant "seat time" before students can be truly conversant. While a working person may already be practicing much of what she or he needs to know for certification, there are few people with similar experiences in literature and physics, history and biology, Plato and Freud. This has to not only be learned but reinforced.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR THE MIND

Liberal arts education is experiential learning for the mind. It's about grappling with tough stuff. The assessments (or competencies)—tests, papers, labs—are only part of the picture; equally important is what happens while students are in class and, more generally, on campus: the discussions, questions, conversations; the exposure to new ideas and different perspectives. A college graduate should become an interpretive being, capable of not just answering but asking sophisticated questions; of not just knowing facts, but making sense of them; of not just understanding what's in a book or lesson, but offering original ideas based on their learning. Developing this deep understanding depends, as Socrates recognized, on conversations between teacher and student. Cognitive science confirms what the ancients knew.¹¹ As philosopher Michael Oakshott has written about liberal edu-

cation, “in every ‘ability’ there is an ingredient of knowledge which cannot be resolved into information” given that “abilities’ do not exist in the abstract but in individual examples.” As a result, gaining fluency in the liberal arts is like learning a new language. One must master basic rules but “until one can speak the language in a manner not expressly provided for in the rules, one can make no significance utterance in it.”¹²

In short, it’s both how things are taught and what is taught that makes college education distinctive. Yes, college may improve critical thinking and foster creativity, but there are many critical thinkers and creative people who have never

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attended college. College may or may not be the best preparation for all things. But colleges ask students to think critically and creatively about specific things—the arts and sciences—and, as one result, they become more critical and creative about many things.¹³

Certainly, the above picture of college education happens most often for full-time students in institutions with a strong commitment to the liberal arts.¹⁴ Many other students fail to receive this experience. Colleges can do better by focusing attention on how students learn, providing more resources to help students succeed, and developing a more coherent core curriculum.¹⁵ But many students do not want a college education and others are unprepared for it. For many, better financial support would help, but for others, who spend years earning credits part time and resent their courses in history and biology when all they want is a better job, WGU offers what is wanted and needed. Again, this is good, but it is not college.

HOW DID WGU GET ACCREDITED?

WGU is well aware of the above critiques, and it responds that it has been accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and University (NWCCU), “the same accrediting body responsible for the accreditation of major institutions including the University of Washington and the University of Oregon.”¹⁶ WGU was accredited by NWCCU in 2003, with an interim evaluation completed in 2009. After the school was endorsed by the Washington state legislature, the *Seattle Times* opined that WGU “carries the same level of accreditation as Stanford University.”¹⁷ Certainly WGU and its boosters exaggerate. Celebrating accreditation is like celebrating vaccination; it’s a good thing, but it’s a base line.

More important, a close examination suggests that WGU fails to meet the NWCCU’s standards because its labor model fundamentally undermines faculty

governance, faculty quality, liberal education, and academic freedom.¹⁸ With that in mind, despite WGU's motto that it is "online, accelerated, affordable, accredited," it is not clear how and why it received accreditation.¹⁹

In its 2003 published requirements, NWCCU requires that faculty have "a major role and responsibility in the design, integrity, and implementation of the curriculum," but, according to WGU, "academic programs are developed and guided by WGU administrators working through several councils, which are comprised of academicians and industry experts in the various fields of knowledge." These councils are made up of outside consultants, not WGU employees. For

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example, the Liberal Arts Program Council consists of faculty from Utah State University, the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Berea College, George Mason University, and elsewhere.²⁰

For its degree programs, WGU seeks—for good reason—to align its competencies to the needs of businesses that will employ its graduates. But, again, programmatic decisions are made by outside consultants. Its Health Professions Program Council includes faculty from Eastern Kentucky University, Loma Linda University, and from such businesses as HealthInsight and HCA (formerly known as Health Corporation of America).²¹ Simply put, WGU has outsourced academic governance in violation of NWCCU's standards.

Similarly, NWCCU requires that the "faculty is adequate for the educational levels offered, including full-time faculty representing each field in which it offers major work." Again, WGU falls short. For starters, students do not interact primarily with faculty, but instead with non-teaching mentors described as "life coaches." These would be part of Student Affairs at other schools, and thus cannot be considered faculty.²²

Courses are overseen by "course mentors," but there is no evidence on WGU's websites that these course mentors represent the fields in which WGU offers courses. WGU admits that it dodges NWCCU standards, stating that its course mentors' "training is specific to the courses they support," rather than to their fields, as required by the NWCCU.²³ Forget asking students to do complicated independent interpretive projects—such as senior theses—that require professors to be knowledgeable in their fields.

The governing bodies are no better. Although WGU requires students to complete coursework in the arts and humanities, the overseeing Liberal Arts Program Council has experts in mathematics, physics, and writing, but none in any

of the other arts and sciences.²⁴

Additionally, NWCCU requires that to “provide an acceptable level of instruction for the graduate student, faculty whose responsibilities include a major commitment to graduate education are involved in keeping pace with, and advancing the frontiers of, knowledge.” Despite offering masters’ degrees, nowhere on WGU’s website is there any information about its faculty’s scholarship. For good reasons, NWCCU recognizes that graduate students require instruction by those who are active scholars in their fields, but WGU’s website offers no evidence that it can meet this standard. NWCCU also requires colleges to offer “a substantial

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core of general education.”²⁵ While WGU claims to do so, as discussed in the previous section, its competency approach does not encourage serious engagement with the liberal arts and sciences.

Finally, there is no evidence that WGU “fosters and protects academic freedom for faculty,” as the NWCCU’s 2003 standards mandate. Academic freedom applies to both research and the classroom.²⁶ With the absence of faculty governance, however, it is not clear that course mentors are allowed to exercise their professional judgment in choosing course materials. Given WGU’s reliance on standardized modules, it also is not clear that course mentors exercise any meaningful discretion over curriculum. Robert Mendenhall, WGU’s president, notes that “we do not develop any of our own courses,” clearly violating academic freedom. WGU instead relies on such commercial vendors as Pearson and McGraw-Hill, rather than on faculty.²⁷ Another key aspect of academic freedom is tenure, but there is no evidence WGU offers such protections to its non-unionized employees.²⁸

WGU relies instead on a “disaggregated faculty” model in which the various components of faculty work—curricular development, student mentoring, course supervision, assessment, and academic program governance—are separated into specialized departments.²⁹ Kevin Kinser, a scholar at the University of Albany, notes that WGU “instructors are largely separate from the course planners, designers and assessors.” Mendenhall celebrated this model: “in an online environment that truly takes advantage of technology, the faculty role may change from delivering content to mentoring students.”³⁰

Mendenhall’s argument is wrong in two ways. First, although the web and new technology has made content more accessible, since the mass publication of cheap books and magazines two centuries ago, Americans have had easy access to content.³¹ The web is wonderful, just as the publication of cheap books was won-

derful, but today's technology boosters are missing the main point: teaching, especially in the liberal fields, has long been about more than content delivery. Otherwise, the printing press would have done away with teachers long ago.

Second, mentoring is not a generic act. A mentor guides an apprentice in the pursuit of something specific. It is about taking material and helping the student turn it into knowledge. Good teaching is good mentoring, and good mentors by definition teach something. In truth, WGU has neither faculty members nor mentors.

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Despite its claims to be more student-centered than traditional institutions, in fact it is management-centered, reflecting broader trends throughout America. Even in traditional institutions, administrative bloat plus growing numbers of adjunct faculty threaten shared governance, academic freedom, and educational quality.³² There is no reason to believe that highly paid managers, consultants, and profit-minded vendors will be more student centered than faculty who have given up alternative, more lucrative, careers to teach and learn.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

One might ask, "Who cares?" Clearly faculty do, because the erosion of shared governance and academic freedom affects their ability to teach and research effectively. But there are good reasons for the broader public to be concerned as well. The issue at hand is not simply whether colleges are or are not student focused, but whether it is a good thing for colleges to offer innovative and distinctive courses, and whether faculty should be involved in curricular design and scholarly research.

The academy is more than a conveyer of knowledge; it is also a center for the life of the mind. Whether through research or teaching, it embodies the pursuit—the love—of knowledge. When faculty design their own courses, interpret information, and conduct research, and when they bring that excitement into the classroom, they demonstrate what it means to be a scholar. At its best, teaching and research are acts of devotion. While the curriculum may offer the "stuff" students should know, an institution's culture shapes students' values and attitudes toward learning.³³

Ultimately, this is about character. Colleges seek to make people liberally educated, to give them a foundation on which they will continue to develop. Liberal

arts education expands the capabilities of students as human beings and as citizens.³⁴ Ideally, the academy seeks to be a “community of learning” in which both teachers and students are engaged in the search for knowledge.³⁵ WGU’s labor model leads instead to a world in which neither faculty nor students participate in the life of the mind, where knowledge is consumed rather than produced.

WGU offers us a vision of the university without intellectuals. If the academy produced commodities, perhaps WGU’s approach would make sense. But the academy does not, and it is not served when faculty are replaced by managers, curriculum specialists, vendors, assessment specialists, and “course mentors,” any more

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than a church would be served by outsourcing its theology and replacing its ministers with managers, conversion coaches, rhetoricians, orators, conversion assessors, and accountants. The church may cost less but would not inspire worship. By treating the life of the mind as unimportant, WGU inverts the academy’s means and ends, threatening the purpose of academic teaching and research.

Even worse, WGU’s model would take the power over interpreting knowledge away from those committed to the search for truth and place it with for-profit curricular design companies that place their financial interests ahead of the quest for knowledge. Importantly, the academy publishes knowledge for public use, whereas for-profit companies treat knowledge as proprietary. Because WGU already outsources curriculum development, in many ways it is a nonprofit shell for curriculum development companies seeking to profit from students.³⁶ WGU’s approach does not increase access to knowledge but privatizes it to transform knowledge into a commodity.

The academy may be responsive to market needs, but the academy should not be subject to them. Certainly, universities can prepare students to enter the fields and professions that the economy needs. There is also no doubt that the economy benefits from the liberal arts and sciences, which develop the thinking, writing, analytical, and creative capacities—the “transferable skills”—that employers desire.³⁷ However, the primary goal of academic teaching and research is to understand the world and ourselves better for the public good. Both within and beyond the classroom the academy provides a forum for democratic deliberation. Academic freedom allows scholars to ask serious questions and to offer unpopular answers; in fact, this is one of the academy’s most important contributions.³⁸ If WGU’s model becomes widespread, we would no longer have the competitive marketplace in ideas we have today. This would not serve our democracy well, nor

our economy, both of which depend on the innovative ideas that universities produce.

By ensuring that faculty design courses and pursue research, our democracy ensures that students are exposed to competing perspectives and are taught by those who participate—and thus embody—the life of the mind. This is the real foundation for academic freedom in the classroom as well as in research. WGU's approach would standardize knowledge and centralize control over it. This is cheaper for WGU and profitable for its partners, but it is a dangerous way to organize institutions devoted to knowledge.

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Some argue that the old model costs too much, but this claim requires clarification. Higher education has followed a cost curve similar to other labor-intensive industries, suggesting that there are external causes to rising tuition.³⁹ Even when we focus closely on universities, however, we discover that the primary driver of higher costs has been the collapse of state funding in the public sector combined with the costs of new technology, campus buildings, and the spectacular growth in administrative staff and programs.⁴⁰ As the power of managers grows, less money is spent on teaching and research and more on other services. Rather than solve these problems, WGU is their logical conclusion.

COLLEGE EDUCATION IS MORE THAN TRAINING

WGU offers people the credentials they need to get better jobs but it does not offer a college education. We need to accept that college is not the only kind of postsecondary education. Instead, we should respond to Americans' diverse needs and goals by offering multiple "pathways to prosperity." We must continue to develop apprenticeship and certification programs that respect Americans' desires, are cheaper and faster than college degrees, and prepare people for the workforce.⁴¹ Too many students go deep into debt taking classes for which they have no desire or are ill prepared, and too many of those students fail to graduate, creating social and personal costs that cannot be justified.⁴² By making college the sole mechanism for economic and social advancement, we threaten both collegiate education and our democratic values.

At the same time, we should ensure that access to college—to higher learning in the arts and sciences—is available to all Americans seeking it. All high schools should offer students a meaningful foundation in the liberal arts to prepare them for college, and colleges must recruit and support students from all sectors of

American society. Collegiate education cannot be for the privileged few and vocational education for the rest. Unfortunately, today's system tends to reinforce existing class privilege as wealthy families enter the most elite schools while states defund public institutions that used to offer opportunity. If schools like WGU proliferate, and if they are used to justify continued public defunding, we will deepen the class division between those who receive a quality college education and those who do not.⁴³

Faculty, administrators, students, and citizens must stand together to protect what makes college education special and valuable. College education requires "seat time" in the liberal arts and sciences and faculty who devote their lives to studying and teaching. Faculty must ensure that accreditors develop and uphold standards that improve rather than weaken the academy. We must urge policy-makers to promote education rather than degrees. Colleges should cultivate and mobilize alumni to advocate higher education. But, most of all, as faculty, we must write and teach with our hearts and souls so that our students learn to value the experience as much as we do. We cannot just proclaim the values of the academy; we must embody them. 

ENDNOTES

1. See Kinser, "Taking WGU Seriously: Implications of the Western Governors University," 161-73; and Meyer, "Western Governors University: Creating the First Virtual University," 35-43.
2. Duncan, "Beyond the Iron Triangle: Containing the Cost of College and Student Debt." See also Carey, "College For All?," 48-51. Western Governor's University, "Our Commitments."
3. For some background from WGU insiders, see Mendenhall, "A Model and Principles for Effective Internet-Based Distance Education," and Johnstone, "Western Governors University and Competency-Based Education," 2346-52.
4. For WGU tuition, see http://www.wgu.edu/tuition_financial_aid/tuition. For the \$10,000 figure, see Rampell, "Where the Jobs Are, the Training May Not Be."
5. I have expressed my doubts in Neem, "Online Higher Education's Individualist Fallacy." See also de Vise, "In Defense of Liberal Education," Archibald and Feldman, *Why Does College Cost So Much?* chapter 8; and Keeling and Hersh, *We're Losing Our Minds: Rethinking American Higher Education*, 116-30.
6. There are also reasons to worry about the quality of WGU's programs. A University of Washington computer scientist concluded that WGU's Information Technology degrees would not "be taken as sufficient preparation for graduate study in computer science or any closely related field at other institutions." Stiber, "Computer Science at an Online University, Western Governors University."
7. Boy Scouts of America, "About the Boy Scouts of America."
8. For some context see Borden, "The Accountability/Improvement Paradox;" and Tuchman, "Metrics, Business Plans, and the Vanishing Public Good," 23-31 .
9. Ravitch, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education*, 166-67. See also "Let Your Voice Be Heard: A Q&A with Academic Historian Diane Ravitch," 111-16.
10. In the 1862 Morrill Act providing federal support for vocational colleges in "agriculture and the mechanic arts," legislators recognized that college education demands both "liberal and practical education."
11. Zull, *The Art of Changing the Brain: Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of*

- Learning*; and Keeling and Hersh, *We're Losing Our Minds*, chapter 4. On liberal education as experiences for the mind, see Ayers, "The Experience of Liberal Education."
12. Oakeshott, "Learning and Teaching," 35-61, at 52. See also Anderson, "Three Cheers for Useless Teaching;" de Vise, "Liberal Education;" and Lewis, *Excellence without a Soul: How a Great University Forgot Education*.
 13. This is one reason why student learning outcomes are an insufficient measure of a college education. Such assessments measure at best half of what matters—the development of critical thinking and other skills. Equally important is what students think about. For example, it is as important that students think critically in order to read literature as it is that students read literature in order to think critically. But, as states defund, legislators are seeking to reduce the time students spend in core and general education courses. See Neem, "Funding Students, Threatening Liberal Education;" Berett, "CUNY Proposes a Leaner Core Curriculum, to Faculty's Dismay;" and Sternberg, "No College Left Behind."
 14. See Arum and Roksa, *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*; and Keeling and Hersh, *We're Losing Our Minds*.
 15. Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*; Keeling and Hersh, *We're Losing Our Minds*; Lewis, *Excellence without a Soul*; and Kronman, *Education's End: Why Our Colleges and Universities Have Given Up on the Meaning of Life*.
 16. See http://indiana.wgu.edu/about_WGU_indiana/accreditation.
 17. "Western Governors Makes a Good Call with Floten," *Seattle Times*.
 18. See NWCCU, "Accrediting Standards."
 19. When WGU opened its virtual Washington campus, I asked WGU for its accreditation material. My request was refused. Every other public and private college I examined in Washington had their accreditation materials posted online. Thus, my conclusions below are based on comparing NWCCU's requirements in 2003 against what WGU posts on its website.
 20. See http://www.wgu.edu/about_WGU/governors_industry.
 21. *Ibid*.
 21. For a sympathetic study of the WGU student experience with mentors and course mentors, see Connell, "At no-frills Western Governors University, the path to a college degree is only as long as students make it."
 23. See http://www.wgu.edu/about_WGU/wgu_faculty. See also Connell, *op cit*.
 24. In reality, many of the course mentors no doubt have PhDs in their fields, but this is not made clear on WGU's website. More important, given WGU's competency approach and labor model, course mentors cannot teach effectively.
 25. NWCCU, *op cit*.
 26. For the AAUP's definition of academic freedom, visit <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/issues/AF/>. Even those who take a more limited approach to academic freedom recognize it applies to both classroom and research. See Wood, "Is Academic Freedom a Can Opener or a Highway?"
 27. Kolowich, "Model of the Moment."
 28. For an overview of threats to academic freedom see Nelson, *No University Is An Island: Saving Academic Freedom*.
 29. Paulson, "Reconfiguring Faculty Roles for Virtual Settings," 123-40; and Kinser, "Taking WGU Seriously." For an overview of different models for online education see Smith and Rhoades, "Community College Faculty and Web-Based Classes," 97-110. Finkelstein et al., *Dollars, Distance, and Online Education: The New Economics of College Teaching and Learning*, conclude that for online education to save money courses must be large and standardized and faculty roles diminished. Done properly, on the other hand, online education may well be more expensive, although it would perhaps offer people greater access. See Walters, "21st Century Snake Oil," *Inside Higher Ed* (Dec. 2, 2010); and Maitland, Hendrickson, and Dubeck, "Faculty Costs and

- Compensation in Distance Education,” 269-95.
30. Kinser, personal correspondence; Mendenhall, “How Technology Can Improve Online Learning—And Learning in General;” and Legon et al., “Overcoming Inertia: Can Higher Education Change?” 9-13.
 31. See Gross and Kelley, eds., *An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840*.
 32. Macfarlane, “The Morphing of Academic Practice: Unbundling and the Rise of the Para-Academic,” 59-73. See also Cote & Allaha, *Lowering Higher Education: The Rise of Corporate Universities and the Fall of Liberal Education*; Burke, “The Last Enclosures;” Walters, “More Degrees/Dollar—Damn the Quality?;” and Kinser, *From Main Street to Wall Street: The Transformation of For-Profit Higher Education*. Surprisingly, given the rhetoric surrounding WGU, its labor model reflects the ideas of the 19th century rather than those of the 21st century. Today’s economy depends on creativity, and many of our most successful companies have sought to improve their work environments by borrowing from the college labor model. See my blog post “Faculty Productivity Considered.”
 33. Sizer and Faust Sizer, *The Students Are Watching: Schools and the Moral Contract*, 1-18; and Keeling and Hersh, *We’re Losing Our Minds*, especially chapter 3.
 34. For two distinct perspectives, compare Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* with Harpham, “Between Humanity and the Homeland: The Evolution of an Institutional Concept,” chapter 3. The humanities, in particular, focus on the study of value and what it means to be a human being in a university increasingly dominated by utilitarian studies.
 35. Oakley, *Community of Learning: The American College and the Liberal Arts Tradition*. See also Gutting, “What is college for?;” Shils, “The Academic Ethic,” 3-128; Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*; and Schwartz and Sharpe, “Colleges Should Teach Intellectual Virtues.”
 36. If this sounds like conspiracy thinking, read Fang, “How Online Learning Companies Bought America’s Schools,” about how companies like Pearson and McGraw-Hill hope to profit from virtual and for-profit schools, and Layton and Brown, “Virtual Schools Expand Territory.”
 37. See, for example, Jay and Graff, “The Fear of Being Useful,” and Arum and Roksa, *Academically Adrift*. Because transferable skills in a mobile labor market are non-proprietary, firms are likely to under-invest relative to market needs, which is one reason that the liberal arts must be subsidized. See Stevens, “Transferable Training and Poaching Externalities,” chapter 1.
 38. For a discussion of the broader civic purposes of the university, see Calhoun, “Academic Freedom: Public Knowledge and the Structural Transformation of the University,” 561-98; Back, “Intellectual Life and the University of Commerce;” Hollinger, “Money and Academic Freedom a Half-Century after McCarthyism: Universities Amid the Force Fields of Capital” 77-105; and Post, *Democracy, Expertise, and Academic Freedom: A First Amendment Jurisprudence for the Modern State*.
 39. See Archibald and Feldman, *Why Does College Cost So Much*.
 40. Archibald and Feldman, *Why Does College Cost So Much*, chapter 9; Kamentz, *DIY U: Edupunks, Edupreneurs, and the Coming Transformation of Higher Education*, chapter 3; Gillen et al., “Net Tuition and Net Price Trends in the United States, 2000-2009;” Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class*; Ginsberg, “Administrators Ate My Tuition;” Greene, “Administrative Bloat at American Universities: The Real Reason for High Costs in Higher Education;” Zerkel and Johnson, “Buying the Professor a BMW;” and Ehrenberg, *Tuition Rising: Why College Costs So Much*. For the recent impact of state defunding, see Zumeta, “States and Higher Education: On Their Own in a Stagnant Economy.”
 41. Harvard Graduate School of Education, *Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing Young Americans for the 21st Century*. See also Fain, “Not Just Degrees,” Hanushek,

- et al. "General Education, Vocational Education, and Labor-Market Outcomes over the Life-Cycle," and Scott-Clayton, "Who Shouldn't Go to College?"
42. See Grafton, "Our Flunking Universities," 38-42; and Arum et al., *Documenting Uncertain Times: Post-graduate Transitions of the Academically Adrift Cohort*.
43. Carnevale and Strohl, "How Increasing College Access Is Increasing Inequality, and What to Do about It," chapter 3; and Lemann, *The Big Test: The Secret History of the American Meritocracy*. How to balance liberal and vocational education is a real challenge. In the past, as high schools went from minority to majority institutions, they also became less academic. Sadly, they also tended to guide poorer and minority students into vocational tracts, preserving the academically rigorous work for the privileged. Thus, the first step to take is ensuring all high-school students have access to college preparatory coursework. Yet protecting the academic quality of collegiate education is absolutely necessary as more and more Americans seek post-secondary education. Providing quality alternatives to college will help, but we must be careful not to repeat the past by guiding minority and poor students into vocational programs and preserving the liberal arts for the elite. On these points see Oakes and Karoly, *Educational Matchmaking: Academic and Vocational Tracking in Comprehensive High Schools*; and Nuzum, "A Cycle of American Educational Reform: Garfield and Bellingham High Schools in the State of Washington, 1958-1983."

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