Current Trends in U.S. Higher Education

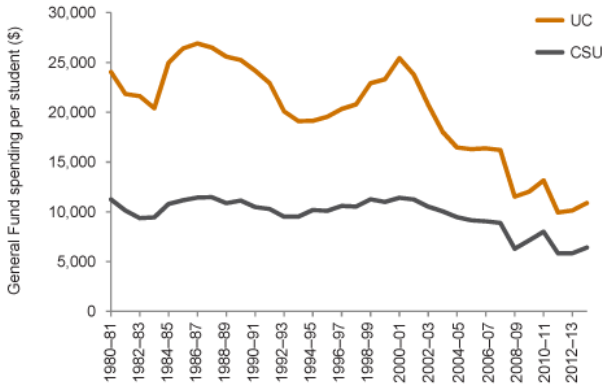
STEVEN BRINT

Is Higher Education in Crisis?

1. THE PESSIMISM OF HE SCHOLARS
2. A NEW GOLDEN AGE?
3. EVIDENCE OF GROWTH AND GROWING PROMINENCE

Many Know about the Challenges…

General Fund Spending,1980-2012



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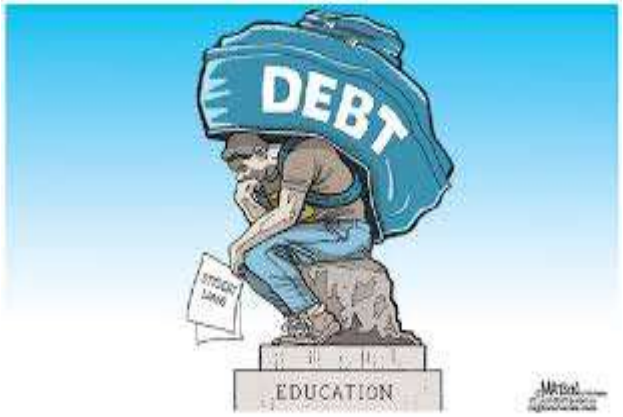

Or Is This Your Reality?

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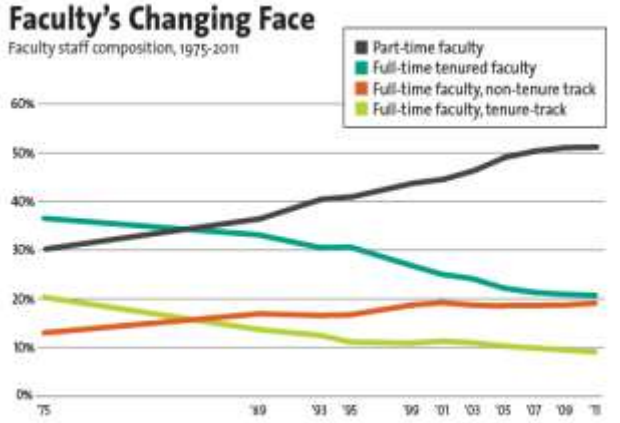
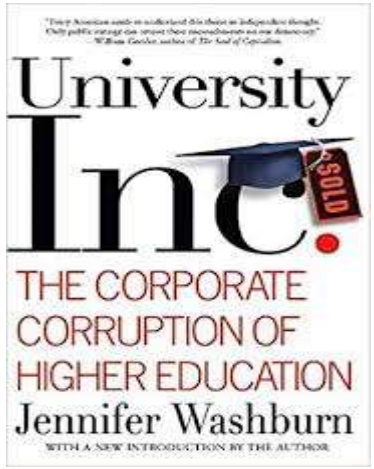
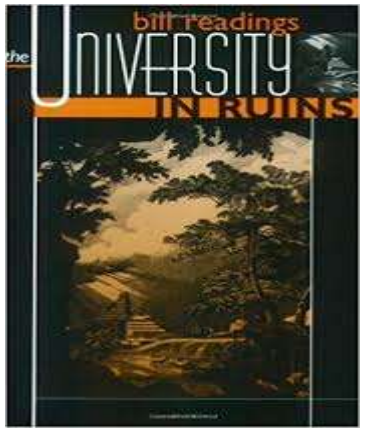
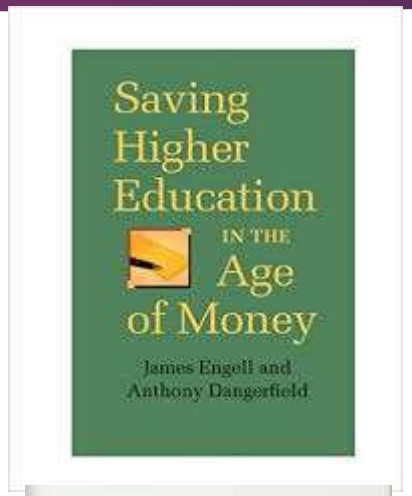
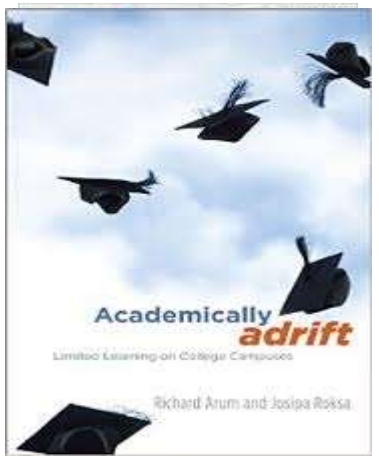


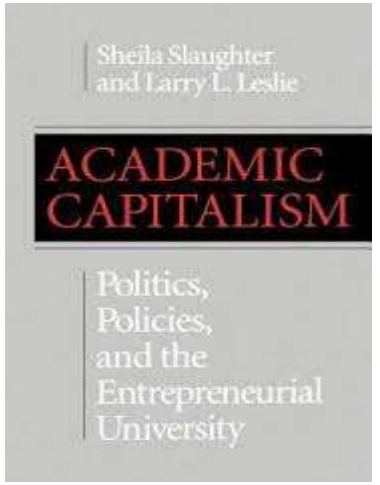
Some Recent Titles: The Pessimistic View

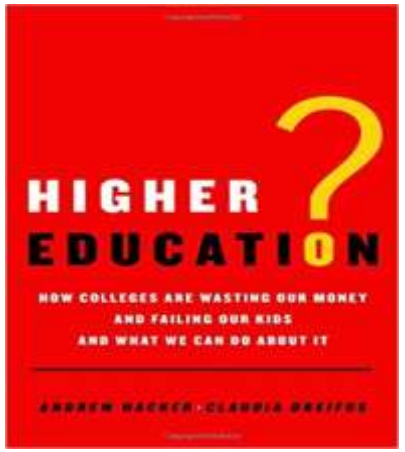


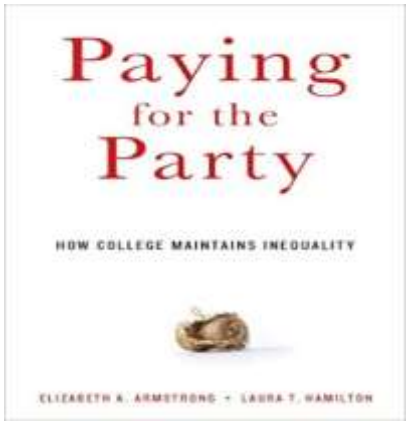


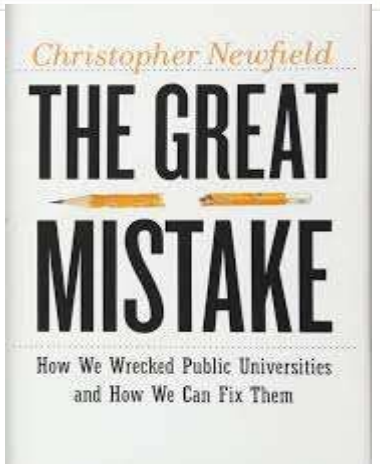


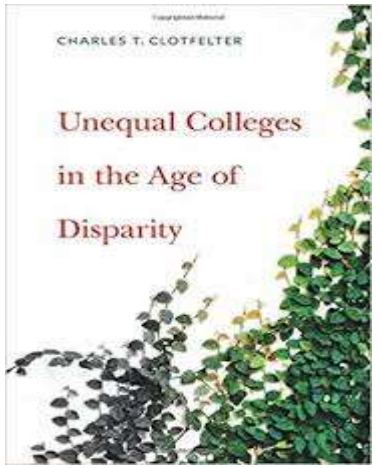


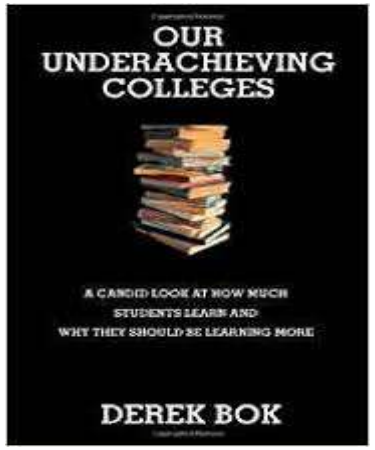












How Then Could I Consider 1980-2015 a Second "Golden Age" of US Universities?

- **Research dollars, publications, & citations all grew dramatically**.
- Universities played much **larger role in the national innovation system**.

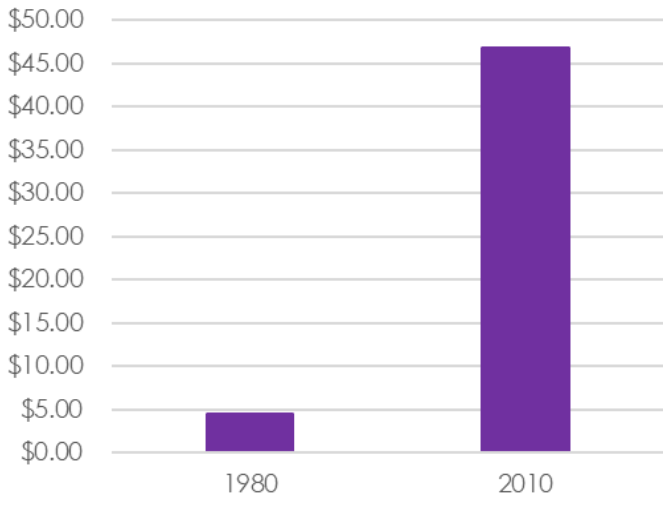
- Both undergraduate and graduate **enrollments nearly doubled**.
- The system showed **major improvements in access** for under-represented, first-generation, and low-income students.
- Male dominance declined. **Women out-performed men** in most disciplines.

- **Research universities successfully diversified their revenue bases**.

Growth of Research Expenditures, Publications, & Citations (Top 200 RUs)

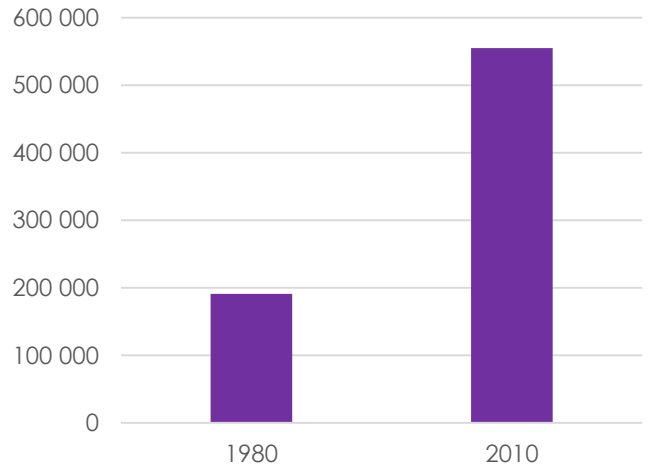
Research $$

(in 2010 constant $ billions)



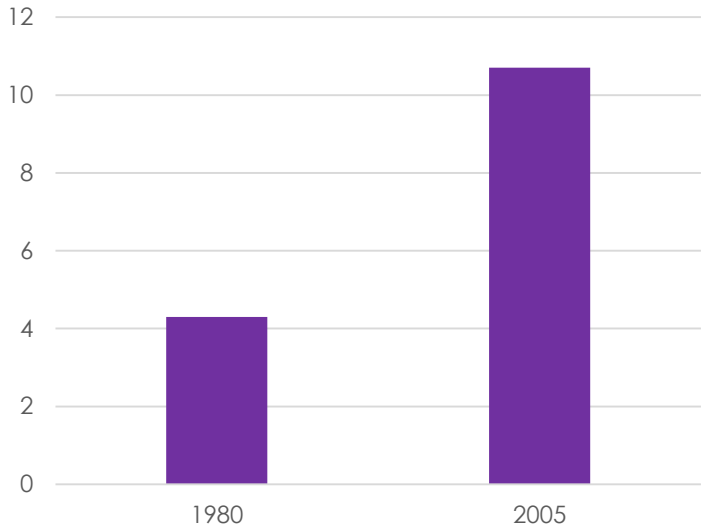
Publications

(from Web of Science)



Citations

(from Web of Science, in millions)



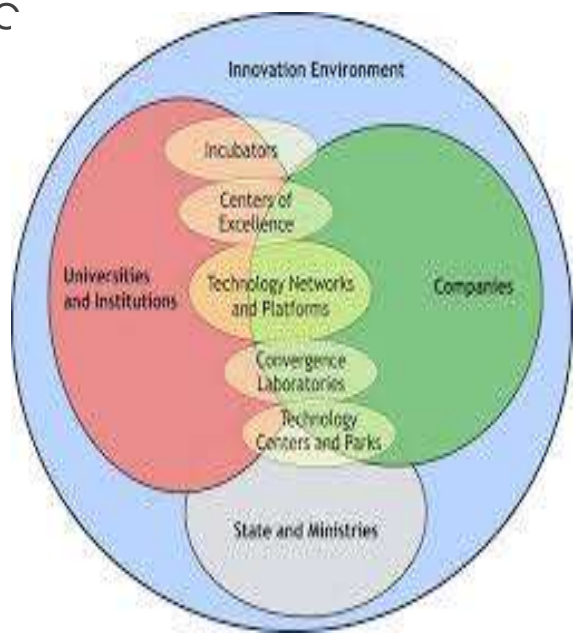
University Role in Top 50 Inventions, 1955-2005

- **Most Important Role (8)**
  - Coronary bypass surgery
  - DNA fingerprinting
  - Fuel cells
  - Genetic engineering
  - Genetic sequencing
  - In vitro fertilization
  - MRI
  - Polio vaccine

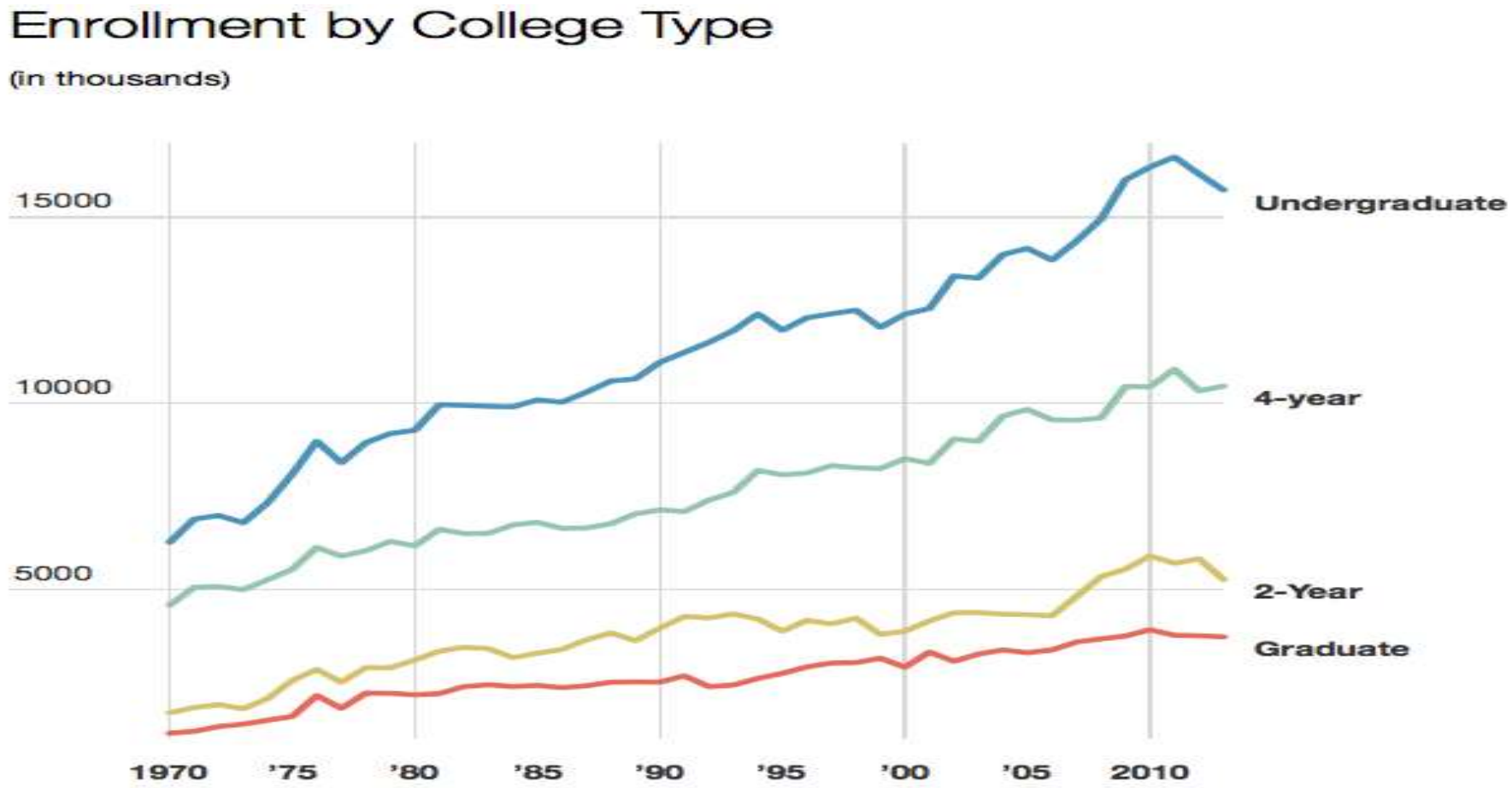
- **Very Important Role (12)**
  - ARAPANET
  - Fiber optics
  - High-yield rice
  - HTML
  - Industrial robots
  - Laser beam
  - MP3 Player
  - Pacemaker
  - Personal computer
  - Video games
  - World Wide Web

Porousness & Prominence

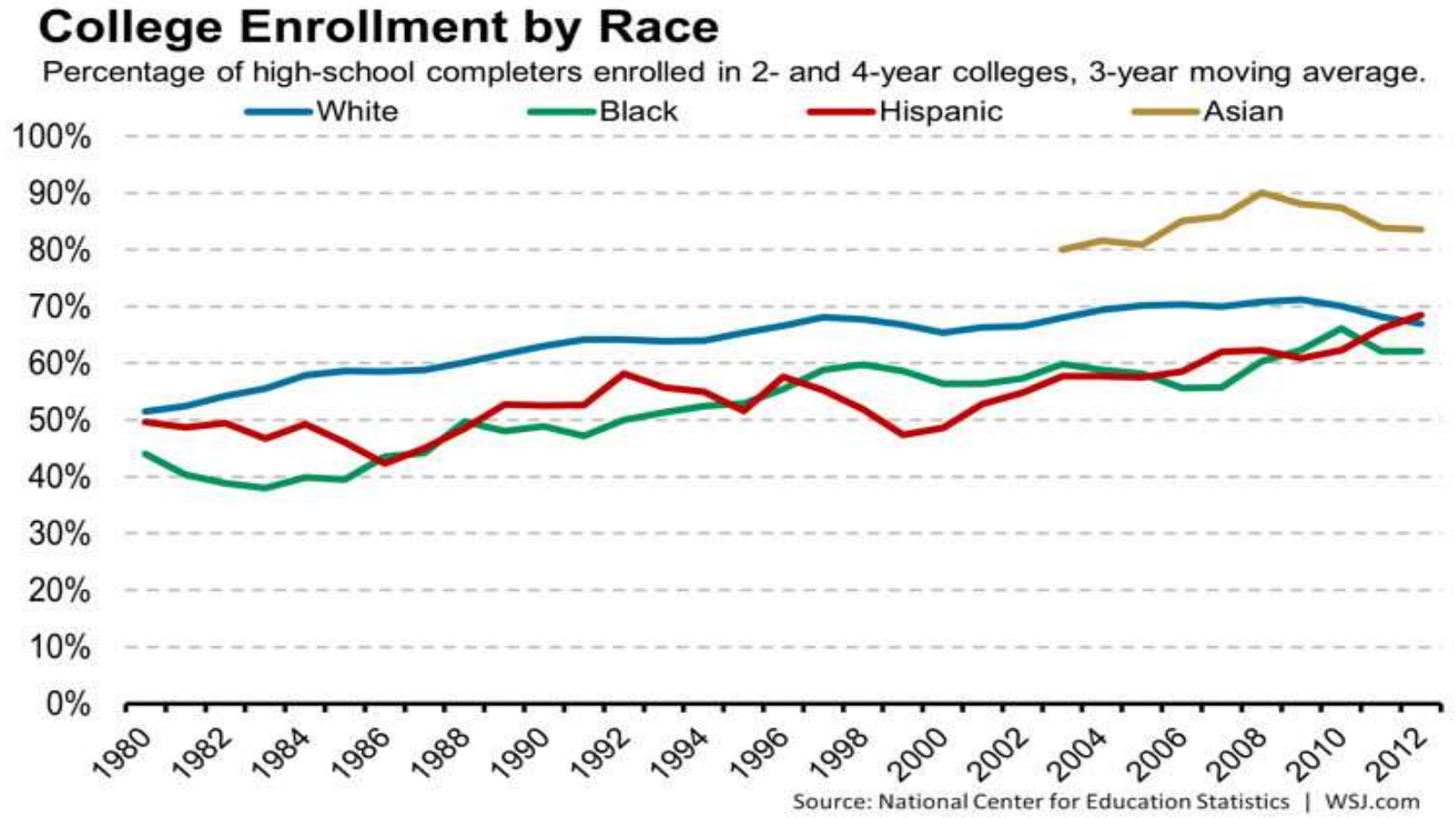
- **New York Times Study:** Professors the most frequently cited sources for expert opinion (followed by political officials)
- **Circulation of Ideas Study:** Establishes regular trade in ideas between institutional sectors through cases studies of exports from and imports tc academe. Examples: balanced scorecard, box office formulas, user-based design, scenario planning.
- **Industries employing large proportions (10% or more) of workers with advanced degrees now contribute 50% to U.S. GDP.** Includes many of the most dynamic industries in the economy.



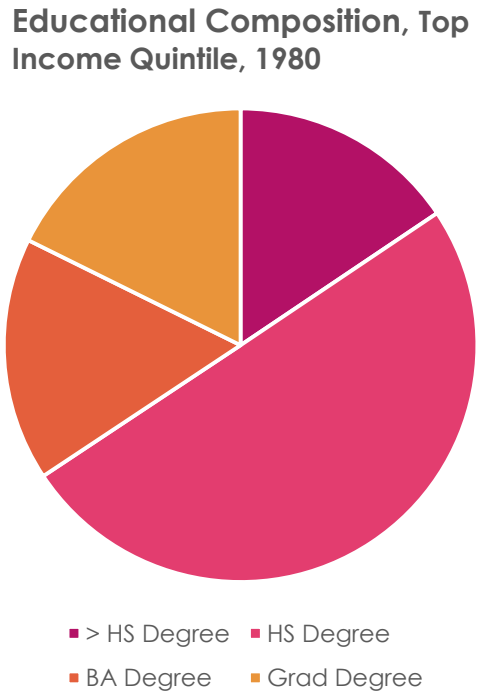
Trends in Undergraduate & Graduate Enrollments

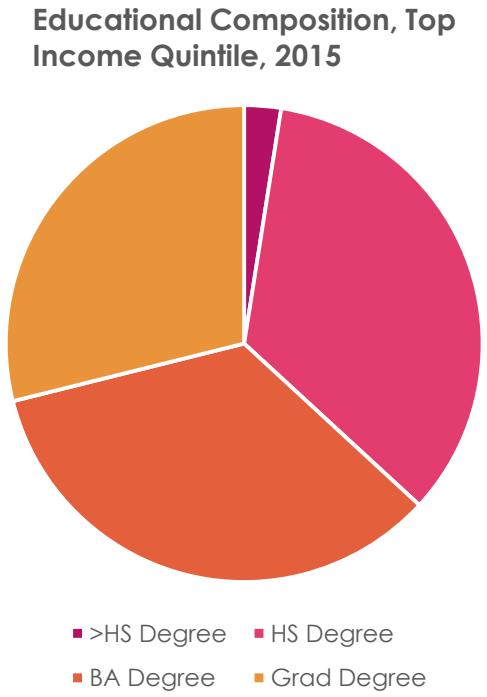


Trends in College Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



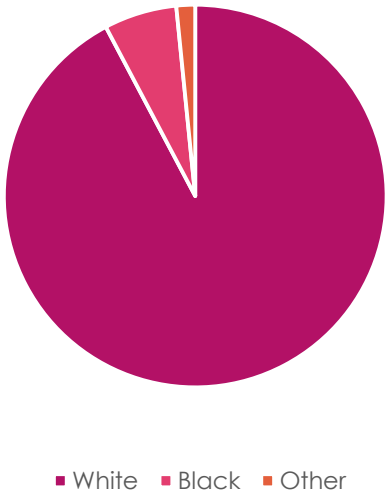
Educational Composition of the Top Quintile, 1980 & 2015



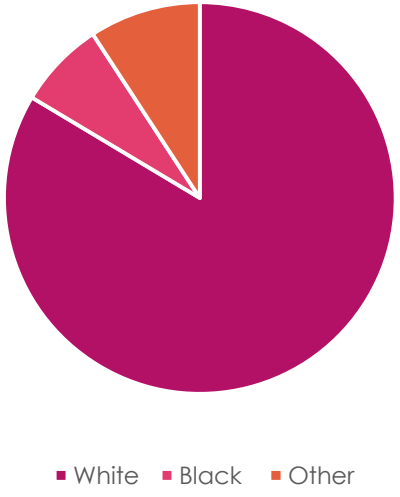


Racial & Gender Composition of Top Quintile, 1980 and 2015

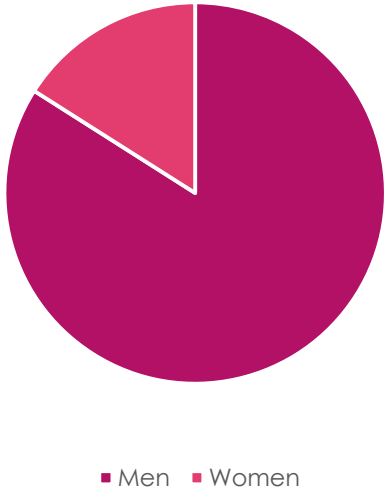
Racial Composition, Top Income Quintile, 1980



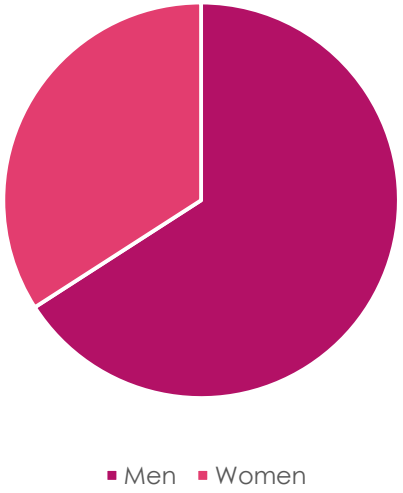
Racial Composition, Top Income Quintile, 2015



Gender Composition, Top Income Quintile, 1980



Gender Composition, Top Income Quintile, 2015



Million-Dollar Plus Gifts, 1990 & 2000

1990			2000		
Academic Fields	**295**	**$973.4 m.**	**Academic Fields**	**695**	**$3.33 b.**
Non-Academic	122	$390.2 m.	Non-Academic	329	$1.52 b.
Unidentified	116	$497.0 m.	Unidentified	203	$380.7 m.
Total	**533**	**$1.86 b.**	**Total**	**1227**	**$5.23 b.**

Sources: Author's calculations from Foundation Center (2008, 2010) and IUPUI Center on Philanthropy (2011).

Million-Dollar Plus Gifts (continued)

1990

Field	No. of Gifts	Total Amt.
Medicine	54	$194.6 m.
Engineering	28	$131.0 m.
Natural Science	37	$141.6 m.
Arts	33	$126.6 m.
Religion/Theology	13	$ 98.1 m.
Business	36	$ 86.5 m.
Social Science	10	$ 35.1 m.
Humanities	14	$ 32.4 m.
Law/Public Policy	18	$ 28.5 m.
Education	14	$ 27.5 m.
Computer Science	9	$ 21.3 m.
Communications	8	$ 15.7 m.
Human Services	7	$ 10.6 m.
Agriculture	3	$ 8.1 m.
Public Health	5	$ 7.2 m.
Cultural Studies	4	$ 4.6 m.
Nursing	3	$ 4.0 m.
Academic Fields	**295**	**$973.4 m.**

2000

Field	No. of Gifts	Total Amt.
Medicine	100	$696.7 m.
Business	75	$500.4 m.
Engineering	41	$423.1 m.
Natural Science	77	$383.7 m.
Arts	59	$200.9 m.
Public Health	29	$187.7 m.
Education	55	$167.7 m.
Computer Science	21	$141.7 m.
Religion/Theology	47	$128.3 m.
Social Science	50	$109.0 m.
Communications	25	$ 83.5 m.
Law/Public Policy	31	$ 74.4 m.
Humanities	18	$ 69.6 m.
Human Services	17	$ 47.4 m.
Agriculture	13	$ 45.8 m.
Nursing	18	$ 41.0 m.
Cultural Studies	17	$ 36.5 m.
Academic Fields	**695**	**$3.33 b.**

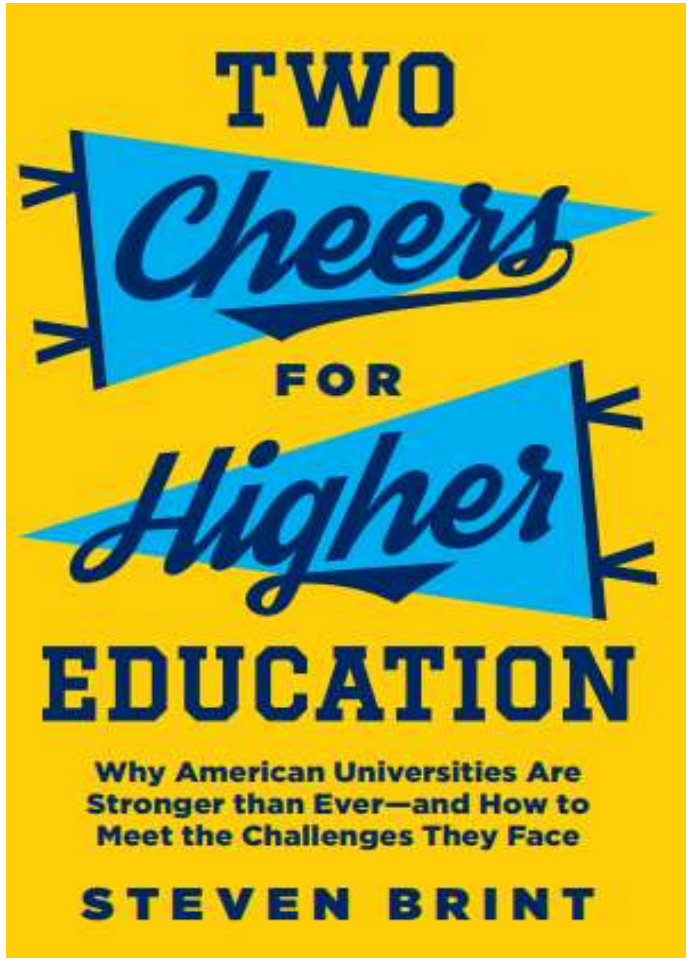
The Argument of *Two Cheers for Higher Education*

1. THREE LOGICS OF GROWTH
2. ACCOMMODATION AND CONFLICT BETWEEN THE 3 LOGICS
3. THE PRIORITIES OF PATRONS
4. THE CONSEQUENCES OF GROWTH & GROWING PROMINENCE

Meaning of “Two Cheers” in US Usage

- In the United States, if a team or an individual has performed very well, it is common to use the term “three cheers” for them.

- The term “two cheers” means, roughly, “good job, but there are still some problems to correct.”



Three Growth Logics

- **The Logic of Academic Professionalism**: Solve problems defined by the disciplines (and at their interstices)
- **The Logic of the Market** (including especially efforts to contribute to technological innovation): Invest resources for revenue gains
- **Logic of Social Inclusion**: Reach out and support previously under-represented groups

The Argument of *Two Cheers*

- The dominant system of academic professionalism is oriented to **identifying and solving problems in the disciplines** and **teaching disciplinary knowledge** bases to students.
- During the period, two movements grew up alongside this dominant system: the **movements for technological innovation** and **social inclusion**. These movements had a sizable impact because they were **supported by mobilized constituencies and powerful patrons**. They helped fuel expansion and the growing prominence of universities.
- **Accommodation between the three logics was the norm**. Engineering and medical deans, for example, found themselves rewarding contributions to the literature, applauding the entrepreneurial activities of researchers, and supporting efforts to diversify the student body and the faculty.

Competition & Conflict Were Also Evident at Times…

Over Technological Innovation

- Levels of industry influence
- Conflicts of interest
- Conflicts of commitment
- Perceptions of an erosion of basic science funding

Over Social Inclusion

- Standards for admission and hiring
- Equity in access to valuable educational experiences
- Allegations of unconscious or conscious bias in research/teaching
- Racially-motivated hate crimes & sexual assaults
- "Political correctness" controversies

The Argument (continued)

- These movements were not the only forces for growth. **Federal, state, and donor patronage also fueled expansion and the growing prominence of universities**. As states disinvested in public higher education, federal and donor patronage became particularly important. The era saw large federal and donor increases in financial aid and research expenditures.

- Professors tended to favor disciplinary professionalism and social inclusion. Patrons tended to favored technological innovation and rewards to talented students (especially in areas in which they had been successful). **The tensions between these two sets of actors encouraged the dynamism of the whole**.

The Argument (continued)

- **Growth & Growing Prominence Had Consequences:**
  - In the decline of the academic ethos
  - In the rise of the "practical arts" connected to power centers in the U.S. economy
  - In the divergence between fields linked/not linked to federal patronage
  - In the rise of graduate credentials as increasingly essential for labor market advantages
  - In the development of agenda-driven funding in government and the philanthropic foundations
  - In an accumulation of university administrators & growth of an academic proletariat

Social Inclusion Was Balanced by New Modes of Status Acquisition

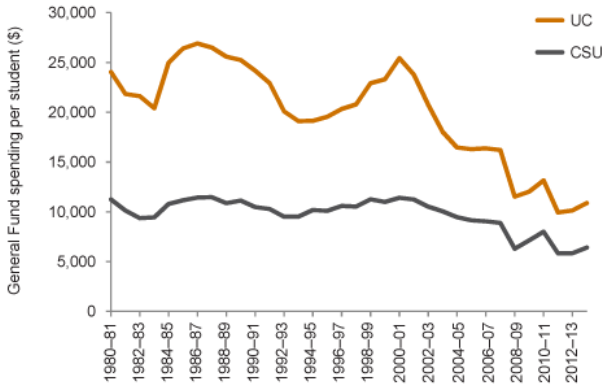
- **New High-Status Tracks:**
  - Quantitative Majors
  - Graduate Degrees, esp. those linked to power centers in the U.S. Economy
  - Public "Flagship" State Universities join Private Elite Universities at the Top
- **New Status Locations on Campus:**
  - Honors Programs
  - Restricted Majors
  - Leadership Programs
  - Entrepreneurship Programs

Challenges – And How to Meet Them

1. LIMITED LEARNING
2. COST ESCALATION
3. ONLINE COMPETITION
4. SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

The Book Does Not Ignore the Challenges Facing Higher Education

General Fund Spending,1980-2012



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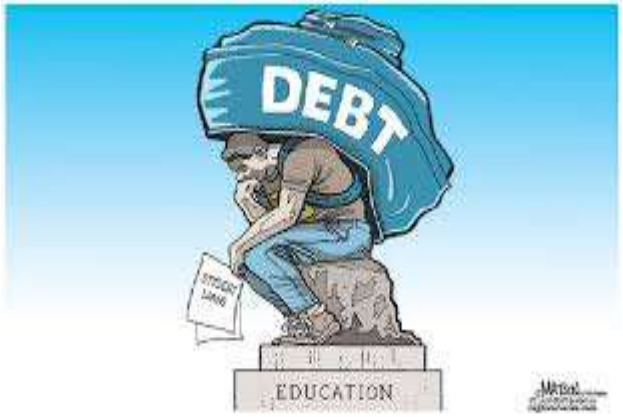

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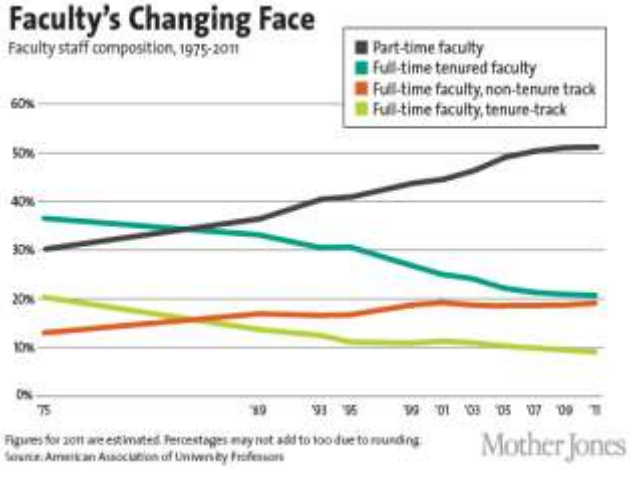
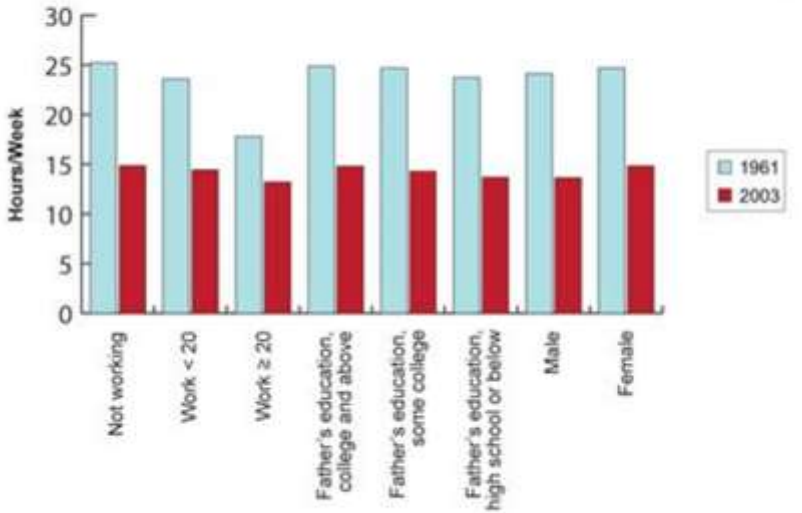


A Major Challenge: The Quality of Teaching and Learning

- Evidence that **many students are learning little in college**.
- Two largely failed movements: Teaching Reform and Student Learnina Outcomes.
- **"The New Progressivism"** was a major result of reform
- Hope for Improvement from the sciences of learning:
  - * **Participation mechanisms**
  - * **Accountability mechanisms**
  - * **Teaching for Understanding mechanisms**
  - * **New methods for evaluating teaching**

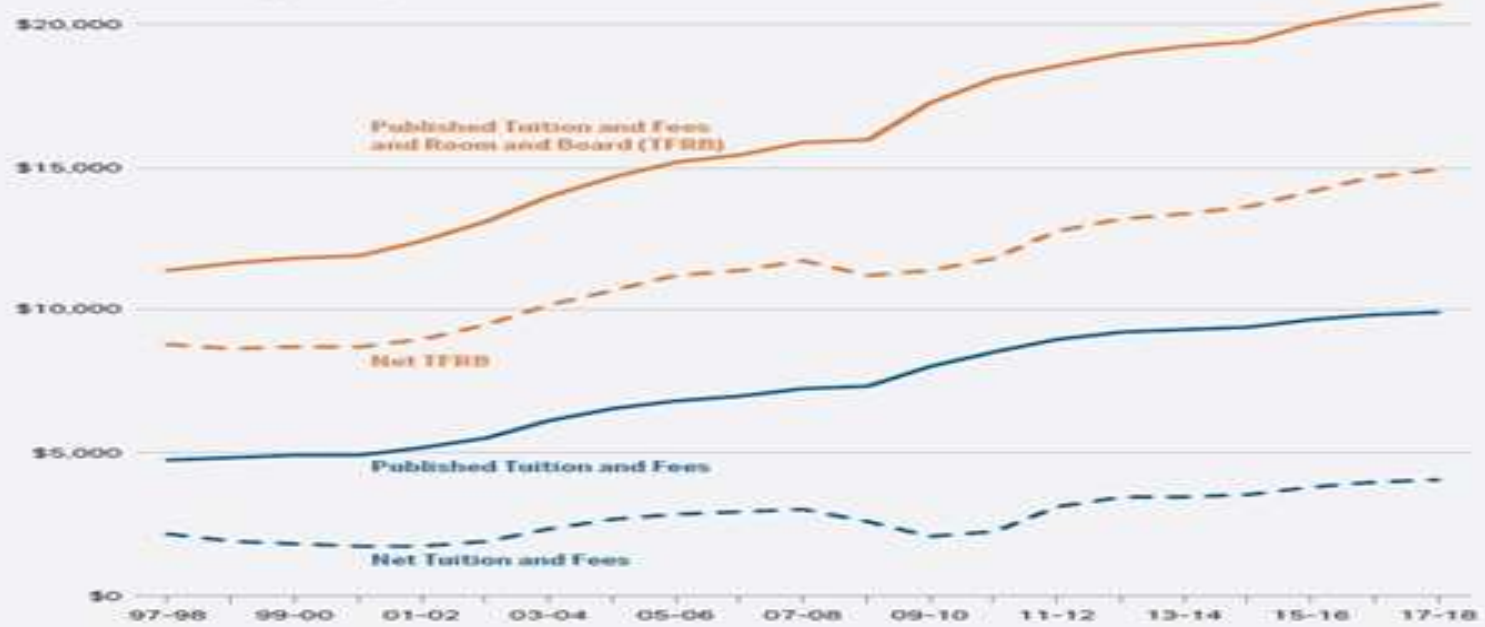
FIGURE 2
AVERAGE STUDY TIME FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS AT FOUR-YEAR U.S. COLLEGES BY WORK STATUS, PARENTAL EDUCATION, AND GENDER, 1961 AND 2003



SOURCE: Authors' calculations.

Public University Costs, 1997-2017

FIGURE 9 Average Published and Net Prices in 2017 Dollars, Full-Time In-State Undergraduate Students at Public Four-Year Institutions, 1997-98 to 2017-18



NOTES: Estimates of net price exclude military/veterans aid, which awards relatively large amounts to a small number of students. Because information on grant aid and education tax benefits for 2017-18 is not yet available, the net price for 2017-18 is estimated based on 2016-17 financial aid data.

SOURCES: College Board, Annual Survey of Colleges; *Trends in Student Aid 2017*; NCES, IPEDS Fall Enrollment data.

Tuition Rising

- **Tuition cost has increased at three to four times the rate of inflation** since the 1980s.
- **Universities have saved tens of millions of dollars through cost-saving mechanisms** but this has only very rarely gone to lowering tuition costs.
- **State investment is cyclical, but shows shallow restorations during good times**.
- Attractive proposals now exist for **income-contingent loan repayment plans**.
- **State-university compacts** could also help, if states would abide by them.

Online Competition

- Online course taking: five times higher in 2015 than 2000.
- Corporate efforts to institutionalize "badges" and other "micro-credentials."
- Online courses can be just as effective as face-to-face. However, some groups do not tend to do as well online: **students with low secondary school grades, men, and minority students.**
- Online fails to capture some of the educational power of the physical campus: **development of interpersonal skills, oral presentation skills, reading body language and emotions, etc.**
- A case can be made for regulating online, but the trend has been to "let the market decide."

Digital Badges

Speech Controversies

- **Bigoted speech is relatively common** on college campuses.
- Efforts to reduce bigoted speech have been largely responsible for what has come to be known as **political correctness.**
- Distinction between **"PC-1"** (sensitivity to language) and **"PC-2"** (effort to impose dogma about how to think and speak)
- **Political correctness has become a special target of the political Right.**
- **My Recommendation:** (1) Expand social inclusion mission to include special consideration for white as well as minority working-class; (2) attempt to curb the excesses of administratively-supported political correctness; and (3) create more opportunities for all students to experience the liberating potential of the rationalistic tradition.

Questions?

THANK YOU!

EMAIL: BRINT@UCR.EDU