

Altbach, P. G., Gumport, P. J., & Berdahl, R. O. (Eds.). (2011). *American Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Social, Political and Economic Challenges* (3rd ed.). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Review by David J. Edelman

This excellent compendium is an indispensable reference volume for those concerned about higher education philosophy, theory, and practice. It provides a cogent review of the critical historical basis to university outreach and engagement. As the third edition of a book that first appeared in 1995 and again in 2005, it updates the material of the previous editions, and points to likely future developments in higher education from the perspective of 2011. Since changes in higher education are occurring at an ever faster pace, a fourth edition would be expected in 5 or 10 years. Having the entire series on one's reference shelf would provide a comprehensive history of higher education with a discussion of the most pertinent issues at specific spaced points in time.

American Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century is divided into four parts: the setting, external forces, the academic community, and central issues for the 21st century. Each part contains three to six detailed, well-written, scholarly chapters. The book is well-organized and relatively easy to read, although one would not be likely to read it straight through. Rather, one would read particular chapters for specific research information or to provide content for lectures. Consequently, some chapters make general points that are discussed in detail in other chapters. Each chapter thus can stand alone as well as contribute to the fabric of an ambitious chronicle of higher education in America since the 17th century. Roger Geiger's chapter on what he refers to as the ten generations of American higher education is particularly useful. He presents and aggregates various processes of change over time to discern fundamental changes in the entire system of U.S. higher education. In addition, each chapter is meticulously cited, and provides extensive notes to enable academics and students to pursue further research on the issues it raises.

Thus, the book gives the reader the luxury of having the historical record of American academia in one volume. It presents the social, political, and economic challenges to higher education over time so that current issues can be understood and confronted within the context of accumulated experience. Chapters on the development of American higher education, autonomy and accountability,

academic freedom, the roles of the federal government and the states, the legal environment, external constituencies, professors, students, and university presidents, which form the first three parts of the volume, provide the historical lens through which the reader can internalize the book's fourth part dealing with present-day challenges and future actions. The challenges to be confronted (e.g., financing higher education, coping with rapid technological change in teaching and research, integration of graduate education with research, curriculum reform, market developments in higher education, the diversity imperative) point to the need for an increasing effort by university administrators and faculty members regarding outreach to and engagement with constituencies whose importance to the university and within society, as well as their interrelationships, are ever changing. The constituencies include legislators at both national and state levels who demand accountability, and provide less funding to universities each year; parents who are hard pressed to pay for their children to attend college; and undergraduate and graduate students who are increasingly diverse, not only in the traditional differences of race, ethnicity, and gender, but also in immigration status, English language ability, culture, religion, age, and sexual orientation.

Consequently, Part 4 of the book is the most salient. It provides fodder for passionate discussion among educators, administrators, and students. Although the first three parts are extremely useful, the part on 21st-century issues comes alive. Daryl G. Smith's chapter on changes and the future outlook for diversity in higher education is noteworthy. Its approach has an edge that some readers may consider too political. The chapter will stimulate thought and discussion.

A little more "point of view" in each of the chapters, rather than their impartial and somewhat staid tone, would have made the book special indeed. Given the magnitude of challenges to higher education in this century, a book that generates controversy through differing viewpoints on the same set of issues, and simultaneously presents impeccable academic work, would be a major contribution. This is, however, a minor criticism of an impressive volume that those concerned with the future of American colleges and universities should acquire.

About the Reviewer

David J. Edelman is a professor of planning at the University of Cincinnati. His research interests include urban environmental management, energy policy planning, development planning

and management, environmentally sensitive planning and urban design, and international planning. He earned his bachelor's degree in history from the University of Rochester, and his master's degree in city and regional planning and his Ph.D. in policy planning and regional analysis from Cornell University.

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