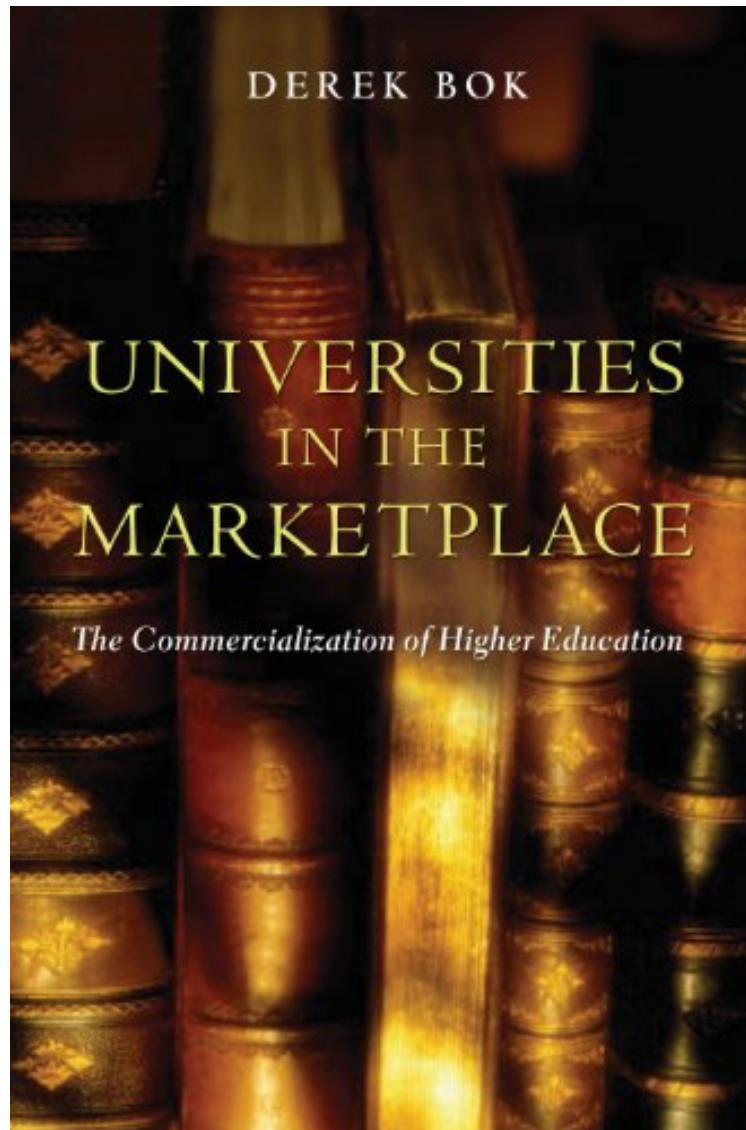


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## **Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education (The William G. Bowen Memorial Series in Higher Education)**

*Derek Bok*

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**Derek Bok : Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education (The William G. Bowen Memorial Series in Higher Education)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education (The William G. Bowen Memorial Series in Higher Education):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Nice Delineation of the IssuesBy Richard B.

SchwartzNonacademic observers frequently express the wish that universities `be run like businesses'. The (often sad) fact is that they already are so run, to the detriment of academic principle and academic quality. Derek Bok is all too aware of these realities and explores them in this relatively brief book.He is aware of the temptations, of course: big-time college athletics, licensing agreements with sportswear companies, the siren song of institution-saving patent income, the faculty/institutional participation in tech transfer businesses, medical school participation in clinical trials with self-interested pharmaceutical companies, the lure of the internet and mass, for-profit coursework, the exploitation of university extension, the erosion of admission standards in the face of significant development opportunities . . . the list goes on and on.Bok provides a nice enumeration of the temptations, expresses sympathy for universities with regard to conditions that are already too far gone (athletics, the relationships between medical schools and the medical industry, e.g.) acknowledges that survival will generally trump values and principles, shows the pros and cons of commercial activities, relates some horror stories and offers counsel which, if implemented, would help to ameliorate our condition before it is too late.Unfortunately, the advice takes a predictable form. For example, some university research has resulted in triumphs that have changed the institutions which developed the process or made the discovery. One thinks, for example (and Bok notes), Harry Steenbock's process for treating milk so that its constituent vitamin D would eliminate rickets. The Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (which manages the Steenbock (and other) patent income is one of Wisconsin's major comparative advantages. On the other hand, chasing patent income can often fail; it can divert universities from their fundamental purposes and it can distort their values. Bok then offers a host of examples of things that one might do (increased trustee regulatory oversight, etc.) to ameliorate this situation. However, he also acknowledges the fact that his proposals are unlikely to be a be-all and end-all solution, that there are two sides to this issue, etc. etc.Thus, we get a good elucidation of the potential problems, some examples of how succumbing to the temptations can be deleterious (but with an awareness that the payoffs, if handled wisely, can be very advantageous), some suggestions for muting the problems (with an awareness that they are likely to be insufficient in and of themselves) and a final hope that we will all do good and avoid evil, to the extent possible.The book benefits from Bok's extensive experience and usually clear-headed judgment; it is limited, of course, by the fact that Harvard's `problems' are markedly different from nearly everyone else's. It may have greater temptations but it also has the armor of a multibillion dollar endowment. At one point, for example, he argues that we should be wary of using extension as a cost center (i.e. a cost-generating center) because the college and graduate school (to which extension's `positive variances' would likely be reallocated) already have enough money. Ah, would that that were always so. He also talks about the generosity of the country in funding public education. Not to bite any of the hands which feed us . . . but that allocation now represents a smaller and smaller portion of public universities' total budgets and entrepreneurship (though hopefully not of the whorish variety) is now a university necessity.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Sobering Thoughts for AcademicsBy Elizabeth T. SmithAs state legislatures squeeze funding for higher education and private university endowments shrink, entrepreneurial leaders in higher education have found creative ways to fill budget gaps by attracting more students and partnering with private corporations. Bok has given us a series of cases in which these budget enhancement measures violate core values of higher education and harm universities. Central to his argument is that the entrepreneurial university ultimately cannot serve two masters; revenue enhancement strategies often compromise the central mission of the academy. Football programs that require players to spend excessive hours training and traveling make it very difficult for team members to obtain an education. Partnerships with corporations that require secrecy clauses in contracts interfere with academic norms of peer review and wide sharing of new findings. These norms support the progression of scientific knowledge and without them, the rate of discovery will inevitably slow.One of the more sobering sections of the book looks at the sad state of distance education, the fastest growing sector of higher education today. The lure of low-cost high-profit online courses has proved so irresistible that many institutions are willing to forego quality to partake in the revenue bonanza that distance education has become. When students become customers whom teaching faculty must serve, what happens to academic values? If the customer is always right and students all want A's, untenured professors and adjuncts are in a difficult bind.This book has made me think more critically about my own university's foray into Division I athletics and distance education. There is nothing inherently wrong with either but it is critical to retain the core values of the institution, even at the expense of winning games, contracts and tuition dollars.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Bok totally misses the role that indirect costs (IDC) play ...By Paul N. WilsonBok totally misses the role that indirect costs (IDC) play in the incentive structure at Research I universities. As a result, his analysis is partial and his self-serving because he does not explicitly discuss the financial incentive structure of administrators associated with IDC.

Is everything in a university for sale if the price is right? In this book, one of America's leading educators cautions that the answer is all too often "yes." Taking the first comprehensive look at the growing commercialization of our academic institutions, Derek Bok probes the efforts on campus to profit financially not only from athletics but increasingly, from education and research as well. He shows how such ventures are undermining core academic values

and what universities can do to limit the damage. Commercialization has many causes, but it could never have grown to its present state had it not been for the recent, rapid growth of money-making opportunities in a more technologically complex, knowledge-based economy. A brave new world has now emerged in which university presidents, enterprising professors, and even administrative staff can all find seductive opportunities to turn specialized knowledge into profit. Bok argues that universities, faced with these temptations, are jeopardizing their fundamental mission in their eagerness to make money by agreeing to more and more compromises with basic academic values. He discusses the dangers posed by increased secrecy in corporate-funded research, for-profit Internet companies funded by venture capitalists, industry-subsidized educational programs for physicians, conflicts of interest in research on human subjects, and other questionable activities. While entrepreneurial universities may occasionally succeed in the short term, reasons Bok, only those institutions that vigorously uphold academic values, even at the cost of a few lucrative ventures, will win public trust and retain the respect of faculty and students. Candid, evenhanded, and eminently readable, *Universities in the Marketplace* will be widely debated by all those concerned with the future of higher education in America and beyond.