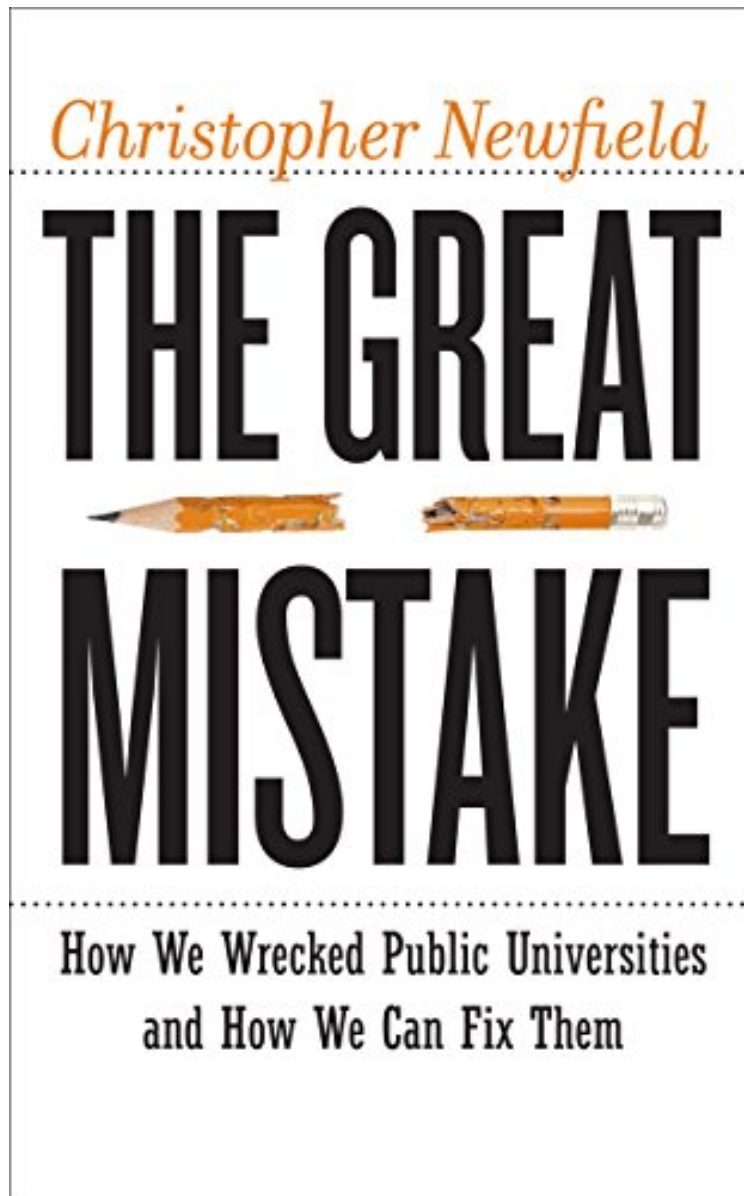


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## The Great Mistake (Critical University Studies)

*Christopher Newfield*

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**Christopher Newfield : The Great Mistake (Critical University Studies)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Great Mistake (Critical University Studies):

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. In the current book Newfield describes how a great public university system was failed by state governmentBy Henry C PowellThis is an outstanding contemporary account by an expert on the subject. Prof Newfield is one of the most expert members of the UC systemwide professoriate to write such a book and it bookends a previous work of his, a 2008 account 'Unmaking the Public University'. In the current book

Newfield describes how a great public university system was failed by state government, university administrators and by the public. Key to all this is the notion that higher education is a 'private' good and therefore legislators and university administrators are very quick to raise tuition and other fees while declining to argue with legislators and the public, that the state and the voters have a real interest in educating our students, especially those in the top 12-15%. Great UC Presidents in the past, Benjamin I. Wheeler, Robert Gordon Sproul and above all Clark Kerr had well articulated visions of the benefits of public education and were ready to share that vision with elected officials from the US Presidents down to state legislators. Before globalization California businesses had a real interest in the well educated work force that emerged from CSU's and UC campuses. But Silicon Valley while happy to have a supply of graduates, doesn't seem to 'get it' that that supply is threatened when 'the democracy of intellect' is ignored and only those able to pay for a 'private good' receive third level education. Legislators struggle to budget for MediCal and prison costs, but seem oblivious to the fact that research universities, such as the UCs and the leading CSUs are the forging ground for scientific innovation and the economic benefits that flow from academic investment. Newfield's critique of MOOCs (massive online open courses) is particularly sharp and he wisely points out that a well structured arts and humanities curriculum provides the structure and the challenges that make students grow with their learning, business courses and introduction to management etc simply don't offer the same kind of challenging material, mastery of which is the real process of 'graduated' education. As he notes, students now pay more for less, this is a cruel irony for anyone engaged in the business of education. America's colleges and universities are among this nation's greatest success stories, Newfield is so right that it is a great mistake to disinvest in America's youth and dismiss the whole educational process as a 'private good'. Highly recommended! 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A reader friendly unpacking of our critical generational challenge By Kajetan Don't be fooled by the title. In this very readable analysis, Newfield correctly identifies public universities as the essential beating heart of the American aspirational middle class. Without pointing fingers, he drills to the essential fallacy of privatization and succinctly lays out a seven step solution for restoring our broken public university system, more essential now than ever. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Authoritative source on public education in the US By David This book is very insightful and intelligent. Chris Newfield is certainly the most authoritative author on the complex subject of higher education in the US. I only wish that enough enough people would read this book, especially policy makers, so that we can begin to recapture the original dream of public education.

Higher education in America, still thought to be the world leader, is in crisis. University students are falling behind their international peers in attainment, while suffering from unprecedented student debt. For over a decade, the realm of American higher education has been wracked with self-doubt and mutual recrimination, with no clear solutions on the horizon. How did this happen? In this stunning new book, Christopher Newfield offers readers an in-depth analysis of the "great mistake" that led to the cycle of decline and dissolution, a mistake that impacts every public college and university in America. What might occur, he asserts, is no less than locked-in economic inequality and the fall of the middle class. In *The Great Mistake*, Newfield asks how we can fix higher education, given the damage done by private-sector models. The current accepted wisdom; that to succeed, universities should be more like businesses; is dead wrong. Newfield combines firsthand experience with expert analysis to show that private funding and private-sector methods cannot replace public funding or improve efficiency, arguing that business-minded practices have increased costs and gravely damaged the university's value to society. It is imperative that universities move beyond the destructive policies that have led them to destabilize their finances, raise tuition, overbuild facilities, create a national student debt crisis, and lower educational quality. Laying out an interconnected cycle of mistakes, from subsidizing the private sector to "the poor get poorer" funding policies, Newfield clearly demonstrates how decisions made in government, in the corporate world, and at colleges themselves contribute to the dismantling of once-great public higher education. A powerful, hopeful critique of the unnecessary death spiral of higher education, *The Great Mistake* is essential reading for those who wonder why students have been paying more to get less and for everyone who cares about the role the higher education system plays in improving the lives of average Americans.

"A wonderfully readable and vitally important book. *The Great Mistake* is not only an impassioned call for the refunding of public higher education in the United States but a brief for the end of neoliberalism altogether." (Michael Beacut; rubeacut;, author of *The Humanities, Higher Education, and Academic Freedom: Three Necessary Arguments*) "Newfield exposes thirty years of casting the private sector as the most efficient benefactor of the public good. For higher education, the result has been soaring tuitions and expenses with plummeting services, fewer faculty, and diminished educational offerings. This book gives us an action plan to reverse this Great Mistake before it becomes a tragedy that dooms our youth and our nation's future." (Cathy N. Davidson, author of *Now You See It: How Technology and Brain Science Will Transform Schools and Business for the 21st Century*) "Public research universities are in trouble, and Christopher Newfield shows us why: they are run on false principles. In fact, sponsored research costs more than it brings in. Humanities departments yield profits that subsidize the sciences. And higher

education really is a public good--in economic as well as idealistic terms. This learned and passionate book offers a thorough analysis and traces the path to recovery." (Anthony T. Grafton, Author of *Worlds Made by Words*)"Irsquo;ve lived through the dismantling of public higher education and watched it crush students. Chris Newfield is right? policymakers have made A Great Mistake?and the nation will pay for it for decades to come. His analysis is astute and his prescriptions for change are spot-on. Read this book slowly and carefully, and then take action." (Sara Goldrick-Rab, Author of *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream*)"Who has paid the price for the privatization of American higher education? You have!nbsp;Written with an insidersquo;s financial detail and a scholar-citizensquo;s outrage, *The Great Mistake* is an intimate and definitive exposeacute; of how our long experiment in corporate logic has failed the university and failed the students who leave it weighed down by debt but without the sophisticated knowledge they need and deserve. I cansquo;t imagine a more eloquent case for higher education as a public good." (Bruce Robbins, Author of *The Beneficiary: Cosmopolitanism from the Viewpoint of Inequality*)"A devastating account of how American public universities became caught in a lquo;doom looprsquo; that sees todayrsquo;s students paying more to get less. Toughly argued, data driven, *The Great Mistake* delivers a compelling economic and political case for pubic reinvestment. Every higher-education policy maker, on both sides of the Atlantic, should read it." (Helen Small, University of Oxford)"A well-written and readable work in the area of critical university studies, this book will be of interest to academics and general readers wanting more information on the causes of current issues in today's public educational institutions." (Library Journal)"Amid much hand-wringing over the corporatization of the university and much chatter about the impending digital disruption of higher education, Newfieldrsquo;s contribution stands out. He mounts a deeply informed and impassioned defense of the idea that our economic, cultural, and political progress depends to a large degree on quality higher education ? or more specifically, on quality higher education that has a liberal arts component, that affords equal access, and that is guaranteed by the 'public provision.'" (Los Angeles of Books)"... straightforward and compelling..." (Times Higher Education)"Irsquo;s a compelling case and an important vision." (Andrew Perrin Scatterplot)"Newfield creates a way to think of the entire landscape for the complex situation institutions face when trying to educate students with the highest quality, best learning outcomes, and fewer resources than ever before." (Education )"This book is a major addition to the Critical University Studies corpus, and should be required reading for anyone concerned about the fate of public education in the United States... Newfieldrsquo;s writing is clear and accessible enough for beginning college students even as his larger argument is sophisticated enough for graduate-level study." (Radical Teacher)"Anyone who seeks a trenchant, nuanced grasp of the situation in US public universities today, and of how we got here, should read this book. They will find themselves grateful for the insight, seriousness, and virtuosity with which Newfield has conducted his investigation." (Public Books)"Christopher Newfieldrsquo;s *The Great Mistake* is probably the most important, and certainly one of the best, books published on higher education in this century. It should be essential reading for everyone?faculty members, administrators, trustees, philanthropists, and politicians?looking to rescue our floundering public higher education system from the pitiful morass into which it has descended." (American Association of University Professors)About the AuthorChristopher Newfield is a professor of literature and American studies at the University of Californiandash;Santa Barbara. He is the author of *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* and *Ivy and Industry: Business and the Making of the American University, 1880ndash;1980*.