

Hall, Joshua C. (Ed.). (2010). *Doing More With Less: Making Colleges Work Better*. New York, NY: Springer. Pages: 283. Price: 90.00 USD (hardcover).

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This edited volume is well worth the read. The essays were commissioned by Richard Vedder in his capacity as the director of the Center for College Affordability and Productivity (CCAP). Each provides examples of higher education in the United States, and readers in Canada will be challenged to examine their views about comparable practices at home, especially within the context of current discussions about the ongoing affordability of high-quality and accessible higher education systems.

At the outset, readers are left in no doubt that the book offers a full frontal attack on the status quo. In the introductory essay, Vedder declares, "With the possible exception of prostitution, I know of no other profession other than teaching that has had absolutely no productivity advance in the 2,400 years since Socrates taught the youth of Athens" (p. 2). Vedder claims that institutional rigidities and practices combined with vested interests have distorted the application of market forces with respect to higher education.

Each essay explores higher education through the lens of market economics. Part I contains contributions that evaluate and debate the causes of rising costs. Andrew Gillen discusses financial aid and argues that unintended consequences arise from how it is implemented. Gillen describes the correlations between institutional prestige, applications, tuition rates, and student aid. He shows how policies intended to promote accessibility operate contrary to market forces, acting as a subsidy mechanism, not as a point of control for costs. A distinction between need-based aid and merit-based aid is made by Gregory Randolph, who contends that the latter is utilized to boost enrolment and attract student talent. He argues that the practice constitutes a form of price discrimination, which prevents pre-entry cost comparison and causes sticker shock to some.

The two essays on intercollegiate athletics may serve as a wake-up call and may even make supporters of college athletics reconsider. The authors show that college athletics is not a panacea for funding woes and can be a catalyst for escalat-

ing costs. William Shughart, for example, argues that in the United States, college sports is a business. While it can enhance institutional prestige and the student experience, Shughart posits that it provides a free ride for professional sporting organizations by way of no-cost talent development. The essay by Matthew Denhart, Robert Villwock, and Vedder goes further and examines the trade-off between academics and athletics. Using a cost-benefit analysis, they show that athletics is not revenue positive and conclude that it is not a good investment, either for institutions or for the main body of students, who ultimately subsidize the costs.

Not surprisingly, given the focus of the book, the for-profit sector is also examined. While the critical essays already mentioned may open new vistas of analysis, the examples offered as potential solutions reiterate mainstream pro-market messages. Although these authors make plausible arguments, many readers will challenge the suggested remedies. James Coleman and Vedder advance the approach taken by for-profit providers such as the publicly traded Apollo Group, whose University of Phoenix continues to increase its market share. They claim that Apollo Group is an example of a success story where an organization has risen to meet the demands of the market by offering its mainly mature student-clients a no-frills education experience, through night classes and distance learning mechanisms. Efficiency is facilitated by market-inspired academic hiring practices, and price competitiveness is achieved through lean operating procedures.

For those interested in the non-university higher education sector, John Woods's essay may set a different trajectory for thinking about program delivery. For some, this chapter will seem to offer a solution; for others it may signal the worst of the horrors to come. While reading this essay, I connected it in my mind to George Ritzer's (1993) thesis about the McDonaldisation of society. The example used by Woods, Rasmussen College, is a self-proclaimed higher education factory system; the curriculum is standardized, the teaching materials are standardized, and the assessment process is standardized. Woods showcases this college as an example of a market-driven higher education enterprise, highly focused on teaching and human capital development. Woods claims that the division of labour at Rasmussen College contributes to organizational efficiency: instructors instruct, and the curriculum development team (with some input from instructors) develops programs and courses that are built around learning outcomes and identified educational skill objectives. Tuition fees include all the required books and materials. Detailed, step-by-step course packets containing lesson plans, assignments, and materials are provided to the mainly adjunct instructional staff, many of whom work full-time elsewhere.

"The Economics of For-Profit Education" is the subject and title of Tyler Cowen and Sam Papenfuss's essay. They draw attention to the growth of for-profit institutions and provide examples of industry-delivered in situ training. For them, for-profit institutions are a practical means by which to deliver vocational training, especially where quality standards are ensured by the need to satisfy external accreditation and licensing agencies, which set the requirements of entry to practice.

The book also contains essays exploring opportunities for reform. Justin M. Ross's essay discusses mechanisms for planning, optimal production possibilities, and resource allocation, and makes a strong pro-market argument. Matthew Holian and Ross look at outsourcing of non-core services and decentralization. What I found particularly interesting about their essay is the part that discusses revenue-centred management (RCM), a decentralized budget model. They provide some teaser examples, but the essay left me thirsting for more discussion about internal competition and the invisible hand at work within higher education institutions. Carrie Kerekes also advocates outsourcing and privatization, focusing on ways to reduce costs and improve efficiency. She draws attention to barriers to change, including the mission of non-profit institutions, self-interested actors, and trustee governance.

With regard to these barriers to change, Gavin Romm and Edward Stringham provide an example of market-based management (MBM) and float the technique as a win-win means to introduce market forces while maintaining non-profit status. They criticize current arrangements and offer remedies that may be unpalatable to many, including reforming the tenure system, moving away from democratic decision making, and changing organizational structures to create profit-centred departments. With respect to non-tenure academic hiring, the final essay in the collection is from G. Dirk Mateer, who provides examples based on experience. He shows how the vagaries of the market affect contractual bargaining outcomes. When reading this essay, I was faced with considering the human aspect versus economic efficiency.

Overall, this is an important book, as it broadens the discussion about the costs of higher education. It is logically organized and studies both problems and solutions. It asks readers to consider the role of the market in what the authors consider to be a higher education industry. I found that the business approach provided credible arguments, and while I am not in total agreement with the solutions offered, I concur with the authors' overall message that the role and impact of market forces must be taken into consideration in higher education inquiry. ♣

REFERENCES

Ritzer, G. (1993). *The McDonaldization of society: An investigation into the changing character of contemporary social life*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.