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Title

Future of Public Higher Education in California

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Supplemental Material

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0dd6k9gt#supplemental>

Marc Bousquet argues that public education has become less and less democratic. Primary and secondary public educational institutions are now run as if they were corporations. The metrics used to determine performance and productivity are vapid and intended on supporting administrations at the expense of students and faculty. Teachers and faculty are working harder to meet business-inspired goals, for example “testing to the test”, rather than producing graduates who have powerful analytical/critical skills. He demonstrates that so far the Obama Administration has consistently backed this ongoing process especially given the appointment of Arne Duncan as the Secretary of Education. Moreover, he focuses on why these changes are undermining students’ freedom of expression and democratic rights. He concludes with some suggestions on how faculty, students and the public might respond to these challenges.

Christopher Newfield notes that part of the loss of US competitiveness is due to the decline of its educational system especially in California which had been the model for public education for the US from the early 1960s onward. Moreover, education funding has declined as fees have increased. He outlines how the general funding model for education has changed significantly at the expense of the middle class: larger gaps in educational attainments; plummeting access to elite institutions by lower classes; and status reproduction through selectivity of the most gifted students (weighted in favor of private institutions). He suggests that this process can be turned around if new goals are established that assess success rooted in the accumulation of social capital and new more sophisticated accounting procedures that separate out different types of funding including the number of students taught and the true cost of corporate-sponsored short-term oriented research. He finishes with an agenda to push for these reforms and others.