



Notes on Privatization and
Reorganization of U.S. Higher
Education

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An Entrepreneurial Sector

- U.S. higher education always has been a plural and competitive sector
- The U.S. federal government created the student/consumer in the mid-20th century
- The student-as-consumer idea is a truly global phenomenon



The Great Capacity Crisis

- From 1945 – 1975: U.S. created the largest and most productive higher education sector in world history; this also created great expectations
- 1980 – present: Relative stasis in capacity coupled with steadily increasing demand
- Result: Cohort crowding; lots of unhappy students; new business opportunities



***But Don't Kid Yourself:
Higher education is not ONLY a
Business***

- It always has been embedded in projects of self-improvement, social service, and regional boosterism
- It always has had a big identity component
- ***That's why Americans love it so much!***



Some suggestions:

- 1) Don't scrimp on the ceremony – People want higher education to be special
- 2) Find ways to include service in your institutional mission
- 3) Find ways to honor and include alumni
- 4) Ferociously defend the authority of instructors – your long-term success requires it



Thank you.

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