



Knowledge Matters: The Public Mission of the Research University (A Columbia / SSRC Book)

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Higher education can be a vital public good, providing opportunities for students, informed citizens for democracy, and knowledge to improve the human condition. Yet public investment in universities is widely being cut, often because public purposes are neglected while private benefits dominate. In this collection, international scholars confront the realities of higher education and the future of its public and private agenda. Their perspectives illuminate the trajectory of education in the twenty-first century and the continuing importance of the university's public mission.

Reporting from Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and North America, these scholars look at the different ways universities struggle to serve public and private agendas. Contributors examine the implications of changes in funding sources as well as amounts, different administrative and policy decisions, and the significance of various approaches to assessment and evaluation. They ask whether wider student access has in fact resulted in social mobility, whether more scientific research can be treated as an open-access resource, how changes in academic publishing change access to knowledge, and whether universities get full value from research sold to private corporations. At the same time, these chapters capture the confusion in the university sector over explaining academic work to a broader public and prioritizing its multiple purposes. Authors examine these practical challenges and the implications of different approaches in different contexts.

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