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Fethke, Gary C. & Andrew J. Policano. (2012) *Public No More: A New Path to Excellence for America's Public Universities*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Business Books.

Pp. vii-265. ISBN 978-0-8047-8050-6.

Reviewed by Virginia Loh-Hagan

In *Public No More: A New Path to Excellence for America's Public Universities,* Fethke and Policano present their insights on public universities needing to change and compete. The authors open with this comment: "…the long-standing dependence on state subsidies that facilitated low tuition and easy student access to public higher education is unsustainable" (p. 3).

The authors push for a new and necessary paradigm in which university leaders embrace programs that meet labor and market demands, narrow program scope in the reallocation of resources, and consider ways to distinguish the university in their offerings. The authors scrutinize the role of funded research, tenured faculty, and other

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defining characteristics of traditional public universities in a political climate of high competition in higher education. The premise is that public universities need to not rely on the public in order to survive.

The book is organized into four main parts: (1) Environmental Issues, (2) Practices, Procedures, and Strategies, (3) Policy and Analysis, and (4) Culture and Governance. Each section builds on the notion that public universities must better strategize in order to efficiently and successfully handle the realities of a changing revenue system. As state subsidies and by extension, public support, for public universities decrease, public universities must find ways to maintain and increase revenue. This will require tough decisions; the authors push public universities to move toward self-reliance by implementing financially viable plans, expanding program scope, and/or increasing entrepreneurial or off-book programs. Fethke and Policano state, "The new normal in public-no-more higher education will involve lower levels of government support, greater attention to competitive tuitions, purposefully determined quality, and willingness to succeed (or fail) in a broader range of entrepreneurial activities" (p. 217). The authors also provide arguments and suggestions for how to deal with various entities such as faculty senates, university boards, and even entrenched ideologies.

The book is well-written and the claims are well-supported. The authors explain various college finance practices and included formulas and appendices that further clarified the economics, or the math. As a person of letters, I preferred the stories. In fact, a strength of this text is the authors' use of specific examples; when describing tuition setting practices, for instance, the authors described three examples: Carnegie Foundation, Iowa Board of Regents, and the University of California system. Applying various economic principles into real-life cases in higher education facilitated my understanding of the concepts. The authors reduced the complexity of college finance into something understandable.

That stated, this book has a specific audience. It seems to be an introductory textbook for graduate students pursuing higher education administration. It doesn't seem to be a read for the general public or even education

professionals. This book does offer a contemporary treatment of the financial politics of higher education which makes it more relevant for students. In today's budget-conscious climate, this book seems to have a lot of relevance.

I was pleasantly surprised by this book. I learned quite a bit about how public universities are financed. But, there were two questions left unanswered as a result of reading this book. First, how do we increase public perception and hence, public support via funds? Second, how should universities address the growing markets of for-profits and online education? The authors are convincing in their arguments pushing the need for public universities to be more financially self-reliant; however, they did not go deeply enough into the reasons why public universities are losing revenue in the first place.

About the Reviewer

Dr. Virginia Loh-Hagan is a published author, professor, public servant, and former K-8 teacher. Her dissertation was a qualitative study on the cultural authenticity of Asian-American children's literature.

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