

# The Provost's Forums on the Public University and the Social Good

Monday, February 8, 2016

## The Great Mistake: How Private-Sector Models Damage Public Universities and How They Can Recover

### Christopher Newfield

Professor of Literature and American Studies - University of California, Santa Barbara



Christopher Newfield is professor of literature and American studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he spent many years involved in academic planning and budget for the UCSB and UC-systemwide senate. Much of his research is in Critical University Studies, which links his enduring concern with humanities teaching to the study of how higher education continues to be reshaped by industry and other economic forces. His most recent books on this subject are *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty Year Assault on the Middle Class* (2008), and *Ivy and Industry: Business and the Making of the American University, 1880-1980* (2003). He has recently completed a new book on the post-2008 struggles of public universities to rebuild their social missions for contemporary society, to appear with Johns Hopkins University Press this fall. He blogs on higher education funding and policy at *Remaking the University* (<http://utotherescue.blogspot.com>), and writes for the *Huffington Post*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Professor Newfield will discuss how nearly all public universities now accept the conventional wisdom that the era of public funding is over. This is thought to mean that universities must commercialize, marketize, financialize, and economize. This "new normal" has polarized observers: most senior officials assert that higher tuition, continuous fundraising, corporate partnerships, and sports enterprise support the public mission; faculty critics say the university will then no longer support independent thought. But both positions assume that private-sector changes will make universities more efficient. On this point, both positions are wrong: private sector "reforms" are not the cure for the college cost disease, for they *are* the college cost disease. This lecture offers an overview of how privatizing public colleges has made them more expensive for students while lowering their educational value, and will outline more-productive policy directions.

#### Lecture:

3 to 4:30 p.m.

Multipurpose Room

Student Community Center

#### Reception:

4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Multipurpose Room - Patio

Student Community Center

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