



# Precipice or Crossroads?: Where America's Great Public Universities Stand and Where They Are Going Midway through Their Second Century

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*Comprehensive treatment of the challenges faced by America's public research universities, and of what those challenges may mean for the nation.*

President Lincoln signed the Morrill Land-grant Act in 1862, launching a nationwide project in public higher education that would build democracy, prosperity, and competitiveness to levels undreamed of 150 years ago. As student costs skyrocket, driven by steep drops in public funding, the viability of that project, like the nation itself, is under threat. In Precipice or Crossroads? top experts in higher education address a broad range of issues central to the question of whether the quality of these institutions—and of American life and democracy—can be sustained.

“America’s land-grant and other great public universities have played a vital role in our nation, but they face extraordinary financial stress and a very uncertain future. In this important book, some of our nation’s most distinguished current and past public higher education leaders paint a clear picture of the problems confronting these institutions and suggest how they must evolve to continue to benefit the nation. This is a must read for anyone concerned about public higher education.” — Ronald G. Ehrenberg, Director, Cornell Higher Education Research Institute and editor of What’s Happening to Public Higher Education? The Shifting Financial Burden

At the University of Vermont, Daniel Mark Fogel is Professor of English and former President, and Elizabeth Malson-Huddle is Lecturer in English.



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