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Between Citizens and the State

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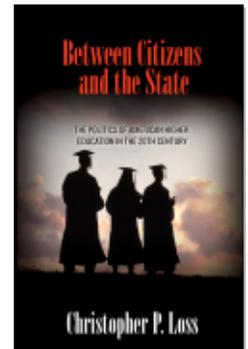
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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Politics of American Higher Education in the Twentieth Century



During the twentieth century, political leaders and university officials turned to one another with increasing frequency in order to build an expansive national state and educational system. They abandoned their shared tradition of laissez-faire relations and forged a powerful partnership that transformed the country's plural system of colleges and universities into a repository of expertise, a locus for administrative coordination in the federal government, and a mediator of democratic citizenship. Slowly during the interwar period, then rapidly after World War II, the state and higher education joined forces to fight economic depressions and poverty, to wage world wars hot and cold, and to secure the rights of previously marginalized Americans. Ironically, at the very moment the partnership reached its peak in the 1960s, it turned sour, only to reconstitute itself, if in a different form, following the conservative political ascendance of the 1980s. *Between Citizens and the State* tells this story.

To date, scholars have only captured a sliver of the relationship between higher education and the American state. This book advances the literature on the emergence of the American university beyond the rise of the professions and the growth of the federal-academic research matrix. Without question the ascendance of large-scale scientific research during World War II radically altered the nature of federal-academic relations, and it is exhibit A in the birth of what some scholars call the "proministrative state." But the emphasis on "big science," and the handful of elite institutions and experts that produced it, has concealed other developments in state-academic relations that occurred outside federally funded labs before and after World War II. Throughout the last century, state policymakers and academic administrators turned the nation's colleges and universities into multipurpose institutions that not only produced cutting-edge defense and medical research but also mediated access to democratic citizenship for millions of Americans.¹

Why has higher education's role in twentieth-century American life been so narrowly drawn? There are two reasons. One is the scholarly fixation on the

birth of the World War II-era federal-academic research matrix. The other is the difficulty of fitting higher education into the larger story of American political and social history.² To craft a new narrative of the politics of American higher education thus requires thinking differently about its placement within the nation's mix of social and political institutions. So, where does higher education fit? The answer explored in the pages that follow: higher education fits between citizens and the state.

By relocating American higher education at the crossroads of state-society relations—between citizens and the state—this book seeks a deeper understanding of higher education's role in twentieth-century American political development (APD).³ Over the past twenty-five years, scholars from political science, sociology, and history have resituated the study of American politics within a polity-centered frame that conceives the state as an evolving, time-bound amalgamation of institutions and ideas. On a theoretical level, APD posits that a combination of public, private, and voluntary institutions—from executive branch agencies to the military to big business and charitable foundations—gives the American state its physical form across space and time. Historically contingent ideas about the appropriate scale and scope of the American state—whether described as strong or weak, big or small—determine the particular institutional arrangement deployed at a given moment in time. In this project, higher education serves as the key institutional embodiment of the American state and the central intellectual construct that helped policymakers and the American people define the very meanings of government, knowledge, and democratic citizenship in the twentieth century.⁴

Between Citizens and the State builds on a burgeoning literature about the American state that has revealed the importance of intermediary institutions—sometimes called “parastates”—in national governance.⁵ According to this literature, since the nation's founding the polity's strong preference for a noninvasive central state directed state development toward interventions that relied on institutions at least once removed from the federal government's immediate family of bureaucratic agencies. In the nineteenth century, when that family was small, state builders turned to political parties, the law, subsidies, and all manner of third-party providers, especially state- and local-level government, to facilitate westward expansion and economic growth throughout the country. In a polity afraid of big government, state builders used intermediaries to mete out federal authority at the local level. What they discovered along the way was that the federal government worked best when it operated by proxy, or as one astute scholar has recently described this phenomenon, “out of sight.”⁶

This pattern of mediated governance endured—and thrived—in the twentieth century even as the family of federal bureaucracies grew. During the New Deal and after World War II, a rich mix of intermediary organizations, still anchored by state- and local-level government but joined by interest groups, professional-voluntary associations, and the private sector, worked with the

federal government's growing network of bureaucratic agencies to regulate the economy, defend the homeland, and deliver goods and services to the American people.⁷ Ultimately, the picture of the American state gleaned from this literature is of a state of parastates, and of an ironic state at that: in order to aggregate governing authority in Washington in the twentieth century, state builders first had to disaggregate that authority among a diffuse arrangement of parastates.

I contend that American higher education emerged as a predominant parastate in the twentieth century. Situated between citizens and the state, completely beholden to neither party but expected and committed to serve both, higher education proved perfectly suited for the task. For one thing, the higher education sector grew dramatically during the twentieth century (see appendices A.1 and A.2): despite economic crises and global wars the number of schools increased four times (from roughly 1,000 to 4,000 institutions) and enrollments more than fifty times (from 250,000 to 14 million students).⁸ For another, higher education's geographically diffuse complex of institutions provided a ready-made administrative network to reach students as well as the millions of other local people who resided nearby. The potential for higher education's ideas and individuals to migrate into the heart of society proved particularly seductive to state builders. That higher education could be used to shape citizens' political commitments resonated with national leaders, such as Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson, who wanted to build a new and more powerful state but had to do so using homegrown materials, all the more effective if they were locally produced. From such stuff was the American state made.

In the name of state building, national leaders had tapped higher education since the early days of the republic. Following the Revolutionary War, college building expanded rapidly beyond the original 9 colonial colleges to include nearly 250 by 1860. The central government's sale of "land grants" stimulated some of this growth. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 disbursed land grants in order to pay down the nation's revolutionary war debt and promote the creation of schools and colleges in newly conquered lands. Congress built on this earlier precedent with the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862. Passed in the throes of the Civil War, the legislation secured the government's role as a key supporter of public higher education. And during Reconstruction the federal government relied on the Freedmen's Bureau and northern missionaries to coordinate the organization of the thousands of new schools that ex-slaves built to protect their hard-fought freedoms. Subsequent federal legislation, for agricultural research stations and the general development of the land-grant system itself, upped the government's financial stake in the operation of the nation's emerging constellation of educational institutions. Add to this the construction of privately financed German-style research universities, such as Johns Hopkins University, opened in 1876, and by the close of the nineteenth century the country's decentralized, public-private higher education system was complete. The only thing missing was students.⁹

Between Citizens and the State picks up where this earlier story ends, offering a new synthetic history of the politics of American higher education in the twentieth century. It examines the role of higher education in twentieth-century state building—when higher education finally got “big.” I argue that World War I precipitated a long period of bureaucratic reinvention—both within the university and between the university and the state—that eventually converted higher education into a key adjunct of the New Deal administrative state. The effects of this new institutional arrangement on the meaning of democratic citizenship surfaced during World War II, when opinion leaders and expert psychologists discovered that educated citizens were better citizens—a point seemingly substantiated by veterans’ surprising success under the G.I. Bill of 1944. Convinced that higher education created prosperous, civic minded, psychologically adjusted democratic citizens worthy of special rights and privileges, cold war policymakers embarked on a global education strategy that culminated in the National Defense Education Act of 1958.

Yet the state’s reciprocal understanding of democratic citizenship, in which educational opportunity was granted to individuals in return for national service, proved impossible to contain. By the 1960s, the state’s rigid conception of the educated citizen, which had been constructed around the memory of the hero citizen-soldiers of World War II, exploded under pressure from campus protesters, especially black and female students and their sympathizers in university administration, on Capitol Hill, and in the White House. Alienated by the modern bureaucratic university and provoked by what they perceived as an imperialist, racist, and sexist bureaucratic state, groups of black and female students forced a national debate about the uses of the university in a democratic society. Their ensuing political struggle—framed by the civil rights movement, the War on Poverty, the Higher Education Act of 1965, and the broader “rights revolutions” of the 1960s—altered the reciprocal relationship between citizens and the state. Swept away by the existential quest for individual and group liberation, and the unconditional demand for respect and self-determination, minority students around the country advanced a rights-based definition of democratic citizenship closely related to a variant of interest group politics known as diversity. Diversity became the watchword to ensure an educated citizenry prepared to meet future challenges. The rapid formation of black and women’s studies programs, combined with the passage of the Education Amendments of 1972, served as harbingers of the ascendant diversity regime. Together they signaled the arrival of a new rights-based, identity-group political order on campuses that mirrored in miniature the political organization of the American state itself.

Specifically, *Between Citizens and the State* explores higher education’s role in state building from three overlapping institutional and ideational perspectives. First, I examine the “big three” federal higher education policies of the past century: the 1944 G.I. Bill, the 1958 National Defense Education Act,

and the 1965 Higher Education Act. While truly monumental pieces of public policy, these laws do not alone define the extent of the federal government's role in higher education policymaking. Taking my lead from political scientists, my project also examines the incremental, in some cases forgotten, policy developments that bracketed those landmark legislative moments. My use of "policy feedback"—the idea that "new policies create a new politics," as political scientist E. E. Schattschneider famously put it—provides a more complete examination of the origins and outcomes of federal higher education policy.¹⁰ I place the G.I. Bill, the NDEA, and the Higher Education Act in historical context rather than using them as mere markers in what is typically depicted as the triumphant march of American higher education in the twentieth century. These policies remain turning points in the story that I tell, but without the air of inevitability of previous studies that have failed to explore how wars, economic crises, and campus upheavals, at different times in the past century, pushed American higher education to its breaking point. By focusing on policy developments that have figured marginally if at all in the extant literature, this book seeks to restore a dimension of contingency to the existing account of the history of American higher education that has been distorted by an infatuation with purely quantitative measures of institutional vitality, such as the growth in student enrollments, federal research support, and endowment size.¹¹

Second, I explore the lives of students, faculty, and administrators in and outside bounded campus settings, studying at home and around the world, as civilians and soldiers, as farmers and television viewers, as political actors and citizens. To capture the complexity of the relationship between the state and higher education in the twentieth century accurately requires looking at educational experiences that occurred away from brick-and-mortar collegiate settings: in the American countryside and on battlefronts, in foreign countries and in suburban households, and in a whole host of other spaces and bandwidths located beyond campus borders. During the New Deal, for example, the Roosevelt administration and the Department of Agriculture tapped the land-grant university extension system, and its force of three thousand county agricultural agents, to implement the Agricultural Adjustment Act and other New Deal programs. During World War II, the U.S. Army partnered with higher education to deliver educational programs before, during, and after combat to millions of G.I.s. During the height of the cold war, higher education experimented with educational television, poured millions of dollars into so-called "adult education," promoted study abroad, and infused the undergraduate curriculum with courses and activities intended to furnish global understanding. And during the 1960s, freedom schools, teach-ins, consciousness raising groups, and experimental colleges offered students a parallel but alternative educational universe to explore ideas about race, feminism, sexuality, war, and politics not included in official undergraduate course directories or convened in buildings named in honor of wealthy donors.

My exploration of the outer reaches of organized higher education provides a significant corrective to scholarship that has drawn rigid boundaries between different types of higher education institutions and the services those institutions provide.¹² In contrast, I place the institution in a capacious framework that reveals the extent to which higher education really was used to penetrate deep into the polity and to mediate relations between millions of citizens and their government. Although public and private universities and colleges rest at the heart of this analysis, I also track the role of administrators, faculty, and students teaching and learning in other institutional settings. By delving into all the ways that higher education insinuated itself into other institutions not concerned primarily with education delivery, this project demonstrates higher education's important, if underappreciated, role as a vehicle of political change in the twentieth century. It spotlights what is arguably higher education's core social and political function: educating citizens for life in a democracy.¹³

Unearthing the social and political functions of higher learning presents a host of challenges. Getting at the private, day-to-day experiences of students and professors is not easy; revealing source material is meager. It is perhaps for this reason that most of the studies that purport to probe higher education's social and political uses are usually thinly veiled polemics against, and occasionally defenses of, the institution. The basic contours of the genre work well on nightly news shows and in other debate-style venues in which "conservative" and "liberal" commentators take turns blaming one another for ruining the modern university since the 1960s. On closer inspection, however, most of these works rely on caricatures of the academy. Conservatives rail against what they perceive to be higher education's liberal professoriate and curriculum, wishing instead for a return to the good old days of the American college they think existed before the 1960s.¹⁴ Old left, New Left, and identity left liberals, meanwhile, vociferously counter such criticisms with their own exaggerated rejoinders against post-1960s conservatism. Liberals correctly defend their right to teach and research under the doctrine of academic freedom, yet they err in parodying conservatism as inherently anti-intellectual. They lambast conservatism as inimical to the modern research enterprise, blaming conservative administrators and trustees for turning the academic grove into a bazaar where students are customers, knowledge is a product, and everything is for sale.¹⁵

Both sides have played fast and loose with the past and either ignored or forgotten how politically moderate and market-driven American higher education has been and continues to be.¹⁶ Rather than rehash this hoary debate, I hope to move the discussion beyond the fateful 1960s, even as the story I tell passes through it. The politics examined in this book move between and among the international and national, the state-level and local, the institutional and disciplinary, and from movement to organizational to personal politics. In order to make sense of the politics of higher education in the twentieth century—to understand why the federal government turned college going into

a national priority—we must seek to capture the dynamics of each of these relationships. A good way to do this is to look at the iterative relationship between policymakers in Washington, DC, and administrators, professors, and students living, working, and learning in a variety of different institutional settings elsewhere. In addition to using a wide array of secondary sources, I have also mined federal education data and reports, presidential papers, government documents, military records, and congressional testimonies combined with surveys, opinion polls, and newspapers to reconstruct higher education at the national level; campus newspapers, student letters, institutional studies and surveys, and administrative records and course syllabi have been used to illustrate the role of higher education in state building and in defining citizenship at the campus level. Because the objective of this study is to reveal hidden aspects of American political development, the evidence that I use draws on a broad range of social—and not simply political—relationships. It is this combination of “bottom-up” and “top-down” approaches that distinguishes this work from most work on higher education.¹⁷

Finally, I trace the influence of psychological knowledge on the organizational, political, and social transformations that drive my story. Over the course of the last century, professional psychologists, and their allies in other branches of the social and behavioral sciences, shaped Americans’ perception of their government, their interaction with their government, and their understanding of themselves as citizens. Some scholars who have studied this widening jurisdiction of psychological thought refer to it as the “therapeutic ethos” and have located its epicenter in the rise of consumer capitalism during the decades around the turn of the twentieth century. The broad consensus among these scholars is that a therapeutic mode of self-understanding—denoted by a belief in dynamic personhood and penchant for conspicuous self-referencing and narcissism—offered individuals a way to cope with the psychological challenges of modern life. The standard story carries a powerful critique of the vanishing public sphere as it was eclipsed by self-absorbed efforts to adapt to a heartless world. Rather than focusing on the therapeutic as merely a source of individual transformation, however, this project also traces the different ways in which psychological expertise transformed higher education and the American state, changing the organizational structure of universities and colleges and the meanings of citizenship in the twentieth century.¹⁸

I follow three professional communities of psychologists as they moved between academe and the state from World War I through the cold war. As historians Ellen Herman and James Capshew have shown, warfare offered psychologists an especially propitious arena in which to demonstrate the utility of their expertise in solving organizational and human problems; and because wartime disrupted colleges and universities as much as any institution, they proved particularly susceptible to psychological understandings of problems and prescriptions for rehabilitation.¹⁹ Following World War I, for example,

university leaders turned to personnel specialists—the first community of psychologists that I examine—for guidance in accommodating the intellectual and emotional needs of their students. Having honed their techniques in the U.S. Army during the war, personnel specialists returned from battle with new ways to help harmonize individuals’ interactions with large-scale organizations. Personnel specialists thought of institutions and individuals as interconnected and endowed with unique personalities that could be adjusted and readjusted—indeed, perfected—by expert interventions. This discovery profoundly changed the way colleges and universities operated, how they packaged and delivered knowledge, and the ways professors and administrators interacted with their students. A heightened emphasis was placed on personalizing and individualizing the academic experience, using what I refer to as the “personnel perspective,” in order to ensure that all students made a smooth adjustment into and out of college.

“Adjustment” and its opposite, “maladjustment,” served as a social scientific catchall for much of the twentieth century. Various understood from one discipline to another, leading definitions of adjustment typically mirrored the white, middle-class behavioral and psychological norms of the male investigators who created and used it.²⁰ Within higher education, administrators plotted students along the adjustment spectrum to chart their academic, social, and psychological progress, or lack thereof. Administrators and faculties believed they could guide students’ adjustment by readjusting higher education’s academic, administrative, and social structures. As a practical issue this belief obligated administrators and faculties to make college fun as well as personally fulfilling, to do whatever was necessary to improve students’ chances of success in order to keep more students in school. It also forced college officials to revise the nineteenth-century student management doctrine of *in loco parentis*, which defined students as “children” and administrators and faculties as “parents.” College leaders maintained their parental privileges but updated the definition of childhood to accommodate new theories of psychological development. No doubt, the emergence of the American research university occurred in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but the psychologically informed theory of *in loco parentis* that dominated the undergraduate experience in the twentieth century dated to the 1920s, when educators adopted the personnel perspective to help students adjust to hierarchical organizations.

The fascination with adjustment extended to the 1930s as New Deal planners marshaled the power of the federal government to readjust the nation’s social and political institutions. Building on political scientist Stephen Skowronek’s foundational premise that “state building is most basically an exercise in reconstructing an already established organization of state power,” I show how the Roosevelt administration used higher education to achieve some of its state-building goals.²¹ Geographically diffuse with strong regional allegiances,

higher education assisted New Dealers in naturalizing relations with an American people who trusted their colleges and universities more than they did their government. Led by publicly supported land-grant institutions, which enjoyed close ties to the federal government and the public, programs in agricultural adjustment, student work-study, and civic education helped national opinion leaders forge a mutually beneficial partnership with the entire higher education sector, public and private. Hamstrung by ideological antistatistism and a lack of administrative capacity, federal government leaders saw higher education as a great way to reach out and touch the lives of farmers, students, and average Americans everywhere. Policymakers learned their lessons well. Even as none of these efforts endured as originally conceived beyond the immediate economic crisis, the idea of using education to adjust citizens and the state was not forgotten.

World War II revealed the full potential of educational adjustment when a new generation of social psychologists migrated to the U.S. Army and to key nodes of the wartime government. Relying on emergent opinion survey technologies to gauge soldiers' attitudes about life in the military, they forged an idealized conception of the adjusted citizen-soldier that inextricably linked psychological health to educational attainment. This finding not only prompted the military to join forces with higher education to bring educational opportunities to soldiers during the war, it also shaped the creation and meaning of the G.I. Bill of 1944 afterward. The G.I. Bill consecrated the relationship between education and psychological adjustment and moved American higher education, and the veterans that swarmed to it, closer to the center of democratic citizenship. After World War II, democratic citizens, by definition, were college educated.

A third community of psychologists—public opinion researchers—deepened and complicated the relationship between education and democratic citizenship during the cold war. As a measurement of psychological adjustment writ large, public opinion was tracked with feverish intensity during that endless crisis. Opinion polling offered intimate knowledge of citizens' private lives and political beliefs and thus presented state policymakers with a new means of democratically governing a distended polity. Significantly, just as social psychologists' study of psychological adjustment in World War II linked better citizenship to educational attainment, opinion researchers also established a causal relationship between informed opinion and education. College-educated citizens, research showed, registered the most sophisticated understanding of cold war politics and global affairs. This finding strengthened policymakers' belief that higher learning could improve national security. It also convinced academic leaders that the study of the global cold war should be incorporated into the college curriculum and extended to adults in cities and in the countryside. By decade's end both developments became synthesized within the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which affirmed the notion that higher education was a bastion of democracy not only at home but around the world.

The psychological link between higher education and adjusted citizenship snapped in the 1960s when students, aghast at the bureaucratic menace that was the “multiversity,” revolted against it. The mass New Left led the charge before dissolving into competing student identity groups by the late 1960s. Black and female student groups—in search of liberation rather than adjustment—emerged as the two most influential identity groups, each pressing for an educational and political order that approximated the nation’s racial and gender diversity. Because of their efforts, race and gender moved to the center of national politics and black and women’s studies programs were incorporated into the academic mainstream. These new interdisciplines represented diversity incarnate, confirming students’ belief that they not only had a right to attend college, but also a right to an education all their own.

However, students did not discard the psychological premises that suffused the modern university and politics. Rather, they harnessed psychology for their own purposes in order to topple the despised adjustment regime and, in its place, erect a new institutional and ideational structure that made the cultivation of personal identity the aim of a college education. In other words, groups of black and female students shared much in common with the “expert” communities of psychologists whose ideas about human behavior, racial and gender norms, and organizational development they sought to overturn. This was ironic because the New Left, black power, and the women’s liberation movements all considered psychology to be a tool of oppression, not freedom. The psychological evoked an endless litany of negative associations: personnel management with *in loco parentis*; personal adjustment with corporate automation; personality with plasticity; public opinion with politics as usual; interest groups with narcissistic self-interest; and Freudianism with male oppression, if not misogyny. Yet in attempting to overcome their own alienation, student protesters found it impossible to resist the allure of the psychological. They explored their inner emotions and private knowledge, often in small group settings, to recover personal, often painful experiences for political purposes; in turn, they discovered that politics and education were personal and that the path to self-discovery required self-knowledge and introspection. At the end of the day, black and female students, like the expert psychologists before them, also believed that psychological insights could help make America’s higher education system and politics, and the citizens who participated in both, democratic.²²

Admittedly, the relationship between higher education and democratic citizenship explored here was not entirely new to the twentieth century. Throughout American history higher learning had always been closely linked to better citizenship. One of the major goals of the old-time denominational college, which dominated the nation’s education landscape before the Civil War, was to train citizens for a life of public service in the new nation. This belief was likewise embedded within the educational mission of the ascendant univer-

sity model after the Civil War. Even as the new university moved well beyond the classical curriculum, offering students courses of study in a host of practical and scientific fields, citizenship training remained a core function. “All the colleges boast of the serviceable men they have trained,” reflected Harvard president Charles W. Eliot, in 1908, “and regard the serviceable patriot as their ideal product. This is a thoroughly democratic conception of their function.”²³

My study adds three dimensions to this older story. First, and most important, full citizenship, like college going, was sharply divided along racial and gender lines in the nineteenth century, the near-exclusive privilege of well-off, white men of Protestant faith. It was not until the twentieth century that the state began to extend full citizenship and educational opportunity to everyone else. Second, this study brings the state back into the history of American higher education, and in a new way. While citizens have always been trained to serve the state, not until the twentieth century did the state take an active interest in, and provide financial support for, training democratic citizens. Finally, this study brings psychology into the history of democratic citizenship. Over the course of the last century social scientists advanced new ways to think about and measure citizens’ political and personal behavior that changed how the state and its citizens thought about one another, and citizens thought about themselves. Infusing politics with therapeutic potential changed the ways in which higher education policy was framed and along with it the very meaning of citizenship. During the twentieth century, higher education policy, and the meanings of citizenship that it helped define, were worked out between citizens and the state.²⁴



Part I, “Bureaucracy” (chapters 2 and 3), examines the bureaucratic conquest of higher education and the state during the interwar period. As I explain in chapter 2, during the 1920s American higher education became truly massive in scale and scope. Enrollments climbed to exceed a million students as college building took off around the country. The dramatic growth in institutions and students, which more or less continued for the rest of the century, caught university administrators off guard. High student dropout rates coupled with general administrative disarray seemed poised to bring the university building project to its knees. The realization, as one university president put it, that “many students enter at the bottom but comparatively few go over the top,” raised serious doubts about the future of higher learning.²⁵

University leaders’ search for administrative order led them back to the crucible of wartime. Though the war caused havoc at many campuses, some fields of study, such as psychology, exploited the war in order to extend their professional influence beyond the university laboratory. Two competing camps

of psychologists—intelligence testers and personnel specialists—populated the U.S. Army Committee on Classification of Personnel during the war; both camps, while possessed of differing conceptions of human behavior, found the army fertile ground for fine tuning the use of their psychological technologies to adjust and readjust large-scale institutions and the individuals who populated them. For administrative, scientific, and economic reasons, however, the personnel community achieved a critical advantage over the intelligence testers. After the war, a multidisciplinary personnel movement, led by personnel guru Walter Dill Scott, the director of the Army Committee on Classification of Personnel, co-opted the intelligence testing community. Scott and his team of psychologists had harmonized the army's troop induction and placement processes, and now wanted to extend their expertise to all large-scale organizations. They persuaded college administrators, in part because many of them ascended the administrative ranks after the war, that personnel management could help them better understand their students and thus improve students' chances of success. During the 1920s, the focus on adjustment turned higher education into an institution that not only imparted knowledge and credentials to students, but also offered students training to navigate hierarchical organizations. Higher education pioneered work on personal adjustment, which during and after World War II became the very heart of educated citizenship.

Prior to that happening, however, higher education and the state needed to join forces. Chapter 3 shifts the focus from organizational change within higher education in the 1920s to venues that linked the New Deal state and higher education in the 1930s, when federal policymakers used higher education to help adjust the American people to life in a bureaucratic state. The country's land-grant colleges and universities proved absolutely indispensable to this state-building effort. Resting at the literal and metaphoric intersection of the state and society, but completely beholden to neither, the land grants captured the attention of entrepreneurial New Dealers in search of discreet ways to extend federal power at the grassroots. Attention to the land grants eventually spilled over to the entire higher education sector as President Roosevelt and a handful of top New Deal administrators encouraged and rewarded higher education institutions, and many of the students who attended them, for their help in combating the Great Depression. Higher education won, extending the government's reach into citizens' lives.

Roosevelt's interest in higher education was driven primarily by raw political considerations, not his personal affection for colleges and universities. But he was also persuaded by congressmen, university presidents, professors, and students and parents who let him know that higher education was in dire need of a new deal, too. For Roosevelt and his brain trust, then, higher education offered a popular and relatively uncontroversial way to fight unemployment, deliver social amelioration and services, and at its most ambitious, help average Amer-

icans to make sense of the growing bureaucratic regime in which they lived. “No institution,” declared a New Dealer in 1936, “is more interested in all aspects of national life than is the college or university”—and for good reason.²⁶ My examination of land-grant colleges and universities’ role in dispensing agriculture adjustment, the Office of Education’s federal forum project, and the National Youth Administration’s college work-study program illuminates the ways in which the New Deal experience sympathetically disposed higher education’s leaders to the possibilities of still greater cooperative endeavors during World War II.

Part II, “Democracy” (chapters 4 and 5), explores how higher education and democratic citizenship became deeply intertwined during World War II and the cold war. Chapter 4 moves the story from the New Deal to the U.S. Army. As the state’s main wartime hub for psychological research, the Army Research Branch, headed by University of Chicago sociologist Samuel A. Stouffer, presented evidence to military commanders that better-educated soldiers were more efficient, exhibited higher morale, and were less likely to desert or suffer a psychoneurotic breakdown than their educationally deprived peers. Military and educational policymakers were galvanized by this finding and joined forces to create the Army Information and Education Division—the education clearinghouse for the common soldier. With the steady support of General George C. Marshall, the chief of staff of the army, who believed wholeheartedly in the transformative power of education, millions of G.I.s made use of the educational services provided to them. Soldiers learned how to read in an army literacy course, earned degrees-by-mail through the U.S. Armed Forces Institute, and even pursued a college-level education at one of the army’s four Army University Centers. Although army officials and psychologists interpreted soldiers’ enthusiasm for higher learning as evidence that education could be used to shape soldiers into psychologically balanced and adjusted citizens, most soldiers just felt fortunate for the chance to improve their lot during the war. Many soldiers shared the excitement of one fortunate G.I. safely stationed at Camp Cooke, California: “Yes, there is definitely something I would like to learn in the Army.”²⁷

If for wholly different reasons, then, policymakers’ and soldiers’ enthusiasm for higher education carried over to the postwar period. Record numbers of veterans, the vast majority of whom were white males, tapped the education provision of the G.I. Bill. Their widely heralded academic success and seemingly smooth readjustment to civilian life appeared to confirm that education not only produced good soldiers, it also produced democratic citizens. The excitement generated by the passage of the G.I. Bill proved infectious, triggering policy effects that extended well beyond the lives of veterans and shaped policymaking for decades to come. The legislation fueled the polity’s interest in higher learning and remade the institution into a training ground for democratic citizenship.

As I explain in chapter 5, replicating the stunning outcomes of the G.I. Bill, however, proved more difficult than expected on the cold war campus—and not only because of Senator Joseph McCarthy’s (R-WI) well-documented hunt for political subversives in academia. Though McCarthyism dominates most studies of the cold war university, and figures in the story told here, McCarthyism did not completely dominate higher education. Despite suffering a torrent of anticommunist attacks—and more than a few casualties—higher education also played a leading role in the government’s battle for hearts and minds in the 1950s. At home and abroad the American state deployed education in order to produce democratic citizens and then used public opinion polls to evaluate the integrity of the production process. Obsessively tracked during the cold war, “public opinion” offered policymakers and educational elites access to the American people’s collective psychological adjustment and mental health, to their intellectual fitness and their knowledge of the bipolar cold war world in which they lived. Although polling was by no means bulletproof, as pollsters’ misreading of the 1948 presidential election embarrassingly revealed, the exploration of the relationship between attitudes and opinions, and between the public’s opinions and the state’s prosecution of the cold war, indicated time and again that educated citizens were better citizens.

But higher education’s effort to shape public opinion yielded unpredictable results as students’ private experiences commonly differed with official educational aims. “We have a more aggressive state of mind,” fumed one professor. “But I’ll be damned if students see much connection between higher learning and better citizenship.”²⁸ This was not for lack of trying. Senator J. William Fulbright (D-AR) and Representative Karl E. Mundt (R-SD), along with midlevel government administrators such as Freida B. Hennock of the Federal Communications Commission, turned to higher education to beat back communism and make the world safe for democracy. University leaders and foundation officers, led by C. Scott Fletcher of the Ford Foundation, pursued the same goals by different means. They collaborated to make the study of global politics a central feature of the undergraduate experience and to convince millions of adults everywhere to watch educational television. In both areas higher education’s effort to create globally aware citizens, be it in the cold war classroom or in front of the family television, continued to disappoint. Students and their parents shunned politics and their “citizen duty” to an alarming degree during the cold war. Undergraduates wanted to have fun, study business, and graduate to a well-paying corporate job, while most adults preferred to watch anything but educational television. This discovery raised the possibility that Americans might be motivated by private self-interest and not some overriding concern for the public weal. The public’s political apathy proved particularly discouraging to state policymakers who had come to believe that educated citizens were model citizens. Not even the 1958 National Defense Education Act seemed to register very deeply with students. Though students surely appreciated in-

creased access to NDEA-sponsored fellowships, loans, and loan-forgiveness options, whether they were becoming better citizens as a result of attending college was anyone's guess by the end of 1950s.

The book's final part, "Diversity" (chapter 6), answers this question. It explores how students' private concerns came to occupy the center of campus and national politics in the 1960s and in so doing thrust higher education into the thick of the nascent rights revolution. Students' rights-based reconstruction of the educated citizen marked a departure from the older reciprocal-based formulation that had been decisive in the creation of past higher education policy. From the 1930s through the 1950s, the state provided citizens with educational opportunities in order to repay them for their sacrifices during the Great Depression and the brutal war years that followed. But the gradual expansion of educational access and of federal involvement in higher education set in motion a sequence of unexpected social and political reactions that prepared the way for the shift from a reciprocal to a rights-based conception of the educated citizen founded on the principle of diversity. Awarding higher education benefits to war veterans under the G.I. Bill of 1944 expanded to include additional categories of student-citizens under the NDEA of 1958 and again under the Higher Education Act of 1965. Where the G.I. Bill provided educational opportunities to a single class of citizens—veterans—and the NDEA to citizens in federally sanctioned national-defense-related fields of study, the 1965 Higher Education Act, and its subsequent amendments, theoretically offered the promise of higher education to everyone else. The Higher Education Act increased the flow of federal funds for the support of "developing institutions" and scholarships for students of "exceptional financial need." Along with other War on Poverty educational programs created to equalize "opportunity," the act increased college access for black and minority students, laying the groundwork for the emergence of diversity as the main organizing principle of the post-1960s university.

The institutionalization of diversity was not simply a by-product of a single piece of federal higher education legislation, of course. It occurred in stages, turning on the actions of students and university administrators as well as federal officials, and contained as many unintended consequences as the immigration reform legislation passed the same year as the Higher Education Act. After illuminating the surprising policy origins of diversity, I then examine how groups of rights-conscious black and women students—roused by the ideology of black power and women's liberation and by psychologically derived understandings of oppression and liberation—organized identity groups to pressure administrators into creating black and women's studies programs. The mobilization of rights-conscious black and female students in the late 1960s and early 1970s diversified the college curriculum and helped introduce a new style of identity group politics to the national scene. Subsequent student groups—Jews, Asians, Latinos, gays and lesbians, and countless others—rallied around iden-

tity in order to secure their place within the college curriculum. Students' quest for identity and a true historical self personalized and diversified American higher education and American politics.²⁹

College administrators also benefited from this new political model. They quickly learned that converting black power into black studies, and women's liberation into women's studies, proved an effective way to cope with students' personal and political grievances. By using the university's existing organizational and academic infrastructure to their advantage, administrators discovered that decision making in the name of diversity was an effective approach to address stakeholders' demands and to manage the day-to-day affairs of their institutions. By the early 1970s, well before the Supreme Court's 1978 *Bakke* decision underscored "diversity" as a core value in higher education, many students agreed that they had a "right" to attend college. College administrators, for their part, embraced the notion that the right to education meant little if the student body and curriculum did not reflect the broader society's demographic, intellectual, and cultural diversity. In the end, it was this odd and unexpected mix of federal policy, student identity-group activism, and administrative maneuvering that propelled the idea of diversity into the institutional core of the present-day university.

The conclusion, chapter 7, offers an overview of the state of higher education in an age of diversity. Without the Great Depression, World War II, and the cold war to thicken the relationship between the state and higher education, a rightward political shift commenced during the economic downturn of the 1970s that reached its climax with the election of President Ronald Reagan in 1980. Ideological differences dating back to the campus turmoil of the 1960s, combined with real financial concerns, helped to drive a wedge between the government and higher education. Funding cuts and the introduction of market-driven student-aid policies altered the nature of college going for the rest of the century and beyond. Ultimately, the drift toward "privatization" in the final two decades of the twentieth century readjusted higher education's role as a mediator between citizens and the state once again—changing how students paid for college and moving students closer to a privatized conception of democratic citizenship inextricably tied to the "personal politics" of identity.