



# What Is College For? The Public Purpose of Higher Education

*Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, Harry Lewis*

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“In the face of much handwringing over higher education in America today, this eclectic set of essays offers an engaging call to sustain core values like civic education, the liberal arts, intellectual community and not pandering to fake science, even as a hugely different population with very different needs and desires fills college classrooms.”

—**Karen Arenson**, Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellow and former *New York Times* reporter and editor

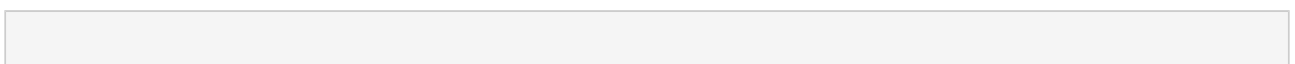
“*What Is College For?* makes a powerful, compelling case for the civic purpose of higher education and provides sensible strategies for renewing and strengthening that purpose. At a time when education for profit often undermines education for the public good, Lagemann and Lewis have made a much-needed contribution to our understanding, as well as our ability to work effectively to fulfill the democratic mission of America’s colleges and universities.”

—**Ira Harkavy**, Associate Vice President and Director, Netter Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania

At a time when higher education attendance has never felt more mandatory for career success and economic growth, the distinguished contributors to this provocative collection ask readers to consider the civic mission of higher education as equally vital to the nation’s well-being. Should higher education serve a greater public interest? In what ways should colleges and universities be asked to participate in public controversies? What should we expect institutions of higher education to contribute to the development of honesty and ethical judgment in the civic sphere? What should colleges do to foster greater intellectual curiosity and aesthetic appreciation in their students and communities, and why is this important for all Americans?

Contributors: **Paul Attewell, Elaine Tuttle Hansen, David E. Lavin, Catharine R. Stimpson, William M. Sullivan,** and **Douglas Taylor.**

**Ellen Condliffe Lagemann** is the Levy Institute Research Professor at Bard College, a senior scholar at the Levy Economics Institute, and a senior fellow at the Bard Prison Initiative. **Harry Lewis** is Gordon McKay Professor of Computer Science in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences of Harvard University.



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