

## Excerpts from the Essays

### From **The Preface**

We hope that you will critically engage with the material in this book, but not in the standard mode of academic criticism where the reader stands back from the work and assesses the adequacy of methodologies, the completeness of coverage, or the consistency of theories. Instead, we invite you to enter into dialogue with these writers, to critically reflect on the way they have expressed their vision and acted upon their academic calling, and to respond to what they have put forward by considering your own perspective on the purposes that public universities should serve.

### From **The Introduction:**

**Academic Callings and the Past, Present, and Future of the Canadian University** by  
*Janice Newson and Claire Polster*

"Academic callings" takes on at least three meanings in these essays. Probably the most familiar is the sense of someone being called to do what academics do ... Being called does not mean that a mystical jolt has settled once and for all what a person should do with his or her energies and talents. Instead, as our contributors reveal, the changing conditions and context of academic life have required them to continually refine what they are called to do, to be open and responsive to new callings, and even to re-call their commitment to purposes they have set aside or abandoned.

The second meaning of academic callings is calling out to others-contemporary colleagues, new generations of academics, and concerned members of the public-to preserve the university as a space for, and a symbol of, engaging in critical reflection and serving the interests of all segments of Canadian society.

... The third meaning of academic callings draws on the idea of the calling card. ... [our contributors'] essays are their calling cards, which reveal to readers something of what their lives in the academy have been, and continue to be, about.

### **FIVE ORGANIZING THEMES:**

The essays in this book could have been organized in a variety of ways. We placed them in five sections - each organized around a particular theme and embodying a particular kind of call. The order ... parallels the subtitle of our book. The first section calls for reflection on the past, present, and future of Canadian universities. The second section is more focused on the university we have had. The third section and some of the fourth focus more on the university we now have. And some of the fourth section and all of the fifth focus on the university we could have. However, the reader may approach these essays in any number of ways, depending on their own needs and interests.