

## Excerpts from the Essays

### PART 1: Against All Reason: Wake-up Calls

Authors of the essays in the first section ... reflect on different visions of the university that have arisen in our country over the last five decades and critique the dominant vision that is shaping higher education in Canada today. They also address what recent developments mean for the future of our universities and the various publics that inhabit and/or are served by them.

#### From **Are We Losing Our Minds? Unreason in Canadian Universities Today?**

*by Claire Polster Sociologist, University of Regina*

In terms of combating survivalism in the university, we need to re/create an environment in which our places are more stable and secure and in which we are more in solidarity with one another ... through our committee work, we can insist that resources be divided equitably between "star" and other faculty and units, and we can defend and employ evaluation criteria that are less heavily quantitative and economically driven and more flexible, sophisticated, and diverse. We can also ensure that we and others accord equal respect and consideration to all university workers in both formal and informal interactions and try to resist pressures to treat our colleagues instrumentally rather than with the inherent value and dignity we all deserve. ... We can also work to re-establish, renovate, or re/create collegial bodies and traditions that afford us greater collective leverage over university affairs and allow for much more public involvement and engagement in the institution.

#### From **Beyond Market Self-Serving: Recovering the Academy's Vocation**

*by John McMurtry Philosopher, University of Guelph*

The betrayal of the academy's vocation seems to have reached into our very identity as people and academics. Development of abilities of autonomous thought and action is what the academy promises and is tax supported to provide. In direct opposition, consumption of ready-made commodities is what the corporate market provides to those alone who can pay for them. We know that if anyone tries to buy his or her way into or through university, she or he is liable to expulsion as a cheat. But if the academy follows market values, why shouldn't students buy their papers from sellers of their choice?... The rising epidemic of Internet plagiarism is not anomalous, but symptomatic of the increasing dominance of market values in the academy.

#### From **The Risk of Critique: Voices across the Generations**

*by Barbara Godard English Scholar and Humanist, York University*

... With corporatization penetrating every aspect of teaching and learning, the university has become a mass marketer for the high-tech industries as professors and students groove together on the latest mobile gadgets. Online, on-demand instruction on the Internet, podcasts, chat groups, Facebook, and even virtual classes on Second Life, are offered by universities so that "difficult concepts" can be introduced in an "unthreatening way," making learning easy. Instead of taking students out of their adolescent subculture and establishing a difference conducive to critical reflection, the university interacts with students in their play.

### From **We Are Saying Too Much ... and Not Enough**

*by Karen Rudie, Electrical Engineer and Applied Mathematician, Queen's University*

If removing theoretical research from universities were on the table as an issue of debate, I could respond to it. And here's what I'd say: I would not want to fly in an airplane whose control systems were based only on theoretical research done at the university in the last year-research that has not stood up to practical-application testing. But I would no sooner want to ingest medicine tested by researchers at the university in clinical trials that were being funded and directed by the very company who manufactures the medicine. Sadly, though, I don't get to weigh in on this topic because the shift toward devaluing basic research and valuing practical applications of knowledge that benefit corporations is being slowly, subtly, and quietly accepted as a done deal by most of us at the university.

### From **A Requiem for Fundamental Biology**

*by Arthur Forer, Biologist, York University*

... throughout my early years at York, graduate students were taught to understand the tools they used; they knew what the various instruments measured, what the experimental bases were behind the assays, and what the various solutions contained (since they made them up themselves). Present graduate students, on the other hand, by and large do experiments using commercially available kits-pre-packaged solutions and accessories that come with instructions on how much of what to mix with what, and for how long, and then what colour (or the like) to measure at the end. It's like making chocolate brownies from a pre-packaged mix. Kits are proprietary so students don't know what they are composed of or how they work or what exactly they do. They use kits, nonetheless, because they are quick and there is pressure to publish the work rapidly to support the grant.

### **Idea and Reality: The University or the Universities**

*by John P. Valleau, Chemist, University of Toronto and Paul Adonis Hamel, Biomedical Scientist, University of Toronto.*

This attempt of government and business to make University research more immediately relevant by having it focus on commercial innovation has turned out to have willing collaborators within Canadian universities, particularly in the senior administrations. That is, promotion of a fundamental shift in the culture of the University has somehow become official university policy! At the University of Toronto, for example, the Report of Manley Panel on Commercialization and Technology Transfer makes explicit that the intention is to "change the culture of the University" in order to make it "more receptive to