



Degrees of Nonsense: The Demise of the University in Ireland

Brendan Walsh

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Irish Universities are in crisis! They are dangerously underfunded and have become crippled by micro-management and preposterous metrics. They have become effectively a boot-camp for the workplace and are promoted as being the only option for every Leaving certificate student. In addition there is the unrealistic expectation that they should react immediately to every political or economic whim and the, increasingly invasive, financing and regulatory framework imposed by national and European government. This book offers a long overdue and crucial discussion on the nature and purpose of education in Ireland. The contributions come from both Irish and UK based academics and argue that, increasingly, universities are being redefined and operated by interests outside the academy, leading to crass commercial understandings of what it is they do, but sadly ignorant of what is it they can do. Increasingly encouraged to offer "courses" which the commercial market deems "useful" one day but not the next, the university is more and more at the mercy of commercial and political interests. This book calls upon university managers and academics to reconsider their place in the so called global marketplace and stridently resist the new role being assigned to them by global government. If we have learned anything in recent years it is surely to scrutinise rather than embrace market understandings of complex institutions! With a Foreword by Roger Scruton, who has repeatedly highlighted the threat of philistinism in post-modern society, this book aims to highlight the increasing risk to learning as traditionally understood in Ireland's universities and, perhaps more importantly, remind corporate business, politicians and the wider public that those seeking university education are not merely agents of economic production. It is this neo-Soviet understanding of the purpose of university education that this book attempts to counter.

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