



# Crisis on Campus: A Bold Plan for Reforming Our Colleges and Universities

*Mark C. Taylor*

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A provocative look at the troubled present state of American higher education and a passionately argued and learned manifesto for its future.

In *Crisis on Campus*, Mark C. Taylor—chair of the Department of Religion at Columbia University and a former professor at Williams College—expands on and refines the ideas presented in his widely read and hugely controversial 2009 *New York Times* op-ed. His suggestions for the ivory tower are both thought-provoking and rigorous: End tenure. Restructure departments to encourage greater cooperation among existing disciplines. Emphasize teaching rather than increasingly rarefied research. And bring that teaching to new domains, using emergent online networks to connect students worldwide.

As a nation, he argues, we fail to make such necessary and sweeping changes at our peril. Taylor shows us the already-rampant consequences of decades of organizational neglect. We see promising graduate students in a distinctly unpromising job market, relegated—if they’re lucky—to positions that take little advantage of their training and talent. We see recent undergraduates with massive burdens of debt, and anxious parents anticipating the inflated tuitions we will see in ten or twenty years. We also see students at all levels chafing under the restrictions of traditional higher education, from the structures of assignments to limits on courses of study. But it doesn’t have to be this way.

Accommodating the students of today and anticipating those of tomorrow, attuned to schools’ financial woes and the skyrocketing cost of education, Taylor imagines a new system—one as improvisational, as responsive to new technologies and as innovative as are the young members of the iPod and Facebook generation.

In *Crisis on Campus*, we have an iconoclastic, necessary catalyst for a national debate long overdue.



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