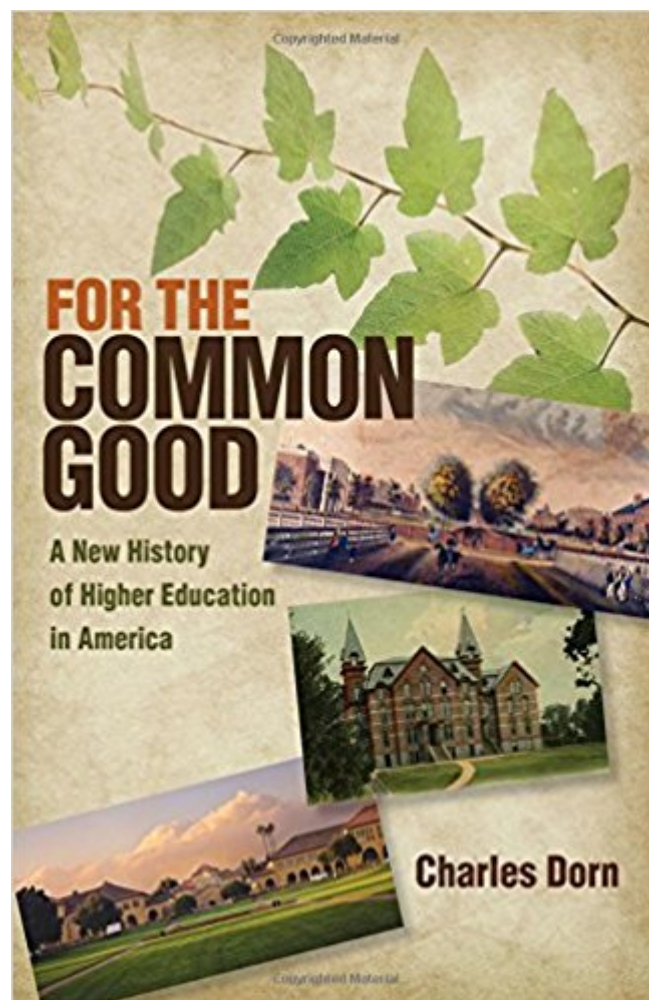




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# For The Common Good: A New History Of Higher Education In America (American Institutions And Society)



## Synopsis

Are colleges and universities in a period of unprecedented disruption? Is a bachelor's degree still worth the investment? Are the humanities coming to an end? What, exactly, is higher education good for? In *For the Common Good*, Charles Dorn challenges the rhetoric of America's so-called crisis in higher education by investigating two centuries of college and university history. From the community college to the elite research university—in states from California to Maine—Dorn engages a fundamental question confronted by higher education institutions ever since the nation's founding: Do colleges and universities contribute to the common good? Tracking changes in the prevailing social ethos between the late eighteenth and early twenty-first centuries, Dorn illustrates the ways in which civic-mindedness, practicality, commercialism, and affluence influenced higher education's dedication to the public good. Each ethos, long a part of American history and tradition, came to predominate over the others during one of the four chronological periods examined in the book, informing the character of institutional debates and telling the definitive story of its time. *For the Common Good* demonstrates how two hundred years of political, economic, and social change prompted transformation among colleges and universities—including the establishment of entirely new kinds of institutions—and refashioned higher education in the United States over time in essential and often vibrant ways.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Charles Dorn knows a great deal about higher education, and *For the Common Good* covers

excellent topics."•Joseph F. Kett, James Madison Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Virginia, author of *Merit: The History of a Founding Ideal from the American Revolution to the Twenty-First Century*

Charles Dorn is Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Education at Bowdoin College. He is the author of *American Education, Democracy, and the Second World War*.

Written clearly and with a provocative perspective that makes this an interesting read especially about the contemporary role of higher education and the role it plays in creating a nation's ethos. You don't have to be a historian or academic to enjoy Dorn's narrative and exploration of what colleges have contributed, or not, to society; and a glimpse into some of the public policy choices ahead. Academics in any field will find this book a useful framework for understanding their own institutions. For those who care, the book is steeped in the literature, extensively annotated, and includes a selected bibliography that runs into the several hundreds (start with this book and you can work your way backwards!).

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