



# Saving Alma Mater: A Rescue Plan for America's Public Universities

*James C. Garland*

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America's public universities educate 80% of our nation's college students. But in the wake of rising demands on state treasuries, changing demographics, growing income inequality, and legislative indifference, many of these institutions have fallen into decline. Tuition costs have skyrocketed, class sizes have gone up, the number of courses offered has gone down, and the overall quality of education has decreased significantly.

Here James C. Garland draws on more than thirty years of experience as a professor, administrator, and university president to argue that a new compact between state government and public universities is needed to make these schools more affordable and financially secure. *Saving Alma Mater* challenges a change-resistant culture in academia that places too low a premium on efficiency and productivity. Seeing a crisis of campus leadership, Garland takes state legislators to task for perpetuating the decay of their public university systems and calls for reforms in the way university presidents and governing boards are selected. He concludes that the era is long past when state appropriations can enable public universities to keep their fees low and affordable. *Saving Alma Mater* thus calls for the partial deregulation of public universities and a phase-out of their state appropriations. Garland's plan would tie university revenues to their performance and exploit the competitive pressures of the academic marketplace to control costs, rein in tuition, and make schools more responsive to student needs.

A much-needed blueprint for reform based on Garland's real-life successes as the head of Miami University of Ohio, *Saving Alma Mater* will be essential for anyone concerned with the costs and quality of higher education in America today.



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