

Wannabe U

INSIDE THE CORPORATE UNIVERSITY

Gaye Tuchman

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS
LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
Chicago and London

GAYE TUCHMAN is professor of sociology at the University of Connecticut. She is the author of *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality and Edging Women Out: Victorian Novelists, Publishers, and Social Change*; coeditor of *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media*; and editor of *The TV Establishment: Programming for Power and Profit*.

The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 60637
The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London
© 2009 by The University of Chicago
All rights reserved. Published 2009
Printed in the United States of America

19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09 1 2 3 4 5

ISBN-13: 978-0-226-81529-9 (cloth)
ISBN-10: 0-226-81529-3 (cloth)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Tuchman, Gaye.
Wannabe us: inside the corporate university / Gaye Tuchman.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-226-81529-9 (cloth: alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-226-81529-3 (cloth: alk. paper)

1. Universities and colleges—United States—Administration.
 2. Universities and colleges—United States—Accounting.
 3. Universities and colleges—United States—Business management.
 4. Universities and colleges—United States—Faculty.
 5. Universities and colleges—United States—Evaluation.
- I. Title

LB341.T774 2009
378.1'010973—dc22

2009005076

© The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

In memory of Evelyn and Jack Tuchman,
who loved art, learning, and the beauty of ideas

Caught in the limited milieu of their everyday lives, ordinary men often cannot reason about the great social structures—rational and irrational—of which their milieux are subordinate parts. Accordingly, they often carry out series of apparently rational actions without any idea of the ends they serve. . . .

C. WRIGHT MILLS

. . . an educational philosopher might claim that those things of greatest value are precisely those things that cannot be measured. . . . If we cannot measure what is valuable, we will come to value what is measurable.

ROBERT BIRNBAUM

Contents

1: Wannabe University Is Transformed	1
2: Situating Wannabe U	25
3: Conforming, Branding, and Research	48
4: Outsiders and the New Managerialism	69
5: The Politics of Centralization	88
6: Teaching, Learning, and Rating	112
7: Carrots, Sticks, and Accountability	131
8: Plans and Priorities	152
9: Making Professors Accountable	173
10: The Logic of Compliance	192
Acknowledgments	211
Notes	213
References	235
Index	247

Wannabe University Is Transformed

1

"Make no mistake about it," James Whitmore, president of Wannabe University, announced to the two hundred people attending the retirement party for one of the university's lawyers. "This is a university in transformation." A few people smiled. Some clapped. For the past few years, the president had informed legislators, donors, trustees, members of the University Senate, parents—almost anyone whom he was invited to address—"This is a university in transformation."

Everyone at the reception had often heard the term "a university in transformation," but they probably shared little, if any, consensus about what that term meant. No one ever had the audacity to ask publicly, "Just what do you mean, President Whitmore?" Nor did or could anyone challenge that "it" was occurring, whatever it might be. When the president of Wannabe University said what the university was doing, one listened.

Now in the seventh year of his presidency, James Whitmore stood tall in the classic business wear favored by university administrators: a dark suit, well cut but not too fashionable, white shirt, conservative tie, more Brooks Brothers than Barneys. His hair was also conservatively cut, a few wisps of the gray-brown falling gently on his forehead. Handsome enough to be a United States senator, President Whitmore had arrived at the reception relatively late and had stood on line, waiting his turn to wish the retiring lawyer well. He had already served longer than the average term of the president of a public research university.

The crowd, almost as hly-white as Ashton, the home of Wannabe University, had arrived slowly and milled around the ballroom, named for a former chairperson of the university's board of trustees. The ballroom was large enough to hold twenty round tables, each seating ten people; several twenty-foot-long tables burdened with hors d'oeuvres; and a mingling crowd

smiling and unobtrusively reading one another's name tags—all punctuated by student servers carrying trays of stuffed mushrooms and teeny encrusted hot dogs. Today, though, no one sat except a vice president in his wheelchair. The long tables held trays of grapes, strawberries, and melon balls; carrots and celery strips, some olives; slices of American and Swiss cheese, crackers. The French doors to the twenty-by-twenty-foot alcove, which sometimes served as a bar, were closed. Instead, the refreshment tables also held glass pitchers of iced water and two large punch bowls filled with a pinkish liquid that begged for lemon to diminish its sweetness.

The retiree had arrived early to greet his invited guests as they filtered off the foyer elevator and stopped to pick up their name tags at the portable institutional table hidden by a white institutional tablecloth. Almost all of the guests knew the routine. Mainly administrators—some from the central administration, others from the schools and colleges, a few from the retiree's church—they had visited this hall for other receptions: retirements, dinners for student athletes receiving academic awards, even the Sunday brunch auction of the local chapter of a national women's service group. Most had attended so many university receptions that they could glance at the refreshments and calibrate the retiree's status at the university, just as they could count the deans, associate provosts, department heads, and vice presidents attending this party to gauge how much the lawyer mattered.

When a provost left the university and the central administration threw a party, they knew, the refreshments were fancier. Those same student servers, but more of them, circulated with trays of scallops wrapped in bacon or miniature Chinese scallion pancakes; tables were burdened with shrimp and an assortment of soft cheeses; a silver-colored fountain spewed melted chocolate, its base surrounded by trays of strawberries; and if the provost had served the university for many years, the guests might even include trustees, who would be formally welcomed by the president when he spoke. (One never ignores the presence of the twenty-one members of the board of trustees, twelve of whom were appointed by the governor. Students and alumni elected their representatives to the board, and several state commissioners held automatic seats on the board.)

There were no trustees today. But when the president had stood on the snaking reception line, his mere presence had created a bit of a lump as though the snake had ingested a meaningful meal, for many guests were as dutiful about greeting President Whitmore as they were about greeting the retiree. Some of his staff surrounded him on the line. Not the provost and the vice provosts; they came and went independently, just as their offices were on the ground floor and so separate from the (symbolically higher) second-floor offices of the president, his "personal" assistants, the chief

financial officer, and the chief operating officer in Top Hall, the small building shared by the central administrators who mattered.

The most powerful of the president's staff—a man in his fifties, pale, suited but jacket unbuttoned, his hair blond-brown with the beginnings of a toure—shook hands with the social science professor immediately in front of him. "I'm Peter Lynch. I work with the president," he informed her. There would be no need to announce his identity and rank to administrators, not even department heads. They all knew who Peter Lynch was, but faculty members might not. For them, the transformation of the university meant less familiarity with central administrators, less of a say in university affairs, larger classes, more pressure to publish and get grants. Nonetheless, even the social science professor understood that Lynch's presence and the attendance of so many central administrators from Wannabe University's "non-academic" sector contradicted the budget for refreshments. The lawyer had apparently done his job well, devoting his last years at Wan U to assisting the push to improve the university or at least to increase its prestige. When he took the podium to address the guests, he spoke with sincerity: "I have no doubt that if I come back in ten years, Wan U will have risen in the rankings to be one of the great American universities."

The lawyer would not have to wait that long. In the tenth year of his presidency, at a reception honoring the founding of Wan U, President Whitmore announced: "This university has been transformed." Now the guests were seated in a long rectangular room in one of the older buildings on campus, the white gold-domed ex-library that currently housed such administrative officers as the vice provost for enrollment management and the vice president for student affairs, and offices that "processed students," such as the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Student Financial Aid Services, and the Office of the Dean of Students. On this occasion, the audience included people from more of the university's constituency, several specially invited students, some administrators, some faculty (mainly those active in the University Senate and a few department heads), a few alumni, two trustees, and the families of speakers. When the town's mayor, the state historian, and a black alumnus delivered their addresses, they too affirmed that this "transformed" university is a special place.

Unfortunately, neither the president nor the other speakers fully explained what they meant by "transformation." Rather they cited a series of "measurements," what the university website and a provost's presentation to the board of trustees were eventually to call "Points of Pride": Students included more valedictorians and salutatorians than ever before; the freshman class had higher scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test than previous classes; more underrepresented minorities were enrolled; student

retention had increased. Some faculty had received million-dollar research grants. The university had achieved a higher ranking in the annual college edition of *U.S. News & World Report*. (Although those rankings have neither a solid theoretical or methodological basis, administrators care about those rankings, because potential students and their parents consult them to plan college applications. Improvement in those rankings influences the flow of applications [Monks and Ehrenberg 1999; Stevens 2007].)¹

At least one faculty member wondered about this litany of accomplishment. What about how the basic processes associated with education had changed? Was the focus on education or more efficient management? What about the presence of more and more managerial personnel and the increased centralization of administration, the interminable forms, the emergence of the university as an explicitly capitalist institution weighing revenue streams and seemingly paying more attention to the components of the university that brought revenue, such as the dining halls and cafeterias, rather than those that did not support themselves, such as the counseling services for students with "personal problems"?² What about the ever-larger classes and the increased pressure on faculty to engage in funded research?

These processes of centralization, bureaucratization, and commodification seemed as crucial to the transformation of Wannabe University as the "Points of Pride" proclaimed by President Whitmore, perhaps even more so, for they had a direct impact on the work environment, particularly its atmosphere. But even though a fundamental change in institutional processes is central to the transformation of a university, President Whitmore struck to the sorts of quantified accomplishments that seemed to express such basic American ideological themes as "With hard work, anyone can join the ranks of the elite" and "We can achieve prosperity through education." I will consider these themes later in this chapter and the processes of centralization, bureaucratization, and commodification in later chapters. For now, I note that President Whitmore was using the language of the managerial literature about higher education and that he was bold to declare that Wannabe U was participating in "institutional transformation."

INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION

In the literature about higher education that seems designed for college administrators, such terms as "institutional transformation" and "university in transformation" have a specific meaning. They refer to profound change, as defined by Eckel and his colleagues, who studied twenty-six colleges or universities seeking to transform themselves (Eckel, Hill, and Green 1998: 3;

cf. Eckel and Kezar 2003: 17; Keup et al. 2001). That definition asserts that "institutional transformation"

- 1 alters the culture of the institution by changing select underlying assumptions and institutional behaviors, processes, and products;
- 2 is deep and pervasive, affecting the whole institution;
- 3 is intentional; and
- 4 occurs over time.³

Thus, when President James Whitmore first declared Wannabe University to be a university in transformation and then proclaimed it to be a university that had transformed itself, he had implicitly asserted that the administration had purposefully altered the university's culture, assumptions, behaviors, processes, and products. That is indeed a bold claim, especially because it is so difficult to define the culture of a large American university and to streamline its often cumbersome processes.

To understand the problem of change, one must understand something of how American universities work. As Clark (2004: 133) explains:

The American system of higher education . . . combines very large size, extreme decentralized control, great institutional diversity, sharp institutional competition and substantial status hierarchy. Its most important feature is the radical disbursement of authority. It is a system composed both of major private sectors, in which over 2,000 private universities and colleges of all sizes operate under individual boards of control, devising their own viable niches, and of numerous public sectors in which another 1,600 institutions fall primarily under the 50 states rather than under the national government.

They all must respond to national policies, such as those governing student loans, research grants, and minority admissions. But, Clark (1983) says, they develop their own responses.

The structure of nonprofit institutions of higher education is also decentralized.⁴ To be sure, there is a central administration that reports to some sort of board of trustees, managers, or overseers. At some institutions, the central administration has much authority, at others less. The kind and amount of authority exerted by that central administration expresses itself in such crucial matters as appointing and tenuring staff and planning and executing budgets, although it affects less controversial matters as well. Conflicts between the central administration and the faculty are endemic to American universities, as discussed by Thorstein Veblen (1918), almost a hundred years ago.

On the whole, whether they are organized into academic departments or colleges, professors tend to be oriented toward their discipline. Mostly, members of disciplinary departments and colleges are oriented toward their professional colleagues and professional associations, as well as the logic implicit in their area of expertise. Many of them see administrators as "mere" managers, whose activities should serve such "core academic values" as advancing knowledge for its own sake. (Many managers perceive this disdain and resent it.) To be sure, many scientists do not understand the concerns of professors in the humanities or social sciences and vice versa; their last exposure to one another's areas of expertise and concern may have been the general-education courses required of undergraduates. Conflicts may also arise between professors working in professional schools, such as business and law schools, and those in the liberal arts and sciences. However, as different as their disciplines may be, professors tend to believe that their activities are the crux of higher education.

Conversely, administrators tend to believe that their own activities define the essence of the university. They see the world in radically different terms than faculty do. Where a professor may define a grant as the funds that enable research and support graduate students, an administrator may see a revenue stream. "Instead of being arms of the state, or representatives of the professors, [administrators] are, in pure form, the leaders—'captains'—of autonomous enterprises" (Clark 1983: 209). Instead of engaging in the competition of discovery, "their efforts on behalf of the welfare of individual institutions leads toward market-like interactions in which competition is the catalyst for change" (209). They may disdain individual professors or even the professoriate as unrealistic or unworlly. For instance, when administrators "decided to grow the undergraduate enrollment"—to invoke the business language that one provost customarily used when speaking to the board of trustees—professors created a howl and cry for additional faculty appointments. However, central administrators may find such desires naive. From their point of view, one can always squeeze another student in a lecture hall (if one has enough large lecture halls and the additional students are not seriously inflating the faculty-student ratio and so affecting a school's competitive edge over other colleges and universities). However, every additional hundred students may mean one has to hire another librarian, additional servers in the dining halls, and additional janitors, as well as to find additional spaces for beds.⁵ At Wannabe University, the chief financial officer has calculated such formulas innumerable times. As an administrator experienced with budgets explained, professors "have no appreciation for the mechanics" of running a university.

The central administration is oriented toward its competition with other

institutions for students and for potentially profitable inventions (intellectual property) that may become technology transfers (an invention that moves from the university to the corporate sector ideally bringing profit to all; see Powell and Grodal 2005; Slaughter and Leslie 1999; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004; Ezkowitz, Webster, and Healey, 1998). It may also be oriented toward such auxiliary revenue streams as athletics, theatrical performances, and even the economics of managing the university as a city (such as its police and fire departments, its "town green" or student union, and even its restaurants and hotels, more properly identified as student cafeterias and dormitories).⁶

In essence, conflict is built into the university system, and that profound conflict affects the ability of a university to make profound changes. In the post-World War II environment, change within universities was generally "incremental, disjointed, contradictory and opaque" (Clark 1983: 8, 9). In the present environment, conflicts between administrators and professors may be more acute, for many who study higher education believe that now central administrators can only achieve meaningful change if the faculty cede some power (see, e.g., Clark 1998, 2004)—or, as others imply (Rhoades and Sporn 2002a, 2002b), if administrators simply centralize power. To attempt the transformation of a university is thus a complex and daring endeavor.

WANNABES, RANKINGS, AND THE MARKET ETHOS

James Whitmore did not introduce the idea of transforming Wannabe University. Nor did he introduce the "market ethos" (Karabel 2005) that faculty claimed to be characteristic of Wan U at the turn of the twenty-first century.⁷ Often invoked, but rarely defined, that "market ethos" is said to involve the transformation of educational values into business values, including the imposition of hierarchical bureaucratic organization on the faculty. Before President Whitmore's arrival, Wan U was a respectable, regional research university. (In chapter 2, I will present a fuller description of Wannabe U.) Current administrators seem to agree that the state, the university, and its administrators had been late to join the national push to "rise" in such national standings as the annual rankings published by *U.S. News & World Report*. Similarly, they had been slow to respond to the relative diminution of legislative contributions to the university's general fund. To be sure, in the mid-1990s, state contributions were 35 percent of the operating budget, while some flagship universities in the West and Midwest limped along with state contributions of less than 20 percent. But Wan U did experience a financial pinch: its share of the state's general-fund budget had been cut

almost in half—from 2.5 percent in the mid-1980s to 1.47 percent in the mid-1990s. That financial pinch was discussed in the business jargon associated with the market ethos, as administrators and trustees searched for new “revenue streams” and plumbd “key revenue drivers.”

Being a late starter is often seen as a disadvantage. Wan U’s trustees and administrators sought to turn it into an advantage. As administrators explained, they hoped to benefit from the experiences of other research universities that had gotten a head start. “Through trial and error, others might discover best practices, and Wan U could learn from their successes and their mistakes. Indeed, Wan U’s administrators brought back from conferences and seminars news about the “best practices” that other schools reported or that the committees of professional associations recommended.⁸

President Whitmore’s predecessor, Ned Oakes, was often credited with beginning “to position” Wan U to claim a higher spot in the “substantial status hierarchy” (Clark 1983) of research universities. Perhaps because he loved athletic competitions, Oakes had identified athletics as what those who study higher education call “a lever of change.”⁹ (Oakes took a daily run around campus with the men’s basketball coach, trying to match the taller man’s strides. He also invited the coach and a key player to a reception for trustees.) With his ally, the director of athletics, Oakes encouraged his coaches to build teams that attracted national attention, such as in the supposedly revenue-bearing sports of basketball and football. Their success made the university seem to be more prominent. (At least it received more free publicity in the sports section of newspapers and on TV.) Also, both the director of athletics and President Oakes felt that success would “grow” ticket sales. Increased demand would mean that the price of basketball and football tickets could be raised.

Athletic success seemed to facilitate other changes. The legislature expanded the university’s capital budget. Under the aegis of Oakes and a politically connected chairman of the board of trustees, Wan U had begun an ambitious construction program.¹⁰ Even the membership of its board of trustees seemed to change. Successive members and chairmen seemed more cosmopolitan and less like the local boosters about whom the mammoth book of regulations of the National Collegiate Athletic Association insistently warns. The board’s enthusiastic appointment of James Whitmore to his third college presidency seemed a logical next step in Wan U’s campaign to fight its way to national prominence. After all, Whitmore was what the former provost of Tufts University calls “a professional president” (Gittelman 2004), one of those administrators who spent some years at one university before leaving for another supposedly better university, much as accomplished executives might jump from corporation to corporation

(Khurana 2002).¹¹ Dr. Whitmore had served in government, had political skills, was appreciative of corporate needs, and even was a member of the same political party as the governor. When James Whitmore was hired, Wan U was potentially positioned to join the ranks of the wannabes.

Although he reported to the trustees, who were themselves responsible to the governor and the legislature, President Whitmore was never foolish enough to announce that he intended to challenge the power of the faculty. From the first, he expressed appreciation of the faculty, his determination to support research, his wish to attract good students, and his desire to serve the state. Mainly, though, he talked about how Wannabe University was going to become one of the best research universities in the United States—a national, not a regional institution.

That theme, entering the “Top Twenty-five,” was so ubiquitous that it almost seemed as though President Whitmore had found a way to discuss transformation that did not even hint at topics that might prompt the slightest conflict with the faculty. Professors also treasured being in the top twenty-five—preferably even higher. At Wan U, as at other universities, professors liked to boast of the status of their department in the disciplinary hierarchy. “Our psychology department is one of the sixteen best psychology departments in the United States,” a professor might say. Or, when describing the university to a colleague teaching elsewhere, a professor might announce, “We have a particularly good psychology department and our biology departments are very good, too.” Indeed, at first blush, the administrative and political decision for this state university to join the ranks of wannabes seemed simply an expression of its American identity. If one cannot be recognized as the best of all, then certainly one can aspire to be ranked at number twenty-five.

This celebration of top rankings is so ubiquitous that being “best” has become an American mantra—whether the topic under discussion is the Nielsen ratings, the weekend movie box-office take, the weekly Associated Press poll of college basketball or football rankings, or the yearly parade of singers on *American Idol*. At sports event after sports event, the fans sitting in the \$100 seats and the \$10 seats raise aloft an enlarged Styrofoam hand molded in team colors, its upright index finger gesturing “We’re No. 1.” As television cameras turn toward the fans, some scream, “Number one, number one.” At other games involving lesser teams with problematic win-loss records, ambitious fans can only root for their team to enter the top twenty-five. Furthermore, being best or even near-best is fraught with meaning: in a particularly famous television commercial, the rental-car company Avis reported, “We try harder,” because its volume of business was lower than that of industry leader Hertz.¹²

Rankings seem pertinent to higher education, because so many colleges and universities are chasing a higher rung in such national rankings as the *U.S. News & World Report*.¹³ So many higher-education institutions present themselves as wannabes. Thus, when I told higher-education scholar Gary Rhoades that I was planning to write an ethnography of a wannabe university, he reminded me just how prevalent wannabes are: "A few years ago, I heard a fellow from a small public regional college in [the West] describe, with bitter disdain in his voice, how a new president at his institution had said that the college was going to become the 'Harvard of the [local] Valley' :)" (e-mail, May 12, 2006).¹⁴

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* concurs. It reported (Arnone 2003), "Whether driven by idealism, need, or greed, many universities have jumped on the bandwagon heading toward national recognition. . . . Aiming to become a national name-brand university" to be number one, the wannabes underestimate the difficulty of advancing up the educational ranks: "Ambition and arithmetic . . . are bound to collide because the number of aspiring institutions far exceeds the slots at the top of any ranking. No matter how hard they try, 100 universities can't squeeze into the top 20."

Not every runner can come in first. Not every team can be the best. But every runner and every team can try to be number one. Sometimes, though, trying one's best may not be enough. Like other sectors in American society, higher education is highly stratified. A high ranking on the *U.S. News & World Report's* "America's Best Colleges" seems to be associated with such American values as elite status and selectivity (MacLaggart 2007). "Elite" is a reference to social class, as is selectivity. Students from wealthy backgrounds are likely to attend expensive private residential colleges that have low acceptance rates, high "yield rates" (the percentage of accepted applicants who choose to attend a school that accepted them), and a high percentage of students graduating in four years (Attewell and Lavin 2007; cf. Stevens 2007). Indeed, such elite private universities as Princeton, Harvard, Yale, Stanford, and Duke sit solidly on or near the top of the *U.S. News & World Report's* rankings of national universities. The highest-rated public university, University of California, Berkeley, does not poke through until number twenty-one. Nonetheless, both public and private colleges and universities compete to achieve higher rankings, as though they were competing for an athletic championship.

The competition of wannabes for a high ranking on the currently fashionable measuring stick may seem gamelike, but this competition is not a game. It does not involve "play," but is rather a dead-serious business enterprise. (Some scholars also argue that national sports championships are dead-serious business enterprises [Shulman and Bowen 2002; Bowen et al.

2003; Zimbalist 1999].) Rather, the search for recognition is an expression of business values that have become increasingly common in institutions of higher education. Some critics claim that rather than defining higher education as the development of critical thinking, the nurturing of civic responsibility, or the pursuit of knowledge—perhaps even knowledge for its own sake—contemporary colleges and universities see the purpose of education in more practical terms, such as preparing students for jobs (also known as "workforce development"). Furthermore, these critics continue, contemporary universities define both knowledge and job preparation as commodities, whose transmission is purchased by student customers (and their parents), when they pay tuition, room, board, and other fees. Increasingly, they also see themselves as a business. Thus, *Newsweek* quoted the provost of a wannabe university as saying, "We are a business. . . . Our shareholders are the faculty, the students and the state" (quoted in Kirp et al. 2003: 4). According to this view, education has become a market transaction.

Put somewhat differently, it is almost as though twenty-first-century higher education echoes Max Weber's characterization of the spirit of "modern capitalism." Weber wrote of the spirit of early twentieth-century capitalism: "Man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life. Economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to man as the means for the satisfaction of his material needs" (Weber 1988: 53). Rather than making a profit being subordinated to man, man is subordinated to making a profit.

Universities appear to have undergone a similar inversion. As Roger Geiger (2004: 25) has observed, "A new standard of economic rationality . . . [pervades] . . . university decision-making." Rather than universities being subordinated to the production and transmittal of knowledge, knowledge is now subordinated to the needs of universities for profit and recognition. Seeking profit, the central administration engages in a "new managerialism" that undercuts faculty authority by implementing change from the top down. Chasing a sterling reputation, central administrators seemed to ask what they needed to say to garner approval. To some faculty, they seemed more concerned with the "image" used to market their product (a university education) to customers (students and their parents) and clients (the firms that would hire the university's graduates) than with the product itself.¹⁵

Our society has wedded the gamelike obsession with "achieving a high ranking" to higher education's market ethos. That marriage thrusts Wannabe University, like many other contemporary institutions, into an "audit society"—what Michael Power (1997) discusses as an "organizational order" linking governance and internal control systems through the new

managerialism. As I argue in chapter 2, the "audit society" enables "coercive accountability" carried out in the guise of transparency, trust, and public service. As an organizational order, the audit society is dedicated to encouraging organizations (including governments) and their members to measure their aspirations, fears, and accomplishments against the hopes, worries, and activities of peers and competitors and to accept that those measurements have consequences. It entails both forced and voluntary surveillance, as individuals and organizations audit themselves and subject themselves to audit by others. Of course, to do so, they must transform both their organizations and themselves auditable. That is, they must transform both their organizations and themselves into entities that can be defined, delineated, and measured. That transformation and the coercive accountability associated with both an audit society and its culture helps to constitute an *accountability regime*—a politics of surveillance, control, and market management disguising itself as the value-neutral and scientific administration of individuals and organizations.¹⁶

From Socrates to Freud, Western society has praised self-examination. The audit society might seem to be the apotheosis of self-examination, because it celebrates order and control through self-analysis. But this self-examination is antithetical to Socrates' famous pronouncement: "The unexamined life is not worth living." Socrates' notion of self-examination stressed asking oneself about the ethical principles guiding one's actions. Audit does not assess how actions match ethical or philosophic principles. It is rather a *ritual of verification measuring if and how institutions and individuals have conformed to agreed-upon procedures of self-poling*. Besotted with these rituals, an audit society transforms itself into an accountability regime, where honor does not reside in a principled life but in being number one—or at the very least being in the top twenty-five.

WANNABES, RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND THE STATE

Although the administration of Wannabe University, like that of other aspiring educational institutions, seems to speak more about status, rankings, and other points of pride than about knowledge, it is unfair merely to dismiss its attempt at transformation as ill-conceived ambition. Rather, Wannabe University has additional goals. These also resonate with American cultural themes. Most important is the vaunted association between education and economic advancement.

Officially, Wannabe University was to transform itself to solve a dilemma confronting its state. As the governor and key legislators declared in the state's newspapers: Too many students were leaving the state to get

a college education elsewhere, and then they were failing to return. Indeed, more high school graduates left than returned. Like the countries that sent waves of students to the graduate science departments of Van U, the state was experiencing a brain drain. The answer a powerful legislator had proposed was to improve the university. The availability of an excellent education (with a relatively low in-state cost) might diminish the brain drain, especially the departure of the best students. Also, through excellence in public higher education, the state might increase its prosperity. Indeed, perhaps the new mottoes for the state might be "Through education, prosperity" and "Through higher rankings in the national education arena, even more prosperity." Here, too, the university was conjuring up American themes: Education may enable individual mobility. It may also facilitate industrial growth. An educated workforce serves industry. Industry requires educated and diverse employees, qualified to compete in the global economy.¹⁷

As discussed in public at least, all other goals were ancillary, seemingly designed to serve that primary goal of attracting the state's college students and fostering economic development. Such subsidiary activities might include raising more research monies by winning more grants and contracts, licensing the patents derived from faculty research, increasing the take from such auxiliary activities as athletic games and theatrical performances, improving the academic qualifications of high school students who apply for admission, and even marketing the ever-popular Wan U ice cream. I do not know whether university administrators and legislative leaders had concrete plans to achieve any of these goals. Although the department heads annually informed their faculty that funds were tight because of budget cuts, the administration and trustees certainly did not confide their fiscal plans to professors. Even the budget summary available to the trustees cut a sufficiently broad swath to conceal some specifics. For instance, an informant told me that the university spent more on improving the conditions for research animals than it did on counseling services for students, but I could neither confirm nor reject that claim from the summary data presented to trustees.

Search committees and trustees must have asked about fiscal matters, including revenue streams, when they interviewed candidates for university president. Certainly, they knew that the more monies raised through research, the more prestigious the university seemed to be and the less it might depend on state funds, which were becoming an ever-smaller percentage of its expanding budget. The better the university's key athletic teams, then the more ancillary income and national publicity generated; also the more applications for admission (including out-of-state applicants

who would pay a higher tuition), the more selective the university could become. Even a university president who wasn't particularly fond of sporting events and often gave his basketball tickets to friends was enthusiastic about the institutional possibilities inherent in sports acclaim. All of these goals might help the university to climb up the national rankings, to transform itself from a regional to a national university.

Wan U did not officially declare itself to be on the path to national acclaim in order to halt the brain drain and improve the state's economy—although the state newspapers reported that the legislature felt that a flagship university with higher national status might serve those purposes. When President Whitmore first arrived, he had not proclaimed the motto “Through education, prosperity”—although rumors circulated through the liberal arts faculty that this new president was “oriented toward business” rather than toward “core academic values.” Across departments, professors informed one another that President Whitmore had talked about alliances with business when he was introduced to the University Senate. At his inauguration, Whitmore emphasized both academic values and service to the state by educating people of all backgrounds and incomes and developing partnerships with such state institutions as businesses. Whitmore simultaneously affirmed: “Nothing is more important to the quality of life in this state than educational excellence. Nothing is more important to [this state’s] economic development.”¹⁸

The president’s goals were to develop a university recognized across the nation for the excellence of its programs, the commitment of its faculty, and dedication to its students. He wanted

- a university that serves as [the state’s] prime resource of excellence in a wide range of areas—from fine arts to the liberal arts, from social sciences to basic sciences;
- a university open to individuals of talent and aspiration who will, with the education they receive here, help build a better [state];
- a university that stands as the willing partner to the major institutions and enterprises of this state as we help [this state] move into the next chapter of a long and proud history.

As President Whitmore spoke, he positioned the university as an institution on the cusp of greatness:

I came to [this state] . . . firmly convinced that no public university in the United States is better positioned to improve, and improve dramatically, the level of excellence, access, and service it offers. I retain that conviction. [Wannabe

University] has been an important university for many decades. Now it has the potential to become a great university—one of the handful of public institutions that define what a state can do when it makes a commitment of resources and a commitment of will.

President Whitmore was also positioning the university as a wannabe. In his speeches and presumably in his discussions with legislators, donors, trustees, other administrators, and even some faculty, he aligned his ambitions for the university with the characteristics of a wannabe university.

As the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Arnore 2003) has explained, a wannabe university yearning for recognition and approvals

- 1 wants to “translate a strong regional presence into national recognition and respect”;
- 2 “push[es] . . . to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on new construction, while hiring well-known faculty members and recruiting top students”;
- 3 develops “a slick advertising campaign . . . [that] portray[s] the institution . . . as being on the cusp of greatness”;
- 4 speaks of aspirations “into the top [rankings] of the National Research Council [and] *U.S. News and World Report*,” and
- 5 explains that “becoming a national research university [is] vital to . . . [its] mission,” since its region needs more research universities that act as engines for state economies.”

At the height of ambition, it even

- 6 “dream[s] of nurturing the start-up companies for the next Silicon Valley or Research Triangle Park.”

The central administration of Wan U, the trustees, the legislature, the governor, and some of the faculty lusted after fame, funding, and power.

A NOTE ON METHODS

Decades before this book was even a glimmer in my imagination, I had made the acquaintance of Wannabe University sociologists at professional meetings. We had delivered papers on the same panels. We had served together on committees and editorial boards. In the mid-1990s, like others, I was told that Wannabe University was transforming itself. By 2003, I was hearing tales of tension, conflict, and dissent: professors in four departments in the social sciences were feuding so badly that their departments

might go into receivership. (The term "receivership" means that a department has lost its right to self-governance and the dean has appointed a senior professor from another discipline as its head.) People in two departments in the humanities appeared to have "arranged themselves into two camps"; some were barely talking to one another. Program reviews, some people told me, had exacerbated departmental conflicts, and in one or two cases had introduced conflicts where none had apparently existed. Other departments, I learned, had been promised specific resources as a result of favorable program reviews but had never received them, even when those promises were in writing.

I have always been interested in university politics, including how academic departments function. One must have a minimal interest in this topic to work in a university. So in 2003, after receiving approval to study Wannabe University from my university's institutional review board, I began interviewing key professors in the four social science departments that were supposedly being rent by dissent. I interviewed some of them over the phone and some in person. I took notes on these and other conversations I had with people who worked at Wannabe University, but as my university's institutional review board had specified, I never taped or took pictures of anyone or anything on the campus. I also started reading both the sociological literature and the management literature on higher education, as well as studies in the sociology of organizations. I assumed that the management literature presented a picture of how administrators think. I found that portrait of administrative thinking particularly valuable, since I had decided not to interview many high-level administrators. (I was, though, a faithful member of the audiences that central administrators addressed, charmed, and cajoled, and I did have regular interactions with several of them.)

The more I read and talked to people, the more I became convinced that an observational study of Wannabe University was a viable project. However, that decision created some problems. I knew that the reception of ethnographies had included attempts to identify their locale and even the identity of the people discussed in the book. The reception of Arthur Vidich and Joseph Bensman's *Small Town in Mass Society* is a famous case in point. Townspeople inscribed their pseudonyms in the Vidich and Bensman book on signs, hung the signs on themselves, and then held a parade.

Accordingly, to behave ethically, since 2003 whenever anyone has asked me the topic of my current research, I have explained that I am studying the transformation of Wannabe University. With each passing year, this project has become more real to me, and I have become more forthright about my research. As a result, social scientists familiar with participant observation have become quite careful about what they have said in front of me. People

in the humanities, sciences, and professions have not been as careful as the qualitative social scientists. Some administrators even forgot a cardinal political rule: Say only as much as you need to say.

I have also tried to impede efforts at identifying my informants. So that my informants will not be placed in a difficult position, I am careful about both whom I quote and how I describe people. I have promoted some people by identifying associate deans as deans and I have demoted other people. To confuse matters more, now and again I used someone's correct title. I have not quoted my close friends. Nor have I quoted the sociologists who work at Wannabe University. Instructing me never to quote her, one sociologist suggested that Wannabe administrators would not be happy about my book and joked: "You may intend to retire when this book is published, but I do not." The comment of a white man who read part of a chapter for me indicated I was having some success at hiding identities. "That description was right on," he said. "Glad you thought so," I replied. "I was quoting you."

To protect informants, I have also avoided analyzing some topics, though information about them pops up here and there. Specifically, I have not discussed athletics. I have not analyzed the problems that women in the administration and on the faculty have faced at Wannabe University. Nor have I addressed the problems of people of color. Both women and members of racialized ethnicities face real problems. Quite a few men in the administration told me that Wan U is a difficult place for a woman to work. None of them was quite sure why, although a middle manager pointed to the "male" atmosphere—the pat on the back or the squeeze of the shoulder with which men greeted each other as they walked into a meeting. Sometimes women faculty spoke about how they coped with what they viewed as unequal treatment, from lower "merit raises" to the assignment of courses that their male colleagues viewed as not so important—or at least not as important as the courses that the men taught.

People of color frequently felt isolated. "When I came here over thirty years ago," an African American said at her retirement party, "there were very few of us and we were very isolated, each in a silo, one to a building at most." Many of those buildings are still in use. However, since some of today's new buildings are larger than those of the 1970s, that generalization does not hold as much. Nonetheless, it would be very difficult for me to quote any person of color on the Wan U campus without making her or him identifiable. To take a glaring example, were I to write about the perceptions and problems of an African-born professor or a librarian from India, people at Wannabe University would have a pretty good idea whom I was discussing. So even though I have heard professors use the word "racist" to describe a colleague, an administrator, or a situation, I have elected to

avoid the topic of racialized ethnicity. However, here and there, an example involving this topic appears, just as I occasionally mention the Division of Athletics and its teams.¹⁹

In 2003 I also began participant observation of the meetings of important groups, especially those of the trustees. By 2004 I expanded my work by gaining access to college and university committees, whose meetings I observed. By fall 2006 I was observing six important committees, as well as the University Senate. I also observed a couple of executive committees. My notes are different from the official minutes of the committees that I observed. For instance, at meetings of the board of trustees, I kept track of how the president and the chairman of the board addressed people, who interrupted whom, and who held sufficient power or felt sufficiently powerful to interject jokes in their own comments.²⁰

In general, I have tried to follow the journalistic practices I learned while doing research for my book *Making News*. Because I was attending so many meetings, more professors and administrators shared information with me. A few people made a special point of giving me information about professors and administrators whom they did not like. I analyzed their information the same way I analyzed other information. Two people whom I believed were in a position to know about a specific topic had to confirm salient details of meetings and actions when I had not observed those meetings or actions myself. When I did not have two sources for critical statements, I kept a record of negative comments so that I could get a better sense of the fault lines at the university. (I also discovered that a few professors in the so-called "dysfunctional departments" were keeping records about one another in case they ever wanted to lodge a formal complaint.) In addition, I wrote down the comments made by people whom I encountered when, say, I attended a dinner party or went to the supermarket in Ashton. I have not interviewed current administrators, though I did feel free to ask them informal questions when I encountered them on campus or at committee meetings. On the whole, even though I have done my best not to quote friends or sociologists and to mask people's identities, I have followed a key rule: "Everything's data unless it will hara someone."

I have used another data source often omitted from ethnographies, news reports. As I explained in *Making News* (1978; cf. Gans 1979; Fishman 1980; Gitlin 1980), institutionalized ideologies are embedded in the very processes of gathering and disseminating news. How the news media disperse their resources, including their staff, reveals what they believe matters. What media identify as "fact" defines not just what can be facts, but also the criteria determining facticity.

Like all contemporary organizations, Wannabe University did its best to control how the news media portrayed it. It sent news releases to the media and posted them on its website. It also posted on its website the favorable coverage it received from the news media. (Somehow the critical coverage rarely if ever was posted.) I paid special attention to how Wannabe wanted to be seen. I filed all stories about the management of Wannabe University that were published in both local newspapers and the important state newspapers, especially the *State Capital Record*.

I also paid special attention to three more sources of information disseminated by Wannabe administrators. One is the *Wannabe Weekly*, a widely distributed newspaper published by Wannabe's Office of University Relations—what in a less euphemistic era might have been called its public relations department. The minutes of powerful committees suggested the importance of this publication. For instance, the records of decisions and actions taken at one of the most powerful committees on campus occasionally indicated, "Place a story about [this matter] in the *Wannabe Weekly*."²¹ Additionally, many stories in *Wannabe Weekly* are identical to the news releases on the website labeled "Wannabe press releases." (Multimedia feeds are also available through University Relations.) I also used Wannabe's general website, which University Relations maintains. The last is e-mails sent by administrators to students, staff, and professors. I view all three sources as announcements of how administrators want others to view both the university and its administrators.

I am all too familiar with the inaccuracies endemic in news coverage. For my purposes, those flaws do not matter. Rather, news coverage is an expression of what Dorothy E. Smith (2005: 13) calls "relations of ruling," "forms of consciousness and organization that are objectified in the sense that they are constituted externally to particularly people and places." As she explains, "We are ruled by people who are at work in corporations, government, professional settings and organizations. . . . Though they are, of course, individuals, their capacities to act derive from the organizations that they both produce and are produced by. The relations and organizations in which they are active are also those that organize our lives and in which we in various ways participate" (18). These relations are both omnipresent and mundane.

Watching television, reading the newspaper, going to the grocery store . . . taking on a mortgage for a home, walking down a city street . . . these daily acts articulate us into social relations of the order . . . called ruling as well as those of the economy. . . . These transactions aren't with people we know as particular

individuals. . . . The functions of "knowledge, judgment and will" have become built into a specialized complex of objectified forms of organization and consciousness that organize and coordinate people's everyday lives. (18)

Modes of organization and coordination are not random. Policies are not accidents. Neither are rules and regulations. Institutions govern people through policies carefully wrought by the individuals, committees, and other groups at work in institutional bureaucracies. As a member of the pertinent committee reminded me, a group in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences spent almost two years writing that college's mission statement and strategic plan. Essentially these are policy and planning documents about the business of the college. Not only do the university, its colleges, and its schools each have a mission statement, but the central administration had asked every department, even the mailroom, to write one, for all were involved in the bureaucratic business of the university.

Organizations, including universities, often announce their rules, regulations, and policies in newspapers, which the institutions publish both to present themselves in a positive light and to promote compliance. Indeed, the rules and regulations—and the formal accounts of them disseminated in newspapers and on the web—are so important that Smith specifically identifies them with ideology and social regulation. In essence, in our bureaucratized and centralized institutions, these written policies and the procedures associated with them become objectified as the essence of social regulation—as relations of ruling (Smith 2005: 15ff., 69). The *Wannabe Weekly* and the Wannabe website exemplify the sorts of official information that Smith discusses.

I have relied on Wannabe's official publications for accounts of some events. Sometimes I have also used these official statements rather than my own data, for the printed statements will not encourage people at Wan U to say, "I wonder who told her that." Also, the official accounts reveal more than either what Wannabe's administrators want people to believe or what they want to hide.²² They also highlight the administration's dedication to spin (cf. Frankfurt 2005). In conversations with me, administrators have praised their colleagues by saying that he or she had found "a really good way to spin it." Spin seems so important that I suspect that sometimes the decision to publish a specific version of an occurrence may have been reached at President Whitmore's weekly Wednesday 9:00 a.m. meeting with his vice presidents and directors. (The provost and the dean of the medical school were the only "academics" routinely included in this meeting.) I have assumed that the administrators' news spin is telling; that is, it informs me of what the administrators want others to believe.²³

One final note: I have written in modified temporal order. I began collecting data and writing in 2003, when James Whitmore was president and Tyler Johnson was provost. I allude to events before Whitmore's presidency. Whitmore resigned when I was completing a second draft of this book. A new president, Richard (Rick) Daniels, arrived as I was working on a much revised chapter 7. I began writing President Daniels into this book in 2008, when Provost Wesley presented the faculty with a new strategic plan. I do not cover the transition from Whitmore to Daniels. Nor do I generally discuss how presidents and provosts decided to leave or were advised to leave Wannabe University. Like students and faculty, administrators are entitled to privacy.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

As all institutions of higher education are, Wannabe University is operating in a new environment. In the mid-twentieth century, higher education was a public good; now the distinction between public and private is not so clear (Gumpert and Snyderman 2006). In 1970 Wan U did not charge tuition; its undergraduates paid only "fees." Now compared to the other public universities in the region and compared to its "peers," Wan U is a bargain. But it is an expensive bargain. Its tuition has been creeping up; its out-of-state tuition resembles that of some private universities. Its administrators are on a perpetual search for new and increased revenue streams. As a chairman of the board of trustees repeatedly said, although research universities are not businesses, they can be business-like.

This book is about how being "business-like" has affected today's public research universities and how the changes in universities are, in turn, revealing emerging aspects of American life. It argues that the new emphasis on business has introduced new sorts of administrators who have different kinds of relationships with the professoriate. Increasingly, they try to govern them rather than to govern *with* them. As a result, the process of auditing has become ever more important, as administrators create situations in which faculty members must account for themselves. Indeed, these administrative actions appear to be encouraging an *accountability regime*.

In many ways, Wannabe University is typical of an ambitious American public research university, as chapter 2 explains. It situates Wannabe University geographically and historically and also in the context of contemporary American higher education. Some changes have emerged in research universities, as they have immersed themselves in the audit culture and accountability regime that are coming to dominate many American institutions. These changes include declining support from legislatures coupled

with increasing legislative interest in higher education as preparation for the workforce; an increased emphasis on research that could be transformed into a revenue stream; an emphasis on pleasing customers (undergraduates and their parents); reviews of departments to improve "quality" (or at least ranking in a discipline); an increase in the number of full-time professional staff per full-time faculty; and an increase in part-time instructors. Wannabe University also suffered a bad case of "middle-status conformity" as it sought to institute "best practices" that would increase the "three e's" associated with an audit culture: economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Chapter 3 highlights Wannabe University as a "middle-status conformist" that simultaneously seeks to conform to what other public research universities do, while it develops its own distinctive "brand." I pay special attention to how Wan U participates in the corporatization of higher education, transforming the faculty's research into a revenue stream (as other research universities do). I include here some of the techniques used to persuade professors to earn money for the university and to dissuade professors from shirking. These activities involve new relationships among administrators and professors, who were once thought to share the governance of universities.

As academic administrators have increasingly followed the corporate pattern of achieving vertical mobility by moving from one employer to the next, professors have reconsidered both the meaning of being an administrator and the relationship between the professoriate and the administration. Chapter 4 argues that many professors feel that the "outsider" administrators are "corporate administrators" more concerned with power and their own careers than with the fate of Wan U. Put somewhat differently, according to many professors, by helping Wannabe University climb a rung up the ladder of American public research universities, the "corporate administrators" help themselves clamber up the stairs of a managerial career in academe.

Adherents of the "new managerialism," Wan U's administrators seek to improve organizational rationality to maximize economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. To accomplish this rationalization, they are modifying the administrative structure of Wannabe University by engaging in centralization. Some changes have been accomplished through a gradual concentration of power; others by seemingly sudden fiat. Chapter 5 discusses the politics of centralization. It focuses on the "academic restructuring" (the elimination of three schools), the departure (retirement, firing, and career movement) of most of the deans, and some of the methods that professors use to deal with administrative fiats. These include both direct and indirect bureaucratic methods and ritual compliance.

Chapter 6 reports how professors reacted when, over a ten-year period, the central administration began to emphasize the need to improve the instruction of undergraduates. That emphasis on teaching undergraduates and auditing how instructors perform this task highlights an essential contradiction in contemporary American research universities. As professors see it and as has been the case at American research universities since the post-World War II period, research universities stress research. Professors' careers are based on their contribution to the scholarship of their fields. However, to sell the quality of their education to potential students and their parents, research universities boast of how they rank in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* publication "America's Best Colleges." To produce its ratings, that magazine uses indicators that stress aspects of undergraduate education, not research. Chapter 6 includes some discussion of the innovations (or "tricks") involving instruction that Wan U introduced to improve its ranking.

Chapters 7 and 8 discuss how the central administrators tried to implement some of the changes that would improve its ranking. In chapter 7, I discuss how the central administration encouraged instructors to make themselves auditable by introducing techniques for assessing both what undergraduates learn and how well professors teach. To some extent, external forces coerced it to do so. Its Regional Accreditation Agency not only mandated that it have such business documents as a mission statement and a strategic plan, but also that it institute student outcomes assessment. The chapter asks whether Wannabe University is conflating education and lifestyle, and whether its concern for students is simply part of "doing business." Chapter 8 discusses the impact of these changes of faculty, stressing how the shift of emphasis from one provost to the next leads to inconsistency and confusion. It asks about the mission of a public research university, noting how the characterization of higher education as both a public and a private good produces organizational ambivalence. That ambivalence was particularly clear as Wan U's specific policies about "managing" diversity shifted when one provost replaced another.

But there is much continuity. Chapter 9 considers some ways of making the faculty accountable, including the use of external reviews and "data-mining" about graduate programs to eliminate graduate departments. I discuss how much the faculty at Wannabe University is already being audited, although the professors do not identify the forms that they submit either to be granted promotion and tenure or to receive merit raises as structures associated with an accountability regime. I also contrast the American accountability regime with the highly centralized system introduced to British higher education in the 1990s. Although the centralization

and rationalization being imposed on American research universities is less marked than the practices now found in the British system, the American accountability regime developing in higher education resembles the regimes imposed in other fields with ideological content as well as in health care. Why, I ask in chapter 10, has the faculty has been so compliant?

2

Situating Wannabe U

When President James Whitmore declared that Wan U was an “institution in transformation,” he did not bother to explain why the university needed to change. Nor had he done so in his inauguration speech. Then he had referred to “our mission as a land-grant university” to promote “excellence,” “access to all [state] residents,” and “service to the state and beyond.” He had also invoked the possibility of greatness. Apparently, President Whitmore assumed that everyone at the academic convocation—politicians, trustees, faculty, students, and reporters—knew why change was necessary.

Gathered in the university’s largest auditorium, the audience paid close attention to Whitmore’s formal address. The faculty seemed informed about Whitmore. After all, it was in their best interest to have some sense of his character and preferences. Before the speech, a few professors whispered among themselves about the new president’s decision to buy a home close to a pocket of wealthy donors rather than to occupy the on-campus presidential house. Everyone knew that the house needed repairs, but a scientist knew enough about the Whitmore family to tell those sitting near him that repairs were not the only issue. Teachers at the local school were making too big a fuss over the president’s children to please his wife. (She wanted them to be treated like everyone else.) Some professors seemed less enthusiastic about Whitmore’s emphasis on business. They preferred to define “service” in terms of the intellectual and moral growth of their students.² However, politicians and trustees applauded heartily as Whitmore announced that the university’s “capacity to translate that concept [of service] into ongoing, working, profitable partnerships with [the state’s] major public and private institutions is already beyond question.” And that “the University cooperates with more than 200 companies and provides a point of service for hundreds of thousands of the state’s citizens.”