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The Academic Marketplace

Theodore Caplow, Reece McGee

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"This volume is a must for anyone interested in academic problems and will produce the emotion of recognition in those concerned, and the emotion of surprise in those outside the field."-*Los Angeles Times* "Professors Caplow and McGee have given scholarly respectability to what many a professor has long suspected: Competition in the academic marketplace is as severe as in the business world. [Their book] might come to have the same function for the professor as Machiavelli's work had for ambitious princes."-*Midwest Journal of Political Science The Academic Marketplace* is a straightforward, hard-hitting exposÚ of the American university. Caplow and McGee consider all the working parts of the system and assess their suitability to the professed purpose. Their report on the actualities, myths, and consequences of routines thus amounts to an anatomy of an institution-an anatomy that does not present a pretty picture. We learn, for example, that the chief criteria used in making appointments are prestige and compatibility, not teaching ability. The authors describe the precipitous decline in teaching loads and then explain how this tendency is related to the new seller's market, on the one hand, and to the extravagantly indeterminate structure of the university as an institution, on the other. Not only is the temper judicious, the facts well gathered and competently marshaled, but the expression of results is invariably lucid. In a new introduction, the authors sort out fact from legend and discern trends, they address the validity of their own research methods and the applicability of their original findings to today's academic marketplace. They observe that the essential commodity offered in the academic marketplace is still the same-the mysterious intangible called prestige, by which universities, colleges, departments, disciplines, fields of inquiry, journals, and ultimately faculty candidates are ranked from high to low, and raised up and cast down accordingly.

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