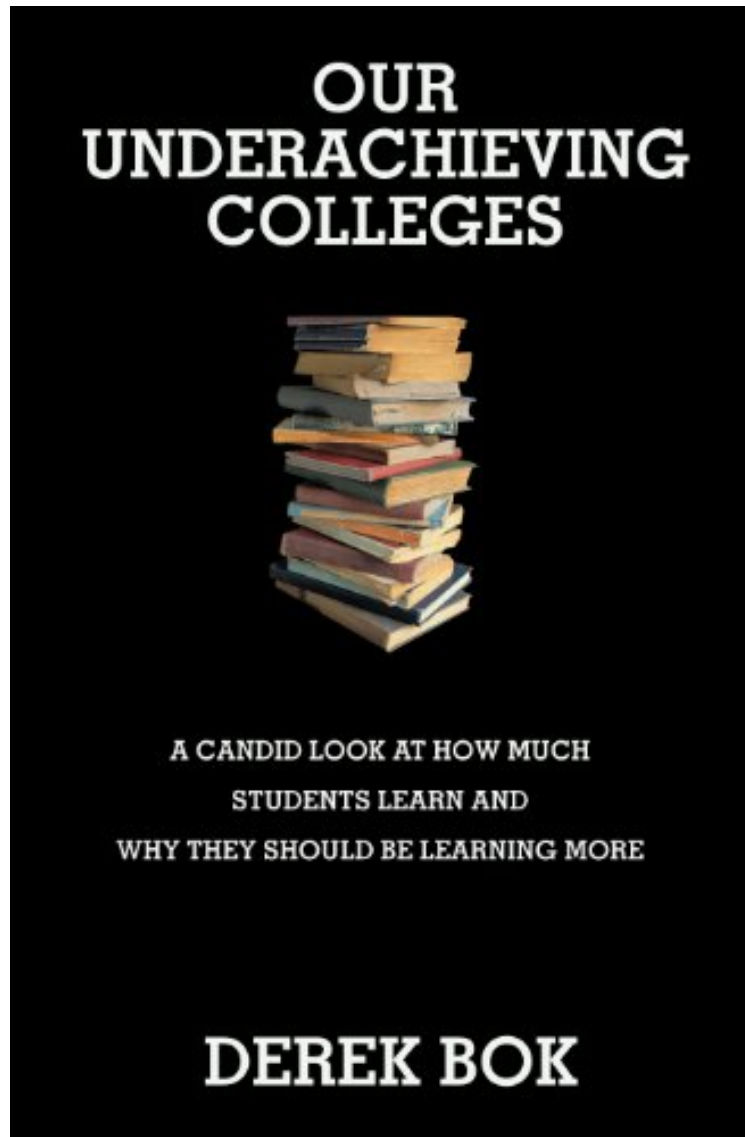


(Download free pdf) Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More (The William G. Bowen Memorial Series in Higher Education)

Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More (The William G. Bowen Memorial Series in Higher Education)

Von Derek Bok

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Von Derek Bok : Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More (The William G. Bowen Memorial Series in Higher Education) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look

at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More (The William G. Bowen Memorial Series in Higher Education):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Too Little Interest in Improvement Among American Faculty MembersVon Donald MitchellUnless you are a glutton for punishment, chances are that you'll never read all of the major critiques of undergraduate education in the United States. It would take a true masochist to follow up all of that reading with a look into the latest research on how and when undergraduates can learn more at college. But only someone with a true love for the subject would also consider what colleges should be trying to accomplish for students, professors, and society. Meet Derek Bok, veteran of two decades as president of Harvard University, who recently served another year as interim president after Larry Summers resigned last year. He's a man with a mission: Make undergraduate education as good as it can be. That zeal won't be evident to the casual reader. The material is presented in such an even-handed way that it's easy to conclude that President Bok has no strong opinions. That would be a mistake. You need a hint: President Bok started out as a professor interested in labor law where strict adherence to standards is critical to effectiveness. He later served as dean of Harvard Law School at a time when the students (my class) barricaded him all night in the library where he amiably chatted with all comers. President Bok's often turgid prose also makes his words seem less powerful than they might be. But read between the lines. Ignore what the conservative flame-throwers have to say about too much sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll and not enough great books. American four-year colleges can do a lot better in their main missions: 1. With greater emphasis, more resources, and a pervasive role throughout the curriculum, student can learn to write and speak much more effectively. 2. By focusing more on encouraging critical thinking, emphasizing greater student participation in class, and providing more challenging assignments that require applied thought, the 95 percent of students who cannot apply any of the disciplines they were exposed to in college can make an applied contribution to the world. 3. Academic leaders need to consider that they can build character by exposing students to more ethical questions and involving students in public service community activities. Students themselves seem to want more guidance in this area. 4. Colleges should encourage knowledgeable participation in the political process. Otherwise, our form of government may atrophy due to disinterest by its best educated citizens. 5. Colleges need to move beyond integrating a diverse student body into helping each student develop greater abilities to relate to other people. 6. Expanding student perspectives beyond the domestic American views to see global issues and opportunities. 7. Creating a greater awareness of disciplines outside of one's own area of interest, especially for those with a scientific and vocational focus. 8. Better balancing student desires to get a job after college with faculty desires to ignore vocational perspectives. 9. Employing the most effective teaching methods, experimenting to find better ways for students to learn, and being flexible in shifting one's teaching style. It's in this last area that the book's critique seems most justified. Colleges are supposed to be the home of advanced knowledge in all dimensions. Why has helping students learn taken such a back seat? It's hypocritical. Having sat in on classes at many elite colleges over the last 30 years, I must admit to disappointment with what I experience. The amount of useful information that's exchanged could easily be assembled into a briefing document that I could read in five minutes. Surely, something better could be done with the remainder of the class time. When I was an undergraduate, the only way I could stay awake was to try to create a verbatim record of the lecture. Then, I would summarize the results into less than 50 words. Today, I might only need 30 words. Bravo, President Bok! This book deserves to be treated very seriously and acted on. Perhaps it will be. I mentioned to the president of one college that I was reading the book, and he immediately became defensive and hostile. I think at least he is hearing the message.

KurzbeschreibungDrawing on a large body of empirical evidence, former Harvard President Derek Bok examines how much progress college students actually make toward widely accepted goals of undergraduate education. His conclusions are sobering. Although most students make gains in many important respects, they improve much less than they should in such important areas as writing, critical thinking, quantitative skills, and moral reasoning. Large majorities of college seniors do not feel that they have made substantial progress in speaking a foreign language, acquiring cultural and aesthetic interests, or learning what they need to know to become active and informed citizens. Overall, despite their vastly increased resources, more powerful technology, and hundreds of new courses, colleges cannot be confident that students are learning more than they did fifty years ago. Looking further, Bok finds that many important college courses are left to the least experienced teachers and that most professors continue to teach in ways that have proven to be less effective than other available methods. In reviewing their educational programs, however, faculties typically ignore this evidence. Instead, they spend most of their time discussing what courses to require, although the lasting impact of college will almost certainly depend much more on how the courses are taught. In his final chapter, Bok describes the changes that faculties and academic leaders can make to help students accomplish more. Without ignoring the contributions that America's colleges have made, Bok delivers a powerful critique--one

that educators will ignore at their peril. Pressestimmen In the Bok view, American colleges and universities are victims of their own success: they answer to so many constituencies and are expected to serve so many ends that no one can agree on even a few common goals, and in the meantime they have grown complacent. -- Charles McGrath The New York Times Derek Bok paints a picture of colleges that, if not dysfunctional, are operating far below capacity. He questions the coherence and purpose of departmental majors, describes programs of study abroad as little more than recreational excursions, criticizes lecturers for their indifference to whether students learn anything, and, in general, hold faculty accountable for ignoring research about which teaching methods are most effective. -- Andrew Delbanco New York of Books Derek Bok makes a unique contribution by skillfully weaving his critique of campus and curriculum with an extensive review of the literature on student in a number of key areas, including writing instruction, critical thinking instruction, civic education, and diversity education. Rather than identify a narrowly defined culprit in the supposed decline of higher education, such as political correctness or neglect of the literary canon, Bok writes persuasively about the multiple aims of higher education and retains focus throughout on the question of how attention to each of these aims contributes to measurable increases in student learning... This thoughtful critique of higher education will be accessible to a wide audience. Publishers Weekly In Our Underachieving Colleges, Derek Bok argues forcefully that those of us within the academy can do a much better job of educating our undergraduates, widening their vistas, and preparing them to succeed in life. -- Charles M. Vest Boston Globe Bok in this book criticizes the state of undergraduate education... His research suggests that common problems in education extend beyond K-12. Education Week Derek Bok ... points out in his recent book ... that civic responsibility must be learned, that it is neither natural nor effortless. -- Michael M. Spear Editor Publisher It's hard to think of anything more central to a university than teaching... The cause of improving teaching quality--and of perhaps imparting practical knowledge to students--now has a well-placed champion: Derek Bok... As the highest profile academic in the world, he'll have a chance to change the way academics think about the interaction between the professor and the student. But as Bok may know better than anyone else, he has his work cut out for him. -- James Beale Washington Monthly Derek Bok's most recent book, Our Underachieving Colleges, is worth scrutinizing... Bok is ... on solid ground in pointing out that our colleges underachieve in preparing students for citizenship. -- George Leef The American Enterprise Online In Our Underachieving Colleges, [Derek] Bok acts as both diagnostician and healer, wielding social-science statistics and professional studies to trace the etiology of today's illnesses and to recommend palliative treatments for what he has discovered. -- Donald Kagan Commentary Derek Bok makes a unique contribution by skillfully weaving his critique of campus and curriculum with an extensive review of the literature on student learning in a number of key areas... Rather than identify a narrowly defined culprit in the supposed decline of higher education, Bok writes persuasively about the multiple aims of higher education and retains focus throughout on the question of how attention to each of these aims contributes to measurable increases in student learning... This thoughtful critique of higher education will be accessible to a wide audience. -- Scott Walter Library Journal Bok focuses not on curriculum change but on pedagogy. He asks why college teachers have not taken more advantage of the extensive research that has been done on the conditions that allow students to learn most effectively. -- Ken Gewertz Harvard University Gazette What distinguishes Our Underachieving Colleges from other books in the genre is the author's focus on what research has to say about what students are and are not learning, along with his insistence that institutions should put their money where their mouths are and invest in the teachers, teaching, and educational experiences that are likely to help them achieve their own chosen goals. -- Mary Taylor Huber Change In his book, Our Underachieving Colleges, Derek Bok, past-president of Harvard University, challenges postsecondary institutions to live up to their educational mandate... [H]is stature in American higher education adds credibility and weight to his challenge. Also, the book is well researched and well argued. As such, it has the potential to motivate change... If you are a senior administrator or board member, please read this book. If you are not, consider making a gift of it to someone else. -- Gary Poole University Affairs This book is a clarion call. Attention should be paid. -- Peter Lamal Journal of Higher Education Pressestimmen In the Bok view, American colleges and universities are victims of their own success: they answer to so many constituencies and are expected to serve so many ends that no one can agree on even a few common goals, and in the meantime they have grown complacent. -- Charles McGrath The New York Times Derek Bok paints a picture of colleges that, if not dysfunctional, are operating far below capacity. 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